

**Springfield Township  
Parks & Recreation Commission Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, September 1, 2009**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The September 1, 2009 Regular Meeting of the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Vallad at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, Michigan 48350.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present**

Diane Baker  
Lisa Christensen  
Dot LaLone  
Annette Zemon-Parker  
Jean Vallad  
Darryl Wendt

**Staff Present**

Sarah Richmond  
Jennifer Tucker

**Others Present**

Chris Benedict  
Verlin Cook  
Judy Hensler, Township Trustee  
Kelly Hyer  
Ron Hudson  
Anne Loncar  
Casey Reed  
Collin Walls

**IV. AGENDA REVISIONS AND APPROVAL**

Add "Revised 2009 Budget Notes after Amendments" to item "F" under Consent.

**Chairperson Vallad moved to accept the agenda as revised. Chairperson Vallad was supported by Commissioner LaLone. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kelly Hyer came to present the Commission an update on the Friends of the Parks Organization. Ms. Hyer stated that she was in the process of finishing the necessary paperwork for the group. She is finishing the draft of the by-laws and then the group will be meeting to approve them. The group also has a new logo.

**VI. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes-August 11, 2009 with Additional Disbursements of \$15,611.59 for the Parks & Recreation Fund and \$ 700.00 for the Trust and Agency Fund
- B. Receipt of Parks & Recreation Activities Report for August

- C. Receipt of Financial Summaries
- D. Receipt of Approved Township Board Meeting Minutes for July 9, 2009
- E. Receipt of Memo dated August 26, 2009 re: The Final Months of the 2009 budget
  - Receipt of Communication
  - 1.

**Chairperson Vallad moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. Chairperson Vallad was supported by Commissioner Zemon-Parker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. 2010 Parks and Recreation Fund Budget**

Director Tucker stated that at the Township Board Budget Workshop meeting on August 31, 2009, the Township recommended allocating \$ 358,000.00 from the General Fund to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Director Tucker stated that while some cuts are still necessary to balance the budget with the General Fund Contribution, she felt that the Budget Workshop Meeting went very well. The Township Board had indicated at the meeting that they would be willing to work with the Commission and the Department on ways to reduce some costs that the department incurs. One option that was discussed was reverting the front meadow back into a prairie, which would save the department some money on mowing costs. Another item that the Township and the Parks are going to be investigating is snow plowing.

Chairperson Vallad suggested that perhaps it would be best to have a special meeting in order to discuss the 2010 budget and the necessary reductions. She also stated that Director Tucker did a good job at the budget workshop meeting.

Chairperson Vallad stated that there was one issue of the 2010 budget she felt should be discussed this evening and that was the snow plowing issue since the "Approval of Request for Bid Proposal for Snow Removal" is on the agenda. Chairperson Vallad stated that snow plowing could begin as soon as November and the Commission needed to know what the Township Board's thoughts were concerning the snow removal.

Director Tucker stated that it was her recommendation that the Commission should still go out for bids and she reminded the Commission that going out for bids did not require them to accept a bid. However, by seeking bids it allowed the Department some time to gather information on doing the snow removal in-house and find out which direction the Township Board would like to take.

The Commission discussed available dates for the special meeting. It was decided that the upper level conference room was available at 6:30 pm on September 24, 2009.

**Chairperson Vallad moved to a Special Meeting for the discussion of the 2010 Budget on September 24, 2009 at 6:30 pm. Chairperson Vallad was supported by Commissioner**

**Christensen. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Recommendation for Park Commission Vacancy**

Chairperson Vallad stated that it was very nice to have five candidates apply for the vacancy on the Commission and it has been a hard choice.

Chairperson Vallad opened up the discussion asking the other Commissioners for their thoughts on the candidates.

Commissioner Wendt stated that he placed the candidates in the following order: 1) Collin Walls, (2) Anne Loncar, (3) Chris Benedict, and tied in fourth is Ron Hudson and Linda Hawes. Commissioner Wendt stated the reason he placed Mr. Walls as number one is because he is a long standing citizen of Springfield Township and he knows the ins and outs of both sides of the Township Board and the Park Commission. He has also been involved in a lot of volunteer work and other different avenues of Springfield Township. Commissioner Wendt stated that he placed Mrs. Loncar as second because he viewed her as a possible asset because she knows a lot about ground maintenance and she has some skills on the budget level. He did have some concerns about her complete experience with the budget and if it was similar with the process that our Department has. Mr. Benedict was very well rounded in the North Oakland Land Conservancy and with the Clinton River Watershed and having some budgeting experience. Commissioner Wendt stated that the biggest reason that he placed Mr. Benedict at number three is because he is currently employed by Supervisor Trout and he feels that it could be a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Baker asked if there was a difference in conflict of interest in working for the Township and being married to a Township Trustee.

Chairperson Vallad stated that Clerk Moreau had looked into this matter. By law there is no conflict of interest for a Park Commissioner to be employed by the Township. Chairperson Vallad stated that while that is the case, she does agree with Commissioner Wendt that it could be a conflict of interest because Mr. Benedict works directly for Supervisor Trout, and when he comes to the board table he needs to be a proponent of the Parks Department not the Supervisor's Office. In addition, his position is required to float among other departments, which could mean that he would end up working in the Parks Department if the need arose.

Commissioner Zemon-Parker stated that the Commission is aware that Mr. Walls is a member of Rotary. What she was wondering is when does Rotary elect their presidents and how often does that come up.

Mr. Walls stated that the position is elected annually.

Commissioner Zemon-Parker stated that she feels that there would be a conflict of interest if Mr. Walls were to be elected president of Rotary, while being a member of the Park Commission.

Chairperson Vallad stated that during the interview process the Commission did ask the candidates if they would be "able to separate personal priorities with the groups from those of the Commission?"

Commissioner Zemon-Parker stated that she understands that the Commission asked that question but in her opinion, there is a difference between just being a member of an organization and being the president of the organization. Again she feels that it would be a conflict of interest because when dealing with community groups the Commission deals with the presidents or the heads of those organizations, if that person is on the Commission whose interest would they have in mind?

Commissioner LaLone stated that she too was glad that there were five candidates. The way that she looked at the selection was based on the suggestion that Trustee Vallad had made the night of the interviews, to look at the short term, medium term and long term. Commissioner LaLone stated that she does not see a long term since the person filling the vacancy would have to run for re-election in 2010. Commissioner LaLone stated she looked at the short term. The Commission has a budget to work on this year and a master plan that, in her opinion, has to be approved and submitted by November of 2010. It is for these reasons that she only looked for people that had experience in budgets and master plans. Commissioner LaLone stated that her pick was Mr. Walls.

Commissioner Christensen stated that she had to agree that there were five excellent candidates, which made the decision very difficult. Her top two choices were Mrs. Loncar and Mr. Benedict; they both had equal positives in her opinion. With the issue of Mr. Benedict's position with the Township and his time off for his fall class, she would default to Mrs. Loncar. She stated that Mr. Benedict's passion was unparalleled to any of the other candidates and she got a true sense of his fight in his beliefs in the parks and recreation system. His experience with the natural resources compliment Springfield Township and the goals that the Commission is trying to meet. As far as Mrs. Loncar is concerned she feels that she has great experience with the natural resources at Indian Springs and with the budget, it may be different than our Department but she thinks that Mrs. Loncar would be able to ease into our Department's budget and work with it. Commissioner Christensen stated that she thinks it would be great to get some new blood involved in the Commission versus others who have been involved for a very long time on different levels. Doing this would allow the Commission to get some new perspectives.

Chairperson Vallad stated that when she was thinking on this matter she tried to think of things that she needed to see in a Park Commissioner and three criteria is what she came up with. (1) Knowledge of the budget process; (2) Stewardship of the property that the Township owns. In her opinion preservation of the property for future generations is a high priority; (3) Ability to attend the meetings and spending time preparing for those meetings. Based on the above criteria she did a plus and minus system. Mr. Walls received three pluses and Mrs. Loncar and Mr. Benedict each received two pluses. Chairperson Vallad stated that she then began looking at several other criteria such as formal education and life work experience, ability to work with others and as a team, passions for the parks, organizational skills, and their involvement with the local community groups. Having looked at all of the above, Chairperson Vallad stated that she was moving Mrs. Loncar up to her first choice and Mr. Walls and Mr. Benedict were in second.

Commissioner Zemon-Parker stated that after looking over all the resumes and the interview responses and after listening to all the discussion she would recommend Mrs. Loncar. She chose her for a number of reasons, among them is she has an understanding of the community

since she works in the community at Indian Springs, she has maintenance experience, an understanding of what is needed in a parks system, and experience with budgets.

Commissioner Baker stated that she was very glad that there were five great candidates that had applied. She echoes most of the Commission in the fact that in her opinion she thinks the top three candidates are Mr. Benedict, Mr. Walls and Mrs. Loncar. She appreciated the way that Commissioner LaLone summarized how she was looking at this short term versus long term. She was impressed in all the responses that she had read and Mrs. Loncar and her problem solving skills. One of the things that she was considering was do you chose someone that had really new eyes and may be more objective about the situation or other individuals that have a lot more experience and who might be entrenched in some previous history. Commissioner Baker stated that with Mr. Walls there is a whole spectrum of experience that he could bring to the Commission. However, on the other hand with some of the interactions that the Commission has had with him in the past and some of the recent conversations that have occurred recently, she wonders if everyone would be on the same page with the direction for the Department. And that is not to say that Commissioner Baker is looking for everyone to be a "yes" women or a "yes" men, because she believes in having diversity on the Commission but she does question how well the Commission's pace or momentum would be upheld. With Mr. Benedict she was greatly impressed with his work experience and the education that he would bring to the table. She also feels that the number of years experience that Mrs. Loncar has, along with budget experience, special training and ability to handle a variety of issues is helpful. Commissioner Baker stated that she has a first place tie with Mrs. Loncar and Mr. Walls.

Chairperson Vallad stated that Commissioner Baker had to give the Commission a clear choice for a number one in order for the Commission to be able to try and get to a recommendation.

Commissioner Baker stated that she thinks she would vote for Mr. Walls because of the experience that he brings to the table at this time. She also wanted it noted that there were some reservations with that.

Chairperson Vallad stated that she would like to ask the opinion of Director Tucker, Sarah Richmond and Casey Reed, who were all present at the interviews, if there was anything that jumped out at them or if there is anything else that they would like to add. She was not asking them to name names for their first choice, just what they observed having sat through the interviews.

Director Tucker stated that what she really enjoyed about some of the candidates is that they come with fresh perspectives and sometimes that is helpful. In her opinion a fresh set of eyes could look at what is currently being done and see where there could be some things that could be changed or no longer need to happen. Director Tucker also stated that in her opinion there are aspects of a few of the candidates which could help move forward our relationship with the Township Board.

Casey Reed, Recreation Coordinator, stated that during the interview process there was one candidate that was not as pro recreation as some of the other candidates. To her it was very obvious that to that one individual recreation was not a high priority or an essential service that is offered by the Department. In her opinion recreation programming is a big part of what the Department does and it is an essential service that is offered. The programs are what bring people in and from the feedback that she has received it is also what the community wants.

Chairperson Vallad asked if anyone stuck out in her mind.

Mrs. Reed stated that Mrs. Loncar and Mr. Benedict both discussed recreation in the interviews and it being an essential service that is offered.

Sarah Richmond, Administrative Assistant, stated that she agreed with Director Tucker and Mrs. Reed and that there were certain candidates that stood out more so than others. One of the concerns that she had, like Mrs. Reed, was about the view of recreation being an essential service that the Department offers. There were also candidates that were very much maintenance oriented, which is a major focus of the Department since the Department has been bestowed with such a jewel by having the Shiawassee Basin Preserve. Mrs. Richmond did not envy the Commission the difficult decision that they had to make but she believes that whatever decision is made needs to be one of balance. This new Commissioner needs to understand that they represent the employees and that they need to be willing to represent me, the employee, in a positive light and that they, no matter what their own personal bias may be, can represent us. This individual will also need to work with the Township Board and continue the positive relationship that is being built with the new Board.

Commissioner Christensen stated that when she considered the question regarding recreation being an essential service, she did weigh those responses heavily. She also questioned the short term versus long term. Are we saying that someone with not as much experience could not learn the process?

Commissioner LaLone stated that her point on that was the Department has a really short time frame to write our Master Plan and because of that there is a certain learning curve that will be involved with it. This is one of the items that Commissioner LaLone gave extra weight to when making her decision.

Chairperson Vallad asked the Commission since everyone was present and since the top three candidates were present would it be alright to clarify how much master plan experience each candidate has.

Commissioner LaLone asked how that was relevant.

Chairperson Vallad stated that since some were using previous master plan experience as a criteria it would be fair to understand each candidates experience.

Mr. Walls stated that he has had numerous years of experience with master plans for both the Township and back in the 1970's with one of the Parks and Recreation's master plan.

Mr. Benedict stated that he has very little experience with the actual master plan experience.

Mrs. Loncar stated that she has experience giving input for the master plans and capital improvement project lists.

Chairperson Vallad stated that this question is strictly from her, are the candidates able to come to the board table and express their opinions?

Mrs. Loncar stated that expressing her opinion should not be an issue.

Mr. Benedict stated that he would be able to express his opinions if appointed. He would like to clarify the matter of him working for the Township. He feels that if he was appointed he would be able to come to the table as a Park Commissioner not an employee of the Township. He would like it noted sometimes just the perception of a conflict of interest can change how people talk to one another and form relationships and go about doing things. And if there is even the slightest perception of conflict of interest he would just assume not be chosen and rather see someone else chosen.

Mr. Walls stated that it would not be a problem for him to come to the table and voice his opinion on matters. But more importantly voice them in a positive way to find solutions.

Chairperson Vallad stated that at this point the Commission had a tie and she was going to ask once again for everyone's first choice.

Commissioner Wendt- Mr. Walls  
Commissioner LaLone- Mr. Walls  
Commissioner Baker- Mrs. Loncar  
Commissioner Christensen- Mrs. Loncar  
Commissioner Zemon-Parker – Mrs. Loncar  
Chairperson Vallad – Mrs. Loncar

**Chairperson Vallad moved to nominate Anne Loncar to fill the Park Commission vacancy dependent upon Township Board approval. Chairperson Vallad was supported by Commissioner Zemon-Parker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, Zemon-Parker, Vallad; No: LaLone and Wendt. The motion carried by a 4-2 vote.**

#### **B. Approval of Request for Bid Proposal for Snow Removal**

Director Tucker stated that due to the fact the our snow removal company from the last several years has gone out of business, the Commission now needs to go out for request for bids proposals.

Director Tucker stated that even though there was some discussion at the Budget Workshop meeting about the Department performing the snow removal duties in-house, it is her suggestion that the Commission still seek out bid proposals in order to be covered in case the duties can not be performed in-house this year.

Commissioner Zemon-Parker stated that she would like to see an earlier date than October 5, 2009 be listed for the deadline date.

It was decided that the new deadline date would be Monday, September 21, 2009.

It was also decided that Discussion of Snow Removal Bids would be added to the Special Meeting Agenda.

Chairperson Vallad stated that she feels that there really needs to be some clarification on the discussion that occurred at the Budget Workshop. Among those items needing clarification are: (1) what type of truck would be purchased, (2) person to operate said truck, and (3) is it a possibility for this to happen this year.

**Chairperson Vallad moved to accept the request for bid proposal for snow removal with the addition of liability insurance, worker's compensation insurance and change of deadline date to September 21, 2009. Chairperson Vallad was supported by Commissioner Wendt. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

### **C. Discussion of Community Development Block Grant Funds Application**

Director Tucker stated that in addition to her request that is highlighted in her memo dated August 26, 2009, she would like to request permission to ask the elected officials for accessible doors for the Civic Center. Director Tucker stated that the request for accessible doors was made last year.

**Commissioner Zemon-Parker moved to allow Director Tucker to move forward with the request for Community Development Block Grant funds for accessible doors for the Civic Center and for funds for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Commissioner Zemon-Parker was supported by Commissioner Baker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

## **XII. TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **A. Bills List**

**Commissioner LaLone moved to approve payment of the bills as follows: Parks and Recreation at \$ 22,749.02 and \$ 200.00 for Trust and Agency. Commissioner LaLone was supported by Commissioner Zemon-Parker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

## **X. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **A. Policies and Procedure Committee**

Chairperson Vallad stated that she still needs to see the protocol for the reporting of the Director's time and once she has time to review it, the committee will need to meet to discuss the protocol.

### **B. Shiawassee Basin Preserve Rental Properties Committee**

The initial draft of the Interlocal Agreement with Rose Township has been sent to the Township Attorney, Greg Need. The agreement does need some work and Mr. Need will meet with the Rose Township Attorney. Once that meeting has taken place Mr. Need will contact Director Tucker with the necessary changes and those of course will be forwarded on to the Parks Commission.

There will be a tour of the house and the fen on September 10<sup>th</sup> beginning at 5:30 pm.

### **C. Non-Profit Community Group Committee**

None

### **XI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mrs. Loncar thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve on the Commission and she hopes that she is approved by the Township Board because she is looking forward to the whole process of being on the Commission.

### **XII. COMMISSIONER COMMENT**

Commissioner Zemon-Parker stated that it was wonderful that there were so many great candidates and it was a difficult choice and she would like to thank all the candidates.

Commissioner Christensen agreed with Commissioner Zemon-Parker. In addition, she thanked Mr. Walls, Mrs. Loncar and Mr. Benedict for coming this evening.

Commissioner Baker thanked all the candidates that attended the meeting that evening and to all the candidates for applying. She also thanked Chairperson Vallad for asking those additional questions because she found the answers very informative.

Commissioner LaLone thanked the candidates for attending the meeting this evening. The Oakland County Headwaters Trail Council will be having their summit next month at Proud Lake.

Commissioner Wendt thanked Mr. Walls, Mrs. Loncar, and Mr. Benedict for attending the meeting and the rest of the candidates for applying.

Chairperson Vallad thanked the candidates as well for applying.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Zemon-Parker moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Springfield Township Parks and Recreation at 8:41 pm. Commissioner Zemon-Parker was supported by Commissioner Baker. Vote on the motion: Yes: Baker, Christensen, LaLone, Zemon-Parker, Vallad and Wendt; No: None. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.**

---

Jennifer Tucker, Director of Parks & Recreation

---

Jean Vallad, Chairperson of Park Commission