

# ONEKAMA VILLAGE AND TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 19, 2016

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At 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 19, 2016, Chairperson Jon Phillips opened the Onekama Village and Township Community Parks and Recreation Committee regular monthly meeting in the Onekama Township Hall. Agendas had been distributed. Other Committee members present were Vice Chairperson Mary Lou Millard, Paul Mueller, Secretary-Treasurer Tom Gerhardt, Leann Burger, Roger Burger, Kevin Hughes, Sally Koon, and Mary Reed. Al Taylor of the Explore the Shores Subcommittee was also present. Cecelia Huebner was at the meeting to talk about cleaning up Onekama's sidewalks. Township Clerk Helen Mathieu, Village Councilman Rudi Milasich, Bonnie Miller, and Township Supervisor David Meister also were in attendance.

***Approval of the Minutes of April 21, 2016***—Roger Burger commented in reference to the report on the North Point Park proposed irrigation system in the April 21, 2016, minutes under “Tree Subcommittee” that is continued at the top of page 4. This comment was in reference to “Gerhardt encouraged the installation of a system with hydrants to which could be connected the irrigation hoses and that would have water available for other uses out in the Park.”

Burger thought that the Committee had decided not to install a drinking fountain or hydrants in the Park. Gerhardt said that this comment was made in reference to using the materials required to install a more permanent system than just laying it on top of the ground, and was his opinion. Millard moved that the minutes of the April 21, 2016, meeting be approved. Taylor seconded the motion; the motion carried.

***Cleaning Onekama's Sidewalks with Volunteer Help***—Huebner, who had been at the April 21 meeting about **cleaning Onekama's sidewalks with volunteer help**, reported that a majority of the members of the Village Council were in favor of cleaning the sidewalks using volunteers. Milasich also said that it was the consensus of the Village Council to go for a plan to do this work with volunteer help. Legally, the Village is responsible for the sidewalks; they own the right-of-way.

Huebner also had a letter from the Michigan Department of Transportation, dated April 22, 2016, stating that although MDOT allows construction of sidewalks in the State right-of-way, it does not own those facilities. “The local agency/government, such as the Village, is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of those sidewalks. Also, MDOT does not object to the local government or volunteers cleaning and maintaining those sidewalks”

Miller, who had attended a seminar in Traverse City, said that she had learned there that the Village is responsible for the sidewalks, unless there is an agreement through an ordinance that the property owner is responsible. However, there is the feeling that the property owner should be notified that the cleaning is to be done.

**Huebner mentioned that some property owners had hired a man to do this work at \$25 an hour. This is a solution where volunteers are not available. Also, there is a possibility of soliciting donations for the work. Huebner asked if the contributions could be sent to the Village Council? Council members present thought that there should be a contact person to collect the donations. Huebner agreed to do this; her telephone is (231) 889-3691.** She also said that Main Street currently is the only part of this project.

Hughes said that there is a possibility of **grant funding**. The Onekama School at one time received funding through Safe Routes to School. Phillips said that Huebner should let the Committee know if she organizes **a work session for cleaning the walks**; maybe some of the members could help.

**Tree Subcommittee**—Phillips said that **Arbor Day was celebrated in the Onekama Village Park on Saturday, May 7, 2016, 10 a.m.** Josh Shields, forester of the Manistee Soil & Water Conservation District, was the speaker at this event. Don Oswell of the Tree Subcommittee and Phillips led the planting of trees in containers along Main Street in the Village Park. The event went well. Kathy Ervin did posters for the event, which also included a placard display by the Portage Lake Watershed Forever. Reed, with the assistance of Pat Lawrence, organized the placard display.

Phillips and Mueller, who is chairperson of the Subcommittee, agreed that the ordering of the trees must be done earlier for next year's event, possibly in late summer. Milasich suggested planting trees at the Manistee County Fairgrounds. He encouraged asking the Fair Board if trees could be planted along the fence line.

**Secretary-Treasurer's Report**—Secretary-Treasurer Gerhardt said that **there had been no further reports of expenditures for the Onekama Township General Fund Budget for April 1, 2016, through March 31, 2017.**

**Park Watchers**—For **Glen Park**, Phillips said that the **tree Leann Burger had reported down at the March 17, 2016, meeting was removed from the trail** that was beyond the park boundaries. Phillips said that he found this out when he called Jason Sievert, Park caretaker, about the tree. Sievert does not know who cut it.

Millard had handed Phillips a copy of a phone message that she had received from **Steve Symanski. He reported a dead ash tree in the Park hanging over his property.** It could possibly fall on his house, he said, and believed it to be a tree that was missed while the tree removal was done in December. His telephone number is (231) 655-9137; he called on May 4, 2016. Members of the Tree Subcommittee will look at the situation and then will call him.

**Feldhak Park Landscaping Plan**—Phillips reported that Ken Franklin had talked to Bob Baker, the late Harry Feldhak's son-in-law, about **the tentative landscaping plan for Feldhak Park**, which would include a garden in the shape of Portage Lake, with annuals and native plants being used. Because of the deed restriction on Feldhak Park, permission to do this would have to come from members of the Feldhak family. Baker did not wish to discuss it. **Mathieu suggested that Franklin contact Baker's daughter, Nancy, and her brothers.**

**Manistee County-Wide Park and Recreation Plan**—Phillips said that **the Manistee County-Wide Park and Recreation Plan had been approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources**; this was reported in the May 16, 2016, Manistee News Advocate. Phillips said that Tamara Buswinka from the Alliance for Economic Success had contacted him; she indicated that there was a desire to organize trails to connect recreational sites in the County. A group might meet to make plans for trails.

**Explore the Shores Projects**—Taylor reported that **work should start next week on the Langland Park project, although there is still a debate over the striping for parking.** There will be access to the beach during construction from the north or the south. The north access to Lake Michigan will be closed off first while construction in June is done at this access and for the rest room, which will also cause the closing of the north part of the parking lot. There will be no construction in July and August. The south access will be closed in September and will not be used again. Construction then will center around the gazebo complex. Taylor said that there will be maintenance of the new restroom that must be done with Township funds.

The **groundbreaking ceremony for the Langland Park project** was held on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, at 11 a.m. Tim Ervin was master of ceremonies. Phil Joseph, past Explore the Shores Subcommittee chairperson; Mary Reed, Portage Lake Watershed Forever chairperson; Diane Bess, Portage Lake Association president; and David Meister, Township Supervisor, broke the sand at this event!

The project received a \$261,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund in 2014. Onkama Township made a match of \$87,000 for the project. The Portage Lake Watershed Forever and the Portage Lake Association each donated \$5,000 for the project. Tim Knutsen of Beckett & Raeder, designers and engineers for the project, and Jerry Fleis of Fleis & Vandenbrink, contractor for the project, were also present and made presentations.

Taylor said that **negotiations still are proceeding regarding the lease of the M-DNR Launch Site.** The negotiations might be completed this summer. The lease might be a thirty-year lease at one dollar a year. Sometime in late June, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund will let the Township know what can be done to improve its score on the grant application for the kayak launch that would be placed at the Launch Site. December, 2016, is when the announcement is to be made of grant applications that are approved.

Mueller asked if the Township's desire to lease is because of locating the kayak launch there, if funding is received for that project. Taylor said that one of the requirements for the grant application being made to the MNRTF for the kayak launch is that a site has been confirmed on which the kayak launch is to be located. The negotiations have to be completed before the grant is awarded. Meister said that the Township Board has indicated interest in leasing the site even if Onekama Township is not awarded the grant.

Taylor further reported on several **miscellaneous items**. Taylor mentioned that the longboarding event was held, but there were issues with how some of the campsites were left after use. These issues will have to be resolved before the event is organized next year. Papa J's in Onekama will have kayaks and stand-up paddleboards for rent. The Beachnut Surf Shop at Frankfort will also have some activities at the Onekama Village Park. The Portage Point Inn will have some waterfront activities.

**Onekama Consolidated Schools**—Hughes reported that **graduation for the Onekama School will be this Sunday, May 22, 2016**. Around forty-four students will be graduating. **Girls and boys district softball games** will be held at the School. A **project to repair goal posts** is underway; donations have been made. **Soccer and T ball games are underway** on the School grounds near Main Street. Parking for these games has been donated by the Acker Mall. **The golf team helped with preparing the Portage Petunia Parade beds for planting, which is to be done May 25**. Taylor commented that student volunteers are also helping with other projects.

**Koon said that she is running again for the School Board of the Onekama Consolidated Schools. She is currently Board president. Three more candidates are also needed to replace those who are not running again. July 26, 2016, is the last day to file.**

**Onekama Days Activities**—**Onekama Days is August 5-7, 2016**. The Committee discussed some of its activities for the event.

Koon had a flyer for **"Sharks in the Park."** Participants are to answer questions by visiting Village and Township Parks that are located by using coordinates with Smart Phones or GPS. Leann Burger listed the coordinates and devised the questions. Prizes will be awarded by bringing the answers to the questions to the North Point Park parking lot, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Saturday, August 6, 2016. The flyer has been handed to all elementary students at the Onekama School. It will also be distributed at other Onekama locations. Koon invited the Committee members to try the directions and answer the questions.

Jim Mrozinski will again organize the **refreshments for Parks Appreciation Day** to also be held at the North Point Park parking lot, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Saturday, August 6, 2016. **Wiffleball, pickleball, and tennis tournaments** will be organized during Onekama Days, too.

**M-DNR Launch Site**—**At the April 21, 2016, meeting, it was suggested that the agenda for the May 19, 2016, meeting include discussion of naming and dedicating the**

**M-DNR Launch Site as a Township park, once the lease is completed between the Township and the M-DNR.** Gerhardt said that he had received an email from Jim Mrozinski, who was at the last meeting, stating that “I believe (if the DNR site progresses) that calling it ‘Lighthouse Park’ would be a great name and a tourist draw for our area.”

Taylor said that a name would require State approval as well as Township approval. The lease is still being negotiated, so the Committee should wait to rename the M-DNR Launch Site until after the Township actually leases it. There was no further discussion on this matter.

**Summer Park Tours—Phillips said that Mary Fairgrieve wanted to have parks tours this summer. This was discussed at the March 17, 2016, Parks meeting. It was the consensus of the Committee at that time that it find out exactly what she wants done and who would do it.** The Parks Committee said that it has the information on the parks, which would be available to Fairgrieve.

Fairgrieve has worked on welcoming people to Onekama for the Portage Lake Association. She has also organized Farr Friends, which meets in Farr Center on Thursday afternoons for activities and programs. **Taylor said to let Fairgrieve know that the information is available but to let her organize the parks tours.**

**Village of Onekama—**Roger Burger reported that **the Village parks are open and being used.** The restrooms are open in the Onekama Village Park. **A running relay is being organized from Muskegon to Traverse City, September 30-October 1, 2016.** The Village Council approved this for Onekama. Over 2,300 people have been invited. Small groups will be doing the running in relays day and night, twenty-four hours. They will arrive in Onekama after midnight on October 1. There should be a rest station for them at the Fairgrounds.

Milasich reported that **MDOT will establish a handicap access crossing at Main Street (M-22) and Portage Street.**

**Portage Lake Watershed Forever—**Reed said that funding for the **Portage Lake Watershed Forever Rain Garden at Farr Center** includes \$1,000 from the Manistee County Community Foundation, which “kicked off” the fundraising. Also, \$1,000 has been donated by the Portage Lake Garden Club. Rob Carson, Manistee County planner, and an advocate of rain gardens, is involved in this Rain Garden. It will be planted on Saturday, May 28, 10 a.m.-12 noon, using native plants.

Rain gardens reduce pollution in lakes and streams; help recharge groundwater; and create native habitat that attracts butterflies, birds, and other wildlife. Brian Zimmerman of Four Season Nursery at Traverse City designed the garden. There will also be an educational session, “Learn To Build a Rain Garden.” Reed urged people to come and show support for this project; they also can do some planting.

Other comments related to plants and trees: Milasich asked if Committee members knew that the Village Zoning Ordinance requires permitted projects to include a 10-foot strip of native plants (not grass) along Portage Lake? Taylor stated that his wife, Ann, had a reaction to the oil of garlic mustard weed, when allowing it to touch her skin. Meister reported that some of the tree trimmers are not treating cuts made on oaks to prevent the spread of oak wilt disease.

**Portage Lake Association**—According to Taylor, there is a match of up to \$2,500 offered for donations to the fireworks. Milasich said that the Lions might give more support if a site for the launching of the fireworks other than the Village Park shore is chosen.

Taylor went on to say that the parks interactive site on [Onekama.info](http://Onekama.info) is operating. Work is also being done on advertising for the Manistee County Fair Board and the Fairgrounds.

**Next Meeting and Adjournment**—The Parks and Recreation Committee meeting for May 19, 2016, adjourned at 9:31 a.m. The next regular meeting is on Thursday, June 16, 2016, at 8:00 a.m. in the Onekama Township Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", written over a horizontal line.

Tom H. Gerhardt, Secretary-Treasurer