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## WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

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### WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting  
7525 Highland Road  
White Lake, MI 38383  
**April 26, 2016 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Ms. Deren called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called: Ms. Workman was excused.

ROLL CALL: Merrie Carlock, Chairperson  
Deb Deren, Vice Chair  
Linda Erlich  
Rhonda Grubb – Planning Commission Liaison  
Jean-Philippe Loew  
Andrea Voorheis  
Barbara Workman - Excused

Also Present: Jason Iacoangeli, AICP, Staff Planner  
Lynn Hinton, Recording Secretary

Visitors: 16

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Ms. Deren moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Erlich supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (6 yes votes)

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- a. March 22, 2016 (Draft minutes pending)

No action was taken.

#### **CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Ms. Carlock opened the discussion to the public for comments on items not listed on the agenda, but none was offered.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Historic Fisk Farm Master Plan Final Presentation

Mr. Iacoangeli stated two years ago there was discussion with the Parks & Rec committee, township administration and the Historical Society to put on paper what all the goals and vision would be moving

into the future. The farm gets used more often for community events, i.e., Easter, Halloween, Christmas tree lighting, etc. The idea was to sit down as a group to look at what people hope to see at the farm. The township hired Johnson Hill from Ann Arbor to assist with developing a Master Plan for the farm. We used a steering committee comprised of one planning commission member, one board member, two members from the Historical Society and two members from the Parks & Rec. We also had a design charrette, and from that, Johnson Hill was able to put together 4-5 options. From those options, the steering committee narrowed them down to one final plan, which will be presented this evening.

Chet Hill, Tyler Sprague and Mark Robinson were present from Johnson Hill.

Mr. Hill stated that at the first meeting, they listened to concerns and ideas as far as pulling together a plan for this project. What resulted was a series of graphic alternatives covering a broad range of ideas.

Conceptual Plan 1 formalizes the parking lot and relocation of the Township Hall if it were to come over to the site. They added walkways to connect the major buildings.

Conceptual Plan 2 has a more formal approach. The pathway system works to connect in a formalized pattern. The shelter was relocated, opening the central area. All plans included the possibility of moving the Township Hall to that site.

Conceptual Plan 3 is similar, less the loop drive, and the shelter stays in place. The pathway system is looser, but connects the major components and includes amenities, i.e., a garden area.

Conceptual Plan 4 relocates the shelter and provides more formalized parking and a formalized walkway layout.

He continued that they wanted to incorporate a way to make the old farmhouse more significant. The majority of people entering the site will approach from the rear, and the way the front of the house sits on the site is at the rear of the site. It is important to make it easy for people to see the front of the house when they arrive.

After evaluating the 4 conceptual plans with the committee, they talked about the pros and cons of each plan, and they were able to come up with a final plan.

Mr. Robinson indicated that the amount of permanent parking on the north end is one of the least amounts of parking on the north side. They talked about parking on south side for handicap accessibility. There was a growing consensus that parking on the south is beneficial, but more limited. They also talked about fencing animals, unfencing the Christmas tree, potentially adding fruit trees, and the garden area at the southwest corner of the site. Lastly, they were advised to keep the area open in front, and south of the Thompson school house, for events and vendor tents, etc. Nothing new is being proposed that would intrude into that space. They have kept the site fairly consistent with minimal change.

Mr. Hill added that there are a number of issues and opportunities that are mentioned in the plan. There is some parking on the south side next to the doctor's office, but general visitors to the site will probably not use that parking. They have added 8 accessible spots and it would be convenient to park here for general meetings. They have created a vegetated buffer to screen activities from the house itself, and busses will still be able to utilize a pathway through the park.

The pathways are softer, with limestone. The main entrance to the house is near the garden location, with main area to the north remaining open. All desire lines where people will want to go have been accommodated with pathway connections.

There is a garage building for the fire truck and future Township Hall should it get moved there. They show a fence line, and an area being opened up outside the fence for visibility and accessibility. They created small terraces with a grade change and have formalized parking that has been limited.

An orchard possibility was mentioned and they allowed space for a few rows. They've also enhanced the row of plantings around the edges of the site to serve as a buffer from the Walmart to make it a space in itself. They included a small stage area that could be used in conjunction with events to allow for the use to be separate from the farm itself.

The outhouse and memorial tree will remain, and they have a new building addition to house the farm equipment. Farm animals would still have room for horse rides, etc.

Regarding the shelter, the consensus was for it to stay centrally located. They are making it look nicer and more fitting by constructing larger support to fit the character of the building.

The discussion was opened for public comment.

Barb Allison, of the Historical Society, asked if Mr. Iagoangeli or Ms. Voorheis would recap how this plan works as a concept. The Historical Society may have concerns of what they would and would not like. Mr. Iagoangeli stated the idea behind this plan is for the Township to effectively bring the site in compliance with hosting public events, and to help the Historical Society administer those events. They wanted a plan on file that lays out the goals and objectives from the standpoint that the Parks & Rec would help financially and with community events that would be held there. Improvements include pathways and barrier-free accessible parking.

Of the other things discussed, i.e., different buildings being relocated on the site or a demonstration garden may never happen. If township hall were to ever be moved, they need to have a plan of where to put it. The Township administration wanted a Master Plan in place for the farm, mainly to layout on paper so when projects do come up, there is a plan in place that demonstrates. If grant funding were sought, it goes a long way to see a Master Plan in place with forethought into the money or funds for projects.

Ms. Carlock stated that when you have a public site, it has to be accessible. This is a federal requirement and obligation.

Ann Thompson, 1655 Bogie Lake Road, has concerns with parking in the front. She stated they meet in the school and enter through the rear of the site. Also, she feels the Christmas tree and decorations would be vandalized if the tree is not fenced in. Lastly, she feels putting a row of trees in the rear of the site will prohibit people from seeing the farm. She would like more visibility.

Marilyn Baroni, 2521 Bogie Lake, indicated the entrance off Fisk Road is very narrow and should be widened.

Marge Sawruk, commented that the tree line and orchard is nice, however, it would be a huge mistake for visibility and upkeep, the orchard would attract many bees too.

Barbara Fitzpatrick, 1178 Castlewood, feels there is too much vegetation. It would be overwhelming in 20 years and maintenance would be a problem. They currently are constantly picking up pears before a festival. There is potential for more traffic accidents with this much vegetation, visibility will be limited. There is also a parking issue whenever they have an event at the farm. This is a grave injustice to people coming to enjoy the farm and there's no parking. Ms. Carlock stated they are in discussion with Walmar to have a shared parking agreement.

Mary Voorheis, 6700 Brendel, questioned whether the area by the front parking is fenced, and also asked about the flagpole and memorial garden. Mr. Hill stated that the plan leaves the area open. The flagpole and memorial garden with the rose bushes have also been kept. There will be a gate at the farmhouse location for entrance.

James Thompson, 1655 Bogie Lake Road, feels the 8 added parking spaces are useless and the entrance gate is one more thing to lock up. He likes the drive going through the site, but feels the parking area is too small. Parking at Walmart would work, but there still needs to be an entrance and entrance parking should line up with one of the aisles. He'd like to keep the line straight, and move the retaining walls. Ms. Carlock noted the plan was to have picnic tables in that area, but Mr. Thompson noted that that area is for vendors.

Liz Smith, 71 Blackberry, serves on the committee and is involved with the Christmas tree lighting event. She urged not to take away parking because these events are important to the community. Ms. Carlock stated parking is still there, but not all of it is paved. She also agrees that vegetation could be cut back. Mr. Hill stated that the parking is not far from what is there now.

Sharon Bigelow, Jackson Blvd., stated she has been involved with the farm for 30 years. Her goal is what they have now, and it has taken a long time to get to this point. Things have been done for a specific reason and she doesn't see the need to change anything. Ms. Carlock indicated that they are looking at it with fresh eyes, and she doesn't see much change other than adding walks to enhance circulation.

Mr. Loew indicated that nothing is being moved. They are only improving the shelter visually with color and architectural style. He is opposed to changing the carriage house because it is an original building.

Ms. Allison stated the lines of fruit trees are conceptual and if they never want to put them in, they won't. If they want to put in handicap parking, they will put where it flows. She asked that if they want to put in the fire truck garage and it doesn't work in the proposed location, could they move it to where it works. If it comes time to do something on the site and if it doesn't work for the Historical Society, can they change it? Ms. Carlock stated the goal was to have a plan in place, they would have to revisit any changes.

Mr. Hill responded that to relocate a building in a different location mixes the use up. It's more historically accurate to place them where they are placed. Ms. Allison again asked for clarification as to if it's on the plan and it doesn't work there, whether it can be changed.

Mr. Hill stated that they trust when the time comes, it works out the best way. Mr. Robinson added that all opinions are welcome. Ms. Allison asked if this plan was set in stone. Mr. Iacoangeli stated that these are living documents that change over time. To say that this plan is "it" is not true, however, the township is trying to get some inherent things put down in writing so when the time comes, it has a plan to work from. The idea is that this Master Plan may hang in a position at the farm so people can see what's coming and he would hope that there is a balance and some of these things come to fruition.

Ms. Allison wanted to know the process. If they are ready to put pathways, do they have to put this before the Township Board? Mr. Iacoangeli stated that if township funds are being used, the Parks & Rec committee would recommend the expenditure to the Township Board. There has to be a plan in place, and this plan can bridge the relationship with the Parks & Rec, Historical Society, and township in general. Over the years the Historical Society has operated on its own and has kept it running in the condition it is today. This plan can be the bridge over the gap to bring the two groups together to allow the township in good faith to put some funding into the park. This is a historical park, but park meaning Parks & Rec. Maybe painting the shelter and doing some of the smaller projects can be done now. The Historical Society can start collecting bids, which will be recommended to the Board. The Parks & Rec wants to help the Historical Society do some smaller projects.

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked that if a Master Plan is intact, and we go for a grant and the State sees they didn't do an orchard, how would this affect? Mr. Iacoangeli responded that this is a guiding blueprint. Ms. Carlock added that the grant application may propose a shelter and pathway only. The State likes to see a full plan, just labeled with what you're planning on doing.

Mr. Robinson stated it does help to hear what they don't like and what they might like. Ms. Carlock asked the Historical Society to put their concerns in a written document and email them to Mr. Iacoangeli. Ms. Allison stated they will send their concerns in writing.

Ms. Voorheis noted that the rear drive and front entrance seem to be the most in dispute. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated she is very concerned with any vegetation along Fisk Road for visibility purposes. Kids come from 4 different directions, walking and driving. Ms. Carlock noted that possible shade trees could be spaced along and there are standards for visibility.

Mr. Thompson asked if this plan will be modified. Mr. Robinson stated they will take into account input this evening.

#### Committee Comments:

Mr. Loew responded on the concern of not having the Christmas tree fenced in. He feels there are lots of Christmas trees and decorations, but no one is concerned with people damaging trees in front of their private houses. He doesn't think vandalism will be an issue. Also, he likes the shelter being painted, but wants to see the carriage house left alone in its natural state. The shelter could be painted to match the carriage house. He'd like to see passage ways, but not holes between bushes, with some nice signage. He likes the Orchard trees, but what they are proposing might be too much.

Ms. Voorheis loves the pavilion area, and she loves vegetation, but feels there is too much being proposed.

Ms. Erlich stated that once input comes in, the township will have a plan. She said the Historical Society has done an amazing job for 30 years, but if you don't do anything to it, 30 years from now it will just be old. Improvements are to keep it fresh, not to make it modern. You can't reach the goal and stop, you have to go on to the next goal.

Ms. Grubb feels there is too much vegetation being proposed. With regard to the front parking, they can choose not to use it. She likes the different façade on the shelter.

Ms. Carlock noted to the group that this is hard, but she is encouraged with what they've already done and making it legal and more public-friendly.

Ms. Bigelow asked who would maintain this. Ms. Carlock stated she would consider this to be a park, and the Township maintenance department will be maintaining it as it does the other parks.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### a. Hawley Park Play Structure Repair / Replacement

Mr. Iacoangeli indicated that John from the Maintenance Department noticed that the playscape is in need of new safety surface, which hasn't been done in 7 years. It is decomposing into the soil, and isn't meeting the safety standards. John also took photos of the playscape itself to show that it is missing hardware and areas are becoming disconnected, in addition to the safety surface deteriorating and the metal platforms are being exposed. The question is whether to overhaul it by buying replacement parts or to outright replace it.

Mr. Loew asked if the paint could be stripped and refinished. Mr. Iacoangeli didn't know if this could be done. The structure was purchased in the late 90's/early 2000's. There are safety issues. He noted that the Dublin center structure is in good condition, but it doesn't get played on as much. Ms. Carlock feels this is a nice application for a grant. The award could be \$100-200k. Mr. Iacoangeli asked whether we should have it removed in total for the summer until we can go for grant application. Ms. Carlock said it

would depend on the level of hazard. There are some pinch hazards and rusty steps, Ms. Carlock said it could be tore down and then go for a major grant in the spring.

Ms. Voorheis doesn't want to lose the structure for the summer however some of the things have to be repaired now. She'd like to get John's opinion on whether we can go another year on this. If we don't get the grant, we will have to replace it with a smaller structure. Mr. Loew thinks it can be refurbished or retreated. Ms. Carlock said it's not typically cost effective to go this route, and since laws change, we may have to bring the structure up to new standards. Mr. Iacoangeli will ask John to email him the cost to replace the worst parts.

b. Bloomer Park Pathway Repairs / Parking Repair

Mr. Iacoangeli reported that the township has started some of the maintenance on the park. New gravel was brought in and regraded, the pathways have all been blown off to maintain accessibility, and drains were installed in areas that were pooling water from rain. Total cost was \$900.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

a. Staff Report

Mr. Iacoangeli indicated that the Supervisor wanted him to call to their attention 2 properties to put in the 5-year plan. (1) A 9-acre parcel at Union Lake and Elizabeth Lake Roads. Mr. Baroni mentioned it would make a nice passive park with a potential boardwalk to lead to the river. This could be an ideal location to portage canoes or kayaks. This property is owned by township. (2) Property at Allen Lake Road near Fox Bay there is a wellhouse on 2 parcels owned by the township, located within a neighborhood. This could be an opportunity for a "pocket park". The neighborhood has asked that some trees be cleared out. Ms. Carlock directed Mr. Iacoangeli to relay to the supervisor that the Parks & Rec is interested.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

a. Commissioner Comments

Ms. Erlich reiterated that the Historical Society is doing an amazing job and they are very passionate. She still feels it is them against us and it shouldn't be this way. Ms. Voorheis added that there is still some hard feelings.

b. Next Meeting Date: May 24, 2016 (possible cancellation)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Ms. Erlich moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. Ms. Grubb supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote. (6 yes votes)**