2012- 2017

Sparta Community Recreation Plan

Developed jointly by the Village of Sparta & Sparta Township

Sparta Community Recreation Plan
2012-2017
For the
Village of Sparta & Sparta Township

Adopted by Sparta Township February 9, 2012
Adopted by Sparta Village February 13, 2012

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the Sparta Community Recreation Plan, 2012-2017, was made to develop the recreational facilities for the whole Sparta Community. The efforts of the Village of Sparta and Sparta Township are to coordinate recreational facilities for the Sparta community to create a better understanding of current park and recreation needs within the current and future demographic and physical context of the community. This included taking into consideration community zoning for future growth, environmental benefits of the watershed protection and green infrastructure, avoiding duplication of recreational facilities and expenses, controlling land development with consideration to municipal water, sewer, and existing infrastructure to create a recreational plan that will best serve the entire region.

The planning process began with a public invitation to Village and Township residents to review and comment upon the recreation needs and wants of the community. A draft plan was organized by the executive Village Parks & Recreation Committee to analyze public responses through several methods of data collection to create a plan for the community to review. A final plan was presented to the Village Council and Township Board for final approval and adoption after a public hearing giving the Sparta Residents the opportunity to discuss and comment the final draft plan. The plan was also submitted to Kent County and to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION SECTION

The Community Description Section of the Plan provides an overview of the community's location and boundaries. This plan is prepared jointly by the Village of Sparta and Sparta Township to serve its residents and the neighboring communities such as Village of Kent City, Village of Casnovia, Wright Township, Village of Conklin, Alpine Township, and Algoma Township.

Regional Location of the Sparta Community

The Sparta community is located approximately 10 miles north of the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. The community is a rural community with unique natural glacial resources that provided an optimum location for the growth and production of fruit tree crops. Our community serves as home for many commuters to the Grand Rapids and surrounding areas. A regional location map is shown on the following page.

Village of Sparta and Sparta Township

The Sparta community is comprised of two primary governmental units.

The Village of Sparta is the central business district, commercial districts, the location of the public school system, and residential neighborhoods. The Village area includes 1.9 square miles with approximately 4,100 residents living within the Village limits.

Sparta Township surrounds the Village. The Township is comprised primarily of agricultural lands and rural residential sites. The maps within this section include both the Township and the Village limits.

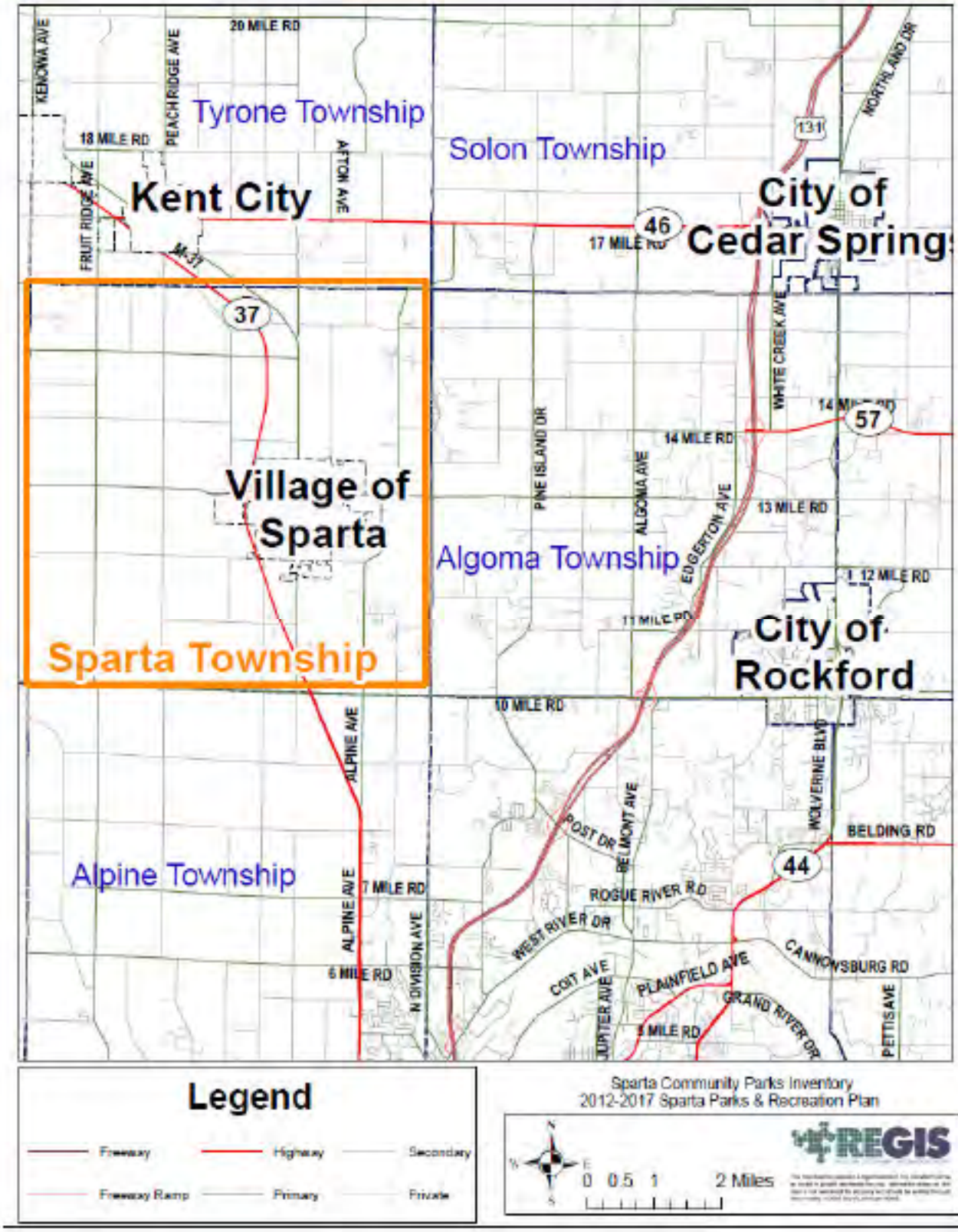
The recreation plan includes all aspects of recreation including natural resource areas, sports complex, greenways, and community parks for the Village of Sparta. Sparta Township is zoned for agricultural preservation with an emphasis of development near the Village limits. The parks and recreational opportunities are focused within the Village limits, for central use of the entire Township and Village community.

Volunteers

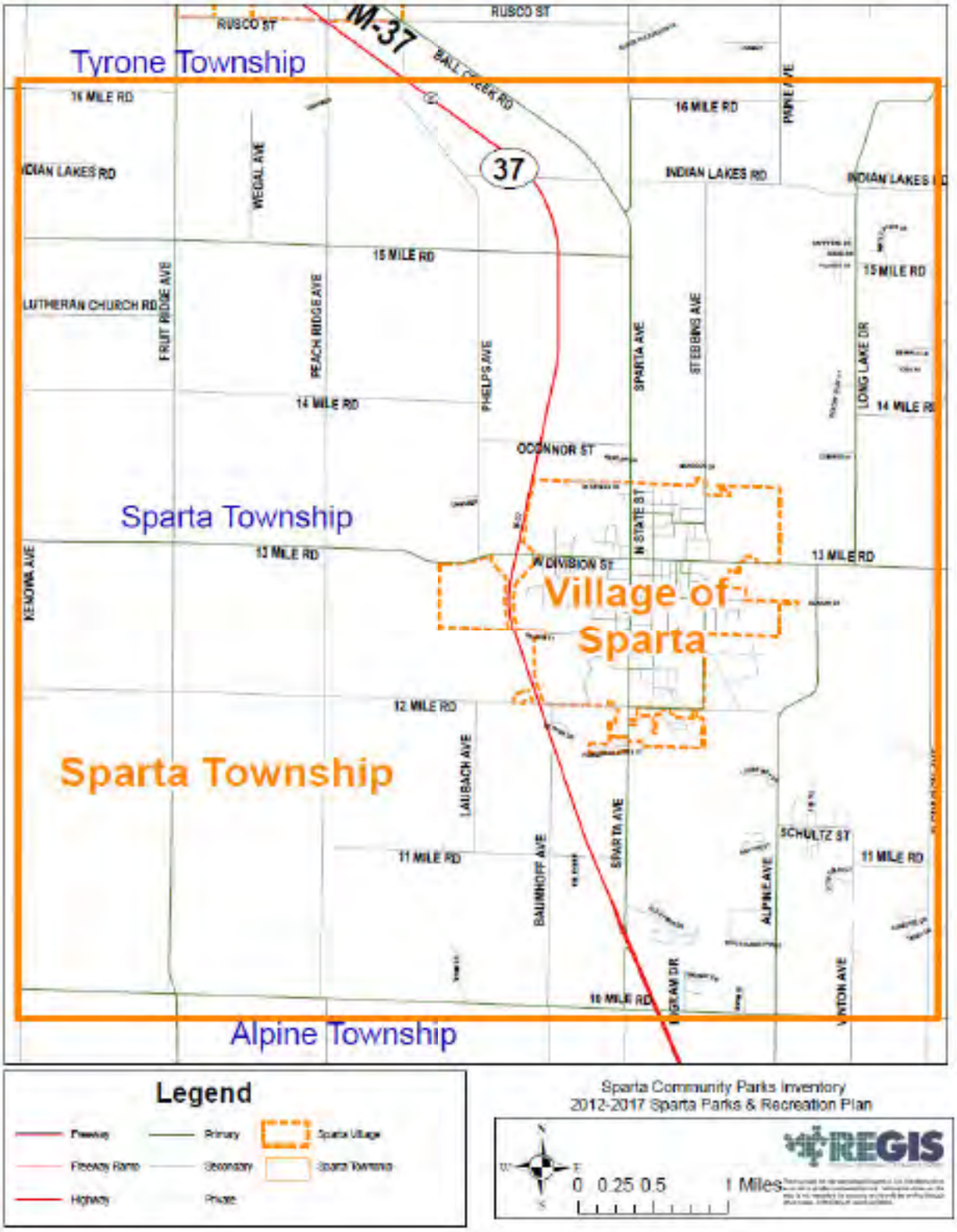
Organizations in our community are teamed together to provide park and recreation programs for the community. The Sparta Chamber of Commerce hosts free concerts in Rogers Park for the community. Sparta Rotary Club has partnered with Junior Rotarians at the High School for annual Creek and Park Cleanup activities. The Sparta Soccer League which consists of approximately 250 players each year has taken the responsibility for physical maintenance at Balyeat Park where the soccer fields are located. Sparta Little League Baseball and Softball organizations have maintenance responsibility over the ball diamonds at Buth Field and Nash Park.

The Sparta Area Community Schools provides facilities for use by the area residents for programs offered through Community Education, as well as play fields for the youth sports. The School District provides the funds that maintains and operates these facilities.

Sparta Regional Map



Sparta Township Limits & Sparta Village Limits



ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Administrative Section provides an overall background of governmental operation of the Village and the Township. This information includes the government structure, elected officials, organizational structure, financials, and the support of the parks and recreation activities.

Village of Sparta- Administrative Structure
The Village of Sparta is a General Law Village established in 1883 with an elected Village President and a six member Village Council. The Village President and Village Council Members at the time of this writing are:

Leonard "Skip" Meyer, II	Village President
Robert Whalen	Village Council
Kristi Dougan	Village Council
Todd Johnson	Village Council
William Taylor	Village Council
Paul Hibbard	Village Council
Gary Moody	Village Council

The Village Council is chaired by the Village President. The Council approves all Village budgets, adopts ordinances, and oversees the policies regarding the operation of the Village.

The Village offices are located at 156 E. Division, in downtown Sparta.

Village Manager
The Village Council appoints a full-time Village Manager as a Village employee to implement the actions of the Village Council. The Village Manager is responsible for the management of the Village staff, prepares and oversees the spending of the yearly budget, and implements the policies set by the Council.

The Village employs a staff of 26 persons.

Organizational Chart
An organizational chart representing the operation of the Village, including Parks and Recreation functions is shown on the following page.

Parks and Recreation Department
The parks within the Village are maintained by the Department of Public Works staff. Three Public Works staff persons provide part time care of the park properties year round.

Programming

Sparta Village does not offer any recreational programming through its offices. Community programs are offered through Sparta Area Schools Community Education, Local Non-profit Organizations such as Sparta Little League, Sparta Youth Soccer, and other programs.

Annual Budgets

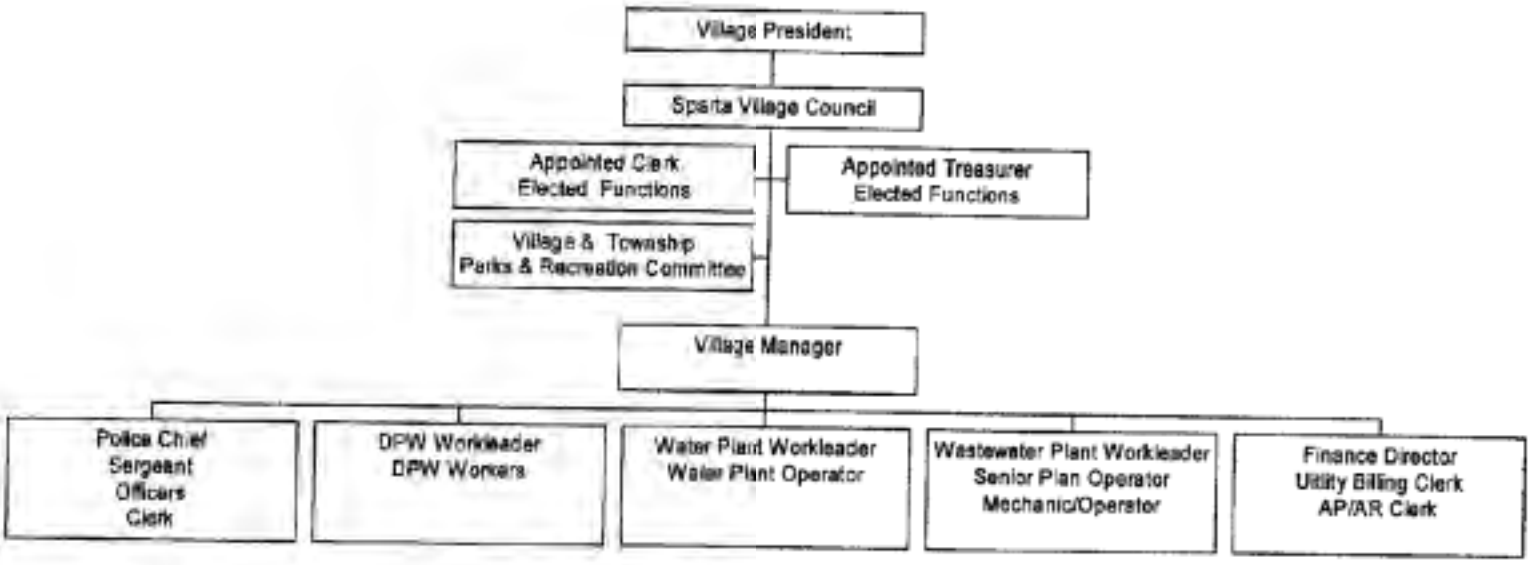
The Village has an annual general fund budget for the year 2012 of $1,543,126. Within this budget, $57,022.50 was allocated for the Parks Department in 2012. These funds include expenses for items such as lawn and garden maintenance, supplies, and capital outlay. Additional capital outlay is provided when desired by fund transfers within the budget by the Village Council. The projected annual budget for parks operation and maintenance are assessed on a yearly basis.

Sources of Funding

Funding for the park and recreation budget is also supplied by the Sparta Downtown Development Authority, (DDA), which has an annual budget of $234,560. Funds from the DDA are eligible for spending within the parks and trails that lie within the DDA district which include Rogers and Balyeat Park.

Other sources of funding for park and recreation development projects come from the Sparta Community Foundation, the Sparta Chamber of Commerce, the Sparta Rotary Club, and other organizations and businesses in the Sparta area.

Village Organization Chart



Sparta Township - Administrative Structure

Sparta Township was established in 1846 and has an elected structure that is comprised of a Township Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and four Trustees. These members at the time of the writing of this document are:

Dale Bergman	Supervisor
Sue Bitely	Clerk
Rachel Shangle	Treasurer
John Fynewever	Trustee
William Goodfellow	Trustee
Robert Maier	Trustee
Robert Steffens	Trustee

The Township offices are located at 160 E. Division in the Village of Sparta. The Township building is located directly adjacent to the Sparta Village Offices. The Township employs 6 staff persons. The staff members are as follows:

Marcy Savage	Deputy Clerk
Clifford Turner	Assessor
Albert Hale	Cemetery Sexton
Casey Patterson	Building Inspector
Robert Maier	Zoning Enforcement
Charles Mead	Grave Digger

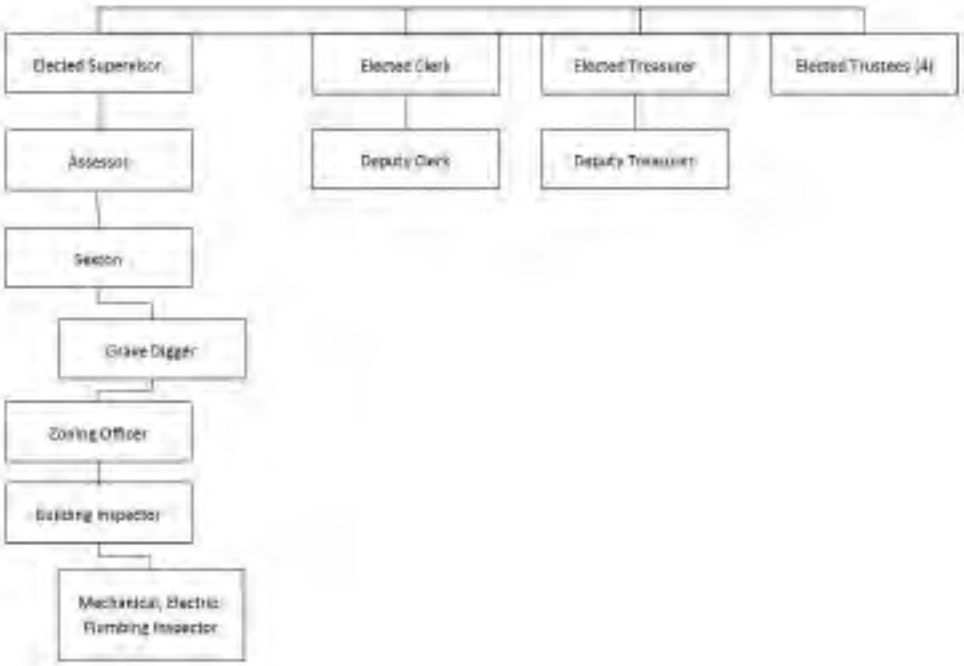
Care of Library Memorial Park

The care of Library Memorial Park, the Township's only park, is the responsibility of the Township.

Township General Fund Budget

The Township General Fund Budget for the fiscal year 2012 is $ 940,337. Library Park maintenance is part of a $10,000 budget item for building and grounds at the library.

Township Organization Chart



RECREATION INVENTORY

The Recreation Inventory Section of the plan provides an overall inventory and review of the existing park properties and facilities available. Additionally, this section provides an overview of existing Village Parks, the Township Park, and an ADA assessment of the existing park facilities. A map of the recreation facilities and opportunities for the Sparta is shown on the following pages.

The recreation inventory for the community parks and recreational facilities are summarized below. The Village Department of Public Works Supervisor, head of the Parks Department, categorizes and reports improvement and needs for each park area within the Village of Sparta each year. These details are used when budgeting the following year Parks Department budget line item including maintenance, repair, improvement, and other associated costs with the parks.

There are currently seven Village owned parks and one Township owned park within the Sparta Community. On the page immediately following is a park location map with each park shown.

Park and Recreation Area Inventory:

Buth Field, 6 acres

Buth Field is located on the east end of the Village south of Division Street behind the commercial properties which face Division Street. The six acre park includes a parking area and a Little League ball diamond. The remainder of the site is undeveloped, which extends to Nash Creek. This park hosts ball games to the Sparta, Algoma, and Alpine Township Little League organizations.
Accessibility assessment: Buth Field meets most of the facilities/ park accessibility guidelines.

Lamoreaux Park, 2.69 Acres

Lamoreaux Park, a neighborhood park, encompasses a small city block located within a neighborhood on the west side of Sparta. The park is defined by four city streets on each side. The park is an active neighborhood park, memorial site for veterans, and a T-Ball game location. The facilities include a T-ball/ neighborhood ball diamond, a picnic shelter, several pieces of play equipment, a drinking fountain, and open lawn play space. This park serves the entire Township and Village residential area.
Accessibility assessment: Lamoreaux Park meets most of the facilities/ park accessibility guidelines.

Nash Park, 10 acres

Nash Park a neighborhood park located in the northeast corner of the Village. The park has one little League ball diamond and an informal parking area. The remaining park is an informal green space and nature area. This park currently serves the Village and Township area.
Accessibility assessment: Nash Park meets some of the facilities/ park accessibility guidelines.

Spartan Park, 1.01 Acres

Spartan Park is a mini-park located in a populated neighborhood in the Southeast central region of the Village of Sparta. Two sides of the park are surrounded by residential homes, while the other two sides are commercial and industrial. This neighborhood park has an enclosed skateboard obstacle course, playground equipment, and basketball court. Accessibility assessment: Spartan Park meets most of the accessibility guidelines.

Rogers Park, 4.7 Acres

Rogers Park is a large urban park located within the downtown business district and along Nash Creek between State Street and Union Street. The park encompasses both sides of Nash Creek, but the majority of the property is on the south side of the creek. New facilities include a large band shell and cement performance area, playground equipment, paved walking trails throughout the park and along Nash Creek, Volleyball courts, Swing set and parking area. This park serves the entire township and village areas, in addition to surrounding communities.

Accessibility assessment: the entire park meets accessibility guidelines.

Balyeat Field, 6.88 Acres

Balyeat Field is an undeveloped large urban park located on the east side of Union Street, north of Nash Creek, and south of Olmstead Street. Balyeat Field was once the site of the old high school football field. It is now the location of two soccer fields and a paved parking lot. The soccer fields are used extensively by the Sparta Youth Soccer for practices and games in addition to adult soccer leagues and unorganized soccer pick-up games. A bridge crosses Nash Creek at the south end of the park, which connects the park to the Central Business District and Library Memorial Park.

Accessibility assessment: Balyeat Field meets some of the facilities/ park accessibility guidelines.

Library Memorial Park, .85 Acres

Library Memorial Park is a mini-park owned and maintained by Sparta Township but located within the Village limits. It is located adjacent to the Sparta Township Carnegie Library on the south side of Nash Creek on Union Street. The park has a pathway that extends along the south side of Nash Creek and connects to the bridge that crosses over into Balyeat Field. This park serves as a memorial those who lost a loved one during the September 11, 2001 tragedy. This park hosts sculptures dedicated by members of the Sparta community in honor or memory of their family members who played a significant role in the Sparta community.

Accessibility assessment: Library Memorial Park meets most of the accessibility guidelines.

Sparta Nature Trail/ Undeveloped Park, 103 Acres

The Village owns 103 acres of land at the end of the community on the north side of E. Division Street (13 Mile Rd). The parcel is along the Rogue River and is comprised predominately of wetland soils and plant materials. Currently a volunteer group is working to create an unimproved nature path on the dry pieces of the property for nature walks and sightseeing currently named the Sparta Nature Trail.
Accessibility assessment: Undeveloped Park meets none of the accessibility guidelines.

New Proposed Park, .2 acres

At the intersection of Gunn Street and River Avenue in the northeast region of the Village is a small-undeveloped mini park. The space is currently open lawn space maintained by the village that could be maintained as a mini-park for the area. Accessibility Assessment: The New Proposed Park currently meets none of the accessibility guidelines.

Sparta Park Inventory
NASH PARK
ROGERS PARK
GREENWOOD CEMETERY
PROPOSED PARK
BETTES MEMORIAL PARK
Nature Trail
LIBRARY PARK
BALYEAT FIELD
BUTH FIELD
LAMOREAUX PARK
SPARTAN PARK
FAIRPLAINS CEMETERY
Sparta High School
Sparta Middle School
Appleview Elementary School
Ridgeview Elementary School
White Early Childhood Center
SPARTA AVE
W STATE ST
E ALMA ST
W DIVISION ST
E DIVISION ST
13 MILE RD
S ELM ST
S ASPEN ST
PROSPECT ST
E GARDNER ST
S UNION ST
S STATE ST
GLENN ST
12 MILE RD
MARTINDALE DR
ALPINE AVE
37
M-37
Legend
Parks
Sparta Village
Rivers & Streams
Sparta Township
Sparta Community Parks Inventory
2012-2017 Sparta Parks & Recreation Plan
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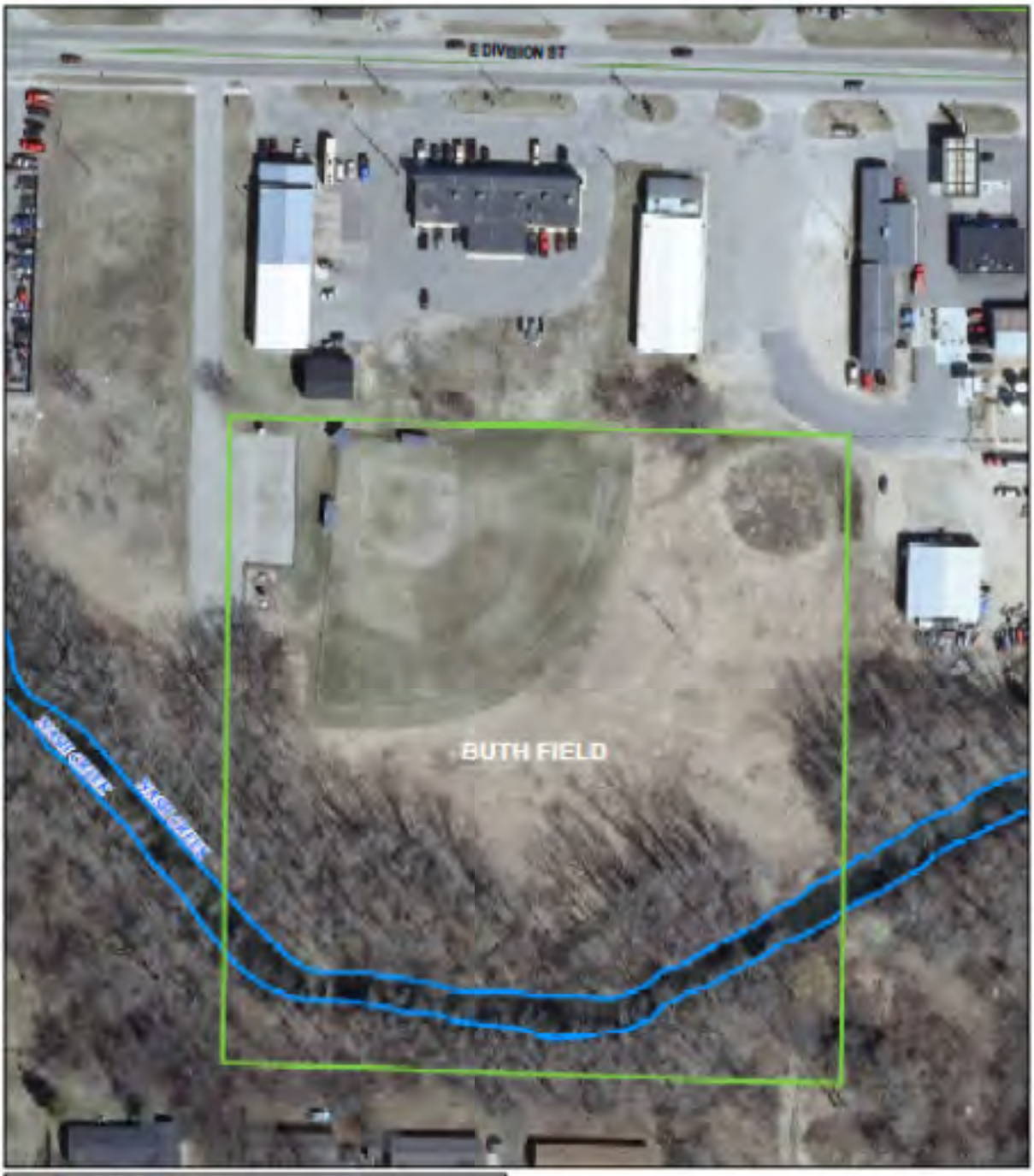
S
0 5001,000 2,000 Feet
REGIS

Sparta Park Inventory - Buth Field



Legend

Parks

Rivers & Streams

Sparta Community Parks Inventory
2012-2017 Sparta Parks & Recreation Plan

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REGIS

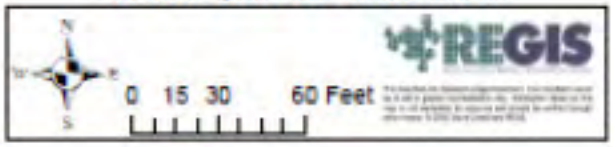
Sparta Park Inventory - Lamoreaux Park

Legend

Parks

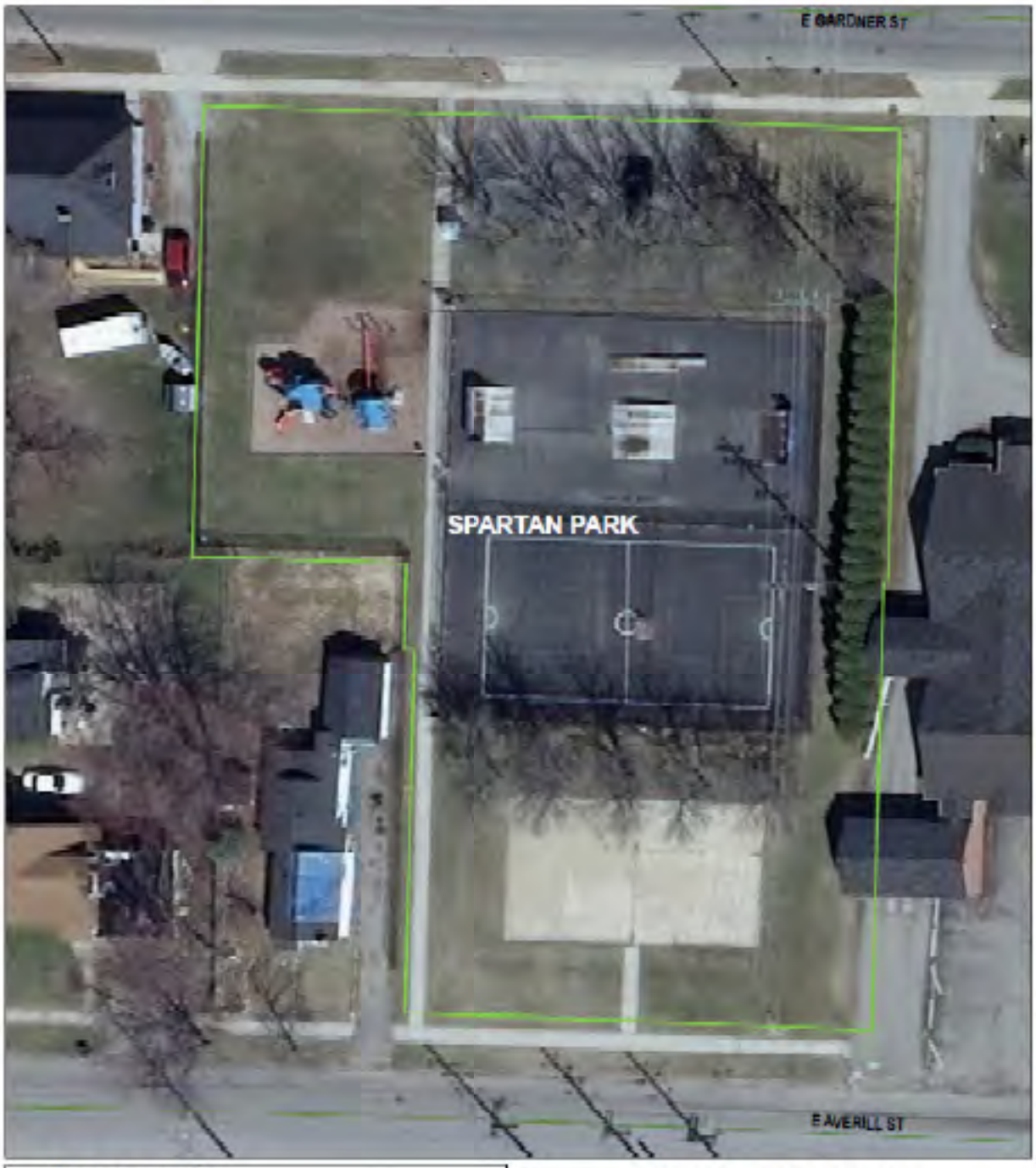
Rivers & Streams

Sparta Community Parks Inventory
2012-2017 Sparta Parks & Recreation Plan



Sparta Park Inventory - Nash Park

Sparta Park Inventory - Spartan Park



Legend

Parks

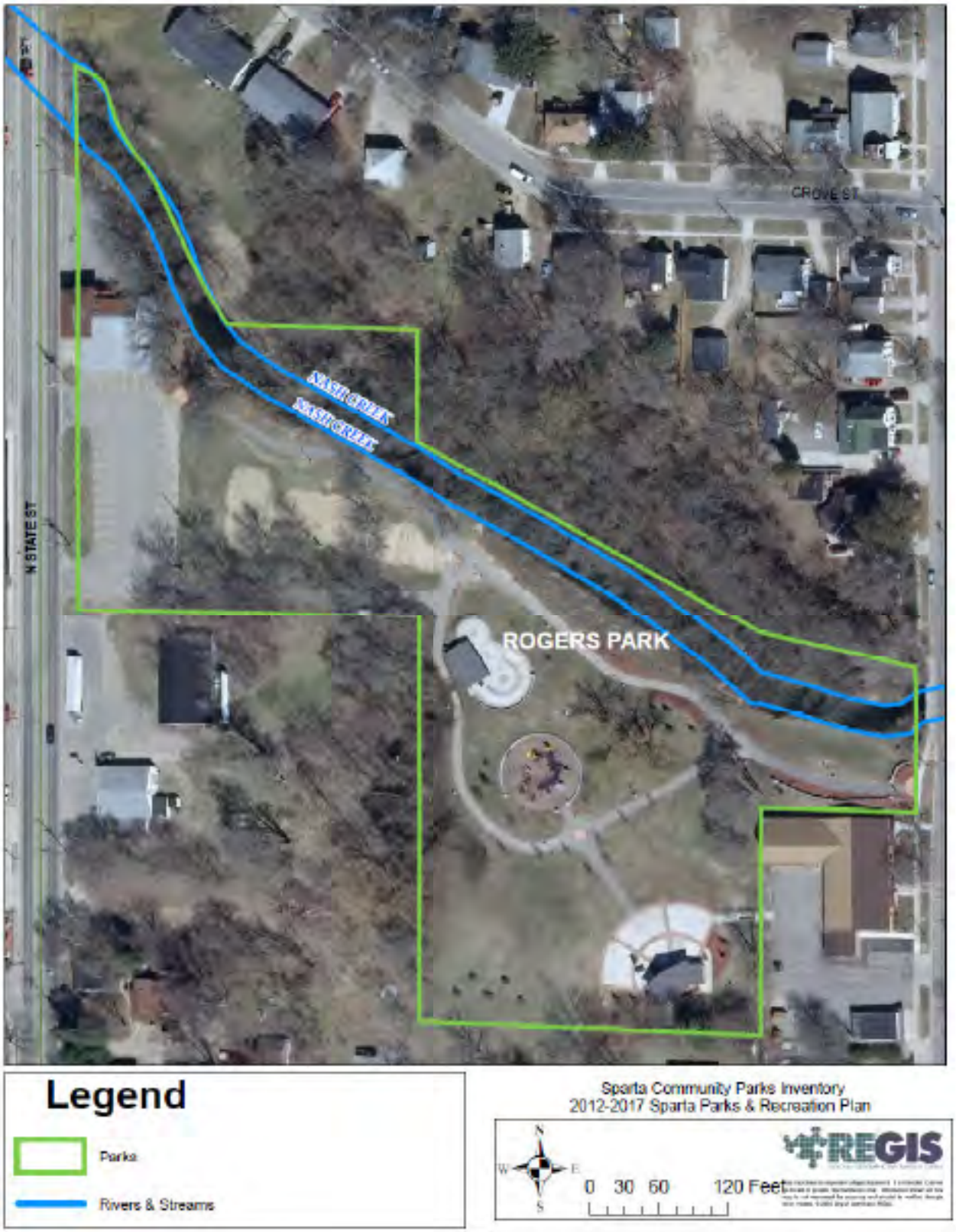
Rivers & Streams

Sparta Community Parks Inventory
2012-2017 Sparta Parks & Recreation Plan

N W E S 0 10 20 40 Feet

REGIS

Sparta Park Inventory - Rogers Park



Sparta Park Inventory - Balyeat Field & Library Park

Legend

- Parks
- Rivers & Streams

Sparta Community Parks Inventory
2012-2017 Sparta Parks & Recreation Plan

0 25 50 100 Feet

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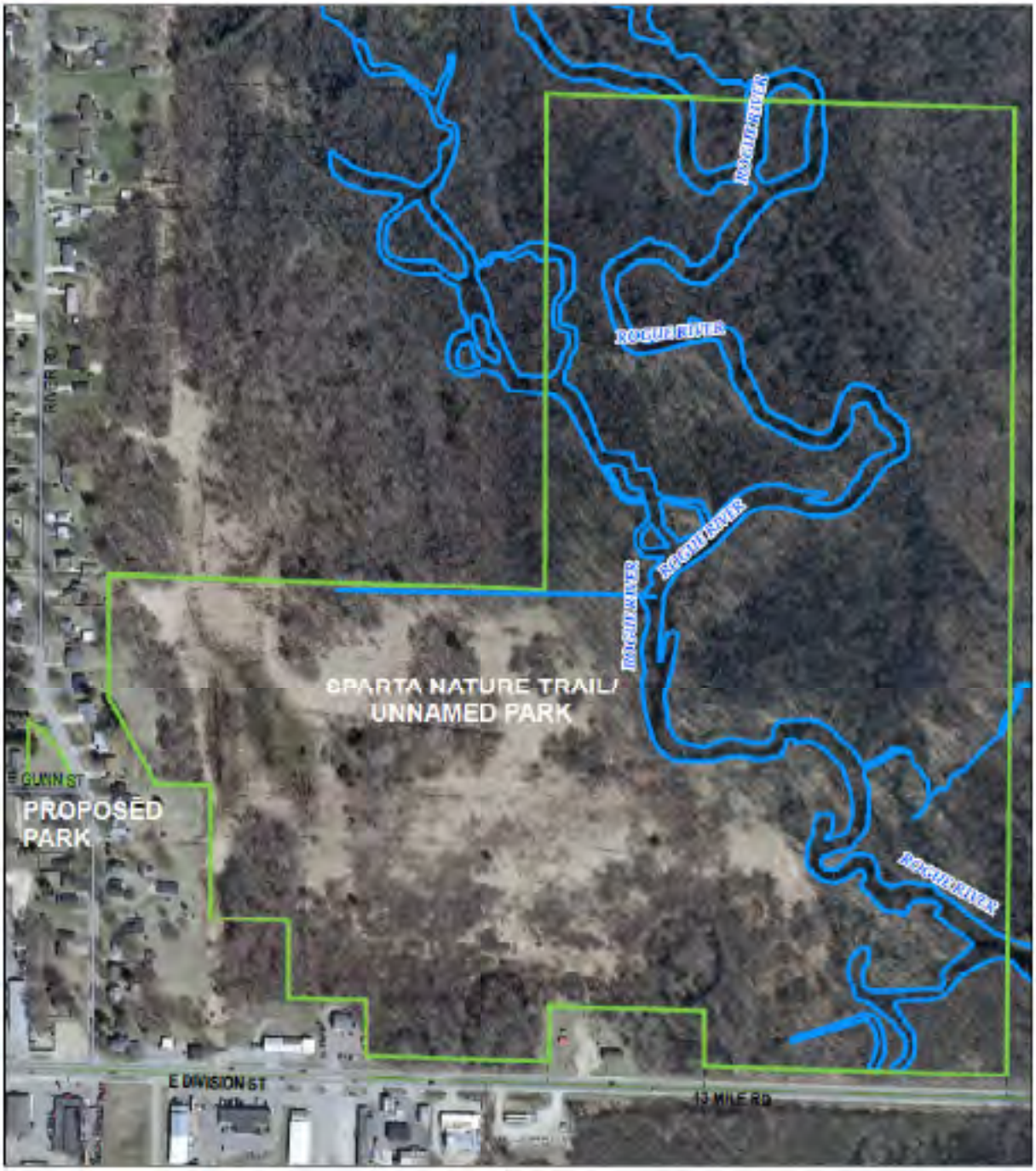
Sparta Park Inventory - Nature Trail/ Unnamed & Proposed



Legend

- Parks
- Rivers & Streams

Sparta Community Parks Inventory
2012-2017 Sparta Parks & Recreation Plan

N W E S 0 100 200 400 Feet

REGIS

DNR RECREATION GRANT INVENTORY

This section is to report the status of all Grant-Assisted Parks and Recreation Facilities as funded by the Department of Natural Resources.

Grants Management
Department of Natural Resources

Monday, December 12, 2011

Recreation Grant History

Applicant

Village of Sparta

Project No. 26-01060 U2 **Project Year: 1978**

Project Title: Ballfield Development

Project Status: Closed **Grant Amount: $15,109.50**

Project Description: One softball field, player benches, LWCF sign

Project No. TF92-275 **Project Year: 1992**

Project Title: Rogue River Park Acquisition

Project Status: Closed **Grant Amount: $33,750.00**

Project Description: Acquisition of 103 acres along the Rogue River for a natural area with fishing access to a state designated trout stream.

Project No. BF92-276 **Project Year: 1992**

Project Title: Sparta Creekside Park

Project Status: Closed **Grant Amount: $41,000.00**

Element

Concrete Walkway
8 Lighting Fixtures
Wiring for Fixtures
Landscaping
9 Benches
Picnic Pavilion

Project Description: Construction of 655 feet of walkway along Nash Creek with associated lighting, benches and a picnic pavilion.

Project No. TF93-327 **Project Year: 1993**

Project Title: Rogue River Park Acquisition

Project Status: Withdrawn **Grant Amount: $14,600.00**

Project Description: Acquisition of 11.06 acres which compliment a previous acquisition grant application of 103 acres along the Rogue River.

PLANNING METHODS

This section is a description of the planning methods used to assess the park, recreation, and open space needs for the Sparta community.

The Village of Sparta is a bedroom community to Michigan's second largest city, Grand Rapids. The Village is a family centered community encompassing a large range of age demographics with many families with children and also many older adults. The needs of these residents based on the recreation facilities currently available to the residents include sports fields/ complex and leisure recreation activities such as greenway walking paths and benches.

The Village of Sparta is a low-moderate income community. Therefore, cost conscious public recreation opportunities are beneficial for this community. Cost-controlled recreation programs available to the community include, but are not limited to Little League Baseball and Softball and Youth Soccer programs that utilize the Village Baseball and Softball fields. Without the Village ownership and maintenance of these fields, the cost could potentially be passed onto the organizations and the rate of increased fees for these programs would inhibit many families from participating. Other opportunities for residents in the community to enjoy are walking paths in Rogers Park and Memorial park around Nash Creek which are kept snow and debris free all year long.

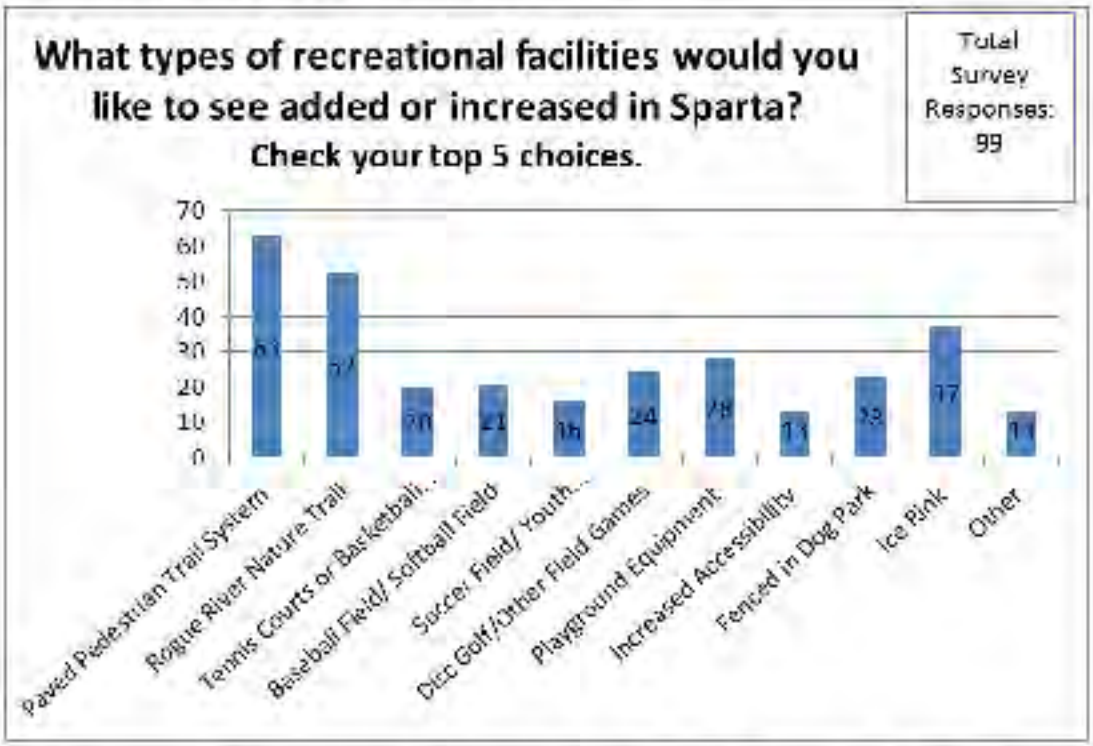
A comparison to the recreation standards was used to analyze the existing recreation opportunities within the community with the community's needs. A list of what the community currently has for recreational opportunities follows:

Volleyball Courts	T-ball field	Walking paths
Basketball Court	Playground Equipment	Bandshell
Baseball Fields	Tennis Court	Gazebo
Softball Field	Skate Park	Natural areas

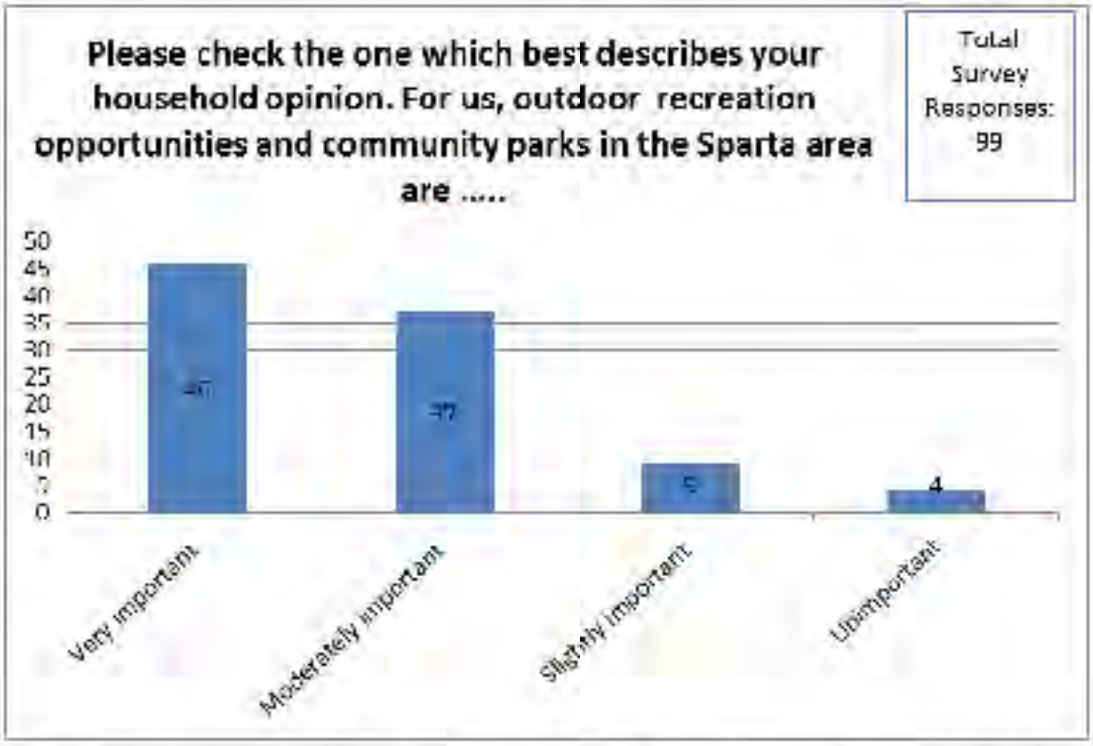
2012 Public Input Responses

The public was encouraged to participate in expressing their feedback at a community workshop, multiple classroom student surveys & focus groups, community wide survey, community forum with local youth-focused athletic programs, and feedback using social media tools such as Facebook. Nearly 100 surveys were returned, 75 students participated in the forum, several youth athletic associations participated and 45 community members in the community workshop. A summary of the requests and results from those findings follow.

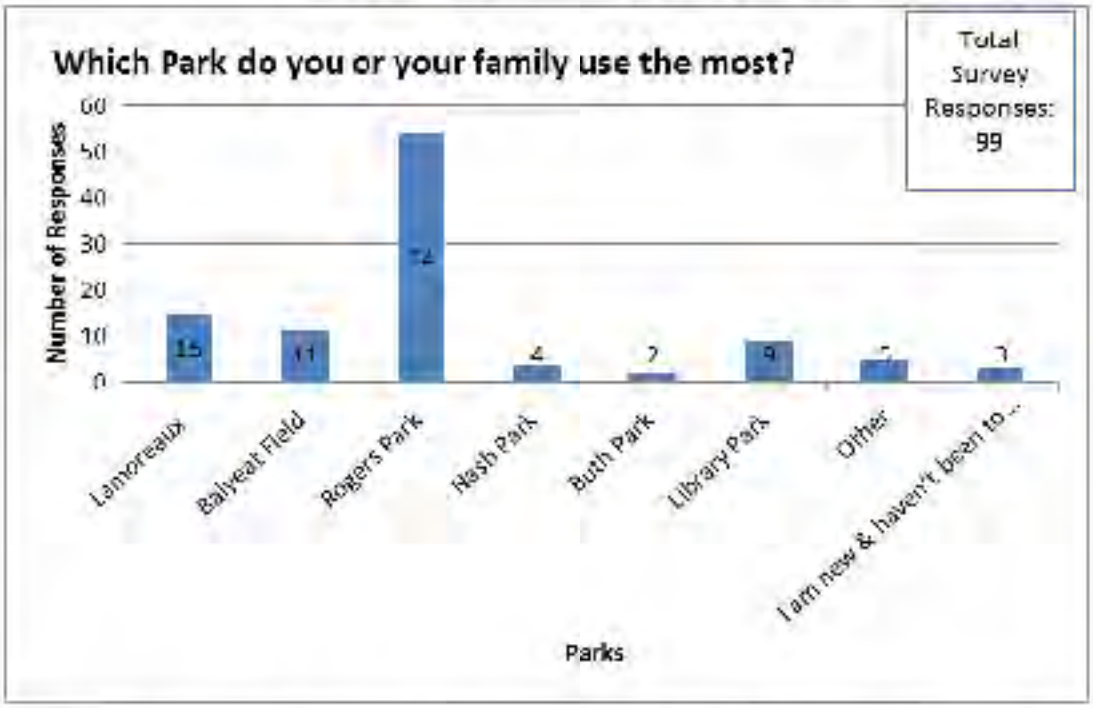
Community 2012 Survey Results:



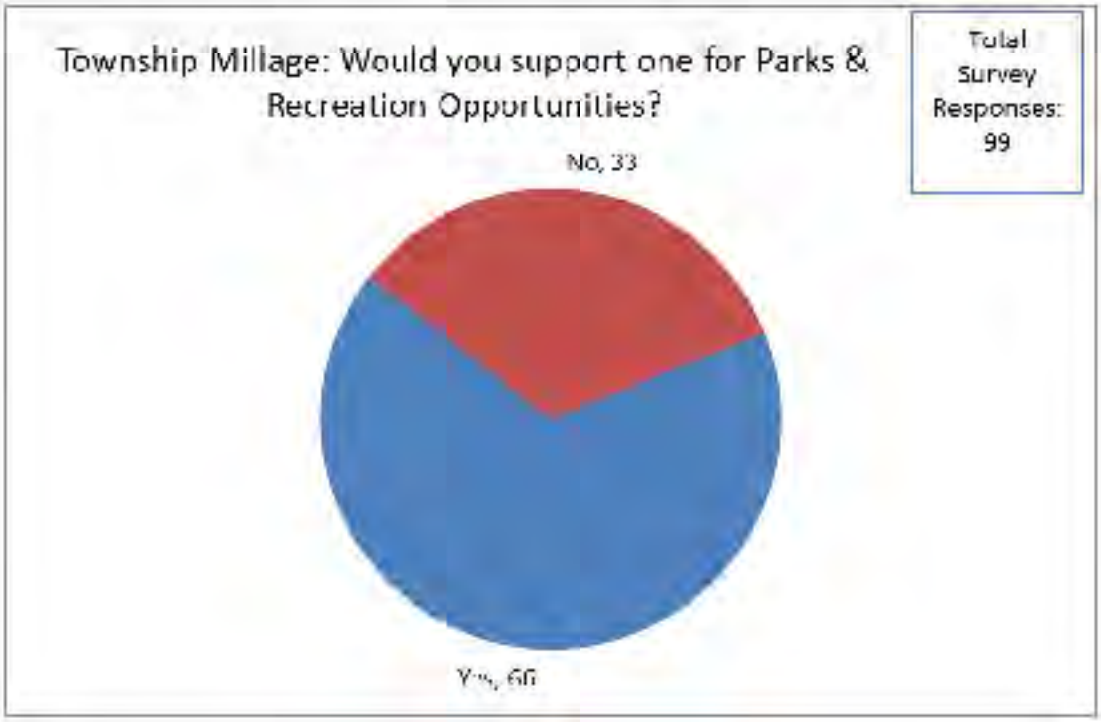
Trail systems were the top two types of recreation opportunities that survey results suggested needed to be increased. The next top three needs to be increased included Ice Rink, Play Ground, and Disc Golf type games.



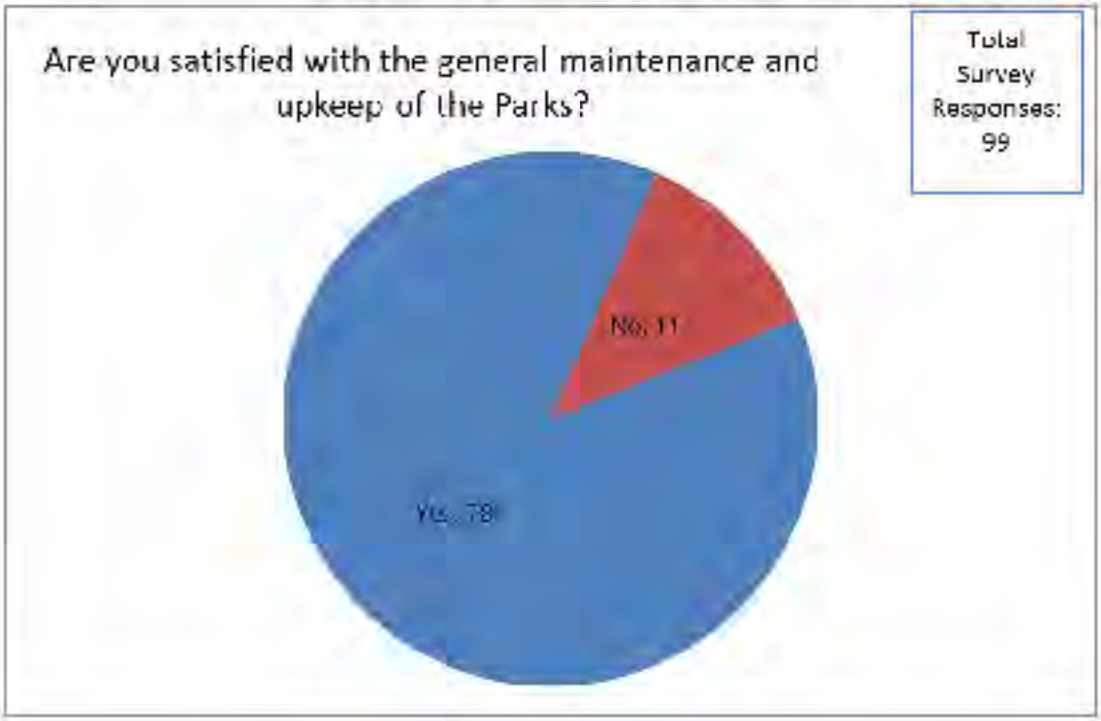
Most survey respondents felt that recreation opportunities including parks were moderately to very important to their family.



Rogers Park is currently the most utilized park because of the amenities including a pavilion, paved trail, bandshell performance area, and playground that overlooks Nash Creek. This park hosts most of the community events and festivals held throughout the year in Sparta.



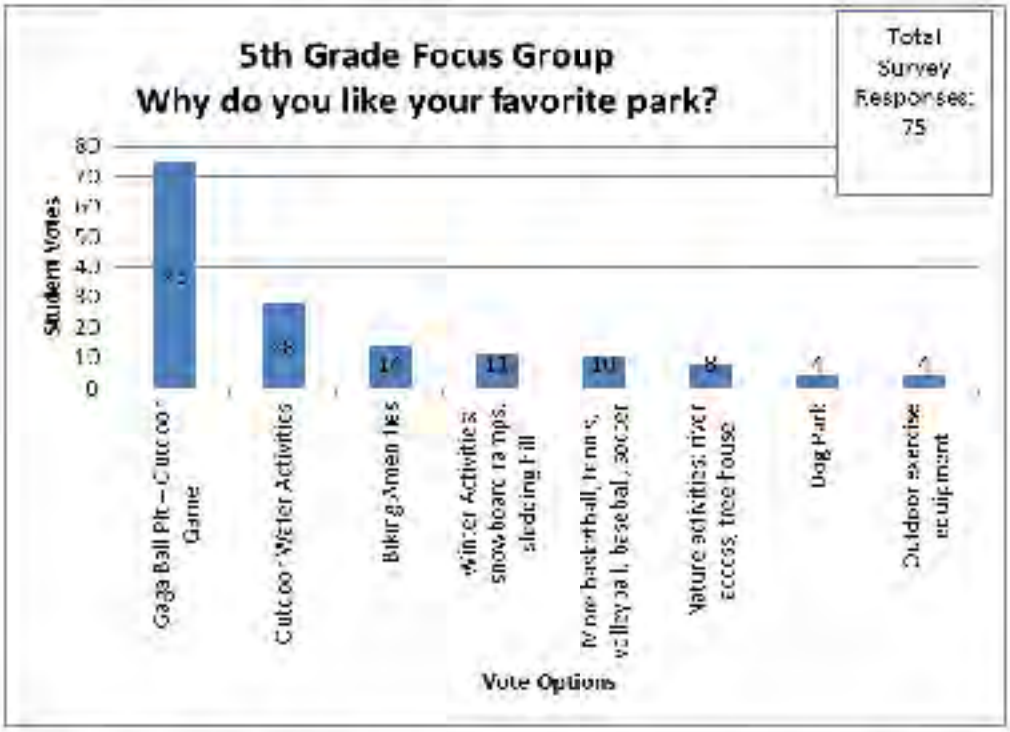
Although in hard economic times, the survey results of 66 families suggesting they would support a millage for recreation opportunities is positive. The Village and Township will jointly discuss the possibilities of what projects under the action plan could potentially be supported by a recreational millage.



Comments from "NO" answers of "Are you satisfied with the general maintenance and upkeep of the parks?"

- Wish all the parks had walking trails that connected
- Flowers & gardening
- Softball fields: long drives reach over the fences and end up in the woods and corn field. Remodel softball field at Aspen St to accommodate outfield of 310 ft.
- Skate park playground is unusable
- Need better seating for spectators, Buth Field regraded
- Things need repainting and weeding
- Damage to the stage and steps at Rogers Park!
- Vandalism
- Nash field is unkempt, pave the parking lot and cut brush down
- Overall is good, but often see evidence of teens going unnoticed. Lamoreaux park playground was unrepaired for some time, law enforcement with teens is not been positive. Proactive measures need to be taken, within schools, greater family involvement.
- Always seems trashy, when something gets broke, it seems like it doesn't get fixed

5th Grade Classroom Focus Group & Discussion: 75 students participated



When asked about pedestrian trails, these were the amenities kids most wanted to see available to the public:

Bike jumps
Water fountains
Handicap accessibility
Picnic Tables
Historical markers
Canoe/Kayak/tubing access
Hand Rails
Fishing area
Bird Feeders
Swimming
Bridge
Nature/animal watching
Tree Houses
Restroom
Bike Fixing Stations
Drinking fountains
Lookout Stations
Horseback Riding
Benches, trash cans
Dirt Biking

When asked about Nature Trails, these were the amenities the students most wanted to see available to the public if the Trail overlooks a river:

Canoe/Kayaks / Tubing Facilities
Fishing Pier
Gate Access to the water
Swimming
Bird Watching
Rope Swing
Habitat
Signs
Boat Rides
Tree Swing

Photo taken during 5th grade class discussion about Parks & Rec.

Community Workshop Meeting Notes

A Community Workshop was held on Thursday, January 5, 2012 at the Sparta Civic Center. Attendees broke into community focus groups on four topics including: Developing a Sports Complex, Vandalism, Developing Trails within the community, and Connecting Trails to other desirable areas. Community members, Village and Township Board members, Local Youth Sports Organization representatives, and the press were all present at the public workshop.

Developing a Sports Complex Committee Notes:

Needs:
2 new soccer fields, 4 baseball, 2 Rugby/Football
Ice Rink?
Baseball and Softball fields in cloverleaf
Combine/ Condense Baseball fields that are currently too spread out
Need Maintenance Costs on a complex

Find leaders from each Youth Sport to create joint committee
Discuss Funding mechanisms & work with Sparta Township & Village
Ostman Property
Bedford Falls Property
Rodeo Grounds
Consider The Old Foundry Site

Addressing Vandalism with Police Chief Milanowski Notes:

Build a graffiti wall where they can freely paint
Expo education or flier from SPD to community "Please call & Let us know when you see something". Without reporting, cannot catch vandals

Neighborhood "Park" Watch
Signs to inform teens & kids of rules and regulations
Swipe cards (free) to get in and out of the Skate park to determine who is in there & when

Developing Trails within the Community Notes:

Most important factors:

- Connectivity
- Safety
- Handicap accessibility

Building new bridge of Nash Creek: need to create donations/memorials for public funding

Finish phases of paved trail as proposed to "start" the trail project
Nature Trail is GREAT for winter use – promote it better
Utilize the strong volunteerism to help clean and upkeep current trails
Continue to build "Friends of Sparta Trails" Volunteer Group

Connecting Trails to Other Desirable Areas:

Long term planning (20 year vision)
Connect to Kent City/Casnovia as closest towns
Connect to White Pine (less than 10 miles)

Connect to Musketawa (Become the Northern connection point for White Pine & Musketawa through Sparta.
Connect Sparta families to over 100 miles of trails at their doorsteps!)

Public Input Process

This section is used to describe the methods used to incorporate public input into the 2012 Recreation Plan.

Public input was collected as part of the planning process for the Recreation Plan. The public was invited to a Public Open House. A written or online survey was available for obtaining feedback on the current conditions and future projects for the Sparta community in addition to a 5th grade student focus group session held with over 75 students to receive input on the future desires for parks and recreation in Sparta.

Citizen Review of the Draft

The Sparta Community Recreation Plan 2012-2017 draft was available in hard copy form at Village Hall, Sparta Township Hall, Sparta Township Carnegie Library, Sparta Chamber office, and viewable from the Village and Township websites as of January 12, 2012. The local newspaper published a public announcement describing the opportunity for viewing of the draft plan from January 12- February 13, 2012 with a request to express written and verbal comments to Village Hall or Township Hall.

Public Meeting

A Public Hearing was held on February 9, 2012 for Sparta Township Board and a Public Hearing was held on February 13, 2012 for Sparta Village Council to consider and accept all written and verbal comments on the Community Recreation Plan Draft. This public notice was put into the local Advance newspaper at least 15 days prior to the public meeting, as stated by our local ordinance, and posted on our local governmental websites one month prior to the public hearing.

On February 9, 2012 the Township Board and February 13, 2012 the Village Council passed a resolution to adopt the 2012 Sparta Community Parks and Recreation Plan with suitable changes suggested during the public input process.

Copies of the Public Hearing notices, minutes, and resolutions are in the Appendix.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following Goals and Objectives developed by the committee serve as the guidelines for the development of the action program. The Capital improvement schedule will focus on the needs identified in the action program and will project potential expenditures for the five-year action period on a year-by-year basis. The five-year period will begin in 2012 and extend to 2017.

The Goals and Objectives were formulated based on results of resident input, committee discussions, and recreation standards. Other factors that were of high priority for the consideration in the Goals and Objectives section included the demographic characteristics and physical characteristics of our community. The goals are long range in nature and intended to be flexible enough to accommodate future change. The objectives are short-range in nature and focus on specific program and development decisions to be made in the next five years. Both the goals and objectives are meant to guide the intent of future actions.

GOAL A: Encourage the revitalization and renovation of existing underutilized parklands.

OBJECTIVE: The community has properties that are underutilized open park space developments due to lack of funding opportunities and coordination between interested residents, organizations, and government entities.

Potential Actions:

- Create an interconnecting pathway system to reach local parks to create safe accessibility options for all ages and abilities and various methods of travel (walking, biking, etc.) rather than just with accessing the parks by driving there.
- Work with Sparta Trails group (volunteer based group of Sparta recreation loving individuals) to establish a feeling of ownership and vision to create safe pathways to the potential properties
- Work with local youth recreation organizations to create the vision of a combined athletic field space and find funding the desired developments
- Work with nature conservationists to create a "best use" plan to utilize the 103 acre parcel with Rogue River access while maintaining the natural assets

GOAL B: Continue to maintain the current park facilities and provide additional maintenance for new facilities as they are developed.

OBJECTIVE: The Department of Public Works will continue to maintain a quality park system through trash, debris, and snow removal, lawn and grounds maintenance, annual necessary improvements, and general maintenance as applicable.

Potential Actions:

- Make sure all new park facilities and improvements have ongoing proper maintenance planning, including line item funds allocated for immediately fixing damaged park facilities
- Continue to work with local groups such as Rotary and Sparta Boy Scouts on volunteer based efforts to clean up parks, Nash Creek banks, and parking lots surrounding parks.
- Identify stable and sufficient local funding sources to operate and maintain recreational lands and facilities that serve both Sparta Township and Sparta Village residents.
- Each construction project should be evaluated for its expected life span, replacement costs, and ongoing maintenance costs.
- Each construction project should include a line item for yearly maintenance costs for the Village and Township.

OBJECTIVE: Explore mechanisms for maintenance of recreational trails and amenities.

Potential Actions:

- Create a committee to identify these mechanisms and the costs and effectiveness of each.
- Identify the maintenance needs and address with a long-term solution for any new trail construction.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to maintain parks that have experienced vandalism such as Library Park and Skate Park.

Potential Action:

- Sparta Township to fix or remove damaged sculptures and displays in Library Park.
- Work with Garden Club on continuing to volunteer to maintain the garden beds more regularly.
- Fix, maintain, and replace damaged equipment and playground area of Skate Park.

OBJECTIVE: Reduce Vandalism in Parks

- Continue and increase police foot/bike patrol
- Continue to prosecute and send representatives of the Police Department or staff to the hearings to maximize penalties and reduce repeat offenses

GOAL C: Provide a balance of active and passive recreational facilities and activities within the Village that provides for all ages and abilities throughout the year.

OBJECTIVE: Extend paved walking trail to connect to Nature Trail for passive recreation.

Potential Actions:

- Develop the Nature Trail property as a natural trail with interpretive signs, parking area, scenic look-outs, and access to the Rogue River.
- Complete the interconnecting pathway that currently connects the trail from Rogers Park, Library Park, and Balyeat Field on the north side of Nash Creek to connect to Buth Field and the Nature Trail property.
- Create recreation uses to balance the active uses of the sports fields and courts with walking trails, sight-seeing through scenic overlooks of Nash Creek and Rogue River, and giving access to natural and semi-natural wildlife and natural habitats.

OBJECTIVE: Provide winter recreational facilities

Potential Actions:

- Evaluate the winter uses of an ice skating rink including expenses for purchasing a non-ice melt system
- Engage and assist the group of volunteers who currently construct and maintain the ice skating area in Balyeat Field
- Find funding partners to provide desired amenities
- Evaluate winter use of trail for snowshoes/ cross country ski's

GOAL D: Continue to improve all facilities in order to better provide for persons of all physical and mental abilities and strive to meet the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) guidelines wherever possible within new park improvements.

OBJECTIVE: Each year, Public Works uses maintenance funds from the Parks budget to repair or improve accessibility to recreational facilities.

Potential Actions:

- Continuing to extend and improve the Sidewalks within the Village limits to provide pedestrian access on all roads.
- Purchasing and installing ADA approved wood chips for playgrounds
- Replace Balyeat Bridge (currently has stairways access only) with a bridge that meets ADA accessibility to increase connectivity to current trail system and parking lot access to Balyeat Field.
- Collaborate with disability groups when planning new construction projects or renovation projects.

GOAL E: Support the development of trail way systems.

OBJECTIVE: Extend the current Nash Creek pathway out of Library Memorial Park to the Sparta Nature Trail property located at the East end of the Village which extends to the Rogue River.

Potential Actions:

- Apply for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund through the DNR with matching funds and support from the Village, Township, Downtown Development Authority, and seek out other partners.
- Develop inventory of potential other grant sources (e.g. Sparta Community Foundation, Meijer Foundation, Consumers Energy, etc.) to match funding from local government funds, local corporations, and fundraising efforts.

OBJECTIVE: Protect and provide public access to natural areas and public waterways.

Potential Actions:

- Create scenic over-looks as part of a park connecting trail system over Nash Creek.
- Work with nature conservationists to create a "best use" plan to utilize the 103 acre parcel with Rogue River access while maintaining the natural assets

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate trail and amenity planning with regional park and trail advocacy groups to increase efficient use of funds.

Potential Actions:

- Coordinate park and recreation trail planning and financing with Kent County Road and Park Commissions, adjacent townships, trail advocacy groups, and the State of Michigan DNR.
    - Review any planned County road projects to ensure the facilitation of existing or future trail safety.
- Continue to work with West Michigan Trails & Greenway Alliance for long term planning.
- Work with Sparta Trails group (volunteer based group of Sparta recreation loving individuals) to establish an ownership and vision for the potential properties

OBJECTIVE: Extend the Downtown Sparta trail to other desirable areas

Potential Actions:

- Extend the trail to the North end of Sparta Village Limits to connect to the Railroad Historic Depot property owned by the Village.
- Extend the trail to the Sparta Schools buildings to provide interconnectivity and safe routes to schools.
    - Consider Safe Routes to School and other grant funding options
- Extend Sparta trail neighboring communities and other trail systems

- Work with Tyrone Township, Sparta Township, Village of Kent City, Village of Sparta, Village of Casnovia and other interested local governmental units on a trail plan to connect communities and consider possible connections to White Pine and Musketawa Trails.

GOAL F: Continue to seek public involvement in the planning and development of park and recreation opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Establishing ownership and creating partners in the future of Sparta parks.

Potential Actions:

- Continue to work with other interested parties and community entities in the formation, creation, and renovation of recreation facilities.
- Continue relationship with Rotary/Interact on keeping parks and Nash Creek clean during community clean up days
- Continue to provide space for meetings of the Friends of Sparta Nature Trails who volunteer their time to clean up the Sparta Nature Trail
- Invite Members of the public to be involved in recreation planning efforts.
- Publicize the joint Recreation Committee's work

GOAL G: Pursue the development of a sports complex for recreation programs.

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate sports facilities such as ball diamonds, soccer fields, other fields and courts as desired, and park facilities into an easily accessible location large enough to handle the youth recreation programs.

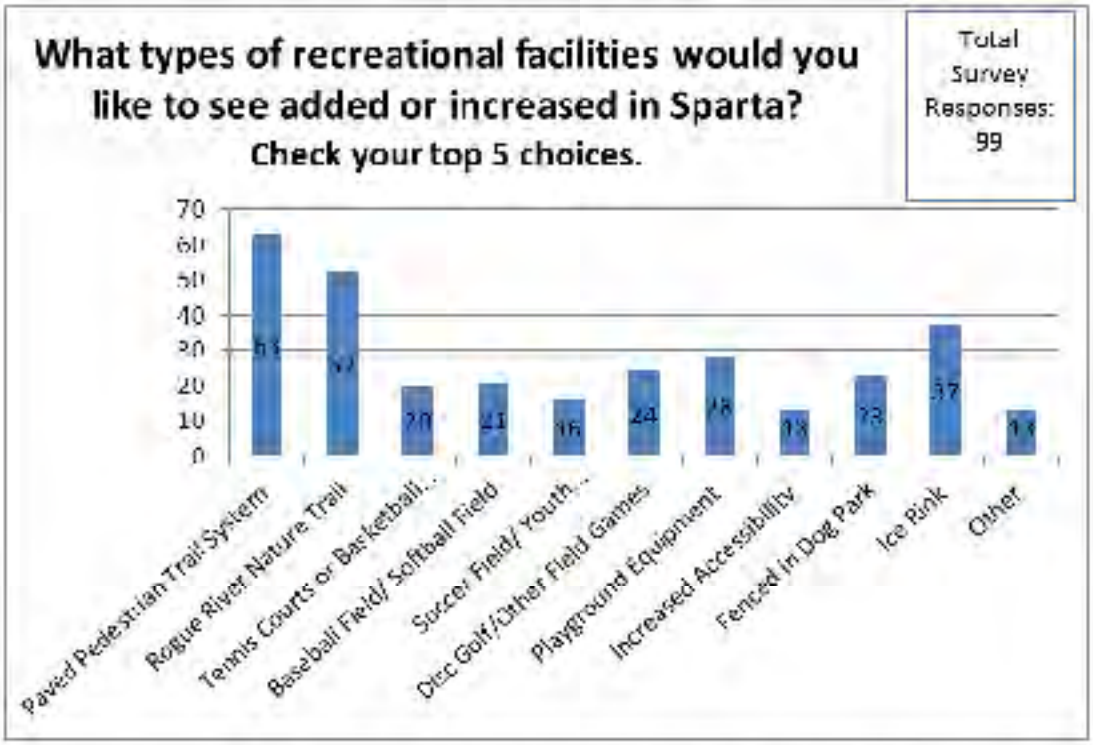
Potential Actions:

- Work with Sparta Area Recreation Assocation (S.A.R.A.) created by youth sports groups leaders on creating funding plan and recreation needs for potential Sports Complex
- Work with potential property options in or near Sparta Village limits to provide space necessary for Sports Complex

BASIS FOR ACTION PROGRAM

Summary of Resident Survey Input

The following graph summaries the ranking of relative importance of various types of recreation facilities and participation in various recreation activities, based on the responses to a township-wide survey conducted in early 2012.



The survey results underscore the populatirty of trail-related activities such as walking, hiking, bicycling, and utilization of nature areas. It also points to a high desire for traditional park-oriented activities like playground equipment, and the use of an ice rink.

Recreation Facility Standards

Recreational facility standards provide a means for evaluating the relative adequacy or inadequacy of a community's park and recreation system. Recreational facility standards identify suggested numerical or acreage standards for facilities relative to population. Facility standards used in this analysis are derived from the "Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Plans," 2/5/09 Revision, prepared by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. These standards were evaluated against existing recreational facilities and compared to the Township's 2010 population.

Analysis of Existing Facilities

The quantitative evaluation of recreational facility deficiencies in Sparta are contained in Table 1. The standards used in the analysis are guidelines which need to be considered in light of other factors affecting recreation needs in the community and therefore, is not to be used as an absolute determinant of deficiencies in facilities. However, it is a useful guide to evaluating these facilities as some facilities account for School or private owned properties.

Table 1: Evaluation of Park/Recreation Facility Needs In Sparta Area

Type of Facility	Standard	Number Existing	2010 Population (9,199)	
			Number Needed	Surplus or Deficiency
Outdoor Basketball	1 per 5,000	1	1	0
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	4	4	0
Volleyball	1 per 5,000	2	1	-1
Badminton	1 per 5,000	0	1	1
Baseball	1 per 5,000	3	1	-2
Softball	1 per 5,000	1	1	0
Football	1 per 20,000, 15-30 min. travel time	3	1	-2
Soccer	1 per 10,000	5	1	-4
Grills	1 per 500	0	18	18
Shelters	1 per 2,000	3	4	1
Tables	1 per 200	25	45	20
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000, 30 min. travel time	1	1	0
Outdoor Ice Rink	1 per 20,000	1	1	0
Community Center	1 per 25,000	1	1	0
Playgrounds	1 per 3,000	3	3	0
1/4 Mile Running Track	1 per 20,000	1	1	0
Trails	1 System per Region	0	1	1
Archery Range	1 per 50,000, 30 min. travel time	1	1	0
Skeet & Trap Field	1 per 50,000, 30 min. travel time	1	1	0
Golf	30 min. travel time	20	1	-19

Source: Michigan DNR Guidelines for the Development of Community Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Plans, (Rev. 2/5/09), Appendix E, Suggested Facility Development Standards

ACTION PROGRAM

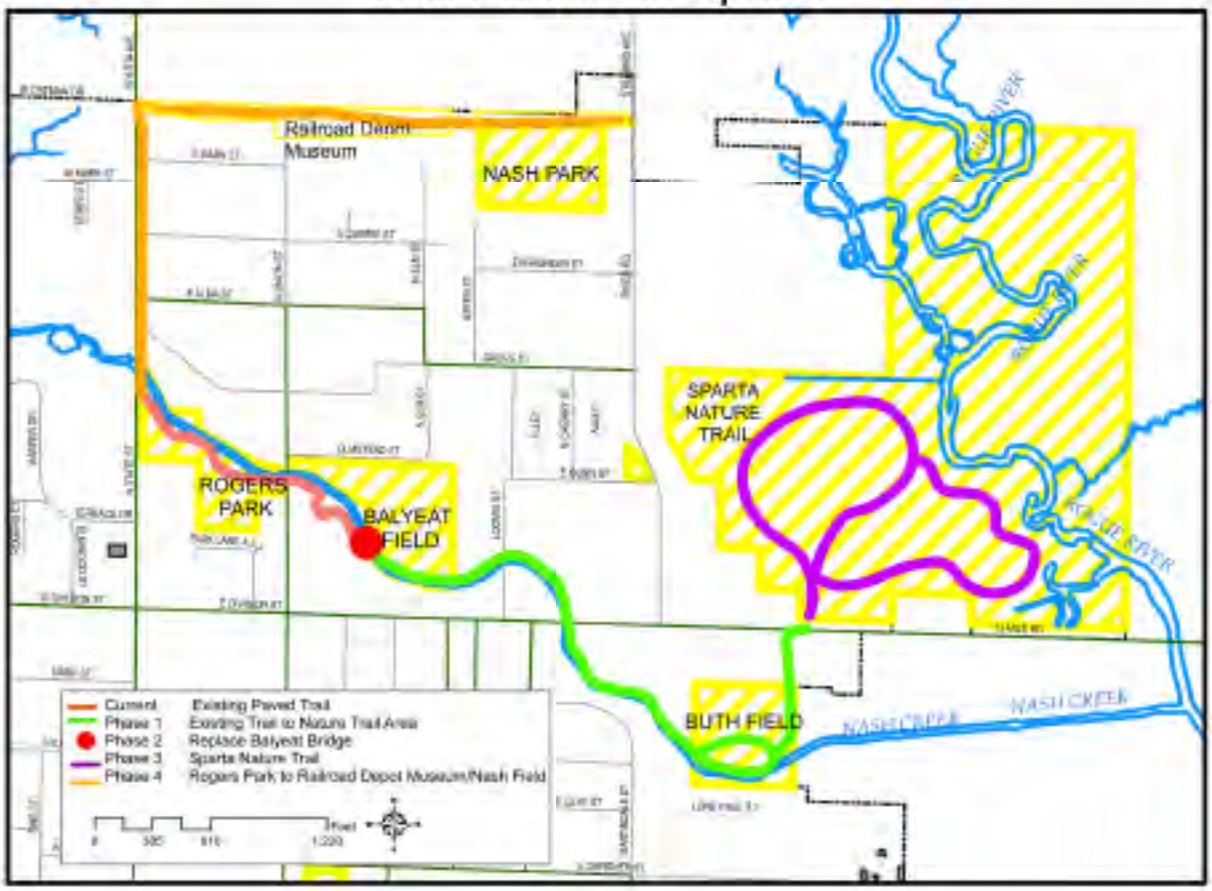
Many of the plan actions stated in the Goals, Objectives, and Actions section represent recreational facility development or long term goals for a better parks and recreation program. Many of the capital improvement projects have been prioritized below based on community feedback.

Non-Motorized Trail

One important part of the proposed trail system is to incorporate a Trail System from Rogers Park to connect to the Rogue River. Easements need to be obtained on the northern boundary of Nash Creek from Rogers Park to the junction of the Rogue River (green line below). These easements will consist of paved walking and biking greenway trail that will be ADA proficient and will coordinate with the Village master plan by connecting to the community parks that already exist along Nash Creek. Public involvement will be necessary to obtain the easements and support during the planning stages for success of the project.

The non-motorized trail throughout Sparta was strongly supported in the 2001 and 2007 recreation plan with a River/Creek walk extended. In the 2012 survey, the paved pedestrian non-motorized trail was the top choice of recreation facilities that responders would like to see in Sparta. During the 2012 Parks & Recreation Open House, community members also ranked the paved pedestrian non-motorized trail system as a top priority.

Trail Phases in Sparta



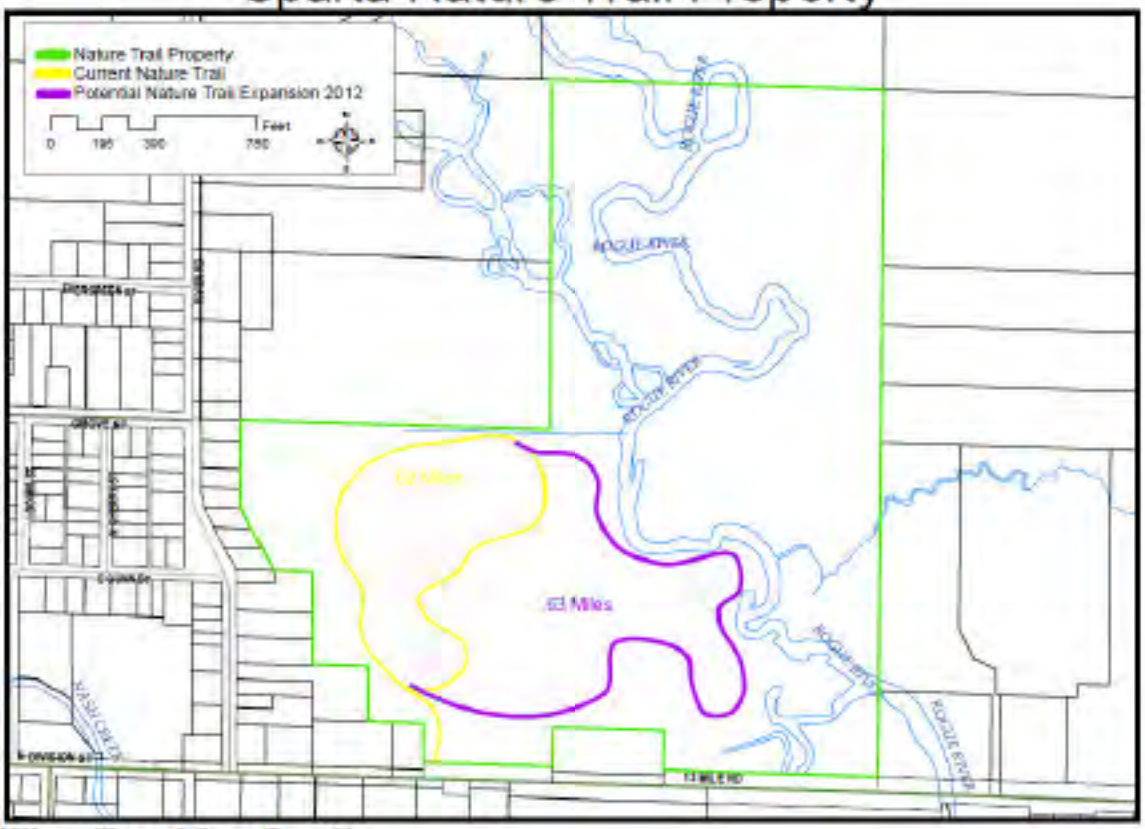
Sparta Nature Trail Property on the Rogue River

Photo of Volunteers Working on Nature Trail

Photo of the Rogue River on Nature Trail Property

The Rogue River Trail will be formed in close partnership with the DEQ and the DNR on the 103 acre floodplain owned by the Village on the east edge of the Village limits. A nature pathway planned to loop around the winding Rogue River will provide nature trail facilities on the property as requested in the community in the 2001 and 2007 formation of the Recreation Plan, and as the second top priority in the 2012 community feedback. This Sparta Nature Trail will connect the paved non-motorized pedestrian trail along Nash Creek to the Rogue River in a natural setting. This trail will give access to the Rogue River including new recreation opportunities such as scenic overlooks, bird watching, wildlife watching, and water activities on unimproved and non-paved trailways.

Sparta Nature Trail Property



Village of Sparta & Sparta Township

Replace Balyeat Bridge

Balyeat Field is used by many organizations in the community including the Sparta Area Fair Association, Sparta Chamber of Commerce, and Youth Soccer. Improvement goals include increased handicap accessibility to the field by replacing the 32 ft. long bridge that has a large set of stairs on the northern end that cause the existing bridge to be out of compliance with ADA guidelines. Drainage issues present on the south end have caused significant erosion and undermining of the approach section which have required extensive ongoing maintenance.

In December 2010, Moore & Bruggink Consulting Engineers created a Nash Creek Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Study that included design considerations, permitting, creek bank protection, cost and funding options, and potential project schedule.

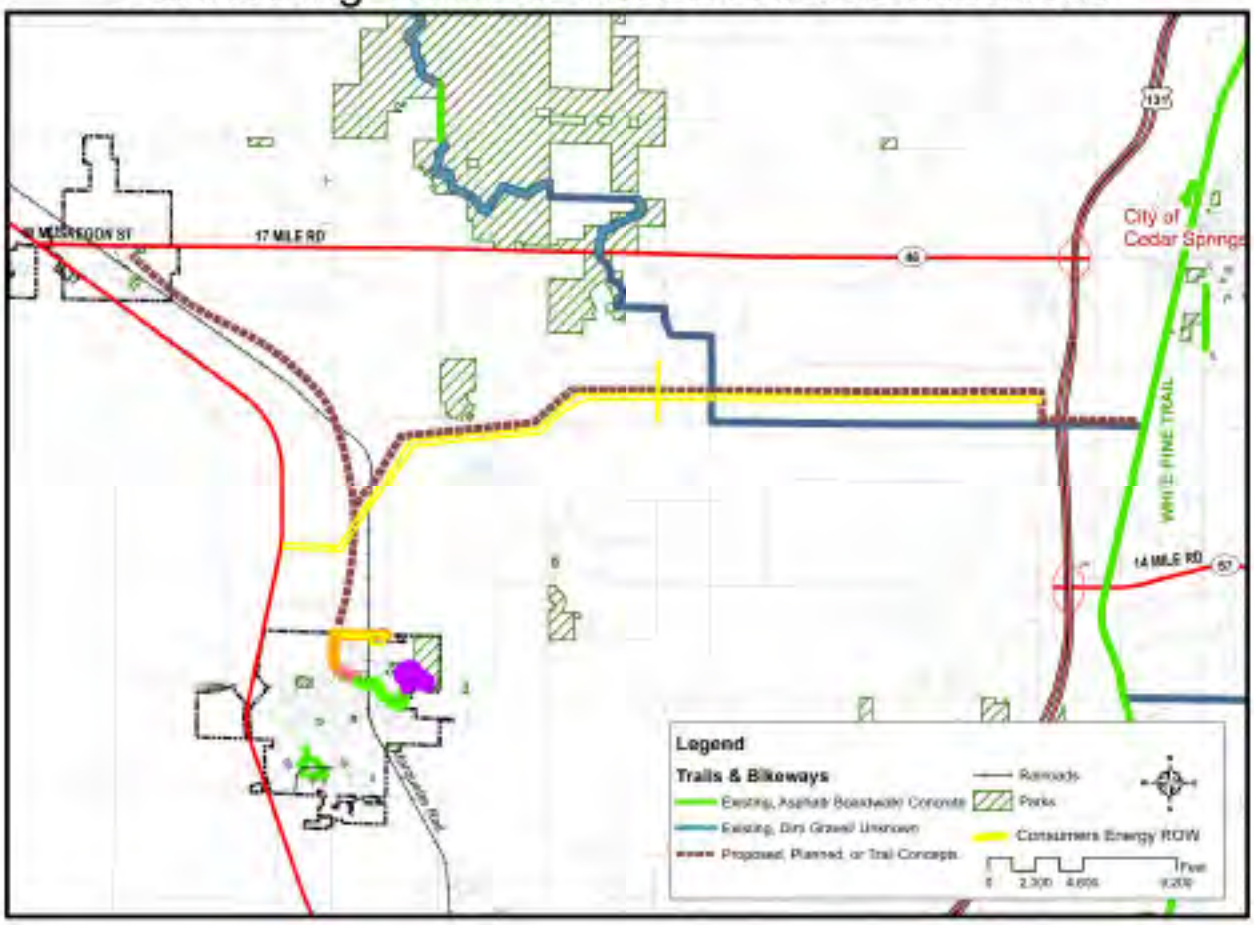
Current Balyeat Bridge

The bridge replacement is projected to cost $135,000 to $160,000 depending on type of bridge material options. The Village and Township have discussed working jointly in creating a funding plan and analyze grant funding to replace the bridge in the next five years.

Connecting Trails to other Desirable Locations

Connect to Kent City and Casnovia creating approximately a 5 mile trail between neighboring towns. The second phase would be to connect the new trail to the While Pine Trail which is approximately 7 miles to the east of the Kent City/Sparta Connector. The new connector to the White pine could be completed through the Utility right of way that leads directly to the current North Country Trail and directly to the White Pine Trail. This would give Sparta Village, Sparta Township, Tyrone Township, and Kent City residents the ability to travel over 100 miles on paved trail from their doorsteps leading to Grand Rapids or north of Cadillac.

Connecting Trails to other Desirable Locations



Sport Complex

The development of a Sports Complex to include new baseball fields, soccer fields, benches and spectator bleachers, a concession stand, and parking area in addition to other amenities such as walking track and other sports fields and courts. By combining several sports fields into a single location, the underutilized land will be developed and still fit into the Village Master Plan. Annexation of Township property will be considered to incorporate into the Village limits. These active facilities all will set a balance between active and inactive facilities through the benches, bleachers, and greenway walking paths that will be ADA proficient.
Financial plans will come from an agreement and collaboration between local youth sport organization S.A.R.A. (established from the 2012 Public Parks & Recreation Community Forum), local non-profit organizations, Village, Township, and other community partners.

Estimates submitted by S.A.R.A include over $1 Million dollars in infrastructure and acquisition. A preliminary break down of expected expenses is below:

- Property Acquisition: $375,000.00
- Access and parking improvements: $215,000.00
- Ball field improvements $275,000.00
- Paved walking and riding trail $ 45,000.00
- Concession, Restroom & Storage $140,000.00
- Rustic trail and Frisbee Golf course $ 10,000.00
- Playground Equipment $ 25,000.00

A preliminary draft image of a sample sports complex in Sparta is pictured below:

APPENDIX

Sparta

Parks & Recreation Planning

2012-2017

Sparta Parks & Recreation Public Forum

Thursday, January 5, 2012

7:00 -8:00 pm

Sparta Civic Center

(75 N. Union, Sparta, MI)

Make your opinion count!

You are invited to join a public forum to discuss future plans for Parks & Recreation for the entire Sparta community as hosted jointly by the Sparta Village and Sparta Township

This forum will be addressing Park & Recreation goals such as:

- How to reduce vandalism
- New free youth recreation opportunities to encourage active youth
- Create a balance of active and passive recreational facilities and activities that provides for all ages and abilities.
- Continue to improve all facilities in order to better provide for persons of all physical and mental abilities
- Support the development of interconnected trial way systems
- Pursue the development of a sports complex for Recreation programs
- Coordinate the Community Parks and Recreation Plan with other entities long range plans & capital development projects.
- Encourage the revitalization and renovation of existing underutilized parklands

This invitation is issued to all Sparta Village & Sparta Township residents, local organization representatives, recreation program representatives, & anyone interested in Sparta Parks & Recreation.

Unable to attend the forum? Parks surveys are available at www.spartami.org or in paper copy at Sparta Village and Sparta Township Offices.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC REVIEW OF SPARTA COMMUNITY RECREATION PLAN

Copy of Notice for Public Review as posted January 12, 2012

The Village of Sparta and Sparta Township are providing the community with an opportunity to review and comment on the Community Recreation Plan Draft for 30 days prior to official adoption beginning Friday, January 13, 2012. Draft copies of the Recreation Plan will be located at the Sparta Township Carnegie Library, Village Hall, Sparta Township Office, and also online at www.spartami.org under the Parks & Recreation section. Please mail your comments to Parks & Recreation Committee at Sparta Village Hall, 156 E. Division, Sparta, MI 49345 or you may discuss your comments in person or by calling Village Hall at 616-887-8251 or Township Hall at 616-887-8863.

Drafts will be available for public viewing during normal business hours. Comments and questions will be accepted in writing at Sparta Township until 5:00 pm Thursday, February 9, 2012 and during the Public Hearing on Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 pm during the Sparta Township Meeting located in the Sparta Township Hall Meeting Room. Comments and questions will also be accepted in writing at Sparta Village Hall until 5:00 pm Monday, February 13, 2012 and during the Public Hearing on Monday, February 13 at 7:00 pm during the Sparta Village Council Meeting located in the Sparta Township Hall Meeting Room.

Sparta Parks & Recreation Committee

Copy of
PUBLIC NOTICE
VILLAGE OF SPARTA
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

The Village of Sparta will hold a public hearing regarding the 2012-2017 Sparta Community Recreation Plan Draft on Monday, February 13 at 7:00 pm in the Sparta Township Meeting Room, 160 E. Division, Sparta, Michigan.

This notice is posted in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Act, Act 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1976, as amended. Questions or written comments may be directed to the Village Manager at 156 E. Division, Sparta, Michigan, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Martin Super
Village Manager
156 E. Division
Sparta, MI 49345
(616) 887-8251

VILLAGE COUNCIL
VILLAGE OF SPARTA
Kent County, Michigan

Councilmember Whalen, supported by Councilmember Hibbard, moved the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO 12-01

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Village of Sparta has undertaken a Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2012 and 2017; and

WHEREAS. The Village has published a notice of public hearing on the proposed five year parks and recreation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Village held a public hearing on February 13, 2012 to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Parks and Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Sparta has worked with Sparta Township to develop the plan for the benefit of the entire community and to adopt the plan as a document to assist in meeting the parks and recreation needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, after the public meeting, the Village of Sparta voted to adopt said Recreation Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1.) The Village of Sparta Council hereby adopts the Sparta Parks and Recreation Plan as a guideline for improving recreation for the residents of the Village of Sparta.
2.) All resolutions or parts of resolutions are, to the extent of any conflict with this resolution, hereby rescinded.

YEAS: Councilmember(s): Johnson, Dougan, Taylor, Hibbard, Whalen, Moody and Meyer

NAYS: Councilmember(s): None.

ABSTAIN: Councilmember(s): None

ABSENT: Councilmember(s): None.

RESOLUTION DECLARED

Dated: February 13, 2012

Greta C. Heugel, Village Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Village Council of the Village of Sparta at a special meeting held on February 13, 2012 which was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1976, as amended.

Greta C. Heugel, Village Clerk

VILLAGE OF SPARTA
REGULAR COUNCIL BUSINESS SESSION OF FEBRUARY 13, 2012
Held at Sparta Township Hall, 160 East Division, Sparta MI

1.2. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Leonard R. Meyer II followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Roll call: Present were: Kristi Dougan, Paul Hibbard, Todd Johnson, Gary Moody, William Taylor, Robert Whalen and Village Manager Martin J. Super.

4. Additions or Corrections to Business and Consent Agendas - V/Mgr. Super requested that Resolution R-12-01 be moved to the end of the Business Agenda and that the presentation by the Sparta Area Recreation Association be presented during the Public Comment part of the Agenda. Request was granted.

5. Approval of Consent and Business Agendas:

Moved by Whalen, supported by Johnson, to approve Business and Consent Agendas as amended. Motion carried 7-0.

Consent Agenda:

A. File Finance Committee meeting minutes of January 09, 2012;
B. Accept the Village Council regular business meeting minutes of January 09, 2012;
C. File Downtown Development Authority meeting minutes of January 10, 2012;
D. Accept Planning Commission meeting minutes of January 16, 2012;
E. Accept Fire Board meeting minutes of January 19, 2012;
F. Accept Special Village Council Workshop meeting minutes of January 23, 2012;
G. File Finance Committee meeting minutes of January 23, 2012.

6. Approval of Accounts Payable and Fund Transfers:

Moved by Whalen, supported by Johnson, to approve Accounts Payable and Fund Transfers. Motion carried 7-0.

7. Public Comment for agenda items - none.

At this time, Greg Peak, Tim Gordon and Tim Driscoll, representing Sparta Area Recreation Association, made a presentation for a proposed Sports Park on the Ostman property south and west of Jacobson's Floral on North State Street. The Council agreed to meet with Sparta Township to consider this project. This will be handled by the Village Public Facilities & Recreation Committee.

8. Public Hearing:

A public hearing on the 5-year Sparta Village Parks & Recreation Plan opened at 7:23 pm and closed at 7:24 pm. Elizabeth Morse, DDA Director was thanked for her efforts on this proposal..

9. Unfinished Business - none

10. New Business:

B. Resolution R-12-02 ; a Resolution to authorize the enforcement of Chapter 30, Article II, of the Code of Ordinances, Village of Sparta, Michigan, by the Village Manager, Village of Sparta Police Officers, and members of the Village of Sparta Fire Department. This was amended to change the Village of Sparta Fire Department to the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief or his/her designee.

Moved by Whalen, supported by Johnson, to adopt Resolution R-12-02 as amended. Motion carried 7-0.

C. Resolution R-12-03: A Resolution to remove the Village of Sparta from the Grand Valley Metro Council.

Moved by Dougan, supported by Hibbard, to adopt Resolution R-12-03. Motion carried 7-0.

D. Ordinance O-12-01; An Ordinance to re-zone certain property throughout the Village of Sparta as indicated in the 2010 Master Plan.

E. Ordinance O-12-02: An Ordinance to amend the Village of Sparta Zoning Ordinance by amending the text to allow a new Zoning District called the O Office District within the Village.

F. Ordinance O-12-03: An Ordinance to repeal the existing Division 8, GC General Commercial District and adopt a new Division 8, GC General Commercial District of the Village of Sparta Zoning Ordinance.

Moved by Whalen, supported by Moody, to adopt Ordinances O-12-01, O-12-02 and O-12-03. Motion carried 7-0.

G. Dump/Plow Truck purchase.

Moved by Moody, supported by Johnson to NOT purchase a dump/plow truck this year. Motion carried 7-0.

A. Resolution R-12-01: A Resolution adopting a Parks and Recreation Plan.

Moved by Whalen, supported by Hibbard, to adopt Resolution R-12-01. Motion carried 7-0.

11. Committee reports
    A. Finance Committee (attached)
    B. Policy & Personnel
    C. Public Facilities & Recreation
    D. Airport - A request for a Mud Run has been rejected. The zero-alcohol policy was discussed.
    E. Public Safety
    F. Fire Board
12. Manager's Report (on line to Council members)
13. Police Chief's report - no report
14. Airport Manger's report (attached)
15. Communications:
    A. An oral report of the Downtown Development Authority report was given by Elizabeth Gorski-Morse.
16. Public Comment - none
17. Executive Session - none.
18. Announcements - It was brought to the attention of the Council that rebricking the east and west sides of the Village DPW building should be considered.
19. Adjournment:

Moved by Hibbard, supported by Johnson, to adjourn at 8:28 pm. Motion carried 7-0.

Greta C. Heugel. Sparta Village Clerk
156 East Division, Sparta MI 49345

PUBLIC NOTICE
SPARTA TOWNSHIP
KENT COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Sparta Township will hold a public hearing regarding the 2012-2017 Sparta Community Recreation Plan Draft on Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 pm in the Sparta Township Meeting Room, 160 E. Division, Sparta, Michigan.

This notice is posted in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Act, Act 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1976, as amended. Questions or written comments may be directed to the Township Supervisor at 160 E. Division, Sparta, Michigan, Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Sue Bitely
Clerk
160 E. Division
Sparta, MI 49345
(616) 887-8863

TOWNSHIP BOARD
SPARTA TOWNSHIP
Kent County, Michigan

Board member Maier, supported by Board member Shangle, moved the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLUTION NO 12-02

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

WHEREAS, Sparta Township has undertaken a Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan which describes the physical features, existing recreation facilities and the desired actions to be taken jointly with the Village of Sparta to improve and maintain recreation facilities during the period between 2012 and 2017; and

WHEREAS, The Township has published a notice of public hearing on the proposed five year parks and recreation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Township held a public hearing on February 9, 2012 to provide an opportunity for citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and discuss all aspects of the Parks and Recreation Plan; and

WHEREAS, Sparta Township has worked with the Village of Sparta to develop the plan for the benefit of the entire community and to adopt the plan as a document to assist in meeting the parks and recreation needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, after the public meeting, Sparta Township voted to adopt said Recreation Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1.) Sparta Township hereby adopts the Sparta Parks and Recreation Plan as a guideline for improving recreation for the residents of Sparta Township;
2.) All resolutions or parts of resolutions are, to the extent of any conflict with this resolution, hereby rescinded.

YEAS: Board member(s): Bergman, Bitely, Fynewever, Goodfellow, Maier, Shangle & Steffens
NAYS: Board member(s): None
ABSTAIN: Board member(s): None
ABSENT: Board member(s): None

RESOLUTION DECLARED

Dated: February 9, 2012

Sue Bitely, Sparta Township Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Board of Sparta Township at a meeting held on February 9, 2012 which was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Act 267 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 1976, as amended.

Sue Bitely, Clerk

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the
Sparta Township Board
160 E. Division St – Sparta, MI 49345
February 9, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Dale Bergman.
Members Present: Bergman, Bitely, Fynewever, Goodfellow, Maier, Shangle, and Steffens
Members Absent: None
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE BUSINESS OR CONSENT AGENDA
None. Motion to approve by Maier, seconded by Goodfellow. **Carried 7-0**

PUBLIC COMMENT
None

Public Hearing-Village/Township Park Plan
Supervisor Bergman asked Treasurer Shangle to explain the plan. Shangle informed the board that there had been a public meeting with input from the community a few weeks ago and Elizabeth Morse and the committee have updated the Sparta Community Recreational Plan for the board to review. Shangle then read the goals included in the Plan. Elizabeth Morse arrived at the meeting and continued with the presentation of the park plan. She informed us that it is a plan that can be presented to the State in document form. Bergman closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA WITH CONSENT ITEMS
Motion by Goodfellow and seconded by Shangle to approve the minutes of January 12, 2012. **Carried 7-0**
Motion by Maier and seconded by Steffens to approve the treasurer's report. **Carried 7-0**

BUSINESS ITEMS
Approval of the Bills
Motion by Shangle and seconded by Steffens to approve the bills. **Carried 7-0**

Sports Complex Presentation by Greg Peak
Greg Peak and other members of S.A.R.A. (Sparta Area Recreation Association, a newly formed non-profit group) gave a power point presentation showing plans for a recreation facility that would provide accommodations for multiple sports for various age levels of youth on up through adult sports teams, including walking trails and dog parks. Presently Sparta is lacking space to accommodate the many youth teams in the community. The group came asking the township to recognize S.A.R.A. and asked that we as a township work with them in accomplishing the park, specifically by asking for a millage to build the park. The property being proposed is on the North side of the Village (known as the Ostman property). Bergman mentioned to the group that we may need to form some type of "authority" comprised of village and township personnel before we could ask for a millage. The language of a millage proposal would need to be drawn up by an attorney. Some research would need to be done before the township could approve the plan. Greg Peak proposed that 1 mill. be requested for a 4 year period. Shangle estimated that 1 mill. could possibly generate $240,000 per fiscal year. Bergman felt that the Township should meet with the Village. The board supported the idea of looking into how to make the plan work. Shangle made the motion that Sparta Township be supportive of the S.A.R.A. project, in co-operation with the village, and look into the possibility of a millage; the motion was seconded by Steffens. **Carried 7-0**

Resolution 12-02; Sparta Village/Township Parks Plan
Motion by Maier to adopt Resolution 12-02, seconded by Shangle. **Carried 7-0**

Resolution 12-03; Grand Valley Metro Council Withdrawal
Bergman stated that he felt that GVMC may be headed in a new direction with the appointment of new director John Weiss, and asked the board to reconsider withdrawing from GVMC. There was no discussion.
Motion by Goodfellow to adopt Resolution 12-03, seconded by Shangle. **Carried 6-1**
Bergman dissenting

Historical Commission Presentation by Larry Carter for Credit Card Transaction
Sparta Township Historical Commission president Larry Carter presented the board with a re-cap of the 2011-12 activities of the commission. He also asked that the board consider a request for the Historical Commission to obtain capabilities of making credit card transactions. Shangle asked about what fees would be involved for using credit cards. Carter was not sure at this point what was involved to obtain the credit card processing system. It was the consensus of the board that it was necessary to have some further investigation before any action could be taken.

Historical Commission Recommendation to Appoint Jayne Paasch to the Hist. Comm. Board
Motion by Fynewever and seconded by Maier to appoint Jayne Paasch to the Historical Commission Board to fill the term vacated by the death of Barb Erhart. **Carried 7-0**

Sparta Township/Village Clean Up Days – April 19, 20, &21, 2012
Motion by Maier to participate and accept the above dates, seconded by Steffens. **Carried 7-0**

Re-visit Fee Schedule for Transfer of Grave Ownership
After some discussion it was the consensus of the board that the $75 transfer of grave ownership fee was per transaction, if there was a split of ownership the fee would be assessed to each owner. Example, if four graves are split between two family members, each family member would be charged the $75 fee. If one family transfers more than one grave to another family, there would be only one $75 fee charged.

Other Informational Items
None

Public Comment
None

Adjournment
Motion by Maier, seconded by Shangle to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. **Carried 7-0**

Respectfully submitted:
Sue Bitely, Sparta Township Clerk

Sue Bitely