

Oakland Township Sentinel

Sunday, May 1, 2022

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Newly Available Meeting Minutes since April 24 Sentinel Newsletter

[PRC Special meeting 4-7-22 Draft Minutes](#)

You can use these minutes in conjunction with the meeting packet and get a good understanding of Fox Nature Preserve or watch the 3 hour video

[BOT Regular Meeting 4-12-22 Draft Minutes](#)

These minutes are not adequate to developing an understanding of this controversial meeting. Please watch the video section 7/5 (1 hour) for better understanding of the serious issues raised by Resolution 22-03 [BOT Video 4-12-22](#)

[PRC Regular Meeting 4-13-22 Draft Minutes](#)

Reading the minutes will suffice

[BOT Special Meeting 4-22-22 Draft Minutes](#)

Reading the minutes will suffice

Meetings Scheduled Next Week 5/2 – 5/8/2022

[Planning Commission](#) - Tues. 5/3/22 – Regular Meeting, 7 PM – Township Hall, 4393 Collins, First Floor Board Room, no agenda yet

[Safety Paths and Trails Committee](#) - Wed. 5/4/22 – Regular Meeting, 6 PM - Township Hall, 4393 Collins, First Floor Board Room, no agenda yet

How to locate meeting records

[Meeting schedule, agendas, packets](#)

[Videos](#)

Resolution 22-03 Creation Process Lacked Transparency

It is obvious that all the significant discussion and decision-making took place outside of any open meeting. The members of the Board driving this did not seek wide public input. Records for February show many phone calls and other line items in our Township Attorney's invoice #1790 of 3/31/22 with our Board regarding this resolution and the previously abandoned one.

<https://oaklandsentinel.files.wordpress.com/2022/04/thekellyfirm-invoice-1790.pdf>

Do all these discussions outside of our view comply with the Open Meetings Act? I really don't know nor think that it matters. Lack of transparency is the issue. The point is we were denied witnessing all of the significant discussion leading up to having Resolution 22-03 sprung on us. It passed with virtually no chance for us to understand it well and the reasons for it, in order to give meaningful input.

Why does that matter? We had no opportunity to witness a thorough problem-solving process and give our input. Apparently our input is not wanted. I don't know what other conclusion to draw. We were only allowed to witness a vote on a decision that had already been made.

So, I ask Board members to envision the day when you are no longer on the Board. A resolution is created and passed that you strongly disapprove of. It was done by the same processes you used here. Will you be satisfied that that future Board did it right?



**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF OAKLAND
COUNTY OF OAKLAND, STATE OF MICHIGAN**

RESOLUTION 22-03

RESOLUTION FOR PURCHASE OF PROPERTY

At a regular meeting of the Township Board of the Charter Township of Oakland, Oakland County, Michigan (the "Township"), held on April 12, 2022.

PRESENT: Dominic Abbate, Supervisor; Robin Buxar, Clerk; John Giannangeli, Treasurer; Dave Mabry, Trustee; Lana Mangiapane, Trustee; Andy Zale, Trustee

ABSENT: Jack Elder, Trustee

The following Resolution was offered by Trustee Mabry and seconded by Treasurer Giannangeli:

WHEREAS, the Charter Township of Oakland recently acquired two parcels of land: (1) Parcel Number 10-09-100-024 (previously 10-09-100-22 and commonly known as 1401 Lake George Rd., Oakland, MI 48363) and (2) Parcel Number 10-04-376-011.

WHEREAS, the Oakland Township Board of Trustees does hereby designate and name the above two parcels as the Fox Nature Preserve.

WHEREAS, the Fox Nature Preserve property was purchased with a combination of funding from a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund ("MNRTF") grant and the Township Land Preservation Fund, financed in part with an interfund loan from the Township General Fund to the Land Preservation Fund.

WHEREAS, expenditures from the Land Preservation Fund are under the sole authority of the Oakland Township Board of Trustees and for the purposes set forth in the Land Preservation Millage, those being for the "acquisition of land, the protection of natural habitat, and the preservation of green spaces within the Township" (Land Preservation Millage language from December 2021 levy).

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Township to maintain, operate, and fund all Fox Nature Preserve improvements and activities through the Land Preservation Millage and, thereby, consistent with the MNRTF grant, fund its operation and use to the protection of the natural habitat and preservation of green spaces.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Oakland Township Board of Trustees does hereby order the above-stated parcels, which include approximately 235.2 acres, shall heretofore be known as the "Fox Nature Preserve," and consistent with and as allowed under the MNRTF grant, shall be operated, and maintained as a preserve through the Land Preservation Fund and for the express purpose of the protection of natural habitat and the preservation of green spaces within the Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, all expenditures, improvements, and authorized activities on or to the "Fox Nature Preserve," which shall significantly or permanently affect the property or its structures, shall be submitted to the Board of Trustees by the Parks and Recreation Commission with all accompanying plans and specifications and such activities shall not be undertaken unless specifically authorized and approved by the Oakland Township Board of Trustees.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

YEAS: 5

NAYS: 1

ABSTENTIONS: 0

CERTIFICATION

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
) ss.
COUNTY OF OAKLAND)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a Resolution adopted at a regular meeting of the Charter Township of Oakland, Oakland County, Michigan, on April 12, 2022, the original of which is on file in my office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed my official signature this 12th day of April 2022.



Robin Buxar, Clerk
Charter Township of Oakland

Resolution 22-03 is an Example of a Weak Problem-solving Process

Likely our Board thought they were addressing some problem or problems with Resolution 22-03. But, if you watch the video [BOT Video 4-12-22](#) (7/5) from 2/12/22 when this was passed, no Board member clearly defined what the problem is. Nor does the resolution state the problem. We heard the word “mistake” from two trustees and an opinion from another that “what you people have done” would be unacceptable to former Parks Commissioners Tomboulion and Mackley. But the “what” was left undefined.

We could assume it had something to do with what residents living around Lost Lake Nature Park Expansion objected to, but what exactly? All of it? Some of it? Something else that we have not heard about? Something in the petition we were never shown? The problem or problems were not clearly defined.

I spent most of my industrial career responsible for leading problem-solving projects involving both things and people. It is impossible to come up with a good, workable, cost effective, accepted solution if you do not identify the exact problem. A problem is defined as a difference from what actually happened and what should have happened. (See *“The Rational Manager”*, Tregoe, Kepner, 1965)

The Board could cycle back to the beginning and identify the problem. It is likely that there is a better solution to whatever they see as the problem and resident input might help find it.

What is Land Preservation and Natural Area Stewardship?

Our Parks and Recreation Commission April 7, 2022 Special meeting did a good job of explaining that and answering questions about Lost Lake Nature Park Expansion / Fox Nature Preserve. If you can't watch the 3 hour video please read the minutes.

[PRC Draft Minutes 4-7-22 \(14 pages\)](#)

[PRC 4-7-22 Video \(3:00\)](#)

For the next level of information see the reports that Dr. Ben VanderWeide has created annually since 2014. Scroll down a little on the "About" page at <https://oaklandnaturalareas.com/> to find them. He provides complete details of his stewardship work with maps of each park showing what was done where.

Forestry mowing started in 2018 and you can go visit the areas where it has been done and judge for yourself.

Below is an example from Bear Creek Nature Park near my home. Forestry mowing was done in fall 2018 on the north end conservation easement area held by Six Rivers Land Conservancy.

This area will soon be named in honor of long-serving Parks Commissioner Alice Tombouljian. Does anyone believe that she would remain silent in 2018 if she thought the Bear Creek forestry mowing, directly across from her home was not a proper natural area stewardship / land preservation activity in her view?

The areas where forestry mowing took place in 2018 are shown in yellow-green on the map three pages farther down.

The alternative to forestry mowing is to remove invasives by hand cutting. Maybe if a few hundred volunteers stepped forward this could work. But a few people can do very little.

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Cover Photo "Charles Isley Prairie" by Ewa Mutzenmore, (c) 2018 Mutzenmore Photography, August 2018. Used with permission.

BEAR CREEK NATURE PARK

2018

Stewardship Task Completed

1. Native Plant Beds: Beds at the Snell entrance were weeded by volunteers during the summer, with occasional assistance from the seasonal technicians. We paid special attention to removing goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) that came in unnoticed with donated plants in 2015, and had spread rapidly in the bed by the picnic pavilion.
2. Garlic Mustard: Mapped and pulled garlic mustard throughout the park. Volunteers assisted with two workdays in May.
3. Swallow-wort and crown vetch. Treated all known patches in the park.
4. Mapped and treated a new patch of brown knapweed (*Centaurea jacea*).
5. Woodies: Cut and treated glossy buckthorn and other invasive woody plants on the south side of Bear Marsh near the south observation deck. Volunteer workday was co-hosted by Six Rivers Land Conservancy and was attended by FCA volunteers.
6. Phragmites: Treated all known patches of Phragmites, and worked with neighbors to get Phragmites in northeast corner of Bear Marsh treated.
7. Prescribed Fire: completed burns on 22.6 acres of old field Bear Creek Nature Park with in-house crew in 2018.
8. Seed collecting: native seeds were collected primarily from the native plantings near the parking lot. We also collected common milkweed and fragrant cudweed from the old field areas.
9. Forestry mowing: Ruffed Grouse Society completed forestry mowing on 11.8 acres in the north-central part of the park in November and December.

Quick Stats

- Purchased 1977
- 107 acres
- Oak forest with vernal pools in north half of park, fields and ponds in south half of park.
- Conservation easement on northern third of the park.

Special Observations

- 113 bird species observed in park since 2014 as of December 2018 (+4 from 2017).
- Observed a brown snake (*Storeria dekayi*).
- Continued monitoring four vernal pools with Michigan Vernal Pool Partnership protocol. Oakland University Conservation Biology class lead by Dr. Keith Berven conducted tree census around selected pools. Dr. Berven completed additional vernal pool research with students in the summer.

Future Stewardship Tasks

- Continue treatment of high priority invasive plants (swallow-wort, crown vetch, Phragmites, garlic mustard)
- Treat invasive shrub resprouts in forestry mowing areas and broadcast native species mix through area.
- Continue annual invasive woody plant control in the northern oak forest, particularly around Bear Marsh.
- Continue forestry mowing in old fields and invasive shrubs thickets. Planned for winter 2019 and 2020.
- High deer densities are degrading the northern forest. Deer control is needed. Consider enclosures to assess the impact of deer browse and preserve sensitive plant species.
- Continue to use prescribed fire to discourage fire-sensitive tree species and promote oak regeneration in the northern forest. Begin thinning fire sensitive tree species to promote understory development.

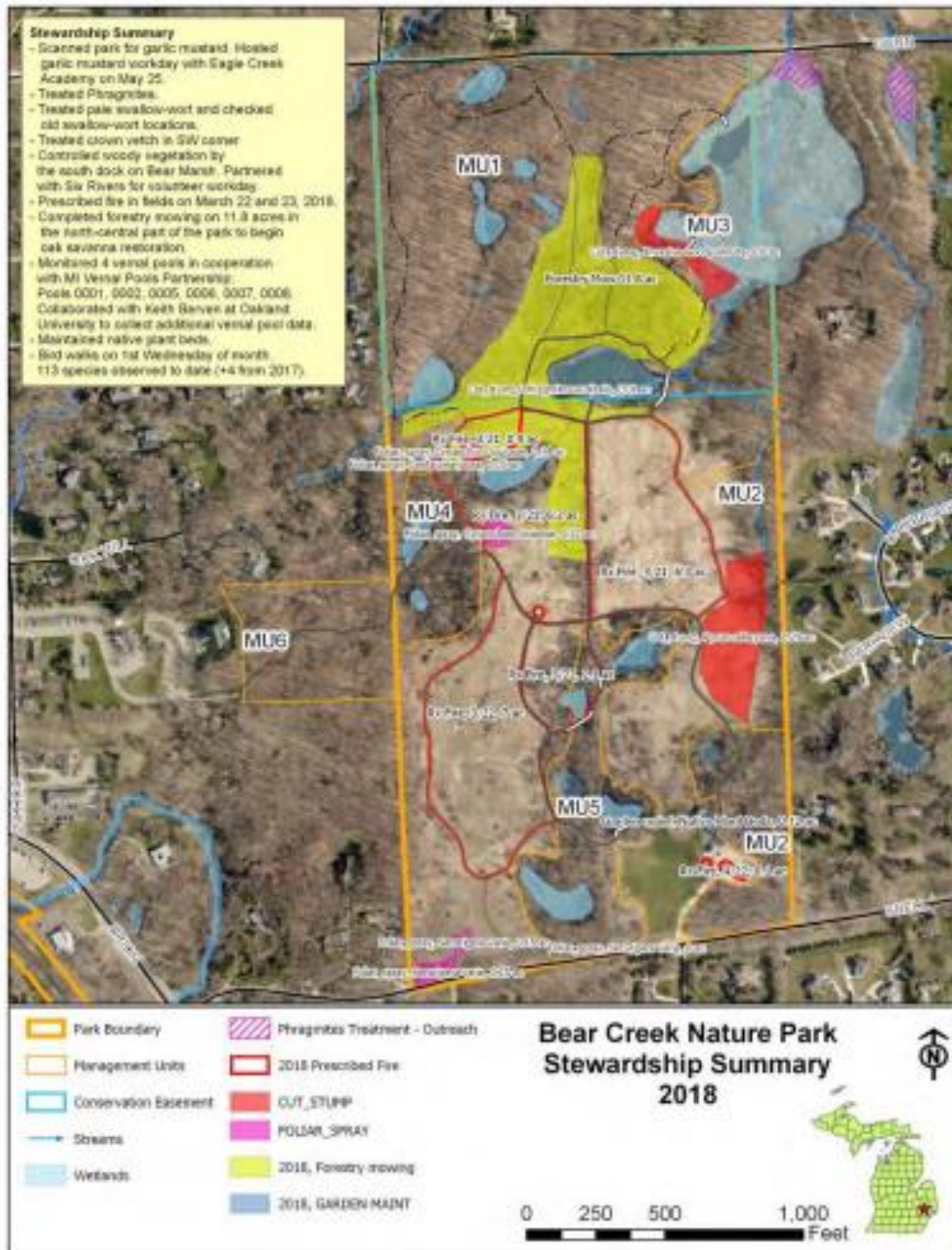


Forestry mowing area north of the center pond at Bear Creek Nature Park on November 19, 2018.

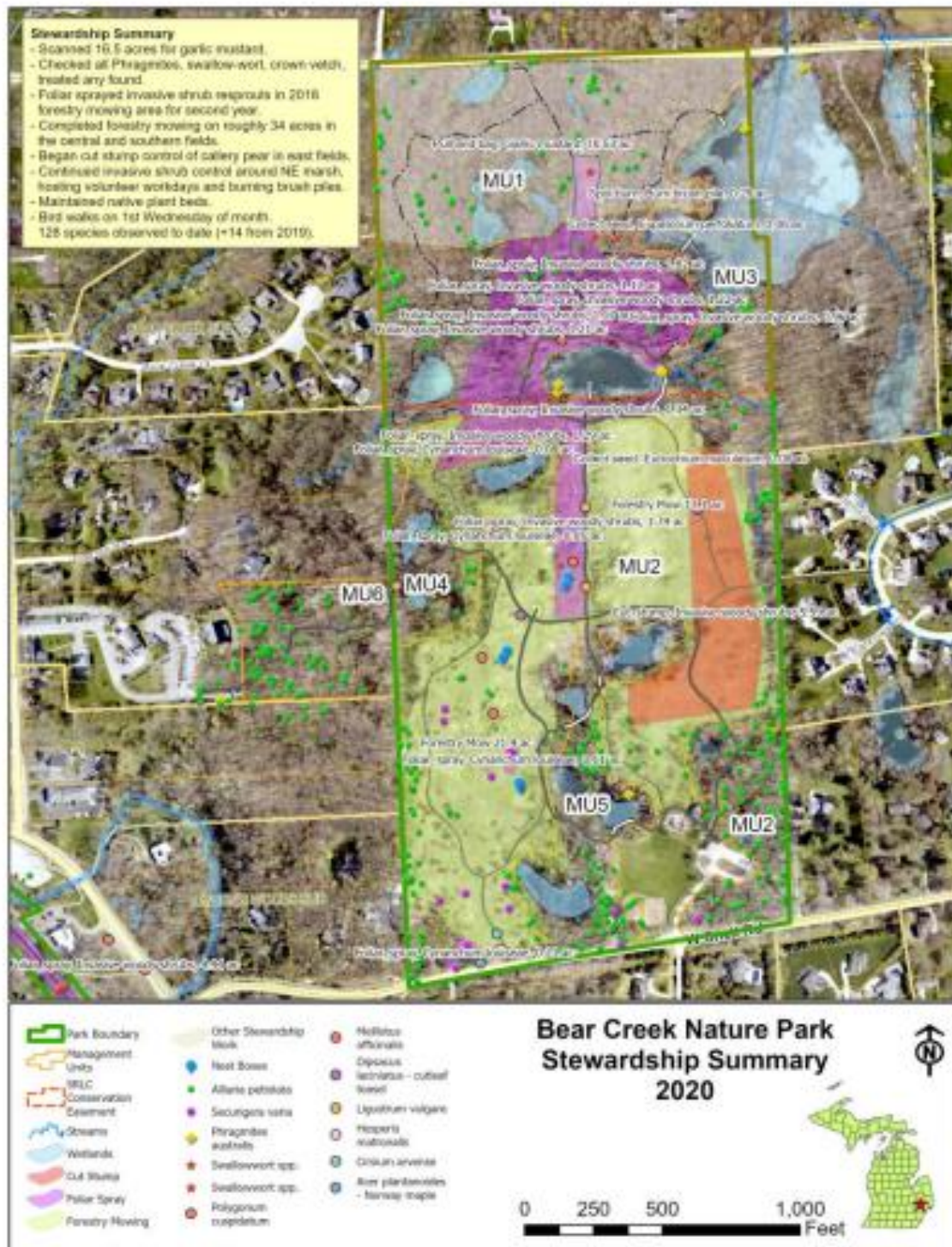


Volunteers and staff monitor a vernal pool at Bear Creek Nature Park on April 11, 2018.

Forestry mowing areas in yellowish-green



In the 2020 report on Bear Creek Nature Park, Forestry mowing is light green and extensive.



Another example of forestry mowing is Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park. There are more examples in the annual reports.

STONY CREEK RAVINE NATURE PARK

2018

Stewardship Tasks Completed

1. Garlic Mustard: Mapped and pulled garlic mustard in the Stony Creek riparian corridor and in the northeast corner of the park. Did not pull garlic mustard in eastern uplands because of heavy invasive shrub infestation.
2. Swallow-wort: Previously identified and new patches of swallow-wort were mapped and sprayed. Several new locations found after shrub clearing in late 2016.
3. Invasive Woody Plants
 - Treated invasive shrubs that had re-sprouted after forestry mowing by the Ruffed Grouse Society in 2016 and Owen Tree in 2015. Crew spot sprayed in areas with remnant native vegetation. We were not able to treat larger areas with the tractor, so they will need to be mowed and treated again in 2019.
 - OTPR crew spot sprayed Oriental bittersweet on the east slope of the ravine down to the floodplain, approximately 8 acres.
 - Contractor (Cardno) treated Oriental bittersweet across nearly 15 acres in the stream corridor, both east and west sides.
 - Contractor (Quality Tree Service) completed forestry mowing on 9 acres in the southeast area of the park in late November. Though some native plants persisted in this area, dense invasive shrubs made it very difficult to access. It will be much easier to work in this area now that it has been cleared.
4. Phragmites: Park neighbor to the southwest had Phragmites treated through the Phragmites Outreach Program.

Quick Stats

- 60 acres
- Acquired in 2008
- Protects the 0.5 miles of the west branch of Stony Creek, and dramatic glacial features.
- Conservation easement protects the creek corridor.

Future Stewardship Tasks

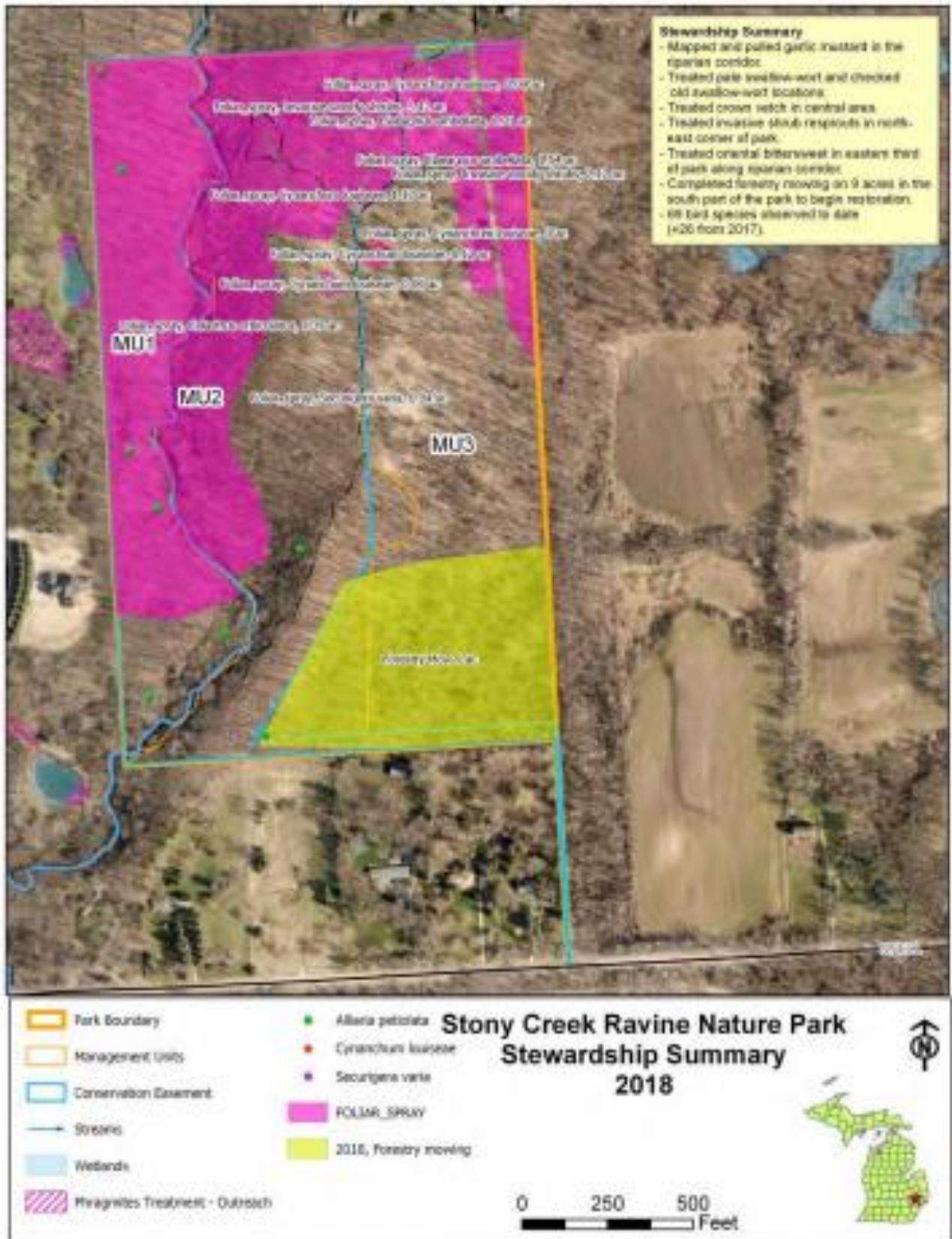
- Continue garlic mustard control throughout the park. Focus on the ravine and riparian corridor. Use spot spraying in degraded areas.
- Oriental bittersweet should be treated aggressively in the riparian corridor. In the eastern uplands bittersweet should be treated aggressively after initial invasive shrub control.
- Invasive woody plants in the old fields should be controlled annually after initial invasive shrub control. Due to low fuel loads, prescribed fire will probably not kill mature shrubs and manual control will be needed.
- Implement prescribed fire throughout the park following oriental bittersweet control.
- High deer densities are degrading the forest. Encourage continuing controlled archery hunt.
- We expect to close on the 207 acres to the east of this park in 2019. Acquisition will be funded by the Land Preservation Millage and a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. After closing on the property, we will need to do a rapid assessment to determine immediate stewardship needs (high priority invasive plants) and set long-term goals. Portions of the current farm fields will be converted to wetland mitigation banks by the current owner.



Southern 9 acres of Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park was cleared with a forestry mower in late November. This pictures shows what the area looked like before clearing. Oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, and glass grew in a dense thicket. November 27, 2018.



Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park during forestry mowing, showing the equipment our contractor used. November 27, 2018.



Some Information Possibly Useful for Unresolved Conflicts between Oakland Township Board of Trustees and Oakland Township Parks Commission

What is a Park?

Excerpt from Act 153 of 1996

141.321 Definitions.

Sec. 1. As used in this act:

(a) "Park" means an area of land or water, or both, dedicated to 1 or more of the following uses:

(i) Recreational purposes, including but not limited to landscaped tracts; picnic grounds; playgrounds; athletic fields; camps; campgrounds; zoological and botanical gardens; swimming, boating, hunting, fishing, and birding areas; and foot and bridle paths.

(ii) Open or scenic space.

(iii) Environmental, conservation, nature, or wildlife areas.

(b) "Record owner" means an individual, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, association, or other legal entity, possessed of the most recent fee title or a land contract vendee's interest in land as shown by the records of the county register of deeds.

History: 1996, Act 153, Imd. Eff. Apr. 3, 1996.

Excerpt from Oakland Township Zoning Ordinance #16 Definitions Section

"16-217

Park, Public: A parcel of land, designated, maintained and used by the public for active and/or passive recreation and which is owned and controlled by a public entity or unit of government."

Who Controls Oakland Township Parks?

Excerpt from Act 157 of 1905

41.426a Township park commission; authority generally.

Sec. 6a. The township park commission shall have authority to acquire, maintain, manage, and control township parks and places of recreation, including bathing beaches,....."

Parks Employees report to whom?

Excerpt From Attorney General Frank Kelly Opinion #5680 March 18,1980

“Since the township park commission is given the authority to maintain, manage and control the township parks and places of recreation, it follows that it has control over its employees and the duties they are to perform. This authority is subject however to the township board passing on the proposed budget of the township park commission as to its reasonableness and necessity. Thus, the township park commission operates the parks and controls its employees within the budget approved by the township board; see OAG, 1975-1976, No 5046, p 484 (June 10, 1976).”

Budget and Operations Micromanaging of Parks by BOT

Excerpt From Attorney General Frank Kelly Opinion #5680 March 18,1980

“Therefore, it is my opinion that a township park commission is required to submit its budget to the township board for its approval in whole or in part. Once the budget is approved, the township park commission may operate without further approval of the township board.”

Why won't Board agree to a Joint Meeting with Parks Commissioners to Iron out Differences?

The minutes for setting the agenda at BOT 2-12-22 shows this:

AMENDMENTS/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Clerk Buxar added, under Pending Business – Request for extension of MNRTF grant agreement TF20-206. She also requested that Item #4 be moved to Item #2, Item #5 be moved to Item #3, the item just added be Item #4 and Item #2 moves to Item #5.

MOTION by Buxar, supported by Giannangeli to approve the agenda as amended.

The Board heard public comment from:

- Craig Blust – 2222 W. Buell Rd

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Abbate, Buxar, Giannangeli, Mabry, Mangiapane

Nays: Zale

Absent: Elder

A better description of what happened follows:

Trustee Andy Zale commented before voting that he would have preferred a meeting with the Parks Commission as they requested before addressing the Parks agenda items.

Parks Treasurer Craig Blust asked the Board to add considering Parks written previous request for a joint meeting to the agenda – just to set the date (Parks had suggested five potential meeting dates).

No one on the Board responded to Craig Blust's request. I find that unproductive. Then Supervisor Abbate tried to move on to the next agenda item but Treasurer Giannangeli prompted him with this comment "Role call vote"

Clerk Buxar – "Zale?"

Trustee Zale – "No"

Clerk Buxar – "Mangiapane?"

Trustee Mangiapane – "What are we voting on?"

Clerk Buxar and several others- "Approval of the agenda!"

Trustee Mangiapane – "Oh, yes!"

All others voted - "Yes"

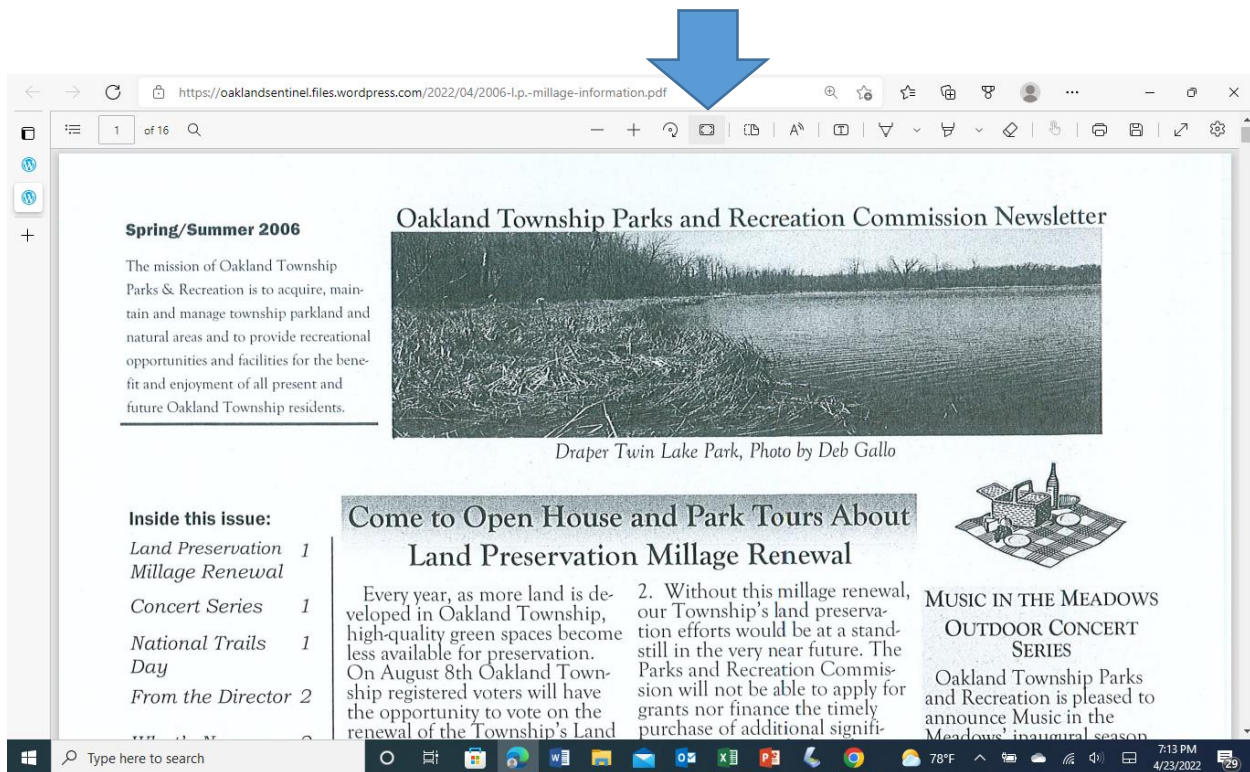
What were voters told about the Land Preservation Fund Early Renewal before voting on 8/8/2006 ?

See details in a 16 page pdf at this link, first see excerpts below on page 3-4

[Land Preservation Millage 2006 Information](https://oaklandsentinel.files.wordpress.com/2022/04/2006-lp-millage-information.pdf)

(Usually you have to click an icon on your computer after clicking the above link)

Click here if not wide enough and visible enough on your screen



Some excerpts:-**Page 6****Which Township entity would manage the Land Preservation Millage funds?**

The Parks and Recreation Commission, having considerable experience in land purchases and donation, would continue to be responsible for managing the Land Preservation Millage monies. They currently manage eleven parks, which include the natural areas acquired with Land Preservation Millage funds, as well as managing the Oakland Township section of the Paint Creek Trailway. The park staff includes a full-time director, a full-time management coordinator who oversees and implements stewardship of park natural areas, two part-time administrative assistants, and two part-time maintenance technicians.

Page 3**Why is renewal of the Land Preservation Millage on the ballot this year?**

Oakland Township has been fortunate in leveraging Land Preservation funds with grants and donations to protect more than 230 acres of important natural areas. To accomplish this, the Parks and Recreation Commission has committed the majority of the voted ten-year millage to finance these acquisitions in a timely way. While the current Land Preservation Millage expires in 2010, the millage renewal would extend the revenue stream through 2020, enabling the Township to proactively finance the protection of green spaces while they are still available.

Page 6**Who would evaluate and recommend properties for acquisition?**

The Parks and Recreation Commission, elected by Township voters, would continue to use the procedures and priorities that they established in 2002 to evaluate parcels consistently and objectively. Nominated properties are evaluated based upon screening/review criteria that include water resources, wildlife habitat, special plants and plant communities, glacial landforms, accessibility by local residents, adjacency to protected lands, parcel size, feasibility of acquisition, availability of property, cultural value and other unique factors.

The Parks and Recreation Commission has obtained ecologists' reports on the significant environmental areas within the Township. The Commission would continue to proactively seek available green space properties and evaluate them according to well-defined criteria, incorporating the recommendations of Township citizens. They would continue to work with real estate and legal professionals to pursue acquisition of the top-priority areas.

Page 6**How much land has been acquired with the current Land Preservation Millage funds, and what types of natural areas have been protected as a result?**

Since the Township has been successful in leveraging the current millage monies with grants and donations, the amount of green space protected is twice the original projections. Currently Oakland Township is in the process of acquiring a parcel containing a significant stretch of Stony Creek by combining a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant with Township Land Preservation Millage monies. Once that is completed, the Township will have protected more than 230 acres of important Township natural areas since this millage was first levied in 2001. These natural areas include:

2006 - Stony Creek Corridor Park: 60-acre proposed acquisition by Land Preservation Millage and MNRTF grant.

2005 - Draper Twin Lake Park: 90 acres acquired by Land Preservation Millage and landowner donation.

2004 - Lost Lake Nature Park: 52 acres acquired by Land Preservation Millage and MNRTF grant.

2003 - Paint Creek Heritage Area – Wet Prairie: 10.46 acres acquired by Land Preservation Millage.

2003 - Cranberry Lake Park (woodland parcel addition): 22 acres purchased with Land Preservation Millage.

Page 7**Would any of the proposed millage renewal pay for the maintenance of green spaces?**

Yes. While a large majority of the millage funds would be devoted to property acquisition, it is important to monitor and preserve these green spaces once they are purchased. Each property's natural features would be managed to prevent degradation of the site's ecological and scenic values. After careful planning, trails will be added where appropriate. The parks staff, consultants and volunteers have successfully completed many current park stewardship, maintenance and improvement projects, and are actively involved in the management of natural areas within the parks.

A trend

Oakland Township Land Preservation Levy Votes					
	YES	NO	TOTAL	% YES	%NO
9/11/2001	1202	791	1993	60%	40%
8/8/2006	1815	934	2749	66%	34%
11/6/2018	6521	2994	9515	69%	31%

Diane Bennett's Experience with Backyard Natural Area Stewardship / Land Preservation

This letter is from former Parks and Recreation Commissioner Diane Bennett, a 42 year resident of Oakland Township.

“Bob:

I just noticed a warbler looking for food in my tamarack! Insects are their favorite foods after migration and insects evolved using specific plant hosts. In the winter I noticed juncos eating the seed of my native clematis, virgin's bower, which I never planted but popped up in a garden bed. Now I know who brought the seed to my yard! And I have moved several of them and can now provide seed for them in the winter (besides our well stocked feeders). I have had several native plants come up in my beds most likely seed spread by birds or mammals, plants that I never tried to grow. As a gardener for many years I became hooked on native plants after seeing the native remnant prairie in Windsor, Ontario. I liked the look of them but as time went on and I began to understand the value to wildlife and insects I planted more and more natives.

Most people garden for color. A quick trip through local area greenhouses speaks volumes on that. I now see such plants as fluff. I still have many non-natives in my garden and enjoy them but feel a sense of responsibility to the creatures that also live here. We have two acres and lately have had 3 great white egrets, wood ducks, house wrens, and this morning a sandhill crane stopped by. We are pleased when we host hundreds of migrants in the spring and fall, mostly red wing blackbirds.

Diane Bennett”

Libby Dwyer's Experience with Backyard Natural Area Stewardship / Land Preservation and Fox Nature Preserve over the last 37 years.

Libby Dwyer has lived 37 years on Lake George Road across from Clam Lake which is now part of Fox Nature Preserve.

"To: Oakland Township Board of Trustees

Subject: Fox Preserve

Dear Trustees,

First of all, I need to apologize for "yelling" at you in my email of April 11. You certainly aren't paid enough to incur my wrath and I should never have pushed "send" in anger. My general opinion about the drama surrounding the Lost Lake Park Expansion (aka The Fox Preserve) is pretty much the same, but I can now see both sides more clearly.

Because you hold control over the new park, some of your comments about land preservation really concern me. I hope you realize the long term consequences of any misguided decisions that might be made. Despite the lack of communication between both the board and PRC, please trust the folks who are experienced and educated in land preservation to do what is best for the land and ultimately, for the township.

I was shocked to see so many residents' from Tamarack Heights so up in arms against the work already done at the park. In my experience managing my own large parcel that was inundated with invasive species is that you can't pussyfoot around. Last winter I cleared over an half acre between our home and the barn that was choked with Shiny Buckthorn and Asian Bittersweet. Phragmites were creeping in. After clearing it looked horrible, but by the end of summer, desirable plants and grasses were filling in the bushwhacked areas. The result? Now we can see our barn and the hill in the back of our 10 acre parcel. The residents who like the park "just the way it is", probably don't realize how through the years it has deteriorated. We felt the same way about our property. I thought my view was just fine and didn't see the gradual degradation. Clearing it was like getting a whole new beautiful piece of property. The same results can happen at the Fox Preserve.

We have lived on Lake George Road overlooking the park for 37 years and have had a front row seat to the deterioration of the property surrounding Clam Lake. When we moved here in 1985, the marsh between Lake George Road and the lake was full of cattails and Tamarack trees. In the spring the songs of Redwing Blackbirds, frogs, and toads was spectacular. Then came the Phragmites and Shiny Buckthorn Trees to choke out the native plants. The Tamaracks died and eventually we lost our view of the lake. The Blackbird and frog songs we hear now come mainly from our own wetlands. Thirty-seven years ago, the orchards on the DeBruhl/Fox property may not have been sprayed, but trees were maintained and they bore fruit. It's just in the last few years that honeysuckle and bittersweet quickly began choking it out. We were fortunate to have permission from both Ella DeBruhl and Bill Fox to ride our horses on the trails there. There was no "tunnel of trees" back then. You didn't have to duck because Buckthorn had taken over and you could see the expanse of the land because it wasn't blocked by Autumn Olive, Buckthorn and Honeysuckle. Lupine filed the northeast field.

It was beautiful and it was heaven.

My point is that it still can be heaven and be even more beautiful with proper management. I admit that the girdling of Red Maples seemed pretty extreme to this layperson. I suspect there was a lack of oversight in that process. But after listening to Dr. Ben's explanation, I understand why an Oak Savannah is so important and how wonderful it would be to have one right here in Oakland Township. You and I may not see the results, but the next generation will. Our Historical District Commission ends their correspondences with this line "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in." Nowadays, this world could stand a bit of that sort of optimism for the future! So, let's plant some Oak trees!

I will trust you to make good decisions and work with the experts and am happy to help or chat whenever you want.

Most Sincerely,

*Libby Dwyer
Studio Twelve Thirty-Four
1234 Lake George Road
Oakland, MI 48363"*

Letters to Public Bodies or Officials from Sentinel and Residents

In the past I have sent many emails to Oakland Township Public Bodies that the general public was unaware of. My reasoning was that perhaps if I did not expose my concerns to the general public said public bodies were more likely to take action rather than just resist automatically my suggestions. I now see that as unethical on my part and doesn't work anyway. While I thought my requests represented the general public; I have no surveys to confirm that. I may have been presenting and lobbying for a minority view. No resident should lobby secretly for their views and no public body member should accept such secret lobbying. One learns this general principle in MSU "Citizen Planner" training for the Planning Commission which I took a few years ago. I finally see how it applies to all public bodies.

Therefore all such letters from me to any public body and some to administrators will be published in the Sentinel. Similar letters from other residents to public bodies will be printed here as well, if you request it.

Letter to Township Manager, Adam Kline

4/24/22

From: Robert Yager [<mailto:yager@comcast.net>]

Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2022 8:37 AM

To: Kline, Adam <akline@oaklandtownship.org>

Cc: Lou Danek (ldanek@oaklandtownship.org) <ldanek@oaklandtownship.org>; Andy Zale (azale@oaklandtownship.org) <azale@oaklandtownship.org>;

dmabry@oaklandtownship.org; Dominic Abbate (dabbate@oaklandtownship.org)

<dabbate@oaklandtownship.org>; jelder@oaklandtownship.org; John Giannangeli

(jgiannangeli@oaklandtownship.org) <jgiannangeli@oaklandtownship.org>;

'Imangiapane@oaklandtownship.org' <Imangiapane@oaklandtownship.org>; Robin

Buxar (rbuxar@oaklandtownship.org) <rbuxar@oaklandtownship.org>

Subject: Elevator Project - Board Resolution 14-03

Adam Kline

Township Manager

Charter Township of Oakland

cc: Board, Lou Danek

I don't think we have been complying with Board resolution 14-03. Perhaps reconsidering it is in order (rescind?, enforce?). Watching the 3/25/14 meeting video, agenda section 7/4 (17 minutes) is probably the first step. There was much good discussion by the Board and public comment. It likely applies to the current elevator project.

[Video BOT 3-25-14](#) See 7/4

Essentially it requires GANTT chart project management for over \$20,000 projects. Clerk Buxar was the only member of that 2013-16 Board on our current Board, who could remember the thinking.

[Resolution 14-03](#)

From 3-25-2014 minutes:

“RESOLUTION 14-03 FOR PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The Charter Township of Oakland Board of Trustees will implement formal Program Management in the FY 2015/16 and beyond.

The Board heard public comment from:

Dick Michalski, 3070 Wains Way, OT

John Markel, 245 Birch Hill Dr., OT

Marty McQuade, 5605 Murfield Dr., OT

MOVED BY THALMANN, SECONDED BY BAILEY to adopt formal Project Management Resolution 14-03 as presented.

AYES: GONSER, REILLY, MCKAY, THALMANN, BUXAR, BAILEY

NAYS: LANGLOIS MOTION

PASSES: 6 – 1

A copy of this resolution is attached as part of these minutes.”

Letter to Township Supervisor, Dominic Abbate

4/25/22

Dominic Abbate
Township Supervisor
Charter Township of Oakland

Cc: BOT, Adam Kline, Jamie Moore

Resolution 22-03 Resident Questions

Some residents have questions about the processes used to introduce and pass this resolution. I think residents would appreciate it if you could introduce a discussion of these questions below to the agenda at the next Board meeting.

Question #1

How did Resolution 22-03 originate? Who said what to whom? What are the steps that cause it to show up on the agenda? Who placed it on the agenda?

Question #2

The "Whereas" sections, before the "Therefore", seem to be rather bold and potentially controversial decisions on their own rather than the expected list of rather obvious facts. When did the Board establish all these "Whereas" statements as true facts?

Question #3

Considering that there are several rather sweeping and potentially controversial assertions in his resolution, was any consideration given to slowing down the introduction and approval process to something more akin to an ordinance revision process or zoning change with at least one hearing just to understand it and allow residents time to absorb, process and research their understanding so they could make informed, intelligent public comments at a future meeting before a Board vote?

Question #4

The Resolution seems to have been created to address some problem or problem(s) as perceived by some Board members. What problem or problems exactly? We can't evaluate it if we don't know what it was designed to address.

I will be publishing this letter and all similar request letters in the Sentinel in the future so the public knows about the requests and can support them or not, as they see fit.

Bob Yager – Editor – Oakland Township Sentinel

Brief Summary of Natural Area Stewardship Committee Meeting, 3:30 Wednesday, April 27

This was a well attended meeting.

- 16 residents,
 - Cayuga Trail, Tamarack Lane, Lake George – 9
 - Other areas of Township - 7
- 3 Parks Commissioners (Simon, Rooney, Workings)
- Parks Director Milos-Dale,
- Natural Areas Stewardship Manager, Dr. Ben VanderWeide

It lasted about 4.5 hours, which included a tour of some of the park. The Stewardship Committee made available printed copies of their 65 page meeting packet with color maps to all attendees.

<https://ecode360.com/documents/OA3183/public/656710148.pdf>

There were no official ground rules, but all attendees were granted unrestricted right to comment, question or discuss just as though they were a PRC member. And there was much discussion. I think this interfered with Dr. Ben's ability to present to the Parks Commissioners, which was the main purpose. I recommend more formal rules next time. I think the principle take-aways were:

- The Committee will suggest to the PRC that professionals from Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) be contracted to assess Fox Nature Preserve and recommend an overall Natural Areas Stewardship plan. This may not happen until 2023.
- Dr. Ben VanderWeide presented his proposed 2022 field work plan, which the Stewardship Committee will recommend to the PRC. See next two pages.
- Residents got a lot of questions answered about the views of Parks staff and the Stewardship Committee. Of course Parks emphasized to the residents that much of what was said is personal opinion to only go into action if approved by both PRC and BOT.
- Jim Jaikens of Cayuga Trail, the developer of Oakland Farms Sub, seems to have been appointed a spokesman, at least for his sub.

2022 Field Work Plan – Fox Nature Preserve

Natural Areas Stewardship Oakland Township Parks & Recreation



Actual timing of work is flexible, depending on weather, growth of vegetation, availability of staff, and contractor schedules.

May

1. Garlic mustard hand pull in high quality woodlands. Pick up any small trash when completing garlic mustard scan, and document large trash that needs to be addressed later.
2. Spread native grass mix in south fields forestry mowing area.

June

1. Complete any remaining garlic mustard control by mid-June.
2. Monitor and treat swallow-wort, crown vetch, wild parsnip, teasel. Document any new locations and treat.
3. Spot treat reed canary grass around the edge of the bog.
4. Invasive cattails – check Clam Lake Prairie fen and treat with selective hand-wicking
5. Invasive shrub control – begin spot treatment of invasive shrubs in south field forestry mowing areas. Target species include invasive bittersweet, glossy buckthorn, common buckthorn, autumn olive, invasive honeysuckles.

July and August

1. Invasive shrub control
 - a. Complete spot treatment of invasive shrubs in the south fields forestry mowing area.
 - b. Treat invasive bittersweet and small diameter invasive shrubs in high-quality woodlands.
 - c. Spot treat invasive shrub resprouts where mature shrubs were cleared over the winter at the bog and Clam Lake prairie fen.
 - d. Potential Oakland County CISMA grant-funded project to treat invasive shrubs in the Clam Lake prairie fen.
2. Photo monitoring – complete late August to early September.

September

1. Phragmites – monitor and treat all known patches. Document and treat any new patches found.
2. Invasive Shrub Control – continue work on projects listed for July/August. Potential CISMA project would wrap up by the end of the September.











3. Crown vetch – check patches and re-treat any areas with new growth.
-

October - December

1. Seed collection – collect wherever desirable native seed is present
 2. Spread native wildflower and grass seed in south forestry mowing area to continue restoration process.
 3. Phragmites – finish any treatment in first week of October
 4. Invasive shrub control – continue work in areas listed previously
 - a. Switch to only cut stump and basal bark methods as leaves change color. Treat vines of invasive bittersweet growing up into trees.
 - b. Begin treatment of glossy buckthorn in the bog after the wetland has frozen solid for the winter.
 5. Brush hog south forestry mowing areas and orchard north of Stony Creek to maintain and prepare for invasive shrub control work the following year.
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Please Help Sentinel Increase Readership

If you value this newsletter please tell your neighbors, HOA members, club members, church members, PTA members, etc. We have 16,000 voters in Oakland Township. Below is a count of downloads of top 2022 postings so far (a measly 2.3 – 4.6% of voters). No, I cannot see any detail on any individual. Download counts for a posting go up as time goes on, but nothing has ever topped 1,000.

File downloads >	
Files	downloads
 controlled-ecological-burn-crew-training	917
 daves-fire-creed.pdf	896
 oakland-township-sentinel-3-6-2022.pdf	893
 oakland-township-sentinel-3-13-2022.pdf	829
 oakland-township-sentinel-3-20-22-1.pdf	775
 oakland-township-sentinel-3-27-2022.pdf	641
 Inpe-red-maple-tree-girdling-situation	582
 resident-suggests-mediation-in-board-	406
 oakland-township-sentinel-4-10-2022-	391
 oakland-township-sentinel-4-3-2022-1	380
View all	

Letters to the Editor & Policy

We accept letters to the editor. Requirements are:

- No restriction preventing appointed or elected official from sending letters
- Provide your name, no anonymous letters
- If you welcome direct contact from other readers, say so and include contact info. Otherwise I will leave out any contact information like phone, address, email.
- If you want to describe who you are, that can be helpful – “38 year resident, former Township Supervisor” for example
- No personal attacks. We define personal attacks as making statements of opinion about the character, intelligence, diligence, motivation, values or other largely unknowable attributes of a person or group. Examples:

Personal attack – “Trustee X cannot be trusted.”

Not a personal attack – “Trustee X has voted differently on the same issue as seen in these records.....”

Personal attack – “Trustee X does not care about issue L.

Not a personal attack – “Trustee M voted against putting issue L on the ballot.”

Personal attack – “Trustee X is trying to undermine Group B with their statements”

Not a personal attack “Trustee X has made these statements which we find potentially damaging to Group B for these reasons.....”

Personal attack – “Trustee X never knows what is going on.”

Not a personal attack – “Trustee X never commented on important “motion X” before the vote and had no questions. It is difficult to determine Trustee X’s level of understanding of or position on this issue.

Personal attack – “Group P is out of control”

Not a personal attack – “There does not seem to be an effective employee managing system within Group P as evidenced by the following facts”

By this standard I declare that my former usage of the term “War on Parks” is a personal attack on our Board of Trustees and will stop using it. It implies a vaguely defined motivation that I cannot possibly know.

As I see it, avoiding personal attacks forces us (that includes me) to focus on facts and our own opinions about what these facts mean for issues.

What happened? Do we approve of what happened? Why or why not? What did we wish had happened? Why? What would we like to have happen? Why?

If we attack people, we allow the conversation to be diverted from the important issue at hand to a pointless discussion of their intelligence, motivation, diligence, etc. That is not an argument of much importance.

As there are few letters, I plan to keep them in a numbered list until the list gets too long. All these below were already published.

1. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/11/resident-suggest-mediation-in-board-of-trustees-parks-commission-dispute/>
2. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/11/another-resident-weighs-in-on-last-lake-nature-park-expansion-issue/>
3. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/12/dr-moore-letter-about-april-7-prc-meeting/>
4. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/12/view-of-former-trustee-frank-ferriolo-on-lost-lake-nature-park/>
5. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/12/another-resident-weighs-in-on-lost-lake-nature-park-expansion/>
6. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/14/dr-drew-moore-email-to-parks-recommendations-for-moving-forward/>

7. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/14/reg-brown-and-cam-mannino-individual-responses-to-dr-moores-email-to-prc/>
8. <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.org/2022/04/16/letter-to-editor-from-frank-ferriolo-regarding-4-12-bot-meeting-and-4-13-parks-meeting/>

(Mr. Ferriolo's letter #8 referred to Dr. Moore's 4/14 letter which can be seen as #6 above)

The End