

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI  
MINUTES OF WORK SESSION  
JANUARY 15, 2019**

Supervisor Stumbo called the meeting to order at approximately 5:03 p.m. in the Ypsilanti Township Civic Center Board Room, 7200 S. Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti Township.

**Members Present:** Supervisor: Brenda L. Stumbo, Treasurer Larry Doe, Trustees: Stan Eldridge, Heather Jarrell Roe and Monica Ross-Williams

**Members Absent:** Trustee Jimmy Wilson, Jr. arrived at 5:05 p.m.  
Clerk Lovejoy Roe arrived at 5:18 p.m.

**Legal Counsel:** Wm. Douglas Winters

**1. TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN  
PRESENTATION..... MEGAN MASSON-MINOCK  
AND CHRIS NORDSTROM**

Megan Masson-Minock, introduced herself and Chris Nordstrom, from Carlisle Wortman. She stated they would go over the Public Hearing presentation for the Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, part of Ypsilanti Township 2040, a community based vision and updating the policies to implement that vision. She explained one of the purposes for updating the Master Plan was to qualify for grants on a state and federal level, which had deadlines for applying.

Chris Nordstrom, Landscape Architect from Carlisle Wortman stated he had been working on this plan with a steering committee made up mainly of Park Commission members and staff. He stated there were two main reasons for updating the Master Plan, first it would dictate how Parks and Recreation operated for the next five years and secondly would qualify for funding through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He explained there were three primary grant opportunities, the first being the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund, which could get up to \$300,000.00 with a 25% match and would be unlimited if used for acquisition purposes. He said the second was Michigan Recreation

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Passport which was funded through the State of Michigan Driver License renewal program for \$150,000.00 with a 25% match, as well. He continued the third was the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal fund which status of funding questionable for this year, for \$300,000.00 with a 50% match required.

Chris Nordstrom stated work on this had begun in May of 2018 and reviewed meetings that had led to this draft for the Master Plan. He said communities typically adopted the plan after a public hearing, which was required by law. He stated it would have to be adopted and uploaded to the MDR website by Feb. 1 in order to be eligible for funding on April 1.

Supervisor Stumbo asked if we knew which plan we wanted to apply for funding and Mr. Nordstrom stated we did not know at this time, however he recommended the process be started today if any funding was going to be considered.

Trustee Ross-Williams asked for any insight he might have from communities that had won grant funding.

Mr. Nordstrom briefly reviewed some projects that had received DNR funding. He stated there were certain components that you had no control over, such as median income, but they liked to see connectivity and improving connectivity went even farther in gaining favor. He said regional and statewide trails were getting the highest score and any project that was part of the Iron Belt Trail got funded.

Mr. Nordstrom reviewed statistics from Survey Monkey which reflected that people were very happy with our parks in the Township, for the most part and they served a vital purpose for our community. Mr. Nordstrom stated he agreed with the survey and stated the Cobalt Survey also presented a picture of around 70% favorability. He reported the Survey Monkey was not a statistically valid survey whereas the Cobalt Survey was.

Trustee Jarrell Roe asked which survey had been used for the presentation. Mr. Nordstrom briefly explained the numbers primarily came from the Survey Monkey and stated there were 113 people that had responded, which was an average

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response from communities our size and since it has been combined with Cobalt Survey, the Open House and the Design Workshop he felt confident the response was a good representation. He explained the previous survey that had gone out with the tax bill had around 500 respondents and the difference between the two was it included the overall Master Plan rather than just Parks and Recreation.

Discussion followed on how well people actually knew where all the parks were and their condition.

Trustee Ross-Williams asked which park was in a certain slide. Chris Nordstrom identified it as Pine Park and in his opinion there was no reason to have playground equipment there, but felt something more creative, such as some type of storm water retention or gazebo with a community garden would make it stand out a little more. He stated it would be best to work with neighboring residents to find out better solutions for the smaller parks.

Chris Nordstrom stated maintaining existing parks was a recurrent theme at all the meetings, with protecting natural resources and having access to trails were close behind. He felt the primary focus for the next five years should be maintaining and upgrading the existing equipment and restrooms.

Trustee Ross-Williams asked what other communities practices were regarding keeping restrooms open without vandalism issues. Mr. Nordstrom agreed it was a challenge and stated having eyes on the park was one deterrent but there was no good answer when there was a limited staff. Discussion was had regarding port-a-johns and Mr. Nordstrom agreed that might be a possible solution. He suggested the smaller neighborhood parks might not necessarily need restrooms, but it was important for the larger community parks to have something more permanent.

Trustee Jarrell Roe voiced her struggle with making decisions based on a few people possibly vandalizing and prohibiting the rest of the peoples access to restroom facilities. Mr. Nordstrom stated, he was playing devil's advocate by stating that those one or two people cost a lot of money.

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Mr. Nordstrom reported there was little interest in programming and the problem seemed to be the hours that programming was available. He said the senior population was served quite well. He suggested the Park Commission could do more marketing by listening to people's interests and making hours more conducive would get others involved. Supervisor Stumbo asked if the size of the Community Center was a problem. Mr. Nordstrom reported there was concern regarding the Community Center as it is right now, as it was out dated and did not accommodate some of the things people would like to see. He reported there was a push for a new center. He reported the location of the current center limited residents south of Ford Lake, there was no pool, no large gym and did not have the type of meeting rooms that people wanted. He suggested partnership with other recreation providers could go a long way and reported one in Southgate that had partnered with YMCA which was spectacular.

Chris Nordstrom reported he was currently working on a non-motorized plan with much more detail than possible in this Recreation Plan that would come back to be Board at a later date. He reported the results of the survey showed a community that was very active and liked to walk, run, hike and bike and 82% of those that responded wanted trails to expand. He stated he was surprised since the Township is right on the Huron River, that there was no response regarding kayaking or canoeing but he couldn't tell from the data if they didn't like it or the fact there was no access.

Chris Nordstrom addressed the big ticket items. He reported people liked dog parks and even though the numbers were not overwhelming in the survey, people had talked about it at every meeting. He said the logical location would be at a community park rather than a neighborhood park because of parking. He said the next subject was a Splash Pad, which would be a big expense, \$200,000.00 minimum with ongoing expenses. Mr. Nordstrom said the next big ticket item was a new community center and gym. He reported 93% of those surveyed said they would support a millage for the acquisition, development and maintenance of Ypsilanti Township Parks. He stated over the next five years the Board and Park Commission may want to consider if a millage is a way to guarantee you have a continued level of financial support for your parks for maintenance, sufficient staffing and development of equipment as needed.

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Trustee Jarrell Roe asked if the millage information came from both surveys. Mr. Nordstrom stated it came from the Survey Monkey. She asked how many people were involved in the Cobalt Survey and Megan Masson-Minnock responded there were 520 respondents.

Trustee Ross Williams asked if it would be a good idea to partner with Washtenaw County in regard to a dog park. Mr. Nordstrom stated it would always be best to partner with Washtenaw County Parks because the level of funding would be far better than any individual community could obtain on their own, but there was always a risk that they might have too many projects. He stated it would be critical to have that partnership when applying for the grant.

Trustee Ross-Williams asked if Mr. Nordstrom had any history to draw from regarding smaller splash pads being able to service the needs of the community. Mr. Nordstrom stated he felt if a smaller splash pad was installed it would be overwhelmed and referred to Brownstown had put one in and had to resort to a residents only policy, as well as charging for its use because the lines were so long. He said other communities had put in a fountain type that doubled as a visual joy as well as something for children to play in on a hot summer day. He felt that a single smaller pad would not be able to serve the community since there was so much pent up demand, but maybe a couple, possibly one at LoonFeather and one at Ford Heritage in order to serve the community that was divided by Ford Lake.

Clerk Lovejoy Roe asked if the survey had included any questions regarding funding for a splash pad and Mr. Nordstrom answered that had not been included in the survey.

Supervisor Stumbo asked if the survey was taken before new millages were voted in, and the timeframe was from between September to October, a little before the new millages were implemented.

Supervisor Stumbo stated it was important to include things we would like to have funding for in the Master Plan. Supervisor Stumbo listed the priorities for the Master Plan as being maintenance, paths and trails, dog park and splashpad. She

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asked if she was correct in the fact that trails and paths were a priority and Mr. Nordstrom agreed.

Supervisor Stumbo reported 5 new playscapes had been updated in 2018.

Chris Nordstrom stated there was a lot to consider regarding maintenance of trails and used the example of the North Bay Park & Boardwalk, which was a wonderful trail but was in needed work to keep up to safe levels. He stated the Board would need to work actively with the Park Commission regarding maintenance, including making a decision of what materials to use for preventative maintenance.

Supervisor Stumbo asked if preservation of farmland for educational purposes could be included in the plan. Discussion followed regarding a joint effort with the County or a non-profit for the purpose of land conservancy for such an endeavor rather than actually acquiring additional farmland for the purpose of a park.

Trustee Ross-Williams commented the previous Park Commission had prioritized the needs in the last plan and she suggested updating that information to show what had been accomplished, what still needed to be done and use this to plan for the future.

Mr. Nordstrom explained he had used the terms long-term, mid-term and short-term and had tried to incorporate the findings from the previous plan. He stated there were a lot of options available to apply for funding.

Mr. Nordstrom stated the most controversial proposal in the plan was for Sugarbrook Park. He stated several people were concerned about crime in that area and the primary reason was because of the configuration of the park. He discussed some of the suggested remedies, settling on installation of security cameras and lighting. Discussion followed on a plan to divest part of the park and extend Heather Ridge and make that area available for single housing and then move the existing equipment and upgrade the existing basketball court. More discussion followed for a park on the Kettering school property which was currently under the jurisdiction of Ypsilanti Schools, but then the question follows on what to do with Sugarbrook Park, which it was agreed would be a neighborhood

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consideration. Mr. Nordstrom stated his main reason for the residential addition was because of the crime, not necessarily to generate income. Supervisor Stumbo voiced her opposition.

Clerk Lovejoy Roe asked if there was a shortage of ball fields and if that field could be updated for use by the Little League. Mr. Nordstrom stated he wasn't sure if the field was regulation and parking would then be an issue. She suggested adding play structures for different age groups. She said the Township should have neighborhood driven remedies for each of the parks.

Trustee Ross-Williams stated if Heather Ridge was extended into Sugarbook Park, she saw that as having more eyes on the park which would be solution to some of the safety concerns.

Supervisor Stumbo stated a lot of small changes needed to be made to the Administrative Structure. Mr. Nordstrom stated he had already made those changes. Supervisor Stumbo pointed out some changes that needed to be made regarding Budget and Funding.

Clerk Lovejoy Roe asked if it were possible to approve the Resolution with the changes as outlined tonight and allow additional items to be included that are received by the deadline. Mr. Nordstrom said if he had the changes by the Special Board Meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup> he could add them to the Resolution.

Trustee Jarrell Roe commented that she would like to see the parks opened all year long to promote wellness.

Supervisor Stumbo stated she would like to have another meeting. Mr. Nordstrom stated it would be helpful if comments could be sent to him so he could outline the changes by January 29<sup>th</sup>.

Trustee Ross-Williams stated she would be the one to accept the comments and suggested it was important to get this done quickly in order to be able to apply for funding by February 1.

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Trustee Jarrell Roe asked for clarification on the process of sending comments.

Mr. Nordstrom asked for comments to be sent to himself, Megan or Trustee Ross-Williams by Jan. 21. and then approval could be done at the Special Meeting on Jan. 29.

Trustee Eldridge stated if this was a fluid document, that once approved changes could still be made, that instead of making last minute changes we could certainly do that after Feb. 1.

Mr. Nordstrom stated he was willing to make the changes so you don't have to do an addendum later and frankly, he wanted to make sure everyone has read and agreed with the changes.

Megan Masson-Minock stated that it would be best to email any changes to Chris, and if conflicting, he would email the Board and when everything was agreed, the update could be done by Friday, January 18. She stated that this would give everyone a chance to review before the Special Meeting on Jan. 29.

**2. COMPENSATION COMMITTEE REVIEW.....**

**.....TRUSTEE ROSS-WILLIAMS**

Trustee Ross-Williams stated there had been a lot of questions regarding compensation stipends so she researched other communities and MTA (Michigan Township Association) which all agreed the best practice was to have a Compensation Committee. She explained a compensation committee was basically made up of a quorum of residents, appointed by the Board to do due diligence to see if any salaries needed to be increased or if the salaries or stipends are at par. She provided examples of times different communities met. She stated she it was not necessarily a paid position and didn't mean the Board had to adopt their determinations. She stated their meetings could be accessed by FOIA.

Trustee Jarrell Roe asked if some committees could have board members. Trustee Ross-Williams said they could, as long as they weren't the majority. Trustee Jarrell

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Roe then asked what would happen, since they met so infrequently, when someone who was appointed moved. Trustee Ross-Williams said the Board could define their own policy and expand the scope to reviewing salaries across the board.

Clerk Lovejoy Roe said a tool was on MTA website to be able to compare salaries.

Arloa Kaiser asked if this wasn't part of the responsibility of the Board we elected.

Trustee Eldridge thanked Trustee Ross-Williams for her work. He stated however this was duplicating a service the Board already did and since nothing has been improper and this was working, he questioned the need for such a committee.

Trustee Ross-Williams stated these were uncomfortable discussions for the Board and this committee did not have to be paid and their only responsibility was to only recommend, after doing research to confirm or deny if any increases are warranted.

Clerk Lovejoy Roe again stated this data could be accessed after setting the perimeters again according to taxable value or population.

Trustee Wilson said he was okay with the committee or role of past practice, whichever the Board chose.

Arloa Kaiser stated the Board was elected by the people, for the people they should have known when elected there was a lot of time involved and they would have to deal with the good, the bad and the ugly and she felt this Board should be capable to do so.

Supervisor Stumbo stated they had always just gone with the 3% dictated by the Union increase so she felt Trustee Ross-Williams had a good idea to look at the data.

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**3. AGENDA REVIEW.....SUPERVISOR STUMBO**

No Discussion

**4. OTHER DISCUSSION.....BOARD  
MEMBERS**

No Discussion

**The Work Session adjourned 6:53 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Lovejoy Roe, Clerk

Charter Township of Ypsilanti