

Oshtemo Charter Township Parks Department Accomplishments, Goals, Vision

2018 Accomplishments

Drake Farmstead

- Successfully concluded the Drake Farmstead Park Capital Campaign, which raised over \$250,000 from the community for the first phase of park improvements. A partnership with Oshtemo Historical Society (OHS) and Friends of the Parks (OFP).
- Began construction of carriage barn and barrier-free ramp to the historic house, funded primarily by Capital Campaign funds.
- Prepared plans and construction documents for the picnic shelter, trails, and parking lot with OCBA Landscape Architects, funded in part by a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant. Topo and tree survey and trail system plan were also prepared.
- Prepared plans for renovation of the reception room in the historic house with Architect Nelson Nave, in partnership with OHS.
- Received a \$50,000 pledge from the Oshtemo Rotary Club for picnic shelter construction.
- Completed a Forest Management Plan to guide ecological restoration of the site and manage invasive vegetation, funded in part by a Michigan DNR Community Forestry grant.
- Commissioned a mural by local artist Conrad Kaufman for display in the carriage barn, funded by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA), Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo (ACGK) and the Capital Campaign.
- Began reconstructing six acres of prairie at the corner of Drake Road and Croyden Avenue, funded by a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KCF).
- Hosted work sessions for volunteers to begin removing invasive vegetation from the site.
- Received a grant from MCACA/ACGK for graphic design of interpretive signs, in partnership with Oshtemo Historical Society.

Grange Hall

- Hosted first 'Salute to Veterans' potluck and dance in partnership with OFP. MCACA/ACGK grant and sponsorships covered cost of performers, food, promotional materials and postage.

Flesher Field

- Hosted third annual outdoor concert series at the gazebo in partnership with OFP. MCACA/ACGK grant and sponsorships covered costs of performers, promotional materials, and postage.
- Offered 'Yoga in the Park' at the gazebo in partnership with OFP.

Township Park

- Hosted outdoor movies and programs for adults and youth, in partnership with Kalamazoo Public Library and OFP.
- Purchased new tennis nets.
- Continued to work with Lets Serve Tennis Club to offer tennis lessons for youth and adults.

Miscellaneous

- Began GO! Green Oshtemo, a comprehensive and coordinated plan for parks and recreation, conservation, non-motorized transportation, and cemeteries.
- Studied alternatives and communicated with property owners to pursue a neighborhood park on the east side of the Township near high density residential areas.
- Donated \$193,000 to the Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Endowment Fund at the KCF using proceeds from the sale of Stadium Park Way Park.
- Recommended revising Township policy to allow general public to rent the Community Center and Grange Hall.
- Replenished engineered wood fiber surface in all playground areas and purchased three picnic tables.
- Planted trees at Flesher Field, Township Park, and Hill Cemetery using grant funds from Consumers Energy and volunteers from Arbor Credit Union.
- Planted trees along Millard's Way using funds donated by the Oshtemo Rotary Club and volunteers from Arbor Credit Union.

2019 Goals

Drake Farmstead Park

- Open the park to the public on a daily basis.
- Complete construction of the carriage barn and barrier-free ramp with Capital Campaign and Park funds.
- Renovate the reception room in the historic house with Capital Campaign funds, in partnership with OHS.
- Construct the picnic shelter, gravel parking lot, aggregate trails, and interpretive signs with MNRTF, Oshtemo Rotary, MCACA/ACGK, and Park funds.
- Reduce construction costs by using volunteers and donated services to cut trees, remove stumps, and chip brush in the area needed for the parking lot, picnic shelter and outdoor classroom.
- Plant native wildflower and grass seed mix in the six acre prairie reconstruction area with KCF funds.
- Build and install a park sign.
- Host educational and recreational programs in the carriage barn, and promote for private events.
- Build wood chip trails and continue to remove invasive vegetation with volunteers.

Grange Hall

- Promote the facility to increase rental revenue.

Flesher Field

- Host the fourth annual outdoor concert series in the gazebo in partnership with OFP. Seek grants and sponsorships to offset the cost of performers and promotions.
- Promote the gazebo for weddings and other private events.
- Continue to host Yoga in the Park in partnership with OFP.

Township Park

- Continue to work with Lets Serve Tennis Club to offer tennis lessons for youth and adults.

Miscellaneous

- Complete GO! Green Oshtemo and submit to the Michigan DNR for approval of Five Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2019-2023.
- Continue discussions with property owners to create a new neighborhood park on the east side of the Township near high density residential areas.

Vision for 2020

Priorities

- Continue improvements at Drake Farmstead Park, Flesher Field and Oshtemo Township Park so our existing parks are fully utilized and deliver an exceptional park experience. **Priority projects are in bold below.**
- Simultaneously, explore land acquisition for a new neighborhood park in the high density residential area near Drake and KL, understanding that limited land availability and the grant process will slow the process.

Drake Farmstead Park

- **Purchase tables, chairs and a drinking fountain for the carriage barn.**
- **Improve the gravel driveway.**
- **Build wood chip trails and remove invasive vegetation with volunteers.**
- **Trim trees along driveway with volunteers and paid contracts.**
- Market the carriage barn, house and grounds for weddings and private events to maximize rental revenues.
- Continue to offer educational and recreational programs.
- Develop and install additional interpretive signs, especially near the historic barn foundations.
- Update the graphic map in the master plan.
- Plant native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers that produce food for people or wildlife (food forest).
- Maintain the newly planted prairie reconstruction area.
- Develop partnerships to help plan and construct the educational garden, starting with a small area that can be maintained by volunteers.
- Continue to pursue a sidewalk along Croyden Ave to improve pedestrian access to the park.

Non-Motorized Trails and Greenways

- **Apply for grant funds to acquire land or easements for the Fruitbelt Trail.**
- Establish corridors through natural areas as identified in GO! Green Oshtemo.

Township Park

- **Install tee signs in the disc golf course. Seek sponsorships to offset costs.**
- Color coat and restripe tennis/pickleball and basketball courts. Purchase four portable pickleball nets.
- Develop a joint natural area management plan for Township Park, Anderson Arboretum, Devries property, and Bonney Castle Lake properties.

Flesher Field

- **Apply for grant funds to develop a forest management plan for the wooded area.**
- Use volunteers to maintain the trails and implement the forest management plan.

Grange Hall

- **Install gutters and other measures to keep water out of the lower level.**
- Maintain the rain gardens to ensure that native grasses and wildflowers outcompete weeds.
- Create a staging area for bike rides, with port-o-let, water access, and bulletin board or kiosk to post routes.

Miscellaneous

- **Continue to work toward acquiring land for a park near the intersection of Drake Road and KL Avenue.**
- **Install educational signage for rain gardens and no mow areas.**
- Develop a pilot study focused on verification of biodiversity within three areas of natural interest shown on the Conservation Areas of Interest Map in GO! Green Oshtemo.
- Evaluate hvac systems and gutters at Community Center, Grange Hall, and Drake House.
- Continue partnerships with OFP and other organizations such as Kalamazoo Public Library and Rotary to provide events and programs that promote the important role of community parks.
- Develop a communications and marketing plan for Township parks and events.
- Hire a seasonal parks assistant to work with programs, volunteers, reservations and natural area restoration.
- Charge time spent on park/facility rentals by front desk staff to more accurately represent the Parks budget.