

**Charter Township of Van Buren**  
Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes  
**April 13, 2010**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Chairperson Askew. Members Present: Ken Askew, Speed Gant, Joy Ann Ferris, Charles Coleman, Ralph Nodwell, Darris Meredith, Director Ross, Deputy Director Wright, Parks Manager Burns, and Secretary Harman.

**Absent:** Leon Wright

**Excused:** Mark Duff

**Members of the Audience:** Joyce Gant and Ed Seyfried.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Gant moved, Coleman seconded to approve the agenda with the amendments to add Summer Concert Series under New Business, recognition resolution for Loretta Speaks and recognition resolution for Christina Harman under New Business. Motion Carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Gant moved, Ferris seconded to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Motion Carried.

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Director Ross welcomed Ralph Nodwell to the committee, it is an honor and pleasure to have him serve on this committee. Ross also reintroduced Student Representative, Darris Meredith, very happy to have him on the committee as a voice to the students. All committee members participated in a round table reintroduction for the newer members.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Election of Officers:** Nominations taken for officers of the Recreation Committee. Motion by Nodwell for Gant to be Chairperson, unanimous ballot. Motion carried. Motion by Ferris for Coleman to be Co-Chairperson, unanimous ballot. Motion Carried.

**2. Summer Concert Series:** Parks Manager Burns presented a handout to committee members of the 9 concert lineup for the summer concert series. The handout also displayed a breakdown of finances for the event. Sponsors are helping to pay for the concert series and the department is currently under budget for this event. Askew feels the need for instrumental music in the series and will continue to keep asking for classical music venues to be added. Some of the bands in this listing do play a little more classical sounds. Costs for an orchestra are much more.

*Nodwell moved, Gant seconded to approve the schedule as submitted for the Van Buren Summer Concert Series in the park. Yeas: Gant, Ferris, Coleman, Nodwell. Nays: Askew. Motion Carried.*

**3. Recognition Resolution for Loretta Speaks:** Gant moved, Nodwell seconded to create a resolution recognizing Loretta Speaks for her 20 years of service to the Recreation Committee. Motion Carried.

**4. Recognition Resolution for Christina Harman:** Gant moved, Nodwell seconded to create a resolution recognizing Christina Harman for the past publication of the Lake Ledger. Motion Carried.

Gant would also like to recognize Drew Burns as the winner of a scholarship from the MRPA Foundation to attend the MRPA Annual Conference and Trade Show.

#### **GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

**1. Parks and Recreation 2010 Vision Presentation:** Director Ross presented the 2010 Vision for the Parks and Recreation Department to the committee members in a PowerPoint presentation. He thanks his staff for all their help in developing this vision. This year's main going is health and wellness for the community. The vision explains the department's past accomplishments, goals and plans for 2010. The department is up for an Environmental Stewardship Award for Riggs Heritage Park, Director Ross would like to thank Wade Trim and McKenna and Associates for all their help with this endeavor. The vision helps with planning gives the department direction.

**2. DTE Energy Foundation Grant:** Director Ross has been working on a grant with the DTE Energy Foundation and received \$3,000.00 for tree planting to go along with the Project Come Together: Youth and Tree Learning in the Urban Setting and Beyond program. Director Ross commends Deputy Director Wright for all her work in getting this going for the youngsters in the summer camp program. The youngsters will visit parks to observe trees, with the \$3,000.00 grant trees will be planted that the youngsters have learned about and observed in this program. The trees will be possibly going to be planted in Van Buren Park, locations are to be determined. Director Ross commends his staff for all their hard work with this. Thank you to the DTE Energy Foundation as well, he will be in contact with them in regards to future grant projects.

**3. Wal-Mart Foundation Grant:** Director Ross was very pleased to announce that \$1,000.00 was received from the Wal-Mart Foundation for the Get Up and Get Active program held last week. This is a spring break camp that is held Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and had 24 children ages 9-15. The children went to various places and participated in activities including roller skating, bowling, rock wall climbing. The program received a grant through MRPA first year running and has been an active, healthy program for 9 years now.

**4. Van Buren Civic Fund Grant:** Director Ross has been working with the Van Buren Civic Fund to put an ADA swing set at Quirk Park. The swing set would have two ADA seats and two regular seats. The Civic Fund has donated \$2,000.00 towards this project. Ross hopes to have the swing set installed by August, wants every child to be able to go out and have fun.

**5. Summer Youth Employment Program 2010:** Director Ross had a meeting in Lansing yesterday and the funding is looking favorable for 2010. Last year the department had 4-5 SYEP employees between the ages of 16-19 and they were very helpful. The program helps kids prepare for their future. The Federal government pays for the program. Last year a resume writing, interviewing and cover letter component was implemented for these kids.

**6. CDBG Funding for FY2010:** Thanks to staff, Director Ross is pleased to announce \$20,000 for youth services will be available through CDBG funds. He is working on a program for childhood obesity prevention with the Wayne County Community College District. \$6,750 will also be available in CDBG funds for the Master Plan update.

**7. Park Updates:** Parks Manager Burns announced that the interpretive sign is now up at Riggs Heritage Park with the help of Christina Harman on design. He has already received comments from residents that they now understand why the features of the park are the natural setting that they are. A Community Garden is being implemented at Van Buren Park next to the sled hill. The plots will be \$25 each and include an annual pass for Van Buren Park. Residents will be able to plant flowers and/or vegetable gardens. This is a great way to get families out and active. The garden cost \$2,300.00 to build, but with community donations from groups such as the Boy Scouts and the Belleville Rotary Club the actual expense to the department to build the garden is only \$200.00 and the garden will be build this coming weekend. On Saturday, May 1 at Riggs Heritage Park the BBC Striders are putting on an event called Bark for Life. Kayaking is also coming to Van Buren Park this summer at no cost to Van Buren. Camp 911 would like to hold its camp on July 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Ed Seyfried, a guest in the audience, is interested in putting in a disc golf course at Van Buren Park. Parks Manager Burns and Mr. Seyfried are looking into the cost and are hoping to get something going within the next year. Several parks in surrounding communities already have some of these courses in place and some even hold tournaments. Tim Schneider is working on the bird boxes at Riggs Heritage Park and is also working with the Boy Scouts. He did find some Buckhorn trees at Riggs Park and is looking to get some more to transplant. Barrels donated by Coca Cola for the Haunted Forest will be used as water barrels for the Community Garden, they will be screened and a spicket will be added for patrons to utilize them to water their garden areas. Director Ross presented to the committee members the Site Design Award for Riggs Heritage Park that he and Parks Manager Burns received in Lansing from the state; they are very pleased with this award.

**8. Recreation Updates:** In February, Daddy/Daughter Dance was held and despite the economy all three dances sold out having 80 couples both nights and 50 couples for the matinee dance. Walgreens came out for free and took photos of the event for the participants and they have taken photos for other events as well. In March, Breakfast with the Bunny had 70 participants. The attendance was less than the norm. If we are unable to do the drop again next year then Deputy Director Wright will add more to the breakfast. Camp registration began March 1. First session of Day Camp is already full and all other camps are filling up fast. Due to budget cuts the number of children per camp was cut by 10 and the number of counselors was cut as well to stay within the budget. She is currently in the process of hiring counselors; most are returning staff from last year. All counselors go through two different types of background checks. In April, the Get Up and Get Active program took place last week. In May, Mother/Daughter Tea Party with Miss Spider theme will be held. The event is already sold out and 60 participants will be attending. May 14<sup>th</sup> is the Mother/Son Bowl and spaces are still available. In June, CDBG money will be funding the Takin it to the Streets program this year and will have a Taylor Swift tribute singer, hot dog cater, inflatables, a tattoo artist and more. The event will be held on June 25<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. Deputy Director Wright handed out the new Spring/Summer Recreation Program to the committee members and pointed out several new classes/programs. Two new social behavior classes to work on self esteem: Flower Power and Social Behavior: A Way of Life. Safety Town is coming up in July.

Teacher, Chris Paris, from Summit Academy has been teaching the Basketball Skills Camp and a third session was just added. His wife Robin is heading up Safety Town along with the help from police and fire. She is also teaching the Math Blasters Camp this summer in August. There are many new programs to see. New this year, the Multi-Purpose Room and Gymnasium are available to be rented on Saturday's and Sunday's. The gym has limited time available due to all of the classes and programs that are held in there, but is able to be rented by the hour for two hours on Saturday and two hours on Sunday. The Multi-Purpose Room is available for half day rentals for either half day rentals or full day rentals. The Multi-Purpose room has been rented three times already. There is an upcoming May birthday party in which the renter reserved both the Multi-Purpose Room and the Gymnasium. If a group calls ahead or schedules early a staff member can be utilized to help organize activities for children. Deputy Director Wright handed out photos from Movie and a Makeover that was put on by Robin Paris. Twenty Five girls attended this event and it was very well received.

Director Ross would like to give special thanks to Joy Ferris for making a direct contact with the Detroit Red Wings to Kevin Lau, if weren't for Joy we wouldn't be receiving \$5 a ticket from the Red Wing Ticket program.

Thank you Speed for coming to the board meeting with the idea of a parks and recreation foundation. Gant is currently in the position of applying for the 501 (c) (3). The Board of Trustees are excited for this.

Gant would like to thank Ken Askew for serving as Chairperson to the Recreation Committee for the past two years.

Darris Meredith is excited to be on the committee. He thinks it is great to have kids getting out and getting active it helps to keep them out of trouble. The committee will be asking Darris what he would like to see and possibly implement some programs. He will be a voice to the students.

ADJOURNMENT: Nodwell moved, Ferris seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 p.m. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christina Harman  
Recording Secretary