

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, February 3, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Garfield Township
3848 Veterans Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684
Ph: (231) 941-1620

AGENDA

ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Call Meeting to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call of Board Members
Election of Officers**

1. Public Comment

Public Comment Guidelines:

Any person shall be permitted to address a meeting of The Parks and Recreation Commission, which is required to be open to the public under the provision of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as amended. (MCLA 15.261, et.seq.) Public Comment shall be carried out in accordance with the following Board Rules and Procedures: a.) any person wishing to address the Board is requested to state his or her name and address. b.) No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding time needed to answer Commissioner's questions. Where constrained by available time the Chairperson may limit the amount of time each person will be allowed to speak to (3) minutes. 1.) The Chairperson may at his or her own discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak. 2.) Whenever a Group wishes to address a Committee, the Chairperson may require that the Group designate a spokesperson; the Chairperson shall control the amount of time the spokesperson shall be allowed to speak when constrained by available time.

2. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Conflicts of Interest

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2024

4. Correspondence

5. Reports

- a. Commissioner Reports
- b. Staff Report / Updates
 - i. Parks Steward Report
 - ii. Mountain Biking Subcommittee – Update
 - iii. PD-2025-9 – Commons Natural Area Accessible Trail Grant Project – Update

6. New Business

- a. PD-2025-8 – 2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report

7. Public Comment

8. **Items for Next Agenda** – April 7, 2025

9. **Adjournment**

Garfield Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting to individuals with disabilities upon the provision of reasonable advance notice to Garfield Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Garfield Township by writing or calling Lanie McManus, Clerk, Ph: (231) 941-1620.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 2024**

Roll Call of Commission Members:

Present: Art Bukowski, Andy Hoort (6:12), William Scott, Fern Spence, and Chris DeGood

Absent and Excused: Chris Remy and Denise Schmuckal

Staff Present: Parks Steward Sean Kehoe and Deputy Planning Director Steve Hannon

Call to Order: Chair DeGood called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: Recited by all in attendance.

1. Public Comment (6:01)

Fern Spence indicated she will be stepping down from the Parks and Recreation Commission since she has been voted onto the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners.

2. Review and Approval of the Amended Agenda – Conflicts of Interest (6:06)

Bukowski moved and Spence seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Yeas: Bukowski, Spence, Scott, DeGood

Nays: None

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 7, 2024 (6:06)

Spence moved and Bukowski seconded to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2024 meeting as presented.

Yeas: Spence, Bukowski, Scott, DeGood

Nays: None

4. Correspondence (6:06)

None

5. Reports (6:07)

a. Commissioner Reports

None

b. Staff Report/Updates

i. Parks Steward Report (6:08)

Kehoe submitted his report in writing and added that staff met with the ISN (Invasive Species Network) to deal with invasive species in the Commons Natural Area and other parks. All parks have been

winterized and the River East dog park is being well used. He met with Sinclair Recreation about the playground at River East and the company indicated the playground may be ready by summer 2025.

Hannon indicated that the Township Board asked about the status of the 2024 parks projects, and the Township Board is preparing a 2025 budget with the priority parks projects identified by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

ii. **PD 2024-106 – Commons Natural Area Accessible Trail Grant Project – December 2024 Update**

Hannon stated that the Township Engineer, Gourdie-Fraser (GFA), is working on the final design for the trail and the grant agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) was completed. GFA is preparing draft bid documents for construction of this project. The MDNR must approve all documents before the bids can be formally let out. Other upcoming projects include the Copper Ridge trailhead construction, and engineering for the Red Drive trailhead.

Andrew Farron, mountain bike subcommittee member, said that a group ride took place, and that a small sign was installed in honor of the cyclist who recently passed away on the trail.

6. **Old Business**

None

7. **New Business (6:27)**

a. **2025 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Schedule**

Hoort moved and Scott seconded to adopt the 2025 meeting schedule.

Yeas: Hoort, Scott, Bukowski, Spence, DeGood

Nays: None

8. **Public Comment (6:30)**

Farron commented on safety issues with the bike trails in the Pines in the City of Traverse City and asked about the sledding hill at Silver Lake Recreation Area.

9. **Items for Next Agenda – February 3, 2025 (6:32)**

Items for the February 3, 2025 meeting include the 2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report.

10. **Adjournment**

DeGood to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 pm.



Charter Township of Garfield
Parks Report

Silver Lake Recreation Area

Working on quotes for driveway and parking lots crack seal, resurfacing, and striping.

No issues this year with driveway and winter driving. Flagging markers seems to be helping.

Small parking lot roped off for the winter.

Commons

Status quo. Graffiti and encampments down due to cold temperatures.

Cleared a couple smaller trees on trails near Copper Ridge.

Copper Ridge trailhead construction started before the snow hit. Good start by contractor.

River East

Bathroom permit submitted by contractor.

Got back on track with GFL and trash pick up.

Dog Park still busy through the winter.

Adjusted snow removal to accommodate more vehicles.

Have moved a few camps out from park property behind Good Will Inn.

We were notified by Sinclair Recreation that the playground set up that we have designed meets the criteria for Game Time (playground supplier) as a National Destination Site based on the 7 steps of play. Game Time is providing a sign with a QR code to be installed at the site that will allow the township to track metrics such as ages using it, how far people traveled to use it, daily use, etc. if people scan the code to answer the questions. The tracking and account are free to the township for meeting the criteria.

Boardman Valley

River froze last week and flooded things a bit to the south of the pickleball courts. Since has thawed and seems to be getting back to normal.

Trail remains cleared. No beaver issues to date.

Looking to replace some fencing this spring.

Miller Creek

Cleared some trees and a couple different occasions.

Got GFL back on schedule for trash removal at both locations.

No encampments to date and everything Cass Road side is still clean.

Kid's Creek

Status quo.

Trails are in good shape.

Oleson's pond is partially frozen over.

Buffalo Ridge Trail


Conservation Resource Alliance helped to get the replanting almost completed before snow hit. A little more to replant near trail by GWL. CRA advised that there are about 500 trees left to plant and they are adjusting the contract with the planter for him to finish in the spring.

Snow removal is going well along trail.

Submitted Jan. 27th , 2025

Derek Morton

Sean Kehoe

 Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2025-9		
Prepared:	January 27, 2025	Pages: 1
Meeting:	February 3, 2025 – Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	Commons Natural Area Accessible Trail Grant Project – February 2025 Update	

BACKGROUND:

In December 2023, Garfield Township was informed that its grant application for \$300,000 for an accessible trail at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area (Project No. TF23-0025) was recommended for funding by the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Board of Trustees. On October 8, 2024 an appropriations bill (Public Act 135 of 2024) was approved by the Governor which included \$300,000 for Garfield Township for the accessible trail at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The MDNR then issued the Project Agreement for this project. The Township Board passed a resolution on November 12, 2024 accepting the terms of this Project Agreement, and the MDNR fully executed the Project Agreement on November 22, 2024.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff offer the following information regarding the next steps for this project:

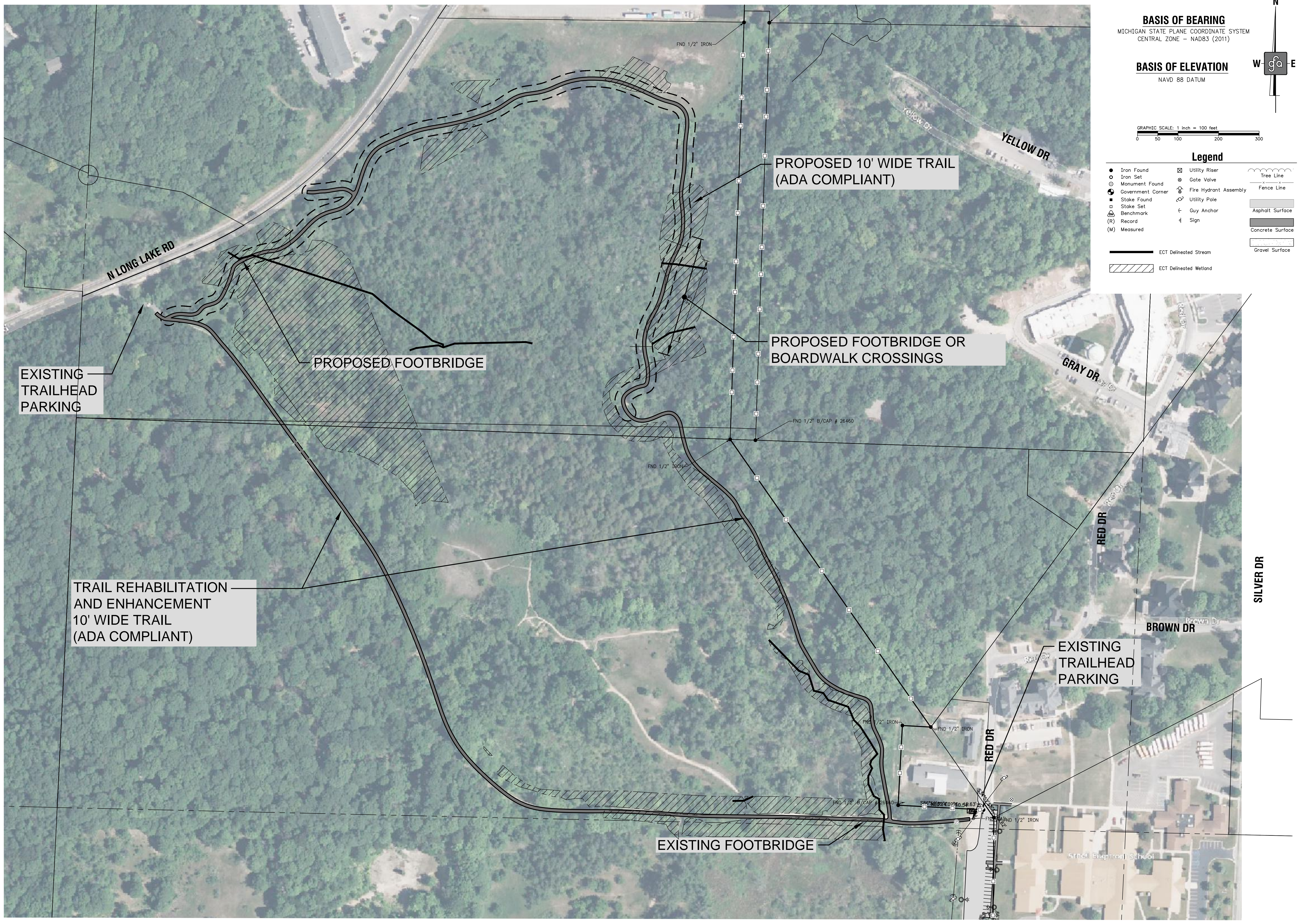
- The Township Engineer, Gourdie-Fraser (GFA), is working on the final design for the trail. The final design will attempt to minimize impacts on the wetlands and thus reduce the amount of boardwalk needed for the trail. Please see attached for a draft map of the trail and maps showing the wetland delineations.
- The final trail design will lead to the preparation of plans, specifications, and bid documents (PSB) for the project. According to MDNR, these documents are required for all projects and are required to be reviewed and approved by MDNR before advertising for bids or seeking quotes.
- Once the plans are finalized, the PSB documents and the wetland delineation will also be used when applying for wetland permits from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).
- Near-term future projects at the Commons Natural Area include design of the Red Drive trailhead and further trail projects in the southern half of the property. Any mountain biking trail projects will include input from the mountain biking subcommittee.

ACTION REQUESTED:

This item is for information only. No action is required.

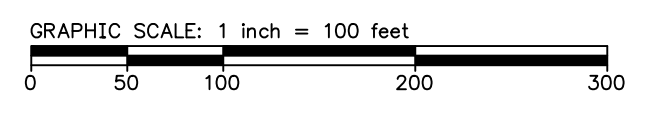
Attachments:

1. Proposed Trail Map – Gourdie-Fraser
2. Wetland Delineation Maps – Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT)



BASIS OF BEARING
MICHIGAN STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM
CENTRAL ZONE - NAD83 (2011)

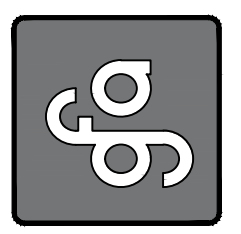
BASIS OF ELEVATION
NAVD 88 DATUM



Legend

● Iron Found	⊠ Utility Riser	~ Tree Line
○ Iron Set	⊗ Gate Valve	- Fence Line
○ Monument Found	⊕ Fire Hydrant Assembly	▒ Asphalt Surface
⊙ Government Corner	⊕ Utility Pole	▒ Concrete Surface
⊙ Stake Found	⊕ Guy Anchor	▒ Gravel Surface
⊙ Stake Set	⊕ Sign	
⊕ Benchmark		
(R) Record		
(M) Measured		
— ECT Delineated Stream		
▨ ECT Delineated Wetland		

<http://gfa.io>
 231.946.8874 (p)
 231.946.3708 (f)



ENGINEERING SURVEYING TESTING & OPERATIONS
123 West Front Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

REV#	DATE	BY	DESC

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF GARFIELD
GRAND TRAVERSE COMMONS NATURAL AREA
PROPOSED TRAIL MAP
 SECTION 9, TOWN 27 NORTH, RANGE 11 WEST
 GARFIELD TOWNSHIP, GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

PA: CHRIS LESTER, P.S.
 DATE: JPT
 CDR: CCL
24069
 SHT 1 OF 1

T:\PROJECTS\24069\24069\24069.DWG - COMMONS TRAIL MAP\24069.DWG (1/24/24) 2:58 PM STAVES

These documents are prepared in accordance with the contractual terms and conditions for this project.

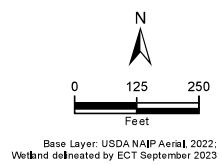
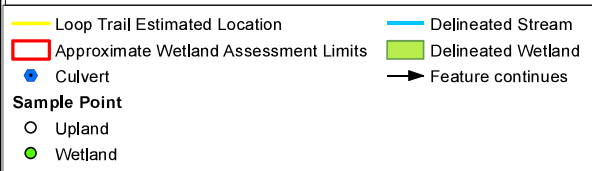
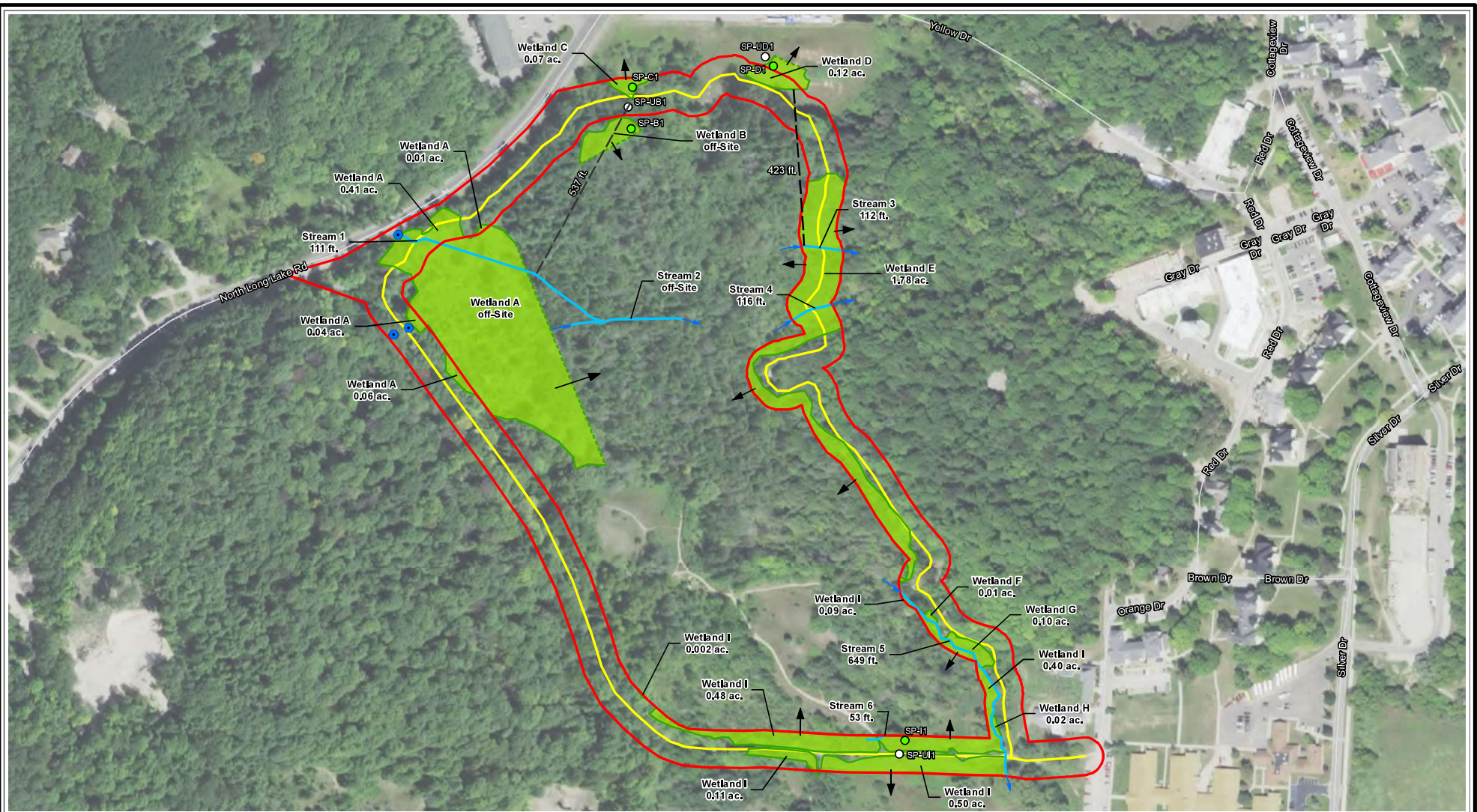


Figure 7
Overall Site Map
Commons Natural Area Loop Trail
Grand Traverse County, Michigan
Date: 9/21/2023

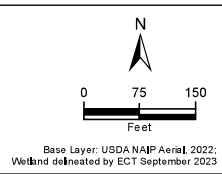
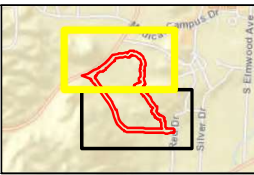
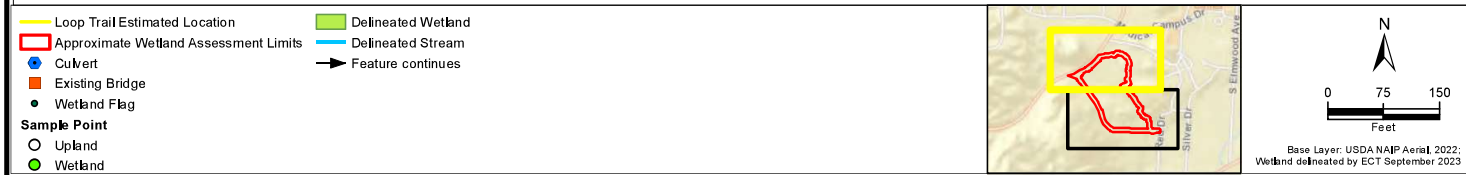


Figure 7a
Site Map Detail

Commons Natural Area Loop Trail
Grand Traverse County, Michigan

Date: 9/21/2023

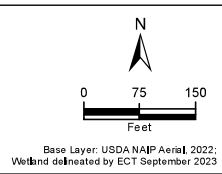
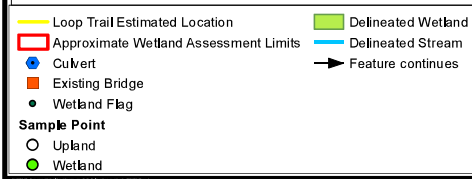
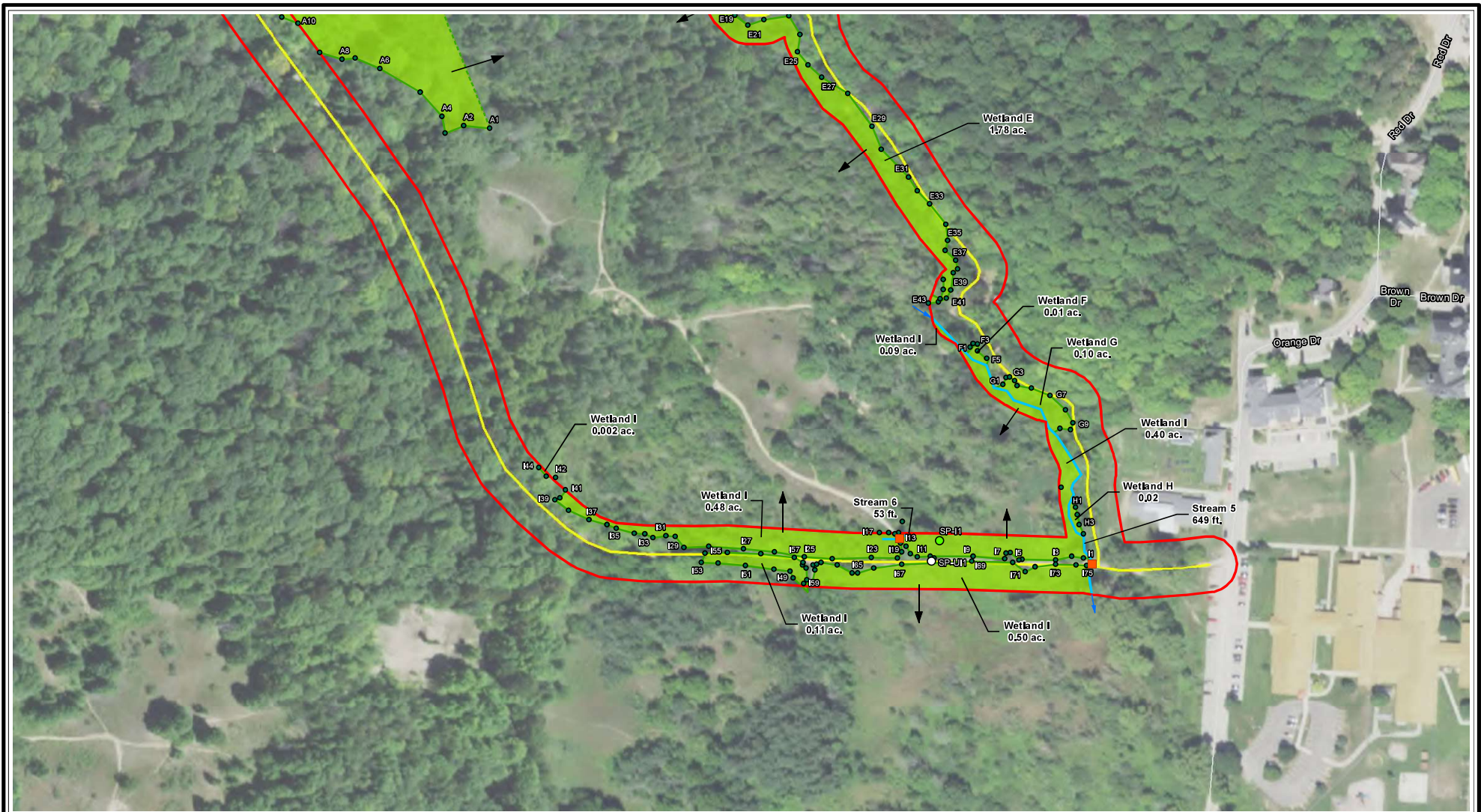



Figure 7b
Site Map Detail
Commons Natural Area Loop Trail
Grand Traverse County, Michigan
Date: 9/21/2023

		Charter Township of Garfield Planning Department Report No. 2025-8	
Prepared:	January 27, 2025	Pages:	6
Meeting:	February 3, 2025 Parks and Recreation Commission	Attachments:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject:	2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Annual Report		

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT:

The Garfield Township Parks and Recreation Commission is required to submit an annual written report to the Township Board concerning its operations and the status of parks and recreation activities.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION:

The Parks and Recreation Commission is the recommending body for policy decisions on the Township's parks and recreation system. The Commission holds meetings on a bi-monthly regular schedule to ensure they meet at least six times annually. These meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of the month. The Parks and Recreation Commission met six times in 2024 on February 5, April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7, and December 2 respectively. This scheduling format will continue in 2025.

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN:

The Township Board adopted the 2023-2027 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan on January 10, 2023. This Plan was approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) in February 2023 and allows the Township to maintain eligibility for MDNR grant programs including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). This Plan also includes the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan which guides development of recreational features within the Commons Natural Area. There were no amendments to the 2023-2027 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2024.

PARKLANDS OVERVIEW:***Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area:***

MNRTF Grant Application – In March 2023, the Township submitted an MNRTF grant application to the MDNR for \$300,000 for a trail improvement project at the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The application is for a 1.25-mile universally accessible (UA) trail loop as identified in the Commons Natural Area Design Plan. The Township was notified in December 2023 that this application was recommended for funding by the MNRTF Board of Trustees.

On October 8, 2024 an appropriations bill (Public Act 135 of 2024) was approved by the Governor which included \$300,000 for Garfield Township for this project. The MDNR issued the Project Agreement for this project. The Township Board passed a resolution on November 12, 2024 accepting the terms of this Project Agreement. The MDNR fully executed the Project Agreement on November 22, 2024.

The next steps for this project include the preparation of plans, specifications, and bid documents, which must be reviewed by MDNR as part of the process. Gourdie-Fraser, Township Engineer, is preparing the documents including adjusting the route to minimize disruption of wetlands. Previously completed steps for this project include the following:

- Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT) completed a wetland delineation of the site in 2023 to anticipate the impacts of wetland and stream crossings and for future permitting needs.
- Gourdie-Fraser conducted a boundary survey of the site in 2024 to identify where the work can be performed and to ensure the neighboring property owners' sites are respected.

Mountain Biking – In January 2023, the Parks and Recreation Commission created a subcommittee with a focus on issues related to mountain biking at Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area. The subcommittee provided input on the following topics:

- *Copper Ridge Trailhead* – The subcommittee provided feedback on the proposed design drawings for the Copper Ridge Trailhead project, including a connection to the existing shared-use trails on the site. Subcommittee members met onsite with Staff at the proposed project site and walked the route of the proposed trail, offering design suggestions to minimize conflicts between hikers and mountain bikers. The trail connection was completed in late 2024 / early 2025 before snowfall. Paving of the trailhead area is anticipated in spring 2025.
- *GIS Trail Mapping Data* – Parks and Recreation Commissioner and subcommittee member Chris Remy created digital data for the mountain bike area by walking all trails and using a GPS device to trace the route of the trail. He also created a map and shared it with the Parks and Recreation Commission. Staff uploaded the trail data into their GIS trail database for the Commons Natural Area and will use this data for future projects and planning.



GIS data for the mountain bike trails at Commons Natural Area

- *Signage* – The mountain bike group held a work bee on Sunday April 28, 2024 to install signage in the mountain bike trail area. The signs help mark names of the trails and identify trail crossing points. Early feedback indicated that both hikers and mountain bikers responded positively to the increased signage.

River East Recreation Area:

Dog Park – The newest amenity at River East Recreation Area, the dog park, opened in 2024 once grass had been established and was ready for use. The dog park is set up with one area for small dogs and two areas for large dogs. Only one large dog area will be open each year, allowing for grass to regrow for the other large dog area. Staff observed that the dog park was getting a lot of users and that they had received generally positive feedback. Benches were also installed in the dog park area. Photos of the dog park are included on the following page.



The dog park at River East Recreation Area opened in 2024

Playground – The Parks and Recreation Commission recommended, and the Township Board approved, purchasing a playground. The playground includes the main equipment and a curb barrier. Installation of the playground is expected in 2025.



A new playground structure will be installed at River East Recreation Area in 2025

Development of this park has been identified as a major near-term priority. Further discussion and public engagement will determine the direction and scope of any future projects. Future projects will include a paved trail loop and improvements and repairs to the nature trails. Potential projects include completing a trail loop along the northern part of the park and repairing trails along the bank of the Boardman-Ottaway River to address the issue of erosion.

Silver Lake Recreation Area (SLRA):

Pavilion and Multi-Purpose Athletic Field Reservations – The SLRA pavilions continue to be a popular amenity for reservations. The yearly amount collected in reservation fees is shown in the chart to the right. Garfield Township collected \$5,435 in reservation fees in 2024. This was an 8% decrease from 2023, but the past four years have seen higher reservation fee revenue than 2019 or 2020.



Reservation fee revenue has been tracked for Silver Lake Recreation Area up until this point. Starting in 2025, fee revenue will also be tracked for the pavilion at River East Recreation Area once the bathrooms are up and running.

Dog Park – The dog park remains a popular amenity with dog owners from across the region and receives regular ongoing maintenance due to its heavy usage. The Facebook group “East Silver Lake Dog Park” has almost 1,100 members as of this writing.

Flag Pole & Electrical Outlets – Silver Lake Recreation Area saw the installation of a new flag pole and electrical outlets added to Bill’s Pavilion. The flag pole and the materials for the electrical outlets were donated by Dan and Sue Walters; other individuals and entities collaborated to make this project a reality including Team Elmers, Alpers Excavating, Todd Bosscher, KV Electric, and the Robertson family.



A new flag pole was installed at Silver Lake Recreation Area

Boardman Valley Nature Preserve (BVNP):

This park continues to be a popular destination for the community, especially the pickleball courts. The Township and Traverse Area Pickleball Association (TAPA) have an agreement for TAPA to manage the online reservation system for the pickleball courts. Staff received a quote in 2024 for a project involving the resurfacing of the courts and a contract was secured based on this quote. The project is anticipated for late spring 2025.

Kids Creek Park:

A volunteer group from the Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA) / Trout Unlimited at the Brook Trout Coalition helped clean up around the kids fishing pond as well as repaired fencing and handrails. Oleson Pond continues to be stocked with fish in the spring, with about 200 rainbow trout stocked in spring 2024 and Staff observing that several bluegills were still in the pond from the spring 2023 stocking. The pond is frequented by many users for fishing throughout the spring and summer.

Miller Creek Nature Reserve:

This park and hiking trail system continues to be well-used, especially by nearby residents. Staff repaired and replaced parts of the boardwalk on the trail and worked with volunteers to clean up wind-blown trash.

HUNTING:

Hunting is currently allowed at Boardman Valley Nature Preserve, Miller Creek Nature Reserve, and River East Recreation Area with a Township permit during hunting season. The Township issued 39 hunting permits to 26 different people in 2024. The chart to the right shows the total number of hunting permits and number of hunters since 2020.

Year	Number of Hunting Permits	Number of Hunters
2024	39	26
2023	25	15
2022	25	16
2021	27	15
2020	18	12

PARKLAND ORDINANCE:

The Parkland Ordinance (Township Ordinance No. 50) provides for operating rules and regulations for, and to apply to, all Parkland under the jurisdiction of the Charter Township of Garfield. The most recent amendment to the Parkland Ordinance was adopted on June 23, 2020. No amendments to this Ordinance were considered or adopted in 2024.

OTHER:

Volunteer Activities – Many volunteers regularly assist the Township on projects including tree planting, invasive species removal, and general cleanup. The Township appreciates everyone who volunteers their time to help keep the parks clean and maintained for the community!

CONCLUSION:

Looking ahead to 2025, Staff anticipate the following for Parks and Recreation in the Township:

- For the Commons Natural Area accessible trail project, the next step is to finalize the trail route to minimize impacts on the wetlands before applying for EGLE permits. The Township Engineer is working on this as part of the final design. The final design documents will need to be reviewed and approved by MDNR before going out to bid, which is anticipated for spring 2025.
- Near-term future projects at the Commons Natural Area include design of the Red Drive trailhead and further trail projects in the southern half of the property. Any mountain biking trail projects will include input from the mountain biking subcommittee.

- The River East Recreation Area will most likely see two major additions in 2025 with the arrival of bathrooms and a playground. Both the bathrooms and playground have been ordered and are anticipated for installation in 2025.

The 2023-2027 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including the Grand Traverse Commons Natural Area Design Plan, will continue to guide the annual list of parks priority projects as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission and approved by the Township Board of Trustees.

ACTION REQUESTED:

That the Parks and Recreation Commission review this report and request any changes prior to directing Staff to forward it to the Board of Trustees. If Commissioners are satisfied with this annual report, then the following motion is suggested:

THAT THE Parks and Recreation Commission 2024 Annual Report as presented in Planning Department Report 2025-8 BE RECEIVED and FILED and FORWARDED to the Township Board.