

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI  
PARK COMMISSION  
APPROVED MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2021 REGULAR MEETING**

*Park Commission Agendas and Minutes are available on the township website at <https://ytown.org/park-commission>*

**I. Call to Order**

Commission Chair Streeter called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. via virtual public Zoom meeting.

**II. Roll Call**

**Commissioners Present:** Tajalli Hodge, Darrell Kirby, Jeff Neel, Brad O’Conner, Star Smith, David Streeter, Brad Hine

**Commissioners Not Present:** None

**Staff Present:** Mike Hoffmeister, Angela Verges, and Robin Castle-Hine

**III. Determination of Quorum**

Quorum present

**IV. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda made by Darrell Kirby

Seconded by Tajalli Hodge

Motion Carried Unanimously

**V. Approval of Minutes – January 4, 2021 Regular Meeting**

Motion to approve January 4, 2021 minutes made by Brad O’Conner

Seconded by Darrell Kirby

Motion Carried Unanimously

**VI. Citizens Participation**

Clerk Heather Roe called in briefly to offer her support and invited all to contact her if she could be of assistance.

**VII. Reports**

**A. Staff Reports**

Mike Hoffmeister gave an update. 1) Spicer group MDNR grant to renovate tennis court; 2) Township approved contract with Carlisle Wortman for study on location of dog park. 3) National Fitness campaign outdoor sports court: After discussion, the Township Board of Trustees decided to push this project to 2022. No location has yet been determined and there are too many projects currently under way to give the project due diligence. 4) Loonfeather Park renovation plans: \$250,000 grant - 50/50 match with Township; 5) Through efforts of Commissioner Hodge, the township applied for Green Gift grant through M- Parks, which will assist with funding, for Sugarbook Park. 6) Community Center flooring project underway. East Hall is done, West will start soon, and finish with Center. Staff can return Feb. 16. Plan is to re-open in March.

Brad O’Conner asked for details, example gender neutral bathrooms. Mike Hoffmeister: overview of renovating and upgrading inside; no change to structures. Making ADA compliant. New pad under main shelter, new sloping/grading are also included in the project.

Angela Verges gave an update: Ann Arbor Summer Festival looking for collaborators on summer events. Mentioned the two focus groups with citizens on programs

Robin Castle-Hine update. Starting to plan for hiring summer help. Details online at Ytown.org. Planning to open parks in summer, renew “Rosie the Riveter” festival.

## **B. Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Hodge shared an update on community task force discussions. 1) grant application to improve neighborhood parks. Working with Sierra Club for advice on such things as pollinators, native plants and wildlife. 2) recreation discussion about E-sports, children’s program, but could improve on recreation for teens.

## **VIII. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Dog Park/Consultant update**

Chris Nordstrom (Carlisle Wortman) is championing this project. Looking at Ann Arbor dog parks for ideas and comparison. Key features to consider: shelter, shade, restrooms, water, fencing, etc. Likely a couple of rounds of public discussion to refine plan. Goal to present a plan in May or June, construction in fall.

Darrell Kirby asked about ease of access? Brad O’Conner asked about residency or permit access requirements? Mike Hoffmeister discussed access options in other communities. Key is safety of pets and people. Liability insurance will play a part. Might consider private sponsorship funding in the future. Also, all current locations being considered have trail access.

## **IX. New Business**

### **A. Willow Run Acres (Apple Ridge) Community Farm**

T C Collins represents Willow Run Acres non-profit. His programs have reached over 60,000 people. Collins wants to put up raised 15x15 plots for individuals to raise their own gardens as well as build “sensory gardens” which incorporate colorful plants, native wildlife, etc.

Darrell Kirby supports this initiative. David Streeter asked about rents: Collins replied that it is a yearly fee, similar to how community gardens are run in neighboring communities. TC Collins Jr (son) has a similar organization in Kalamazoo. David Streeter asked about “scholarships” for those who cannot afford the rent? Collins Jr. said there are options to address this. Tajalli Hodge asked about the application process and if there is a way to limit it to Ypsilanti residents? TC Collins has canvassed residents, most of whom are in favor of a community garden. Residency requirement is a difficult discussion from a public relations perspective, and also from an occupancy perspective. Prefer to engender goodwill and expand as necessary. Community feedback is critical in shaping policies and environment.

Mike Hoffmeister offered that this initiative fits well with existing community programs, marketing, and promotion. Major issue: how to supply garden with water. Probably more cost effective to install a well versus running a YCUA water line. Could establish a farmers’ market once the gardens are installed. Mike also has TC Collins’ contact information.

Motion of support for Willow Run Acres Community Market by Commissioner Kirby  
Seconded by Commissioner Hodge.

Motion Carried Unanimously

**B. Community Focus Group Update**

Continuation of earlier discussion by Commissioner Hodge: Mike Hoffmeister described the process that started a year ago. Vic Chiasson of Eastern Michigan University, an expert in recreational studies and programs, helped to study viability of existing programs and opportunities for new ones. Focus groups were formed of people who use the programs the most. Angie Verges reports that the groups supplied important and actionable results.

Commissioner Smith asked about notes and future focus groups? Mike Hoffmeister has notes and will supply to whoever is interested,

**X. Announcements**

None

**XI. Recommendations to the Township Board**

Motion of support for Willow Run Acres Community Market by Commissioner Kirby

Seconded by Commissioner Hodge.

Motion Carried Unanimously

**XII. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn made by Darrell Kirby

Seconded by Jeff Neel

Motion Carried Unanimously

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Minutes taken and prepared by Jeff Neel, Secretary  
Minutes approved by the Park Commission on March 1, 2021