

**WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**
Virtual Special Meeting
7525 Highland Road, White Lake, MI 48383
January 27, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Carlock called the special meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called.

ROLL CALL: Andrea Voorheis – Township Board Liaison, White Lake Township
 Kathleen Aseltyne, White Lake Township
 Merrie Carlock, Chairperson, White Lake Township
 Deb Deren, Vice Chair, White Lake Township
 CJ Bratta, White Lake Township
 Rhonda Grubb – Planning Commission Liaison, White Lake Township

Absent: None

Also Present: Justin Quagliata, Staff Planner
 Sherri Barber, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Brian Barrick – Beckett & Raeder
 Mike Powell, White Lake Township Trustee
 Liz Smith, White Lake Township Trustee

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Aseltyne moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Bratta supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote, 6 yes votes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Grubb moved to approve the minutes of January 13, 2021 as presented. Ms. Deren supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a voice vote, 6 yes votes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Carlock noted this would go before the Township Board for a public hearing for the grant application to the State.

No one raised their hand from the public virtually to make public comment.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Beckett & Raeder Presentation

Ms. Carlock noted the master plan was conceptual and could change over time. The Committee needed to concentrate on what could be built now with what we could afford, we needed to decide the bare minimum to get the park open.

Mr. Quagliata said Beckett and Raeder had been working hard over the last two weeks. The grant application was due April 1st. There needed to be some type of action tonight.

Mr. Barrick presented a revised Stanley Park concept. The drive was re-oriented along the west property line towards the Civic Center. The amphitheater was scaled down, and the existing block building was saved. The lower park drop-off was closer to the water. Recreation was added including pickleball, basketball, and a splash pad. There would be exercise stations, a fence around the playground, and gravel parking in lieu of porous bituminous. There was a gate so the park could be closed off to vehicular access at night. The waterfront activities remained the same as previously proposed. The north pathway loop had been simplified with future connection to the Civic Center.

We needed to decide phasing priority and funding: The highest priority was waterfront access and accessible roads and parking in the first phase.

We could build phasing and the grant application based on:

- Fundable elements

- Application scoring

- Quality of design and logical assembly of elements

- A reasonable budget was approximately \$1,000,000 for the first phase

The second option would not have vehicular control bollards, it could probably go without right now. That brought the cost down to \$1,071,000.

The third option was to bring the entry road down to the middle parking area, but not down to the water. The pedestrian pathway would still go there. This would be closer to \$900,000, without bollards \$850,000. The bollards would prevent cars from driving onto areas of grass where they shouldn't be.

Ms. Carlock said Beckett & Reader did a good job of updating the design, including the recreation in the plan. We could only afford so much. We could revisit the master plan each time we updated a grant, it could be updated. She would like to see a fountain in the Civic Center. She was concerned about dropping the bollards and she noted some people use boulders or ditches. She asked if we should consider the land and water grant and asked Mr. Quagliata about the dollars. Mr. Quagliata said the parks fund had approximately \$575,000 and annual grounds maintenance was about \$40,000. The only general fund contribution would be the 50% for the entrance road along the Civic Center. If this grant was recommended, the first year could be design and engineering. There were a few years of fund collection and the millage goes to 2023. Ms. Carlock mentioned the triangle trail and we wanted a minimum \$200,000 parks fund balance. She thought basketball should be near the police station. They were active areas and needed some “eyes on the game.”

Ms. Grubb agreed with Ms. Carlock. We could only go so far. She appreciated the drawing and thought everything was addressed. The bollards were important. She liked the basketball in the parking lot. Ms. Smith mentioned a fence around the playground at the last meeting and that was important.

Mr. Powell wanted to start by complimenting the Parks & Recreation Committee. Without them, this plan would still be all trees and they did an excellent job putting this together. He thought this was a homerun. We could get people down to the park but we took care of the physically challenged people. We may need to break up the path down to the lake with two benches. He was impressed and wanted to thank the Committee. Ms. Carlock wanted to mention she would like a dog park too, but she would like a much nicer facility – maybe the county could look at that.

Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Barrick for listening well and incorporating suggestions and significantly cutting the cost. She said at the last meeting it was astonishing that some Parks and Rec members didn't understand the vision of the area. Amenities were a draw to the park with many things to do. She thanked them for the fence around the playground. She talked about benches along the walkway to the water. She thought it would be hard to drag a kayak 300 feet to get to the accessible launch. She spoke with Fire Marshal Holland and the turn radius of the cul-de-sac looked appropriate for first responders. She thought there were other ways to cut costs, such as prefabricated picnic shelters. We would look for creative ways to fund the amphitheater, such as sponsorships. She suggested putting basketball in the green area near the parking lot, instead of the parking lot. Mr. Barrick pointed out the grade change in that area was very significant. She was happy to see recreation added. She thought it was important to be able to get closer to the water. She brought up a more creative idea for dog parks. There were going to be neighbors in the Civic Center, and we should make some rules and dog amenities. She suggested fencing off small areas, it could be a narrow run or the size of a back yard. She would like to see areas where people could take their dogs off leash. She referred to it as dog amenities. She said residents wanted a dog park. She would like it tucked way in the back. She thought it was a great compromise.

Ms. Deren stated it was a great presentation and thanked Mr. Barrick. She agreed with Ms. Carlock and Ms. Grubb. The pathway getting to the beach was great. She was listening to a lot of township residents. She had been on the Committee for 20 years and what she was hearing was we want to get parks developed to a point but we needed pathways to get to the park. She appreciated holding some money and developing the park in phases. She agreed with the bollards. She thought the design as presented was right on target. She suggested adding amenities as people from the township voiced their opinions.

Mr. Bratta thanked Mr. Barrick and the team for a great design, he took the comments and implemented them. He did a great job utilizing areas of the park and considered the environmental impact. That was a great place for pickleball in the mid-park. The cost savings were great. He didn't think a splash pad was necessary at this time. He thought bollards were important. We needed more benches, maybe they could be donated. He was impressed by the design and they did a great job on the presentation. Mr. Bratta asked Mr. Powell about getting together with Treasurer Roman to get money for the park. Mr. Quagliata said it was his understanding that couldn't happen. The Township didn't have money to loan, while it was creative, there was no money to loan.

Ms. Aseltyne stated Becket and Raeder did a wonderful job. She questioned the gate being locked. Mr. Quagliata noted it was discussed from a safety standpoint and it would be gated from dusk to dawn. This would help prevent vandalism and the Brendel Lake residents would be happy with that. She wanted to get consensus to move forward with the grant. It felt like we were spending a lot of time on things that could be added down the line.

Ms. Voorheis agreed with Ms. Grubb, Ms. Carlock, and Ms. Deren. We were generally on the same page. She agreed with Mr. Bratta on the splash pad. She didn't know how much the splash pad got used at Indian Springs. She liked the basketball court higher up for visibility. She liked the changes to the driveway and that all ages and all abilities could use the park. We only had so much money. This was just a master plan, we needed to be able to keep our current parks under control.

Ms. Carlock wanted to go back and see which phases, she didn't know which one to choose. Ms. Carlock would like to take a look at land and water and trust fund money. She noted there was a little talk about a farmer's market down the road.

Ms. Smith addressed comments made by Ms. Aseltyne. She thought it was a small window to hit the April 1 grant deadline and it was important to start the process now.

Mr. Quagliata would suggest Option A, however affordability was an issue. He suggested Option C at a cost of about \$900,000 based on the money we had. For future amenities, this master plan was a living document. This plan as designed incorporated a lot of what was discussed. It gave us the framework to move forward. The cost had been reduced. When we start to get people down to the park, there would be more excitement to add more amenities.

Mr. Bratta asked about two applications in one year. Ms. Carlock recommended land and water, lately things were slow with the transition. Mr. Bratta noted we were relying on Ms. Carlock with her knowledge and expertise. The largest grant was land and water. She was optimistic it might increase. She liked the idea of a capital campaign for the amphitheater like Milford did and bench donations (business or memorials).

Mr. Powell said these were all great ideas, and he and Ms. Smith had talked. It was his understanding things could be tweaked. He would like to point out the number of bollards down the side of the road, many could be eliminated with rain gardens and topography. Keep in mind, as we promoted the CCDC, we were looking to partner with development partners and they could be philanthropic. Mr. Powell would like to see benches along the shoreline. Basketball in the parking lot was done all the time; it could easily be separated. We may want to think about adding a basket for a pick-up game. It was going to be years before we were close to increasing the number of residential units in the CCDC. This park would morph as the Civic Center morphed.

Ms. Smith was happy with all the modifications to the plan. She thought including dog amenities now was smart. She wondered if the Master Plan Committee picked Option A and she allowed the Township Board to tweak it. Ms. Voorheis stated let the Parks and Rec Committee pick and noted she was offended by Ms. Smith's comment.

Ms. Smith said she understood but if the Committee recommended Option A, the Township Board could tweak and see where funds could be drawn from. Ms. Voorheis noted it was made clear there were no funds anywhere else and she thanked Mr. Quagliata for that information. Ms. Smith noted her comments were not meant to be offensive. Ms. Deren asked what the tweaks may be. Ms. Smith was talking about minor tweaks, small things like benches were important, or splash pads in the future. Ms. Deren was concerned by unnamed tweaks. Ms. Voorheis said Ms. Smith's comments were offensive, and why have this volunteer committee to make recommendations with herself as the liaison. Ms. Smith said she was just trying to explain the process. Ms. Voorheis said we had a volunteer committee which was the recommending body. Ms. Aseltyne agreed.

Ms. Carlock noted if we were at a million dollars, it maximized our grant. This would go before the February joint Township Board and Parks & Rec meeting and could be discussed then. Ms. Carlock noted we needed to move forward.

Mr. Bratta wanted to note, if we could remove 1/3 of the bollards it would get us under \$900,000 with Option C. He also noted a developer may have funding in the future. Tonight, we were just trying to get to the water and in the park. We could do Option A later.

Ms. Grubb asked about the triangle trail, and Mr. Quagliata responded staff would explore other funding options for that, but being awarded grants was not guaranteed.

Mr. Quagliata stated the Committee had a robust discussion and was at a point where members were ready for a motion. The Township Board would consider approving the overall design concept on February 10, and the phase one grant application.

Mr. Barrick noted Option C set the Township up nicely for Phase 2 and grant scoring for the future trust fund grant, Option A did as well. The difference between Option A and Option C was \$270,000. There was more flexibility to construct the triangle trail with Option C.

Ms. Smith asked about how much further Option C was for people with limited access. Mr. Barrick stated the trail system would be accessible and ADA compliant. Ms. Smith asked if there was an option to get people closer to the water and shave money to get accessibility to the lake. Could we do a hybrid? Mr. Barrick said we could get close to a million dollars if we brought the road down, added a path to an overlook pier, and eliminated all other pedestrian facilities in the park. Ms. Carlock noted from a grant strategy, there was no benefit to making phase one over a million dollars. Ms. Smith noted we had a large senior population in White Lake, how do we shave money to get people down to the water?

Mr. Bratta asked if we could lower cost by removing some bollards and wanted to know how we could maximize and get down to the water. Mr. Barrick noted they included bollards on Option A and Option C. They weren't planned to fully line both sides of the roadway. It was not a large cost savings.

Ms. Voorheis wanted to motion to accept Phase One, Option C with an adjustment to include the circle drop off closer to the water as shown in Option A.

Mr. Powell liked the motion Ms. Voorheis had presented. He would like Mr. Barrick to look at some things. In steep areas and marginal areas, he was proposing paving. Paving could be cut back in some of the flatter areas. If you proposed not paving all the way down, including the circle, you could trade the paving for gravel and that got us down there. Mr. Bratta noted we could always pave later.

Ms. Voorheis moved to accept the Phase One Option C presented by Becket & Raeder with an addition to include the beach area drop off in Option A, not to exceed \$1 million and a change to gravel drives instead of bituminous paving in appropriate areas. Ms. Aseltyne supported and the MOTION CARRIED with a roll call vote: (Grubb – yes; Carlock – yes; Deren – yes; Aseltyne – yes; Bratta – yes; Voorheis – yes; Powell – yes; Smith – yes) 8 yes votes.

OTHER BUSINESS:

No other business.

COMMUNICATIONS:

a. Member Comments

Mr. Bratta thanked Ms. Carlock for all of her knowledge and helping us through this. Ms. Carlock was confident many generations to come would enjoy the park.

Ms. Aseltyne noted she would like to see us use the space to have concerts at the municipality with the Oakland County band shell. She was anxious to get activities going when we could, possibly using Stanley Park. Ms. Grubb noted in the spring, in nicer weather it would be great. Ms. Carlock noted we could even do a walk in the park.

Mr. Bratta thanked Mr. Barrick and his team. He could see a splash pad in the future, maybe something by the library would be good. Ms. Carlock would like to see a farm market – the heart of our community that we haven't had before. She thanked everyone for giving and taking.

Ms. Smith thanked Mr. Barrick for the update to the design concept, and Mr. Quagliata for relaying the Committee's message to him.

Adjournment:

7:53 p.m.

The next meeting is Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.