May 2, 2014

Park Board Members: Susan Merrill, Chairperson
Sam Bixler
Mayor Lou Bertrand

Beautification Commission Members: Frank Hemphill, Alan Donley

Official Recorder: Susan Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

Others Present: Police Chief Ed Samec, VA Bob Wood

General: Chairperson Susan Merrill called the meeting to order at 8:31 am. The board reviewed the regular meeting minutes of 4/4/2014. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Sam Bixler and seconded by Mayor Bertrand. Motion passed unanimously. Susan Merrill asked to make sure the minutes were corrected to reflect that the Memorial Tree planted at the Hiram Elementary School property was for a teacher; not a student. Sam Bixler asked if that tree still exists on the property; members did not know.

Old Business: Susan Merrill brought up the proposal that was presented to Council for review. Al Donley said there seems to be a strong desire from the public for multiple uses. Chief Samec asked the Park Board if the walking/fitness trail would be asphalt. Members said no, nothing permanent. Mayor Bertrand asked what the status is of the two ball fields on the property. Members said one would be kept for use; the other would be eliminated for other uses. Susan Merrill said the prairie area can be changed at any time. The park plan is a 3-5 year plan. The Mayor asked whether the Park Board can explain how we are going to pay the $74,000 due on the property. Susan Merrill replied that it was not their responsibility to determine how the Village would pay for the debt. Chief Samec felt that the debt of $74,000 would have to be satisfied before we can move onto anything else. Susan Merrill said if there had been due diligence when the property was first purchased; it could have been completely paid for by the grants; the Park Board has been charged to take care of park properties.

Chief Samec asked about the vote from Council; was that vote based on the proposal before them at that time; is absolute or could that change if Hiram College brings back a modified plan to include a ball field. The Mayor said the way it was brought before Council; they had to make a vote that night.

Village Administrator, Bob Wood mentioned that his proposal did not include removing “all” the asphalt; some will be reused. The backside of the asphalt originally between the two buildings would be removed and the topsoil there would be used. The Village would put drainage out to the storm sewer at the road. Underground would be a 4 inch pipe to the storm sewers. The storm sewers are 8” pipes that go to a 12” pipe.

Mayor Bertrand spoke on the AMATS grant but was a little pessimistic about it; their grants are usually used only on state highways. The Portage Foundation Grant, they would like to apply for this one in August; the funds would not be available until the following January.

Bob Wood said in order to remove all of the asphalt; you could be looking at twice the cost, $10,000. He estimated that but has not put together a force account. The Mayor added that our personnel may be stressed this year with the repairs on our roads! Bob would propose putting the drainage in first; even before asphalt is removed. Bob Wood added that once the drainage is done, the ball field can be cleaned up and utilized.
Backstops may need some work and fencing may be needed. Frank Hemphill asked about the setup of home plate on the current ball field. Susan said it would be in the same location as it is now.

**New Business:** Mayor Bertrand asked the Fiscal Officer to look into options on financing/amortizing the loan over time and see about getting a better interest rate.

Frank Hemphill asked about going to the community for these improvements; like with a “park levy”. Mayor Bertrand spoke on the other levies coming before the public in Hiram. Susan Merrill mentioned grant writing and that Portage County Regional Planning Commission does write grants for communities. The question was, how many technical hours do we have this year to use.

Susan Merrill asked the Police Chief to express the concerns he had regarding the property. Chief Samec spoke on something new in the community and that it will be vandalized which will result in extra man hours. Chief Samec asked about the hours of operation and if they would require any pole lighting. There is also a dumpster that sits on the property that belongs to the apartments. Bob Wood said there is a light pole in the turnaround. Frank Hemphill asked about the walking paths. Susan Merrill explained the plan. Frank would like to see the sequence of steps to develop the property. Bob Wood said parking may be an issue.

Chief Samec said a drinking fountain would be huge! What about dogs, would there be any regulations such as when there is a family reunion. We could provide dog bags and trash receptacles.

Susan Merrill wanted to comment on the Communicator from April. It mentioned that alternative uses were advanced by some Park Board members; it was the Park Board as one, all three were on the same page.

Frank Hemphill felt the sequence of steps is vital for community involvement. Park Board members felt it may be a good idea for Susan to send the final minutes on to Stacy Turner with The Weekly Villager. Ed said the Corner Store is going to open up the second week in June and Maggie’s Donuts will open up this month. The new owner of Maggie’s Donuts is interested in working with the parks; as the former Mayor of Middlefield was instrumental in putting in their “water park”.

The Park Board’s next step is to present a resolution to Council that will allow them to go forward for grants.

A motion to request the Fiscal Officer forward a letter to the Hiram Beautification Trust at Hiram College requesting the Village’s share of the trust funds was made by Sam Bixler and seconded by Alan Donley. The vote was unanimous.

Members asked whether we could merge the two committees; the Hiram Recreation and Park Board and the Hiram Beautification Committee. All the old ordinances need to be cleaned up; repealing the old and making one clean piece of legislation. Susan could check into this with the Village Solicitor.

The next regular meeting of the Hiram Recreation & Park Board will be on Friday, June 6, 2014 at 8:30 am.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sam Bixler and seconded by Susan Merrill. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Susan J. Skrovan, Fiscal Officer

Approved:  
Susan Merrill, Chairperson