

Mission Township Parks Committee Meeting August 12, 2020

The meeting was held at Mission Township Park at 3:00 pm.

Present: Committee members present were Jim Peterson, Michael Blassey, Chuck Anderson, Dave Baker, John Buttweiler. No other residents attended the meeting.

Introductions and administration: As this was the first meeting of the Committee the members made brief introductions of themselves and their history in the community. The Parks Committee Charter adopted and approved by the Township Board of Supervisors at the July township meeting was reviewed and discussed. The Committee members agreed to recommend changes to the Charter on an ongoing basis if any are identified. J. Buttweiler agreed to serve as Vice-Chair and conduct meetings in the absence of the Chair. There was discussion of recruiting additional members to the Committee, especially an individual with strong ties to use of the tennis courts. There was also discussion of the boundaries/scope of the Park. With all the adjacent land owned by the Township around the central area of Park the Board may need to clarify the area in scope for the Committee. Monthly meetings during spring summer, and fall months will be held, and other meetings as necessary, at dates/times to be determined.

History of the Park: M. Blassey and C. Anderson provided an overview of the Park including significant maintenance and projects over the past several years, general use of the Park, past and current programs or leagues, and general discussion of the Park in prior Comprehensive Plans of the Township. C. Anderson stated no fees are charged to residents for reserving the pavilion. There was discussion whether nominal fees should be charged to cover time and expenses related to setup and cleaning.

Annual operating needs and budget: M. Blassey and C. Anderson indicated current annual expenditures for ongoing maintenance are generally between \$15,000 and \$18,000. That does not include expenditures for more significant items such as tennis court resurfacing which is done every several years depending on condition. There is no separate fund for the Park. Expenditures are made from the general fund of the Township. The Committee had discussion on whether an annual budget and fund should be established for the Park and will re-address this at future meetings.

Maintenance: M. Blassey and C. Anderson shared information on several park assets that need or will need work within the next few years. They include a new roof on the pavilion, posts and cable around the parking lot, tennis court resurfacing, basketball court resurfacing, parking lot repairs, painting of some buildings, gates between parking lot and park and also on County Road 109, tree and brush trimming along the trails, and misc. other. M. Blassey will request an estimate from Dale Van Horn to get the brush and branches along the trails trimmed. C. Anderson will refresh a bid from Oberg Fence Co. on new gates.

Current use of current park equipment, pavilion, courts, fields, trails, etc.: All members have observed increase use of the park this year likely due to seasonal residents spending more time in the area due to the Covid pandemic. The tennis courts are used by a M-W-F league and get other play. The baseball field doesn't get a lot of use but all agreed it is an asset that should be kept and maintained and if demand increases additional maintenance could be done to make it nicer. Soccer has been played on the baseball field in the past but current

demand doesn't seem high. The trails are used extensively every day by walkers and bikers and regularly in the winter by skiers. Pickleball is played regularly by various informal groups on the basketball court where temporary nets have been established. The basketball court is used occasionally. The pavilion is generally booked most weekends during the summer months but use is down this summer due to Covid.

Future projects: Pickleball courts – there has been discussion at Board meetings and within the community regarding permanent pickleball courts at the Park. The Committee reviewed the proposals that were presented to the Board in August 2019. M. Blassey agreed to contact the City of Crosslake to obtain detailed information on the construction of their new six pickleball courts and basketball court that were completed this spring. The Committee is interested in how the courts were financed (City funds, grants, donations, etc.), contractors used and others considered in the bid process, a summary of costs, and any other relevant information. J. Buttweiler indicated The Bernick Foundation issues grants related to recreational projects in various locations where Bernicks does business including the Brainerd area. The deadline to complete an application for a grant this year is August 31, 2020. J. Peterson will also do research on potential grants offered by the Minnesota DNR or other government organizations.

Other – there has been discussion by prior Park groups of other potential items to add at the park such as shuffleboard and archery. At this time, there doesn't seem to be significant interest in adding additional games/activities but the Committee and basketball courts will listen and discuss such items as they arise.

Volunteer opportunities: C. Anderson and M. Blassey indicated volunteers have been used in the past for general cleanup, painting, and other. Spring tree/grounds maintenance has been done by Jim Van Horn in recent years. Committee agreed to consider and promote volunteer opportunities in the future as needs arise.