

# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN 2014



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## **Special Thanks**

Appreciation is extended to the many individuals and organizations who helped shape this document by participating in the surveys and group exercises the results of which are found in the Appendix.

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### CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN

This document represents the culmination of several months of work on behalf of the Steering Committee formed for the purpose of developing a Strategic Plan for Charlton Park. Several documents were prepared prior to preparation of the Strategic Plan; these documents were referenced in the writing of the Plan and are available as appendices to the Plan. These documents are:

***Current Plans, Policies, and Demographics.*** This report contained a summary of those existing plans, policies, and facilities that may influence both the current and future condition of Charlton Park. Existing conditions help in understanding the goals and purposes of other institutions as compared to the goals and purposes of Charlton Park. Both local and regional influences were included in the report. Demographics that are important in determining the future of Charlton Park are included in the report.

***Community Input Report.*** This report summarized all public input gathered as part of the strategic planning process. Input was gathered via the following methods:

- ❖ **On-line Citizen Survey which was also available as a paper survey**
- ❖ **Short paper survey on-site at the Irving D. Charlton Museum**
- ❖ **Leadership Visioning Workshop**
- ❖ **Mobile Workshops for stakeholder groups**
- ❖ **Individual stakeholder interviews**

Common themes were discovered in order to assist in setting direction for Charlton Park.

**Perhaps the most important idea that emerged in the Community Input Report is that expanding the historic focus of Charlton Park is valued equally with adding new and exciting facilities and events at the park. Achieving a balance between these two values is consistently apparent throughout the Strategic Plan.**



***Architectural Assessments.*** The purpose of this report was to provide a detailed analysis of the buildings and structures present at the park including historic significance and structural condition. Accessibility for barrier free access was also analyzed for each structure. Maintenance, repair, safety, and renovation recommendations and priorities are included in the report.

***Parks and Recreation Trends, Site Accessibility, and General Site Observations.*** This report provided guidance in trends in recreational facilities with an emphasis on those facilities that may be appropriate for Charlton Park. In addition, accessibility for barrier free access was analyzed for all existing recreational facilities at the park and for the historic village. General site observations include recommendations for new facilities, aesthetics, and maintenance.

***Charlton Park Board of Directors Planning Data.*** Prior to the beginning of the Strategic Planning process, the Charlton Park Board produced a list of long term (ten year) and short term (five years or less) issues, many of which have been affirmed by public input received during the planning process. This list is included in the appendices, and has been drawn upon when developing goals and action steps.

## MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR STRATEGIC ACTION

Desires for Charlton Park as expressed by the public, the Steering Committee, as well as the Charlton Park Board, have resulted in the identification of six major categories for which goals and actions steps have been developed, and for which agents or champions have been identified.

For each action step, a time frame (three, five, or ten years) has been established. While these time frames are important in terms of setting priorities in regard to completion of action steps, the Steering Committee recognizes that adjustments in time schedules may be needed due to availability of funding and staffing, or shifting priorities.

The Charlton Park Board, and the various committees that are charged with carrying out the Strategic Plan, should consult the previously prepared reports for detailed ideas in accomplishing goals. Valuable specific ideas are contained in these reports regarding specific park facilities, expansion of existing park programs, increased accessibility to all users, and increased presence through marketing.





The Strategic Plan is intended to be a strong policy document. However, the Charlton Park Board of Directors should apply an annual review of the Strategic Plan to assess accomplishments, readjust priorities if necessary, and identify roadblocks to success that may emerge during courses of action. The Strategic Plan should be viewed as a document that can assist and support efforts to achieve the vision for Charlton Park, but should be revised as needed to meet the purpose of the Charlton Park Board.

Finally, the Strategic Plan should be consistently coordinated with the activities of the Charlton Park Foundation, in order to assure mutual support of both the goals of the Charlton Park Board and the goals of the Foundation, and to insure efficient expenditure of funds.





## EXPAND HISTORIC FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES

### 1. Goal

Hire and train additional docents and volunteers to expand the times and opportunities for which personnel are available to scheduled groups and the general public.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine source of funding necessary to employ additional docents; seek volunteers including retirees, college students, and others.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Volunteers Comm.; Staff
Train docents and volunteers in all aspects of collections maintenance and repair as demonstrations; increase live demonstrations and give-aways that demonstrate historic activities.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Volunteers Comm.; Staff
Explore possibility of outside vendors and providers.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Events and Volunteers Comm.; Staff





## 2. Goal

Increase interpretation of historic and non-historic structures through a system of uniform, attractive signage both outside and inside structures.

### Action Steps

Develop comprehensive sign plan.

### Time Frame

3-5 yrs.

### Agent/Champion

Charlton Park Board;  
Facilities Comm.; Staff



## 3. Goal

Identify those events which enhance the historic focus and mission of Charlton Park.

Evaluate special events for relevance to stated goals and mission of Charlton Park.

Annually

Charlton Park Board;  
Events Comm.; Staff

### Key Challenges for this Category:

Funding for additional docents; recruiting and administering volunteers; increase in facilities and attendance will result in an increase in maintenance; considering increased hours of operation; staffing new events; balancing free events with gate fees.



## INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION, AND COLLECTIONS

*This section was prepared by the Collections and Education Committee of Historic Charlton Park.*

### A. Goal

Employ multiple methods of interpretation in historic & non-historic areas.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Create a robust interpretation program	On-Going	Staff, Education Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Recruit docents for hands on demonstrations in the historic village</li> <li>b. Hire and train seasonal staff to offer interpretation on non-event days</li> </ul>		

Provide Virtual tours of the historic structures and grounds to assist with ADA compliance

2-5 years

Staff, Education Committee

- a. Determine scope of project: inaccessible buildings and certain spaces? Or every building and grounds?
- b. Contact outside vendors for bids
- c. Determine time necessary to complete in-house
- d. Purchase wide angle lens for camera and a new digital camera
- e. <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Virtual-Tour>
- f. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jr1HGk2zYJg>



Develop comprehensive sign plan

5-10 years

Staff, Education & Collections Committee, Facility Committee, Board

- a. Identify areas of greatest need/interest (i.e. building interiors)
- b. Create design and style of signs for consistency in all areas
- c. Determine level of funding needed by consulting printers experienced with indoor and outdoor signage.
- d. Plan to print and install on a yearly basis with available funds
- e. Write and research story of each building or topic



Consider Audio/Cell Phone Tours and the use of emerging technologies

5-10 years

Staff, Education & Collections Committee, Facility Committee, Board, Consultant

- a. Meet with OnCell and other tour providers to determine scope and level of funding needed. Potential maintenance costs.
- b. Consult constituents through Facebook, newsletter, local paper, Volunteers
- c. Is cell phone reception good enough to even consider
- d. Do a test run of QR codes in specific buildings for 6 months and track usage. Online content and code development
- e. If deemed necessary, develop online content for QR codes and create narration for the audio/cell tour.



### B. Goal

Expand scope of program offerings for schools & other organized groups.

#### Action Steps

#### Time Frame

#### Agent/Champion

Determine type and scope of current and new programs, such as Indian Landing, Environmental History, Early Transportation, etc.

1-5 Years

Staff, Education & Collection Committee

- a. Survey all county schools (all grades) to see what programs they would be interested in – not just groups that currently attend programs at the Park.
- b. Discuss with Education/Collections Committee to create a viable timeline to roll out new programs.
- c. Research and develop new programs, using the resources we have in our collection as a starting point.
- d. Complete testing phase of new programming by offering the program for free to a select number of groups, ask for feedback at the completion of the program.
- e. Assess test program and make changes, then offer to a wider range of schools.



Determine source of funding necessary to employ additional docents; Seek volunteers including retirees, college students, and others

3-5 Years

Staff, Education & Collections Committee, Board

- a. Research to see if there are grant opportunities that would help create a self-sustaining pool of money with which to pay docents
- b. Consult with director to see if there are areas of the current budget where funds could be drawn
- c. If funds exist, write a proposal to the Charlton Park board asking for permission to move those monies to a docent fund
- d. Post-employment opportunities onto area college websites and in local papers for Historic Interpreter positions
- e. Arrange visits to local Rotary/Historical Societies/etc. groups to drum up interest for new volunteers and docents.

Hire and train additional docents and volunteers to expand times and opportunities for which personnel are available to scheduled groups and the general public.

3-5 Years

Staff, Consultant

- a. Consult with current volunteer corps to hear why they started volunteering at the Park; use that as a basis for a promotional campaign for new volunteers and docents.
- b. Do a study of when the buildings are most active outside of school groups and special events, and work towards staffing buildings during that time.
- c. Train docents and volunteers in different live demonstrations and giveaways that demonstrate historic activities.
- d. Explore the possibility of outside vendors and providers.

With Collections staff, develop teaching kits for use in local schools

5-10 Years

Staff

- a. Determine primary source needs by consulting local educators, all grades
- b. Pull artifacts (2D/3D) from storage and photograph/scan those intended for use.
- c. Create CDs or use another digital format
- d. Consult local educators on an annual basis to make sure needs are still being met.



**C. Goal**

Insure events and exhibits are relevant to the mission of Historic Charlton Park

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Assess Current events; consider adding or eliminating special events that no longer fit the goals of Historic Charlton Park	1 Year	Staff, Board, Consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Taking community ties and the mission statement into account-Eliminate events from the published calendar</li> <li>b. Based on survey results and public input, determine cost to bring in outside events (i.e. Lumberjack Show)</li> <li>c. Determine if cyclical events would be possible and what those would be</li> </ul>		
Find traveling exhibits that enrich the local community or complement the historic village and recreation areas, providing an outside voice.	1-5 Years	Staff, Collections Committee, Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Examine mission statement to determine focus</li> <li>b. Use resources of outside organizations (MMA and AASLH) or online searches and inquiry to locate exhibits</li> <li>c. Determine costs, budget, potential partners, size, time of year (audience)</li> <li>d. Staff commitment – reporting, marketing materials, installation, storage, security (personnel/cameras), construction</li> </ul>		Staff, Collections Committee, Board
Insure in-house exhibits make use of existing collections and resources	1-5 Years	Volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consider the strengths of the collection</li> <li>b. Determine via press release whether the local community would be interested or able to provide additional information/materials on exhibit topics</li> <li>c. Determine costs, budget, potential partners, size, time of year (audience)</li> <li>d. Staff/volunteer commitment – research, sign creation, design, marketing materials, installation, storage, security (personnel/cameras), construction</li> </ul>		



Create a schedule of exhibits and events that cover a two or three year period at minimum.

2-5 Years

Staff, Collections Committee

- a. Continue to search out and inquire on traveling exhibits
- b. Seek input and information from the local community to support In-house exhibits
- c. Consult the mission statement
- d. Make sure payment plan is in order



### D. Goal

Develop an Interpretation and Education Facility

#### Action Steps

Develop a use plan for an interpretation and education facility; determine anticipated maintenance costs, utilities costs, staffing needs, and income revenues from rentals and other uses.

#### Time Frame

1-5 years

#### Agent/Champion

Staff, Collections & Education Committee, Facilities Committee, Board, Consultant

- a. Organize a listing of all possible uses for the building, (i.e. Education programs [programs or lunchroom for outdoor programs], rental space for meetings, wedding preparation, storage for education programs or special events)
- b. Research buildings similar in use to estimate maintenance costs
- c. Consult with local utilities companies to estimate utility costs





- d. Create a matrix that spells out potential maintenance/utility costs for each type of event held in the building versus the amount of revenue that will come in (i.e. figure out a minimum number of people required to use the building)

Staff, Collections & Education Committee, Facilities Committee, Board, Consultant

Determine specifications such as location and size for a new education building. 3-5 years

- a. Consult with an expert to determine the best location for the proposed building, including proximity to Collections building
- b. Using the list of possible uses for the building, consult with an expert to determine what the layout should look like i.e. number/size of rooms
- c. Ensure ADA compliance of new building and possible use as a severe weather shelter

Staff, Collections & Education Committee, Facilities Committee, Board, Consultant

Search for funding sources and partners 3-10 years

### E. Goal

Develop plan for completion of collection inventory

<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Agent/Champion</b>
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Develop hierarchy of greatest need	3-5 years	Staff, Collection Committee, Board
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- a. Those artifacts/buildings deemed of greatest value historic/monetary
- b. Consider time of year and time needed to complete inventories (physical inventory, photograph, research, data entry, storage resources)
- c. Create spreadsheet delineating projects over the next 5 years





Train additional volunteers, students, and potential part-time staff to assist with inventory program

1-5 Years

Staff

- a. Pay for additional licenses and set up an additional computer for cataloging
- b. Upgrade server memory
- c. Consider staff time needed to supervise and schedule additional helpers
- d. Recruit students with the offer of internships for credit
- e. Train additional volunteers and interns

## F. Goal

Establish a collecting plan to include future collecting and de-accessioning goals

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine time span of collecting activities	1 Year	Staff, Collections Committee, Board
Identify strengths and weaknesses within existing collection	5-10 Years	Staff, Collections Committee, Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. As the buildings and storage spaces are inventoried, compile a list of surplus artifacts and a list of artifacts we are lacking to tell a complete story</li> <li>b. Consider the scope of collecting activities and mission prior to making any decisions or searching out additional artifacts</li> <li>c. Create working document to guide the future of collecting</li> </ul>		
Eliminate excessive duplicates, artifacts beyond repair, and those outside the scope of determined collecting span	5-10 Years	Staff, Collections Committee, Board



- a. Educate the public on the de-accession process through various news sources
- b. Once the collecting plan is complete, systematically remove artifacts that fit the above criteria from the permanent collection following best practices.



**G. Goal**

Design and construct a new Collections Storage Building sufficient for current and future needs while incorporating a conservation lab and possible open storage for public viewing

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Determine specifications, based upon scope and types of use, for a new Collections storage facility and complete a preliminary design	1-5 Years	Staff, Consultant, Board, Foundation, Consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Examine collection composition and group artifacts into similar types of storage</li> <li>b. Consult experts on storage solutions and architects that design collection storage buildings</li> <li>c. Determine need for a conservation lab/work space, cold storage, offices, Restrooms, storage space, loading dock, etc.</li> <li>d. Develop building plans</li> <li>e. Create press materials</li> </ul>		
Identify the best location for proposed building Outside experts	3-5 Years	Staff, Consultant, Board, Foundation, Consultant
Determine level of funding required by capital campaign and seek funding	3-10 Years	Staff, Consultant, Board, Foundation, Consultant





### H. Goal

Develop a Disaster Preparedness Plan

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Work with professionals to determine the areas of the collection under greatest threat for natural or manmade disaster, and the recommended actions for preserving the collections.	1-5 Years	Staff, Collections Committee, Board, Consultant
Create procedural document and attend workshops as needed	2-5 Years	Staff, Collections Committee, Board, Consultant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use existing sources (i.e. Dplan) to create template document</li> <li>b. Examine disaster plans of other institutions</li> <li>c. Contact outside sources and gain support in the event of a disaster (i.e. freezer truck)</li> <li>d. Using 2009 MAP assessment and workshop knowledge, create Document</li> </ul>		
Develop emergency response kit and train staff and volunteers	5-10 Years	Staff, Consultant, Volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Kits will include those items necessary to triage storage and artifacts</li> <li>b. Training will include documentation, triage locations, handling, etc.</li> <li>c. Train staff and volunteers</li> </ul>		

### I. Goal

Increase public accessibility to the collections

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Expand the number of computers with database access available to the public	1-3 Years	Staff, Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Requires more licenses for Past Perfect or another solution</li> <li>b. Requires installation of another computer using outside source</li> </ul>		



Make collection available online through

Past Perfect; resolve security issues                      3-5 Years                      Staff, Board

- a. Determine cost, set up and maintenance needs for online database
- b. Consult other museums using Past Perfect online
- c. Work with county IT, Firespring, and Past Perfect to complete set up

Offer “reading room” hours once per week

for hands on research                      5-10 Years                      Staff, Board

- a. Train any additional/volunteer staff how to search the database
- b. Train staff to identify when visitors need to have access to actual artifact or when the use of the database is preferable.
- c. Create press materials and have reading hours on a trial basis
- d. Consult museums/archives that offer similar opportunities to the public to determine the best policies and procedures.

With education staff, develop kits/CDs of  
primary materials for use in the classroom,  
both on-site and at public and private  
schools

5-10 Years                      Staff, Board

- a. Determine primary source needs by consulting local educators, all grades
- b. Pull artifacts (2D/3D) from storage and photograph/scan those intended for use.
- c. Create CDs or use another digital format
- d. Consult local educators on an annual basis to make sure needs are still being met.



## MARKETING, PUBLICITY, IMAGE, AND EVENTS

### 1. Goal

Increase awareness and “market reach” of Charlton Park to both a local market of up to 30 miles and a regional market of up to 60 miles in order to build local support by strengthening regional image.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Define “what” should be marketed; create an image that equals the mission of Charlton Park.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board
Shape strategy for marketing for millage increase; advertise accomplishments and direction for the future; direct strategy to recognize new-comers to Barry County.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board
Utilize traditional forms of media such as the newspaper, along with social media such as Facebook and Twitter, to reach different age-group segments of visitors.	3 yrs. or less	Staff
Utilize the “Pure Michigan” campaign and other state or county tourism efforts to increase visibility to both local residents and out-of-town vacationers.	3 yrs. or less	Staff
Increase staff for marketing efforts through student interns or hired staff.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Staff

### Key Challenges in this Category:

Reaching a new generation; lack of knowledge about the facility even among Barry County residents; successful millage campaign; sufficient staff to allow dedication to marketing tasks; funding for additional marketing efforts and staff.



## 2. Goal

Design Parks Master Plan showing location of existing and proposed facilities in campus arrangement to maximize park topography as well as use and access to planned facilities.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Prepare preliminary plan suitable for presentation to public and elected and appointed officials.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; all Board Committees; Staff; Consultant





### 3. Goal

Identify and provide vibrant recreational facilities, structures, and events which enhance the recreational mission of Charlton Park, and assist in attracting visitors from a local and regional area.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Prepare and prioritize desired facilities and events utilizing Parks and Recreation Trends/ General Site Observation Report; determine funding and staffing levels necessary.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Events Comm.; Staff
Explore possibility of outside vendors and providers.(amusement rides, ziplines, etc.)	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee; Events Comm.; Staff
Update playground equipment and identify funding sources	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee
Determine feasibility of campground facility; determine funding and staffing levels necessary.	5-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee
Update playground equipment and identify funding sources	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Committee
Design and construction phasing for those facilities not provided by outside vendors.	5-10 yrs.	Facilities Committee



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## Key Challenges for this Category:

Funding sources-millage or Capital Campaign?; topography and location of buildings; increased maintenance and staffing required for expansion of facilities; liability issues.





## MAINTENANCE, SITE IMPROVEMENTS, ACCESSIBILITY

### 1. Goal

Construct new Maintenance Facility sufficient for current and future maintenance needs for entire Charlton Park grounds and structures.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Complete design; determine funding source for new building; complete construction.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Consultant

### 2. Goal

Prioritize and complete improvements to all park facilities to insure accessibility for all users, as required or recommended by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and as embraced by Universal Design principles.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Utilize the recommendations of the Architectural Assessments and the Site Accessibility Assessment reports in order to set priorities for improvements in access; determine funding source and construction schedule.	3-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Consultant





Improve beach area by enlarging useable area, and providing ADA accessible water activities and playgrounds. Determine funding; explore grant funding opportunities. 3-5 yrs. Facilities Comm.; Consultant

When planning for trail improvements, include portions designed for all users. 3-5 yrs. Facilities Comm.; Consultant

### 3. Goal

Provide both inclement weather and severe weather shelter for visitors to the park.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Include severe weather shelter areas as part of design in one or more newly constructed buildings.	5-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Consultant
Construct inclement weather shelter; determine location on park campus Master Plan and in coordination with other planned structures.	5-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Consultant





## 4. Goal

Prepare trails plan that reflects anticipated users; provide trail access along Thornapple River; provide connections to regional trails such as the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Inventory existing trail system; define the anticipated users of the trail.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff
Determine improvements and expansions to the trail system; determine funding sources; work with consultant on design and construction.	3-10 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff; Consultant





## 5. Goal

Increase number of staff trained for on-going maintenance and repair tasks; reduce the need for outside contractors over time.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Develop policy for determining when to invest in training rather than contracting for certain services.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board

## 6. Goal

Establish schedule of repair and improvements especially as they relate to painting, smoke and fire detection, moisture barriers, and heating historic buildings.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Utilizing the recommendations of the Architectural Assessments report, prioritize repairs and improvements. Determine funding needs and, working with the Charlton Park Foundation, determine availability of funds.	3-10 yrs.	Facilities Comm.; Charlton Park Foundation

### Key Challenges in this Category:

Making sure historic structures are not compromised; expenses related to ADA accessibility; legal issues with ADA exemptions; expenses related to heating.





## Financing and Fundraising

### 1. Goal

Prepare for increased millage request necessary to improve facilities and operations beyond current operations and facilities.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Identify project goals for increased millage.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff
Identify millage committee.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board



### 2. Goal

Prepare for and conduct Capital Campaign.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Identify projects and structures for completion.	3 yrs. or less	Charlton Park Board; Facilities Comm.; Staff
Seek assistance with Capital Campaign, consultant or otherwise.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Consultant



### 3. Goal

Continue seeking funding through grants.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Research available grants available through Federal, State, and local sources.	3-5 yrs.	Staff; Consultant
Apply for grants for projects that advance the stated goals and vision of Charlton Park.	3-5 yrs.	Staff; Consultant

### 4. Goal

Provide space and rental opportunities for special events appropriate for the size, location, and mission of Charlton Park.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Evaluate special events for relevance to stated goals and mission of Charlton Park.	Annually	Charlton Park Board; Staff
Rotate special events based upon popularity and relation to mission of Charlton Park.	3-5 yrs.	Charlton Park Board; Staff





## 5. Goal

Coordinate planning and projects with Charlton Park Foundation to help insure efficient expenditures and unity of purpose.

Action Steps	Time Frame	Agent/Champion
Meet annually to review progress on projects and to review future projects.	Annually	Charlton Park Board; Charlton Park Foundation

### Key Challenges for this Category:

Effectively providing rationale for a higher millage; clarifying to the public the reality of the limits of funding from the millage and the Charlton Park Foundation; effectively structuring the millage committee; limited staff time to write grants; determining the leaders in conducting a Capital Campaign.









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## APPENDICES

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# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN

Current Plans, Policies, and Demographics







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### CURRENT PLANS AND POLICIES

This report describes those existing plans and policies that may influence both the current and future condition of Charlton Park. These plans and policies have been collected from agencies such as the Historic Charlton Park Board, the Charlton Park Foundation, Barry County, Hastings Township, private organizations, the State of Michigan, and other entities that may influence the physical and programmatic development of the park.

The purpose of this report is to create a comprehensive understanding of expressed goals of institutions and agencies that impact park use and development. Thus this report looks outside the immediate vicinity to the county, region, and state in some instances, and identifies goals that complement each other, as well as those that may conflict with one another.

#### *Charlton Park Village and Museum Board of Directors*

**Structure and Function of the Park Board:** The Historic Charlton Park Board consists of thirteen members who meet on a monthly basis to decide all aspects of programming, budget, staffing, and maintenance of the park. The Board consists of a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary, along with a representative from the Barry County Commission, a representative of the Gas and Steam Club, and seven citizen-at-large positions. The County Clerk and County Treasurer act as the responsible parties for financial activities. Members of the Park Board represent various interests in the community such as The Civil War Reenactors, Native Americans, Barry County Parks and Recreation Board, and other interests which may vary based upon citizens who hold a position on the Board. The subcommittees of the Park Board include Facilities and Operations, Collections and Education, and Events and Volunteers.

The Executive Committee of the Board consists of the five officers, who also meet monthly to bring recommendations to the full Park Board regarding operations and staffing. The Executive Committee also provides direction to the park staff.

The Charlton Park Village and Museum Board has custody, control, and management of Charlton Park and adjoining properties. As an agency of Barry County, the Board is under the general control of the County Board of Commissioners, and was created under the authority of PA 156 in 1967. The Charlton Park Board is responsible for operations, long-range planning, approval of acquisitions, preparation of an annual budget, and approval of expenditures.

**Mission Statement.** One of the tasks of the strategic planning process will be to examine the Mission Statement of the park, and to determine whether the statement is still relevant, and whether it captures the intent of future plans for the park. The current Mission Statement of Historic Charlton Park is as follows:



*The Mission of Historic Charlton Park is to provide educational and recreational opportunities, through the collection, preservation and demonstration of early rural Michigan life, artifacts and buildings, and the maintenance of natural and recreation areas.*

**Goals and Policies of the Charlton Park Board.** Goals and policies of the Park Board are recommended by the Executive Committee to the full Park Board, where final decisions are made. In 2012, the Executive Committee generated lists of Long Term Issues (10 years) and Short Term Issues (5 years or less). Issues are goals or tasks that members of the Executive Committee desire to accomplish. Each issue was identified as to the subcommittee or agent that would be responsible for accomplishing that particular issue.

Issues cover a broad range of ideas. Long Term Issues tend to focus on funding, collections, programming, facilities improvements, maintenance, and publicity. Short Term Issues tend to focus on finances, program and event evaluation, exhibits, collections, building conditions, and road conditions. Common themes can be found between the Long and Short Term Issues; in summary, the Executive Board's issues fell within these main categories:

- ❖ Funding and financing
- ❖ Programs and events
- ❖ Facilities and maintenance, both historic and recreational
- ❖ Collections and exhibits
- ❖ Publicity and marketing

Additionally, the Executive Board's goals show a desire to focus on the following:

- ❖ Continuing and improving a revenue stream
- ❖ Defining programs and events that are appropriate to the mission
- ❖ Keeping current facilities in good repair; expanding where appropriate
- ❖ Completing an inventory of the collections, improving storage, and limiting scope
- ❖ Identifying and expanding the visitor base

While general goals and themes emerged from the issues identification, specific projects were also identified. The list of issues generated will be utilized along with other sources of input when developing the Strategic Plan.

### ***Charlton Park Village Foundation***

The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation organized for the exclusive purpose of providing the funds necessary to preserve and maintain the park's village and collections. The Foundation manages an endowment fund from which interest is used exclusively to support the physical collections and buildings in the park.



The Foundation’s Board of Directors consists of eleven members; all requests for use of funds must be approved by a majority vote of the Board. A five-year plan is developed which includes specific structural maintenance and improvement projects.

### ***Barry County Parks and Recreation Board***

The Barry County Parks and Recreation Board is responsible for all County parks and parklands outside Charlton Park. However, the Board is responsible for preparing the Barry County Five-Year Parks and Recreation Plan, which includes plans for Charlton Park based upon input from the Charlton Park Board. While the operations of Charlton Park are almost exclusively separate from the operations of the County Parks and Recreation Board, plans of both Boards must recommend adoption of the Five-year Parks and Recreation Plan to the County Board of Commissioners.

According to the 2008 Barry County Parks and Recreation Plan, goals for Charlton Park, in general, included:

#### ***Historic Village and Museum***

- ❖ Improvements to existing infrastructure, including increased accessibility for all users while maintaining historic integrity;
- ❖ Increased educational programming;
- ❖ Maintenance and upkeep of the existing buildings;
- ❖ Improvements in upkeep and display of the collections;
- ❖ Updates in technology to manage inventory.

#### ***Recreation Area***

- ❖ Safety/accessibility of play equipment;
- ❖ Accessible walkways;
- ❖ Increased access to waterfront and other natural resources ;
- ❖ Improved trail network;
- ❖ Maintenance of wildlife habitat.

The Parks and Recreation Board is in the process of updating its 2008 Five-Year Plan during the course of the Charlton Park strategic planning process. Any goals for Barry County parks that might impact Charlton Park that have become available during the course of the update have been included in this document.



## ***Barry County Master Plan/Hastings Township Future Land Use***

The Barry County Master Plan was prepared in 2005. It contains land use goals that, while not specifically impacting Charlton Park, may impact its general vision and mission. These goals are summarized as follows:

- ❖ Conservation of the Thornapple River Watershed;
- ❖ Preservation of natural features and open space including woodlands, prairies, wetlands, lakes, streams, and wildlife habitat by identifying significant natural features, seeking funding sources, and expanding the County parks program;
- ❖ Establish a detailed greenways plan to coordinate pedestrian and bike trails-connect recreational trails with public and private open space;
- ❖ Establish a detailed waterways plan which identifies access site, shoreline preservation, maintenance mechanisms and development strategies;
- ❖ Preserve water resources, and support native and natural plant and wildlife communities, through buffering techniques and storm water management.

Hastings Township does not have a locally prepared future land use plan, but the township is included in the Barry County Master Plan. Future land use for that area that encompasses Charlton Park is recommended for Preserved Lands, a category that includes all public and privately protected lands. The amount of land included in Preserved Land is recommended to be expanded wherever key natural features exist, and maintenance of these areas is a priority of the Master Plan.

## ***State of Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)***

Every five years, the State of Michigan completes a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) in order to stay eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund monies which are then dispersed to state and local recreation agencies such as Barry County. The state reviews local recreation plans that are provided to them, and reports the types of facilities and acres of outdoor recreational space available to citizens and visitors. Citizens of the state as well as local unit outdoor recreation providers were surveyed in 2007 to determine state-wide priorities. Those priorities which could impact the goals and vision for Charlton Park are as follows:

- ❖ Conservation of natural resources
- ❖ Trails (land and water based)
- ❖ Universal access
- ❖ Community recreation
- ❖ Cooperation and coordination among recreation providers



Other identified initiatives of the SCORP that may impact Charlton Park include protection of wetlands, and green technology (energy savings as well as environmentally friendly, cost efficient alternatives to infrastructure construction and maintenance practices).

### ***Barry Conservation District***

The Barry Conservation District is a locally controlled governmental subdivision of the state, governed by a citizen-elected board of five Directors. The goals of the Barry County Conservation District are to develop a plan of action to address natural resources issues, and employ staff to implement the plan through education, programs, projects and technical assistance provided to District landowners. An interface with goals and objectives of Charlton Park are most likely with the following programs of the Conservation District:

- ❖ The Thornapple River Watershed Management Plan Project which brings together agencies and organizations from throughout the watershed to assess, study and develop recommendations to sustain the health of the Thornapple River and its tributaries, and the lands surrounding them.
- ❖ The Barry County Natural Features Inventory which utilizes a science-based approach to identify potential conservation areas throughout the county in order to ensure the long-term biodiversity and ecological stability of the area. A map of Potential Conservation Areas has been developed which show some areas of ecological significance within the Charlton Park area, although the nature of the significance is not reported.

### ***McKeown Bridge Park; Thornapple Trail Park-Barry County***

McKeown Bridge Park, owned and operated by Barry County, is located on the Thornapple River approximately one mile west of Charlton Park. The park consists of approximately 20 acres of a larger 98 acre parcel owned by Barry County. An historic bridge as well as other recreational amenities are available at McKeown Park. In addition, a portion of the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail known as Thornapple Trail Park is located just south of McKeown Bridge Park. Impacts of these parks on Charlton Park will primarily be the opportunity for trail connections, as well as an historic tie-in between the historic bridge and Charlton Park museum and village.

### ***Paul Henry Thornapple Trail***

The Paul Henry Thornapple Trail primarily follows the Thornapple River within the former right-of-way of the Penn Central Railroad. The non-motorized trail is intended to run from a trail head in the City of Kentwood in Kent County to Vermontville in Eaton County. The proposed trail intersects Charlton Park Road at Quimby Road, approximately one-half mile south of the entrance to Charlton Park, on the south side of the Thornapple River. While portions of the trail are



completed, some sections of the proposed trail are still in private ownership, and are not yet available for public use. However, the proposed location of the trail is such that a trail connection to Charlton Park could be considered.

### ***Barry County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Alliance***

The Barry County Economic Development Alliance is a countywide organization providing services to local governmental partners, existing businesses and budding entrepreneurs. The 17-member Board of Directors maintains the following mission statement:

*Utilizing a progressive approach, the Barry County Economic Development Alliance will create an environment for the retention and expansion of business and industry in Barry County, consistent with the preservation of the rural quality of life.*

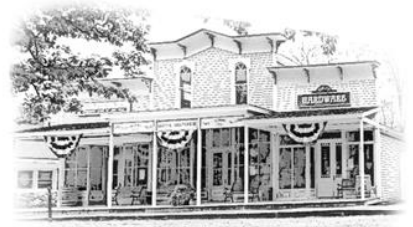
The Tourism Council, a function of the Alliance, provides an on-line listing of events and destinations within the County. In addition, the Tourism Council provides an on-line Inventory Submission Form, where attractions, features, natural areas, shops and lodging can be submitted for inclusion in the on-line list of attractions. Charlton Park is currently included in the list of events and attractions, and can increase its presence via this web site.

### ***North Country National Scenic Trail***

The North Country National Scenic Trail is a regional facility that is not likely to have direct impact upon Charlton Park use and development. However, the North Country Trail does utilize portions of the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail several miles west of Charlton Park, and may enhance the perception of the area in general as a destination for those seeking recreational trails and other amenities offered by Charlton Park.

### ***State of Michigan Game Areas and Parks***

The Middleville State Game Area, the Barry State Game Area, and Yankee Springs State Recreation Area all lie within several miles of Charlton Park. A wide range of primarily outdoor recreational opportunities exist in these facilities. Within the Yankee Springs Recreation Area, the historic Long Lake and Chief Nooday Outdoor Centers, built in the 1930's, still serve persons today. Similar to the impacts likely from the presence of the North Country National Scenic Trail, the presence of these regional facilities help to shape the perception of the area as one rich in recreational and cultural facilities, which may enhance the area's regional draw for visitors.



### ***Pierce Cedar Creek Institute***

The Pierce Cedar Creek Institute lies approximately seven miles southwest of Charlton Park. The institute consists of 661 acres of significant environmental features including wetlands, forests, marshes, streams, lakes, and prairies. The mission of the Institute is to promote environmental education, research, preservation, and appreciation. The Institute is open to the public, year-round, free of charge, and includes over seven miles of nature trails.

The Institute, a mix between a nature center and biological field station, offers programs to serve the community while also building partnerships with area colleges and universities to serve their faculty and students. Special events and classes are offered by the institute. Facilities at the Institute include an auditorium, classrooms, laboratories, overnight accommodations, an auditorium, a dining room, a 1,000-gallon fresh water aquarium, and gift shop.

### ***Other Facilities and Organizations***

A variety of other facilities and organizations exist within several miles of Charlton Park. Several facilities exist which emphasize historic collections; these include the Gilmore Classic Car Club Museum in Delton, the Bernard Historical Museum in Delton, and Historic Bowens Mills in Middleville. A wide range of facilities throughout Barry County emphasize outdoor and wildlife education for a variety of age groups. Several wildlife sanctuaries and preserves, both public and private, exist in the area. The existence of these facilities demonstrates strong support in the area for preservation of the rich heritage of both natural and cultural resources.

***Michigan State University Extension*** *(Some mutual goals may exist here; there is a tourism development component to MSUE; however, the web site had been discontinued.)*

***Michigan Water Stewardship Program*** *(This program deals strictly with nitrogen fertilizer and pesticide applications; going forward, if the Charlton Park Vision includes environmental goals, this may be a program for future cooperation.)*

### ***Summary***

Barry County has a wealth of cultural, educational, and recreational resources, both public and private. The County, as well as neighboring counties and municipalities, have an abundance of unique natural features ideal for recreational and conservancy activities. In addition, the area has several organizations that promote and preserve the rich history of the area.



# CHARLTON • PARK

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## strategic plan

The current mission of Charlton Park is as follows:

*The Mission of Historic Charlton Park is to provide educational and recreational opportunities, through the collection, preservation and demonstration of early rural Michigan life, artifacts and buildings, and the maintenance of natural and recreation areas.*

Given that many area organizations have similar elements of this mission, **a challenge and an opportunity for Charlton Park will be to distinguish itself as a destination in an area that provides a wide array experiences for both residents and visitors, and to develop the funding mechanism to accomplish its vision and goals.**





## DEMOGRAPHICS

Social and economic demographics will influence park development and use both in terms of numbers of users and financial support. While local data is important, the park has experienced visitors and usage from a larger, regional geographic area and will likely continue to be a regional attraction. The following data provides a picture of the factors which will assist the Charlton Park Board in setting a vision that attempts to examine the base of visitors that already utilize the park, define the visitor base that is desired, and possibly expand that base to include new users, and users that return on a consistent basis.

### *Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)*

Under a new designation released by the U.S. Census Bureau in March of 2013, Barry County is now included in a newly defined MSA which includes Kent, Ottawa, Montcalm and Barry Counties. The MSA is determined through gathering worker commuting data; 25 percent of an adjacent county must commute to a central county (in this case Kent County) to qualify for inclusion in the MSA. The population of the newly designated Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSA is just over one million people.

The implications for Barry County are that additional economic activity in general may be attracted to the area, and provide further financial support for organizations such as Charlton Park. Also, the population of the MSA indicates that a significant number of persons live within a reasonable distance from the park (30-60 miles), supporting the idea that Charlton Park is ideal as a day-trip destination.

Charlton Park also lies within approximately 60 miles of other urban areas such as Lansing, Jackson, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and Holland which makes the park a possible destination for a large population of potential visitors. While access to the Hastings area in general and Charlton Park in particular is via State of Michigan Highways rather than freeways, the park's unique location in a beautiful rural setting adds to its potential attraction to visitors.

### *Barry County Growth Projections*

The Barry County Economic Alliance has provided demographics with some projections which may assist in grasping the economic outlook for the immediate Barry County area. These figures may or may not be representative of the greater region which could impact the future of Charlton Park, but they at least help paint a picture of the economic health of the area surrounding the park.



***Barry County Growth Projections***

	1990	2000	2009	2011*	Projection 2014
Total Population	50,057	56,755	59,501	59,173	60,960
Median Age	33.8	36.9	38.7		
Total Households	17,763	21,035	22,515	22,831	23,236
Family Households	13,969	15,994	17,120		17,668
Avg. Household Income	\$38,975	\$58,452	\$61,797		
Median Household Income	\$30,525	\$46,786	\$51,114	\$52,061	
Per Capita Income	\$12,402	\$20,636	\$23,499	\$24,989	
Housing Units	20,887	23,876	27,090	\$27,090	
Median Home Values	\$54,662	\$109,598	\$131,242`	\$142,800	

*Source: Claritas, 2009 and US Census Bureau QuickFacts*

\*2011 data added based upon 2010 US Census

While the projections show some increase in population and households projected for the year 2014, the rate of increase has slowed through the decades from 1990. Similarly, when examining the rates of increase for income and median housing values from 1990 to 2009, the rates of increase in the decade from 1990 to 2000 is greater than the rate of increase from 2000 to 2009, reflecting the years of recession and increasing unemployment.

The median age of the population has increasingly risen, and will likely continue to increase in the coming years.

***Barry County Population Characteristics-Changes and Trends***

Changes and trends in the population of Barry County as a whole may be a key to the population Charlton Park can anticipate serving over the next ten years. While Barry County may not mirror the anticipated service area exactly, it is likely a good indicator of the population that will generally be served by the park. The following information was taken from the recently updated Master Plans of both the Village of Middleville and Thornapple Township.



### Comparative Population Trend 1970-2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	2010	Change 2000-2010
<b>Barry County Population</b>	38,166	45,781	50,057	56,755	13.4%	59,173	4.3%

Source: US Census and Michigan Information Center

### Average Person Per Household 1990-2010

Unit of Government	1990	2000	2010	Change per Household, 1990-2010
<b>Barry County</b>	2.82	2.65	2.65	-.17
<b>State of Michigan</b>	2.80	2.67	2.53	-.27
<b>USA</b>	2.78	2.65	2.63	-.15

Source: US Census 1990, 2000, 2010

### Barry County Age Distribution 2000-2010

Age Group	2000	2010	% Change
Under 5 years	3,774	3,535	-6.3
5-19 years	13,112	12,518	-4.5
20-24 years	2,777	2,908	+4.7
25-44 years	16,448	13,551	-17.6
45-64 years	13,948	18,050	+29.4
65 years and older	6,696	8,611	+28.6
<b>Barry County</b>	<b>56,755</b>	<b>59,173</b>	<b>+4.3</b>

Source: US Census 2000, 2010; USA.com

### Unemployment in Barry County and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSA

Another indicator of the economic health of the region has been reported by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis FRED program (Federal Reserve Economic Data). Unemployment rates in Barry County were very similar to the MSA as a whole, with highest rates of unemployment near 12 percent in 2010, and rates in March of 2013 at 6.6 percent. FRED data also reports new housing starts remaining consistent with 2010 lows.

The ManPower Employment Outlook Survey released in March of 2013 expects a net employment outlook of 18 percent, which is considered a healthy hiring pace. However, when seasonal variations are removed from the data, the outlook is 11 percent. Approximately 73% of employers intend to neither lay off workers nor hire new workers, but to maintain current staffing levels.



## *Personal Expenditures for Recreation*

Two final statistics that may be of interest when planning a vision for Charlton Park are contained in data reported by the US Census regarding where Americans spend their money for recreation, and which activities they participate in most.

As reported in the year 2009, in a list of 22 categories the top ranking expenditure was for video and audio equipment, computers, and related services at a price of 265.2 billion dollars. In comparison, memberships in clubs, sports centers, parks, theaters, and museums ranked fourth with expenditures of 126.5 billion dollars. However, visits to museums and libraries ranked 21<sup>st</sup> of the 22 items, with 6.4 billion dollars spent.

As reported in the year 2010, in a list of 45 activities, the top two activities were dining out, and entertaining friends or relatives at home; reading books came in third, while barbecuing was fourth. Going to the beach ranked 5<sup>th</sup> while going to museums ranked 11<sup>th</sup> of the 45 (activities which are offered at Charlton Park).

While these statistics may not significantly affect decisions regarding Charlton Park, knowing the recreational trends of today's citizens may be of some value.

## *Summary*

Charlton Park is located within a geographic area accessible to a large population located in several urban areas. Economic activity in the area may be stimulated by the newly designated Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which may attract investment and residents.

Barry County has grown at a much slower rate over the past decade than in the previous three decades; the population tends to be somewhat older, with a smaller household size than in the years preceding 2010. Ages of the population have changed since 2000 as shown in the table above. The most significant change is in the ages 25-44 years group, which has declined by 17.6%. This decline is likely due to the economic downturn of the past decade. Persons in the 45-64 years age group as well as those 65 years and greater has increased significantly.

Incomes and home values continue to increase, but at a slower rate in the years preceding 2010. Unemployment remains at approximately 6.6 percent, but hiring patterns show stability and some increases compared to previous years. The majority of employers report that they are neither laying off nor hiring workers, but will maintain current staffing levels.

Nationwide trends in entertainment may impact a vision for Charlton Park, with families tending toward electronic entertainment. Two activities offered at Charlton Park (going to the beach and



# CHARLTON • PARK

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strategic plan

museums) rank fairly highly on a national scale as recorded by the US Census. **Offering unique and vibrant activities for today’s families will be an important consideration in setting a vision for the park.**



# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN



**Parks and Recreation Trends**  
**Site Accessibility Assessment**  
**General Site Observations**







## PARKS AND RECREATION TRENDS

By Gregory Scott, ASLA, CPSI  
Progressive AE

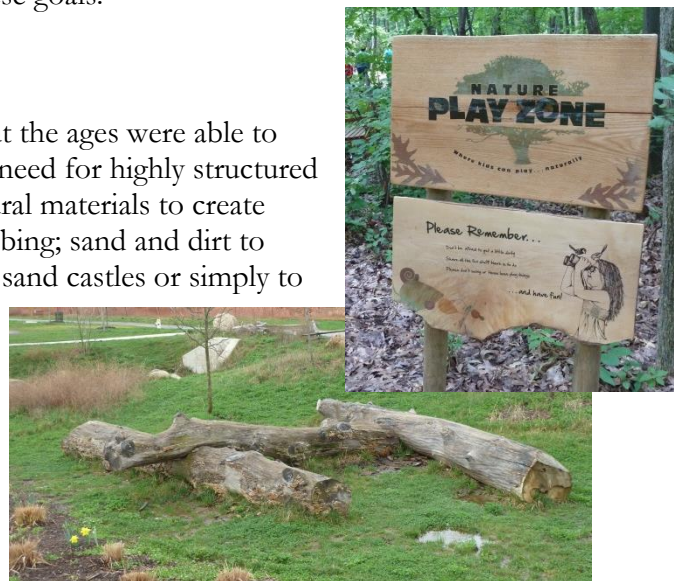
New parks and recreation facilities are building areas that seek to stir the imagination of its users. Whether it be themed play areas or children’s areas that promote discovery/role playing the goal is to engage the users in unique ways so they wish to visit again because it is different than the traditional parks and playgrounds.

John Ball Zoo in Grand Rapids (Kent County) and Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids Township (Kent County) have added play areas specifically for children. The Children’s Garden at Frederik Meijer Gardens increased attendance by 20% and has drawn repeat family visits over the last 10 years since it opened. It has brought more awareness of the natural environment and art to children when they are at the most impressionable age. John Ball Zoo has added a children’s natural play area and tree house play structure for young visitors. This has also increased family attendance and stay time. The stay time is important since it has increased food concession profits. These improvements show the need to draw families to their facilities. They were initiated due to a national trend showing success at similar facilities.

Children’s areas are important but the parks must reach across the entire range of ages. Recreation activities must be for teens, adults, and senior citizens as well. One of Charlton Park’s greatest assets is the amount of area available to accomplish these goals.

Following are some examples of possibilities:

- ❖ **Natural Play Areas** – Children throughout the ages were able to play and challenge themselves without the need for highly structured play equipment. The concept is to use natural materials to create play opportunities: logs and rocks for climbing; sand and dirt to play and sculpt in; water to make mud and sand castles or simply to play in. These areas could fit well in the natural areas within the park and could take on a historical theme as well: water well with a pump handle; butter churns to manipulate; grist mill to rotate. There is a national trend showing development of these types of play areas.



# CHARLTON • PARK



## strategic plan

- ❖ **Adult Play** – Play equipment that promotes fitness yet fun to play as well. Pickle ball courts, which are miniature version of tennis courts, promote movement and fun/competition at the same time.



- ❖ **Disc Golf Course** – A favorite of the young adult crowd and inexpensive to construct. It takes land and a good designer. If the course is first rate, people will come from far away to play.

- ❖ **Sled Hill** – These are used to extend the recreation season. The topography of Charlton Park lends itself to such an attraction. The sledding area can be an informal area open to the park or a source of revenue with tire tube rentals with a rope tow to the top.



- ❖ **Ropes Course** – A “challenge” area could be developed to attract corporate team building exercises, as well as older youth groups. A third party operator could be used to install and



- ❖ **Dog Park** – An area where patrons are not only allowed to have their dogs with them but primarily focused on use by their dogs. Must be fenced in.

- ❖ **Mountain Bike Trail/BMX Bike Track** – The amount of natural area in Charlton Park lends itself to these types of facilities. Local bike clubs can construct on park land. Little or no cost to develop.

- ❖ **Rock Climbing Walls or Nets** – More expensive play items but they provide a unique challenge that kids like. They provide a lot of play opportunity on one piece of equipment.



## SITE ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT

By Gregory Scott, ASLA, CPSI  
with specialization in Americans with Disability Act requirements;  
Progressive AE

An accessible park provides opportunities for people of all abilities to use and enjoy all aspects of the park. There are certain requirements through the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that dictate what and how facilities must be accessible. There are additional means of access that go above and beyond the law to make a facility even more accessible. By having an accessible facility, Charlton Park is able to promote itself as such and draw a greater range of visitors. In addition, school groups would expect that the park would be accessible since they are required to meet the letter of the law at their own educational facilities.

The historical nature of Charlton Park Village provides a greater challenge since these buildings were built at a time when these laws were not in place and sensitivity to these needs was not in the forefront of the design process as they are now.

Following is an assessment of the site accessibility of the park's areas from an approach standpoint. This does not include the challenges of the structure's entry door width, door knob hardware, etc. in order to meet handicap accessible entry requirements and internal building circulation.

### HISTORIC VILLAGE

The gravel drive provides an accessible surface when it is dry and maintained. This is subject to change in rainy weather or due to melting snow in the spring which can render it mushy and unstable. Some buildings have an accessible entry but the majority of them require the user to cross a lawn area which is not considered an accessible surface due to its unevenness, instability in inclement weather, and resistance to wheels of a wheelchair.

An at-grade boardwalk (sidewalk) could provide an accessible surface along the street edge and unify the appearance/feel of the village and would be historical in nature.





Accessible surface boardwalks could then branch off to the various village buildings. Attention to running grades (along the walk) and the need for ramps would need to be studied on case by case for each building. Some buildings would need to be accessed at the rear door due to elevated finish floors. This is less than ideal but would be necessary to maintain the historical nature of the building façade.

Following is a building by building assessment:

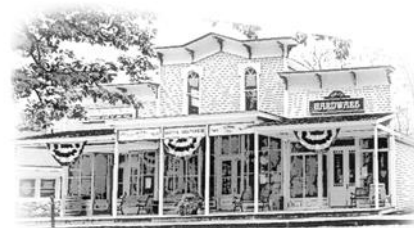
- ❖ **Carriage House** – No accessible connection to the road/parking. Existing ramp is too steep and lacks handrails.
- ❖ **Upjohn House** - There is a wooden ramp to office entry door but the ramp is not ADA compliant (edge condition at end of ramp, no compliant handrail and insufficient landing at doorway). There is no accessible connection from the ramp to the road/parking lot.
- ❖ **Bristol Inn** – Accessible boardwalk along road and connection to the Inn. Stairs at front entry do not allow handicap accessibility. Rear entry is accessible from a boardwalk but boardwalk is not connected to road or other accessible walk way.
- ❖ **Hen House** – This is for viewing only. There is no accessible route to get close to the pen for viewing.
- ❖ **Carpenter/Cooper Shop** – No accessible connection to the road. Inaccessible at entry due to 3” lip at entry door.
- ❖ **Jail Cell** – No accessible route to the structure. It is able to be viewed from afar but not closely due to lack of barrier free access.
- ❖ **Blacksmith Shop** – Handicap accessible entry and walk leading to entry. Walk stops short of road.
- ❖ **Barber Shop** – No accessible connection to the road. Boardwalk on the side provides connection to the front door. Ramp to the boardwalk, the boardwalk, and front porch not ADA compliant. Lacks edge protection and compliant hand railing on ramp.





- ❖ **Hall House** – No accessible connection to the road or front entry. Rear door has potential for entry with a ramp and landing.
- ❖ **Spring House** – No accessible route. Building is not open to the public. It can be viewed from afar but there is no way to get close to the building if you are a person with a mobility disability.
- ❖ **Hastings Township Hall** – No accessible connection to the road. Front entry not accessible but rear door has ability for at grade entry through existing at grade boardwalk.
- ❖ **Outhouses** – No accessible connection to the road. These are not open to the public but can be viewed from afar.
- ❖ **Lee School** – No accessible connection to road. Steps at both front and back of the building will make accessibility a challenge. A ramp accessed from behind the building to an opening at the side of the school may work.
- ❖ **Sixberry House** – No accessible connection to the road. Not handicapped accessible at front or rear door. Possibility for rear door access.
- ❖ **1860 Carriage House** – Not open to the public. Can be viewed from afar. No direct accessible connection to the building.
- ❖ **Hastings Mutual Building** – No present accessible route. A barrier ramp could be constructed for the rear entry door.
- ❖ **Hardware Store/General Store/Thornapple Press Print Shop** – A barrier free access ramp was constructed to provide access to the shared boardwalk in front of the three shop doors. From this boardwalk access has been provided to the interiors of each shop.
- ❖ **Irving D. Charlton Memorial Museum** – Accessible brick paver walk connects road with museum building. Pavers have settled providing an uneven surface. Paver walk should be pulled up and reinstalled with granular base to prevent settling. Possible accessible entry at second level at rear of building but must meet challenge of slopes at that side of the building.





- ❖ **Carlton Center Church** – Ramp at side of church provides access to the front door however no accessible connection from ramp to the road.
- ❖ **Sawmill** - There is no accessible connection to the road/parking area nor hard surface area at the demonstration viewing location.
- ❖ **Exhibition Hall** - There is a direct accessible connection from the parking lot to the building entry.
- ❖ **Charlton Gas & Steam Building** – There is a direct accessible connection from the parking lot to the building entry doors.
- ❖ **Robinson Log Cabin** – Cabin accessed via a rustic trail. The trail is not ADA compliant.

### *Educational Signage*

Educational signs along a central boardwalk(s) can improve the visitor’s experience particularly for those structures which are not open to the public but are part of a historical message. These would help mitigate the need for the visitor to be right next to a building to learn its significance. Signs should have lettering of sufficient size for visitors who may have sight limitations.

### *Picnic Pavilions*

No accessible connection from the parking lots to the picnic pavilions. Location of picnic tables at the main pavilion prevents accessibility to the restroom doorway. One picnic area has an accessible port-a-john but no accessible route to it. You must travel over a lawn area to reach it. There are no grills that are handicap accessible or have an accessible route to them.



### *Beach Area*

There is no accessible connection from the parking lot to the restroom building. A concrete walkway around the building provides immediate access. There is no paved connection from the parking lot to the beach.



***Playground Equipment***

No handicap access to any of the play equipment throughout the park nor accessible safety surface surrounding the equipment.

***Boat Launch Site***

The boat launch skid pier does not meet current ADA standards that are now in place for such boating facilities. There is no transition ramp from shore surface to the pier, the pier is too narrow and lacks edge protection required by present standards.



The restrooms are not handicap accessible. There is no accessible route to them and they are raised in the interior preventing wheelchair access.

***Hiking Trails***

None of the hiking trails have a surface which would be considered handicap accessible.



## GENERAL SITE OBSERVATIONS

By Gregory Scott, ASLA, CPSI  
Progressive AE

### HISTORIC VILLAGE AESTHETICS

The village can benefit from elements that help to unify the look and feel of the village area. These unifying elements will accentuate the village aesthetics and can be used to educate the visitors as well.

- ❖ An at-grade boardwalk along the road that ties into each building can help with accessibility and provide a clean, dry place to walk.
- ❖ Period lighting along the boardwalk can help visually tie the village together as well as provide increased safety and security for the area.
- ❖ Educational signs at the boardwalk explaining the building's use and role in that time period will help to educate and set up the visitor's experience particularly with self-guided tours.
- ❖ Flower beds or historical gardens can further enhance the visitor's experience. A partnership with the local garden club could be part of this endeavor.



### RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Recreational opportunities that accentuate the historical nature of the park and draw upon the existing topography and existing facilities can be incorporated into the park. These are as follows:

- ❖ Historic baseball field such as Doubleday Field in Cooperstown that is used for vintage baseball exhibitions or leagues. Similar to a civil war reenactment players dress up in the time period of 1850s to 1890s and use no gloves. More information can be obtained at [www.vbba.org](http://www.vbba.org).





- ❖ Charlton Park’s topography lends itself to an amphitheater for music. Folk and blue grass music would be appropriate for this venue. Lawn seating would be good for a minimalist approach keeping impact to a minimum and maintenance efforts low.

Playground equipment safety and maintenance concerns were observed. Due to safety and liability concerns these should be addressed as soon as possible.

- ❖ Tall swings behind the historic village. These swings that were constructed out of timbers are much too high allowing an adventurous youth to swing dangerously high particularly since there is no safety surface to land on if they were to fall or jump out of the swing. They are also dangerously close to the woods behind them. The rule of thumb for surface safety area is two times the height of the swing. If a user is ejected on the back side this would put them into the woods. The one toddler bucket seat is very old and does not meet current safety guidelines.



- ❖ Picnic areas – There is little equipment for family venues. The equipment does not have any or in some cases, insufficient safety surface at their base in case of a fall. The equipment is old and in most cases does not meet current safety standards.

## SITE MAINTENANCE

During an interview with maintenance personnel lawn mowing was discussed. The vast areas of mowed lawn, effort to do so, and the public’s perception if areas were left unmowed were discussed. If areas are unmowed the public feels that the park is unsightly and being neglected. One tactic to avoid this yet achieving a goal of minimizing this maintenance is to incrementally reduce the area being mowed over time. As long as there is clean mowed edge along public areas then it does not appear neglected and is viewed as intentional. Additionally signs educating the public that the site is “eco-friendly” and that the unmowed areas are intentional. The unmowed areas can still be brush hogged once a year to keep the height down if desired.

Forest management and tree replacement was also discussed. This approach is fundamentally sound and should be continued. There is a donor tree area with the local Rotary Club – Tree of Remembrance. The use of memorial trees should be actively promoted along with benches for additional amenities and revenue. This could be expanded into memorial bricks for additional accessible walkways.



Just outside the swimming area there were large masses of lake weeds observed. These are good for fishing but are not pleasing for swimmers. An evaluation by a lake management consultant could determine if these could be effectively harvested to clear the area to make the area more inviting.

Lakeshore erosion around the swimming beach was observed. Concrete bumper blocks are used to protect the edges. Boulders and vegetation could be used instead for a more pleasing aesthetic and natural approach.

## **DONOR RECOGNITION**

Revenue beyond the county millage and program fees are necessary to grow Charlton Park. Donors should be recognized in a special prominent way at the Park. Donor walls or monuments should be explored to celebrate benefactors.

## **HISTORIC EARTHWORKS CONSTRUCTION**

The amount of land and open area at Charlton Park may present an opportunity to recreate elements of battlefields in addition to Civil War musters. For example, the earthworks and redoubts depicting the siege line of the Revolutionary War period may be suitable in some locations in the park.

# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN



**Architectural Assessments**





## ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENTS

By Grace A.M. Smith, RA, LEED AP

*These following building assessments address these issues:*

- ❖ Historic significance
- ❖ The condition of existing historic structures
- ❖ Barrier free accessibility (Per the Michigan Construction Code Barrier Free Requirements and the American's with Disabilities Act.)
- ❖ Maintenance issues; suggestions for easier maintenance
- ❖ Recommend goals and implementation steps for future improvements (renovations) or additions to specific structures
- ❖ Recommend additions to the historic village area in general

Portions of the buildings' descriptions are taken directly from the Charlton Park map; it is not original research on my part. I used what the Park staff had used to describe their own buildings and give some historical background.

### ***Overall Recommendations or assumptions:***

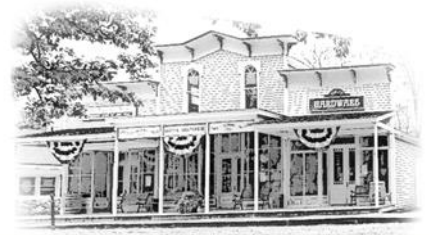
Priority should be placed on having a structural analysis of all floors being used to store extensive inventory.

Priority should also be placed on removing animals and animal waste from all working spaces, storage spaces, and exhibit spaces. Create a monitoring schedule to monitor for animal infiltration or nest building. Remove animals and their waste as found.

Create a painting schedule for repainting each structure on a rotating basis.

No new buildings should be added to the historic village. If an additional exhibit space is desired, consider the 1860 Carriage House.

Regarding barrier free accessibility - few of the existing conditions meet the current barrier free codes, but could be grandfathered in for certain conditions, such as the lack of elevators and the use of historic hardware. When the assessment states that the building approach is barrier free



accessible, that route sometimes means the surface is grass or dirt, but there are not physical barriers to prevent access. A wheelchair could be rolled over the surface with assistance and/or determination. However, it would be to the benefit of the Park, for programming purposes and to serve the greater public, to provide an appropriate sidewalk, boardwalk, or hard surface that meets the intent of the barrier free code and would provide barrier free access to the greatest extent possible to the park's amenities. By making the Charlton Park's activities fully accessible, this fact can be used to market and fundraise for the park.

Further in-depth barrier free access study should be undertaken to determine practical access solutions, cost implications for the improvements and possible financial grants available to aid in implementing these revisions.

Prioritize barrier free alterations as follows:

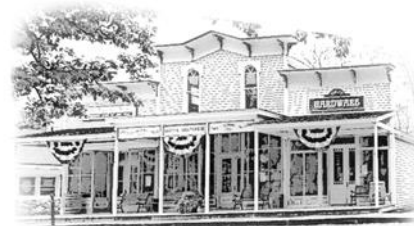
- Pathways and pedestrian walkways leading to barrier free entrances and potential barrier free entrances.

- Restroom access within historic village area and park's recreational areas.

- Museum access at both levels.

- Ramps and barrier free entries leading from pedestrian walkways to most used buildings (preference to the buildings that can be grouped together off one walkway).

Schedule a tour of the buildings with the local fire inspector. If exit signs are required to be added to buildings, pursue the option of a post-type sign with wiring from below rather than installing exit signs on the historic fabric of the building.



### UPJOHN HOUSE AND CARRIAGE HOUSE — c1852

**Carriage House** - The foundation is typically stone with poured concrete and is in good condition. The exterior walls are wood lap siding in good condition with wood doors and wood framed windows. There is some organic growth on siding on the north wall close to the grade. There is some minor deterioration at the base of two doors where they touch the ground. The roof is wood shake with a galvanized gutter at the entry area. Overall it is in fairly good condition although it sags slightly in the middle.



The interior walls are board with some newer ones interspersed with the older ones. Walls are not air tight and could be described as breathable. The ceiling is exposed structure with some sagging noted. Floors are wood plank and exposed structure with some rotting boards near entrance door where water has gotten into the space. The attic has water infiltration through the large gap at the bottom of the loft door and some of the exterior walls that are not water or air tight. The exposed structure has a missing board at the top of the stair, making its use dangerous. Bat guano is evident in the attic. Overall, the building is fairly dry with minimal evidence of water damage.

The building is equipped with electricity, but does not have heating or air conditioning. There are no fire suppression or detection systems. There is no smoke detection system. Smoke and fire detection should be provided to reduce the cost of insurance in buildings (or portions of buildings) used for artifact storage.

There is a ramp at one man-door on the east wall, but the ramp is too steep to meet barrier free codes and there are no hand rails. If it is desirable to make an entry to the building barrier free



accessible, the grade at the west entrance with the large doors could be raised only slightly to align with the first floor. Currently, there is not an accessible path to the entry doors. The barrier free entrance on the east wall should be removed.

Currently, this building is used for storage of maintenance materials as well as storage of some artifacts. If it is to continue to be used for artifact storage, it should be made water tight at the areas where water is currently getting into the space, including at doors and windows. Typically, this could be handled with flashing, repositioning a siding board, adding a trim board, or possibly filling a hole in the siding. Any wood that is rotten should be replaced with a new board or structural member of the same size when possible. The missing floor boards at the top of the attic stair should be replaced as soon as possible. Base trims at doors close to grade could be replaced with a paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced.

Ideally, the building would be made as air and water tight as is possible to provide a clean, more controlled space for the storage of artifacts. This would involve eliminating gaps in the siding, trim, around doors and windows, etc. However, if making the building air tight throughout is not practical, it is recommended that a plan be put into place for regular removal and cleaning of spaces with bat or other animal feces. This should include an effort to keep animals and their waste away from artifact storage. A long term plan for this building should include a plan to replace the roof and make the building reasonably air and water tight. If it is not feasible to replace the wood shakes with new wood shakes, it is recommended that a metal roof be installed in its place.

Outbuildings of this type can be cleaned with a system of Borax and bleach to discourage further deterioration. Cleaning would be required inside and out. There are only a few recommended contractors who can do this type of work with historic outbuildings. The building would have to be emptied to complete this process. This process will extend the life of the building, however, it should be part of a long term plan because of cost constraints and the effort required to empty it of its contents. Since it is not used by the public, it is a lesser priority for this type of cleaning.

### ***Upjohn House***

This was a residence and possibly a doctor's office for Dr. William A. Upjohn, one of Hastings' first doctors. His nephew, William E. Upjohn, learned to be a doctor here and then moved to Kalamazoo to start his own practice. William E. invented the "friable pill" and started the Upjohn Pharmaceutical Company. The restoration includes the doctor's office as it was when Dr. Upjohn practiced medicine in Hastings. This building houses the gift shop and administrative offices.





The foundation is cut stone with discolored stones showing organic growth on their faces. The skirt board just above this area is also showing deterioration. It's possible that the structural member behind the skirt board is also deteriorating. This could be a result of either rising damp or condensation from improper ventilation of the airspace under the floor. Good ground and surface drainage of the site around the house is required and may be contributing to the problem. If a new, impermeable layer was added under a new floor, this could force the condensation/damp to try to escape through the walls rather than through a previously breathable floor. This should be investigated further and the damp source discovered before a solution is tried. Proper ventilation at the skirt board may be a solution and/or providing a physical damp proofing material between the wood and the stone to separate the two materials. A chemical damp proofing should not be used on natural stone. It will cause rapid deterioration of the stone.



When the source of the issue is resolved, the stone should be lightly cleaned with a scrub brush, water, and detergent. The skirt board could be replaced with a milled to shape, paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced. Any damage to the structural member below should be repaired.

The lap wood siding is in good to very good condition. Wood windows are in excellent to good condition with most of the windows being new or historic windows having new storm windows in place. Wood doors also appear to be new and are in excellent condition. A barrier free ramp and entry are provided for access to the first floor, including a toilet room, office area, gift shop and meeting space. Ramp transitions need modification to meet the intent of the barrier free code.



The main roof is wood shake and there is a metal roof on the projecting bay and over the front porch. Overall, they are in acceptable condition but it appears there may be or have been water damage at the reglet and valley areas. There is a metal gutter and downspout at the back porch. A long term plan for this building should include a plan to replace the roof. If it is not feasible to replace the wood shakes with new wood shakes, it is recommended that a metal roof be installed in its place.

The interior of this building is in excellent condition, having recently undergone renovations to make it usable as an office, gift shop and meeting area. The walls and ceilings appear to be gypsum board with a skim coat of plaster. A portion of the upper level has been left in its original condition as a display for the public. Second floor exhibits should be available to those not able to access the second floor through another means, such as an exhibit board, a video tour, or similar experience. This will prevent the need for adding barrier free access to the second floor, allowing for an appropriate use of code grandfathering rather than the unrealistic expense of adding an elevator to this historic building. The wood floors and architectural woodwork are new, except in a portion of the museum area, and are also in excellent condition.

The building is fully heated, air conditioned, has good plumbing and electricity. If not already done, smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas that have been renovated rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes. No further renovations or additions are recommended for this building.



### WOODSHED BEHIND UPJOHN HOUSE

Utilitarian structure used as an exhibit for the storage of wood. This structure sits on concrete blocks located under the four corners of the wood floor rather than having a foundation with footings. The walls are wood lap siding on painted boards. The siding boards closest to the grade show some deterioration. These lower boards could be replaced with a milled to shape, paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced. Floor boards also show deterioration due to proximity with soil and should be replaced at least with treated lumber of a size similar to the exiting boards.



The wood door is fairly new and is in excellent condition. The asphalt shingled roof is similarly new and in excellent condition. Wasp nests were visible at the edge of the roof and should be removed immediately to prevent injury to visitors and staff. Monitoring should occur to keep the wasp population down.

This building does not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended. There

is no public access to the building itself. The woodshed allows visitors to walk up to it and view it from the grass. Barrier free viewing is available to the public from the path, but getting close to the building is not possible. Regular, minor maintenance will be required for this building. But, due to its utilitarian usage and because it is not inhabited, other than the few repairs noted, major changes are not recommended.

### BRISTOL INN — C1848

Built by William Bristol, this house was a stagecoach stop until 1869 when the railroad put the stage out of business. A tavern also operated in this house for a time. The stage, traveling between Battle Creek and Grand Rapids would stop at the Bristol Inn to rest and water the horses and allow the passengers to eat a meal. Donated by the Ferris family and moved to the Park from Bristol Lake in 1970, it opened to the public in 1973.



The foundation of this three story home is cut stone. Some of the stones are discolored, appear damp and have organic growth on their faces. The skirt board and the trims around the door jambs are showing deterioration just above the stone foundation. It's possible that the structural member behind the skirt board is also deteriorating. This could be a result of either rising damp or condensation from improper ventilation of the airspace under the floor. Good ground and surface drainage of the site around the house is required and may be contributing to the problem. If a new, impermeable layer was added under a new floor, this could force the condensation/damp to try to escape through the walls rather than through a previously breathable floor. This should be investigated further and the damp source discovered before a solution is tried. Proper ventilation at the skirt board may be a solution and/or providing a physical damp proofing material between the wood and the stone to separate the two materials. A chemical damp proofing should not be used on natural stone. It will cause rapid deterioration of the stone.

When the source of the issue is resolved, the stone should be lightly cleaned with a scrub brush, water, and detergent. The skirt board and trim pieces could be replaced with milled to shape, paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced. Any damage to the structural member below should be repaired.



The wood lap siding is in good condition overall, except as noted near the foundation and at transition between roof of the lower portion of the building and the side of the house. Siding and roofing should be temporarily removed as needed, new flashing installed, and siding, trim, and roofing reinstalled at this location. Some areas should be sanded and repainted as a part of regular maintenance. A five-year plan should provide for a complete repainting.



The asphalt shingled roof is in good condition with galvanized gutter and downspout system. Attention should be paid to the chimney at the kitchen. Repainting will be necessary within the next five years. The wood windows and wood doors appear to be in fair to good condition with some water damage at window sills. Sills may eventually require replacing, but that doesn't appear to be necessary at this time. When replacement becomes imminent, sills could be replaced with milled to shape, paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced.

This building does not have a barrier free entrance. The kitchen entry could be made barrier free by creating a ramp at the existing boardwalk leading to this rear entry. The boardwalk may need to be modified to provide a barrier free building approach. Currently, the kitchen porch has some deteriorated boards that should be replaced at the step to the porch. The two steps at the front entry should not be altered to make the house barrier free. This would be a distraction from the historical usage of the home. The first floor exhibit areas could be made barrier free accessible with the use of a ramp at the kitchen entry. Second floor exhibits should be available to those not able to access the second floor through another means, such as an exhibit board, a video tour, or similar experience. This will prevent the need for adding barrier free access to the second floor, allowing for an appropriate use of code grandfathering rather than the unrealistic expense of adding an elevator to this historic building.

The interior of the house is in very good condition overall. Ceilings and walls appear to be gypsum board with plaster finish and are in excellent condition and are well maintained. Walls leading to the third floor and on the third floor are in poor condition; cracked and damaged. Since this area is not part of the exhibit space, this is not a priority to repair. This space is used for artifact storage however.

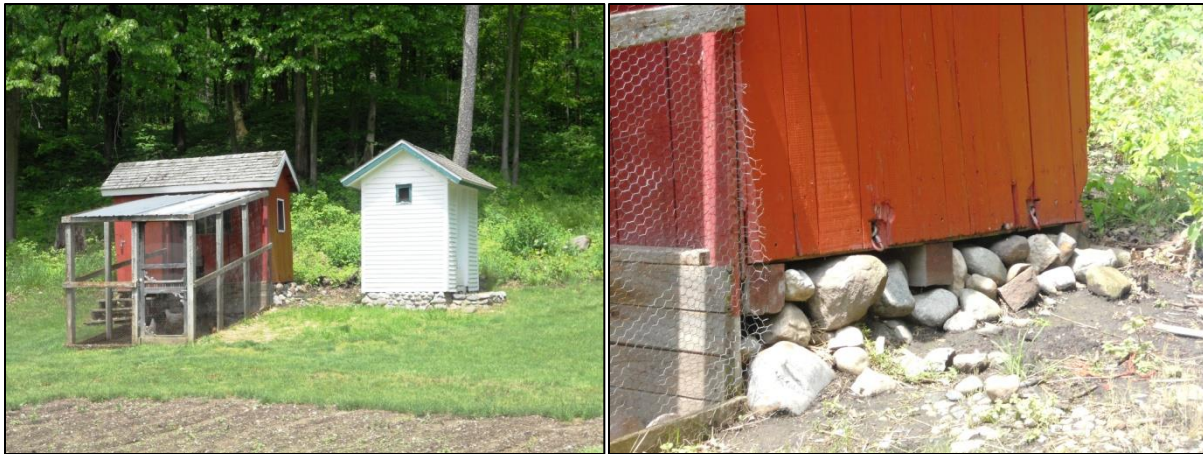
The floors are painted wood and in good to very good condition. Interior doors and architectural wood work are also painted and in good to very good condition. The house is heated by two gas stoves and has plumbing and electricity. There is no air conditioning. If not already done, smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas other than in display areas used for historic interpretation purposes.

## **HEN HOUSE**

Functioning hen house used to pen chickens during the summer. The hen house has an enclosed, cage area at the front, allowing the chickens access to the exterior while still being caged.



The building has wood structural supports cross members that sit on a loose rubble foundation without mortar. This allows drainage and ventilation from the roosting area. The wood appears to be in good condition. The rubble needs constant adjusting to put stones back underneath as they slip out from under the building regularly.



The siding is vertical wood siding in okay to good condition. It's painted and fairly well maintained. The wood door and windows into the coop area are in okay to good condition. The side windows have chicken wire over them for further ventilation if desired. The wood shingles over the coop are okay to good condition. This roosting area appears to stay dry.

The cage area is chicken wire with exposed, unpainted wood framing and a galvanized metal roof. There is a ramp for the chickens to move from the cage area to the roosting area. There is a door for staff to use on the front of this area. The cage area appears to be in good condition.

There is no public access to the building itself, only staff access for the care of the chickens. The hen house allows visitors to walk up to it and view it from the outside. Barrier free viewing is available to the public only from the path; getting close to the building is not possible. The physical access to the roosting area is not barrier free for staff either; there is a small set of steps. Access to the cage area is more readily achieved if desired for staff purposes only.

This building does not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited use, none of these are recommended.



A long term plan for this building should include a plan to replace the roof. This may be several years out, however. If it is not feasible to replace the wood shakes with new wood shakes, a metal roof could be installing in its place. A metal roof would make the roosting area much warmer though, so more ventilation may be desired by opening the windows to the screen only option.

### **CARPENTER/COOPER SHOP**

This structure was a barn from the Neithamer Farm, Woodland. It was reconstructed and opened to the public in 1971. A cooper made and repaired barrels, kegs and buckets. Before the advent of the steel barrel and cardboard box, nearly everything was transported in wooden barrels. The carpenter was equally important; he made and repaired nearly everything made of wood. Carpenters were the house-builders of the community. The first floor of the building is used as an exhibit space with interaction between staff and visitors.

The foundation appears to be a combination of concrete and stone and is in fair condition. Any obvious cracks should be filled. The walls are vertical board and batten that are weathered and in very poor condition at the foundation where they have been in contact with soil. Keep boards away from soil, but it is not recommended to replace with recycled plastic or fiber cement boards since the walls are not painted.



Some of the battens have pulled away, granting animals access to the building's interior. These should be replaced with new battens to match existing. There are some wood framed stained glass windows located in the building that are not original, but are in good condition. Two large, new double entry doors allow public access to the display and demonstration space. The roof is asphalt shingle and in excellent condition. It appears to be quite new.



The building's interior is exposed heavy timber structure in very good condition with board ceilings, board walls, and wide plank board floors all in good condition. The interior attic stair door is in good condition. The attic itself is used for artifact storage and appears to be dry with good air circulation. Since this building is used for artifact storage at the attic level, a structural engineer should be brought in to test the loading conditions. Any overloading of structural members could cause the entire building to collapse and this would be a critical hazard to visitors.

There are visible wasp nests in the attic that should be removed immediately to prevent injury to visitors and staff. Monitoring should occur to keep the wasp population down. Some battens are missing on walls, allowing animal infiltration. Replace broken or missing battens and other wood trims as necessary. A check should be made for bats and clean-up to follow if found. As part of a long term plan, the building should be made as air and water tight as is reasonably possible to control further damage. If this cannot be done, it is recommended that a plan be put into place for regular removal and cleaning of spaces with bat or other animal feces. This should include an effort to keep animals and their waste away from artifact storage and display areas.

Outbuildings of this type can be cleaned with a system of Borax and bleach to discourage further deterioration. Cleaning would be required inside and out. There are only a few recommended contractors who can do this type of work with historic outbuildings. The building would have to be temporarily emptied to complete this process. This process will extend the life of the building and because it is used for public display and demonstration, it is recommended for cleaning. This should be scheduled into a long term maintenance plan.

The grade allows barrier free access to the building itself, but there is not a hard surfaced path, only grass. Because the floor is elevated above the grade, there is a step at the entry doors. The doors swing out, making it impossible to provide a permanent ramp at this location. However, when the building is open for display, a solid, temporary, wood ramp could be located at these propped open doors to provide barrier free access to the first floor. This could be something that is stored in the building for convenience and set out when the doors are opened. Because the rise to the floor is minimal, a handrail is not required. However, the ramp should be at least 3'-6" wide and painted a bright color to avoid being a tripping hazard. This would be a compromise to meet the code.

This building does have electricity, but not heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided but should be and located in areas out of sight (as had been done very





successfully with the lighting and electrical elements) rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes.

### JAIL CELL

This metal jail cell rests on treated lumber members to keep it elevated above the soil. It is not a functioning building, is used for display only and is located outside of a building. The metal is rusted from years of exposure to the elements, but appears to be in solid condition. This could be left as is, or carefully cleaned of exposed rust and coated with a clear polyurethane-type coating. The coating would need to be reapplied every few years to maintain its protective qualities. This would be a large investment in time to get the initial rust off, but would be less difficult in future years. If left to deteriorate, the jail cell will eventually rust through and not provide a safe exhibit. Another option would be to locate the cell within a building for display purposes only, but the current historic character and impact may be lost.



The wooden bench inside the cell is split and in poor condition due to its exposure to the elements. This is more easily replaced as needed than the elegant metal framework. Since it is unpainted and should remain unpainted, it would not be advisable to replace it with plastic material or fiber cement board.

This cell does not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended. There is no public access to the cell itself.

The jail cell allows visitors to walk up to it and view it from the adjacent grass. Barrier free viewing is available to the public from the path, but getting close to the building is not possible.

### BLACKSMITH SHOP

This building was donated in 1968 by Thomas Neithamer. In 1970, it became the first village building to be opened to the public. In the days before mass-produced goods, people relied on the village blacksmith to provide them with metal objects from nails and hinges to axes and hoes. When factory-made metal goods became available, the blacksmith was still needed to repair objects and make specialty items.



The foundation appears to be a combination of concrete and stone and is in good condition. Any obvious cracks should be filled. The walls are vertical board and batten that are painted, but are in very poor condition at the foundation where they have been in contact with soil. Keep boards away from soil, but it is not recommended to replace with recycled plastic or fiber cement boards because the boards are vertical and entire boards would need replacing. Some of the boards are severely cracked and should be replaced with solid boards. Battens appear to be in good condition and intact. If any battens are missing, they should be replaced to prevent animal access to the building's interior.



There are a number of wood framed, multi-paned glass windows located in the building that are in good condition. Two large, new double entry doors allow public access to the display and demonstration space. The roof is wood shake and in fair to good condition. A long term plan for this building should include a plan to replace the roof. If it is not feasible to replace the wood shakes with new wood shakes, it is recommended that a metal roof be installed in its place.

The building's interior is exposed heavy timber structure in good condition with board ceilings in poor condition. Damaged ceiling boards should be replaced. However, if damage is due to water infiltration at the roof, the roof should be replaced prior to making interior repairs. The floor is poured concrete in very good condition.

The grade and concrete surface allows barrier free access to the building. The edge of the concrete ramp should be properly aligned with any new path or drive so that a change in height is not created. Because the rise to the floor is minimal, a handrail is not required.

Outbuildings of this type can be cleaned with a system of Borax and bleach to discourage further deterioration. Cleaning would be required inside and out. There are only a few recommended contractors who can do this type of work with historic outbuildings. The building would have to be temporarily emptied to complete this process. This process will extend the life of the building and because it is used for public display and demonstration, it is recommended for cleaning. This should be scheduled into a long term maintenance plan.



This building does have electricity, but not heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. There is a chimney for the forge and it appears to be in good condition. Smoke and fire detection are not provided but should be and located in areas out of sight (as had been done very successfully with the lighting and electrical elements) rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes.

### **BARBER SHOP**

Opened to the public in 1997, this small structure was connected to a larger home on Center Street in Hastings. This addition was constructed sometime between 1889-1907. Over the years, this building was used as a doctor's office, a jewelry store and a candy store. In the days before the "safety razor," a barber shop was essential to any small town. Not all men could wield a straight-edge razor gingerly enough to shave themselves. Men would visit the local barber for a "two bit" shave and a haircut (25¢). The bath in the back room provided an area for traveling salesmen to clean up after long weeks on the road. The mirrored back bar comes from the Main Street Barber shop in Nashville.

This small Victorian building's foundation appears to be cut stone and concrete block in fair to good condition. There are some discolored stones showing organic growth on their faces. The wood lap siding just above this area is also splashed with organic growth. This could be a result of either rising damp or condensation from improper ventilation of the airspace under the floor. Good ground and surface drainage of the site around the building is required and may be contributing to the problem. If a new, impermeable layer was added under the floor, this could force the condensation/damp to try to escape through the walls rather than through a previously breathable floor. This should be investigated further and the damp source discovered before a solution is tried. Providing a physical damp proofing material between the wood and the stone to separate the two materials may be the only option since a skirt board trim isn't used on this building. A chemical damp proofing should not be used on natural stone. It will cause rapid deterioration of the stone. When the source of the issue is resolved, the stone and siding should be lightly cleaned with a scrub brush, water, and detergent.



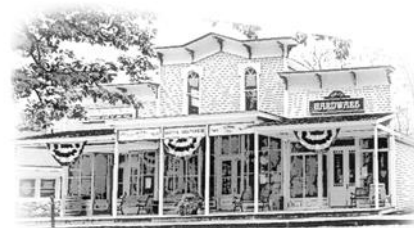
The wood lap siding is in fair condition with some areas in poor shape. Those in poor condition are cracked and/or poorly attached. Some of the wood lap siding has already been replaced. Wood trims are also in poor condition in some of the more decorative portions of the porch area. They are missing, gaping, cracked, damaged beyond repair, and/or poorly attached. The wood windows appear to be in good condition, but window sills are in poor condition. All wood should be repaired or replaced as necessary to create a watertight system. In their current condition, water infiltration will make the damage worse. Wood siding boards and trims close to grade or in areas where they are subject to a lot of water exposure could be replaced with a paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced.

Overall, the siding and wood trims need to be repaired, scraped, sanded, primed, and repainted. The goal is not to make the siding appear new, but to provide appropriate protection from the elements that can destroy a wood building.

The roof is asphalt shingle and is in very good condition. The interior walls and ceiling are wood beadboard. This is in fair to good condition with some repairs needed where there are a few holes. The floors are wood and in good condition. The architectural woodwork is in good condition.

This building does have electricity, but not air conditioning or plumbing. There is a gas heater in the Barber Shop, but it is not used. Smoke and fire detection are not provided but should be and located in areas out of sight rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes.

Barrier free access is provided by a ramp that runs from the back of the building, along one whole side of the building and allows access to the front door. However, there is no barrier free access



path that leads to the ramp. The front door may be too narrow to meet the requirements of the barrier free code, but because of its historic significance, should not be changed out to a larger door if at all possible. This is an excellent example of when grandfathering should be used. The majority of the display can be seen from the front doorway without entering the building. If it is desirable to allow wider entry into the building, it is recommended that the side door be replaced with a slightly wider door that matches the existing door in style and a new ramp be built to allow access to that side door. A barrier free access path should lead to building entries at the rear. This could link the Barber Shop, Hall House, Spring House, Woodshed, Outhouses, Hastings Township Hall, Lee School, the Sixberry House, and the 1860's Carriage House.

### **HALL HOUSE**

Built in the late 1800's, this house was originally located at 334 Madison in Hastings. It is interpreted as the home of the village seamstress. In the days before ready-made clothes were commonplace, many women earned their living in this manner. Often the seamstress lived with the family two or three weeks, until the sewing was completed. Larger scraps of fabric were used to make quilts. Small fabric scraps were often sewn together and woven into "rag rugs." By selling these items, the seamstress could provide additional income for herself.

The foundation appears to be field stone set in concrete and is in very good condition. The exterior walls are wood lap siding that was probably replaced recently and is in very good condition as well. Wood windows and doors appear to have been replaced with new. The front door has broken glass that should be replaced. The base of the wood columns at the front porch are in poor condition and need to be repaired or replaced. Wood trims close to grade or in areas where they are subject to a lot of water exposure could be replaced with a paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced.





The roof is newer asphalt shingle in very good condition. There are multiple chimneys and they are well maintained. Galvanized gutters and downspouts direct water away from the house.

The interior of the building has gypsum board walls and ceilings in excellent condition. The beadboard in the back room is in good condition as is the board floor. Doors are wood and in good condition; the architectural woodwork appears to be new.

This building does have electricity and heat (wood stove used only in fall and spring), but not air conditioning or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided but should be and located in areas out of sight rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes.

Barrier free access is not currently provided to this building. A ramp could be provided at the rear entry, leading from a new barrier free access path. A slightly wider door may be required, and it should match the existing door in style. If possible, cut down the size of the trim to allow for the wider door rather than making the entire opening wider.

### **SPRING HOUSE**

In the days before refrigeration, if you were lucky enough to live by a natural spring, ground water was used to keep food cool. By constructing a stone building directly over the stream of water that came up out of the ground naturally, you could keep the interior a cool temperature year-round. Food was stored in crocks on the shelves of the building or placed directly into the stream to keep the food even colder.



The spring house is constructed of stone with mortar joints and is built into the side of the hill. There is painted wood board and batten siding with a vent and a plaque about the door in the gable. The door is wood and is new. The roof is asphalt shingle. Overall, this building is in excellent condition and should require minimal maintenance within the next 10+ years.

This building does not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended.



There is no public access to the building itself. The Spring House allows visitors to walk up to it and view it from the adjacent grass. Distant barrier free viewing is available to the public from the path, but getting close to the building is not possible. A path or boardwalk should be provided at the rear of the buildings in this area that would also allow closer viewing of this building, although the path does not need to go up the hill to the Spring House.

### **HASTINGS TOWNSHIP HALL**

Built in 1886 at the corner of Center Road and Powell Drive, the building was moved to Charlton Park in 1981, and continued operating as the Township's Hall. It is believed to have been the only operating township hall located on museum grounds. Residents of Hastings Township voted here and Township meetings were held in the building. The last election held in this hall was in 1988. When the new Hastings Township Hall was completed, ownership of this building was turned over to Charlton Park.

The foundation appears to be cut stone on concrete and is in good condition. The siding is wood lap siding with rebuilt wood windows all in good condition. The siding and door at the rear porch should be repainted within the next few years. There is a newer asphalt shingle roof in excellent condition. The chimney for the wood stove is in good condition.





The interior walls are wood in excellent condition and the wood ceilings show some previous water damage (bulging), but overall are in good condition. It is assumed that the water damage was from a previous roof, but if this is not the case, this should be investigated and the source of the water infiltration eliminated. The bulging wood slats at the ceiling could be repaired, but as long as they are structurally sound, this isn't necessary. It could be a time consuming and complicated repair for minimal gains. The wood trim at the windows is in good condition.

This building does have electricity and heat (wood stove used only in fall and spring), but not air conditioning or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided but should be and located in areas out of sight rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes.

Barrier free access is provided to this building via the rear entry. However, there is not an accessible path leading to that boardwalk just outside the door. The door appears to be wide enough, but if the inner door is too narrow, a slightly wider door should be provided that matches the existing door in style. The existing boardwalk should be linked to an accessible path leading behind the buildings in this area of the park.

## **OUTHOUSES**

There are three outhouses in the village area. One is located by the Hen House and two are behind Lee School. None are used as functioning outhouses, although each were once functioning. They are all very similar with painted wood lap siding, an asphalt shingled gable roof, and a single door with a screened ventilation panel at the side.

The outhouse adjacent to the Hen House is in good to fair condition with some deterioration at the foundation. The fieldstone and mortar foundation has a large crack that should be repaired so it doesn't collapse. The wood trims and members are well worn, but as long as they don't sit directly on soil, should last without further deterioration. If there are any areas touching soil, it is recommended that trims be replaced with paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced. The roof is in good condition.





The outhouses behind Lee School have stone with mortar foundations in good condition. There is some obvious deterioration at the wood trims that once touched soil, but they are sitting on a stone foundation now, so that shouldn't be an issue in the future. Repairs could be made, but are not necessary. If there are any areas touching soil, it is recommended that trims be replaced with paintable fiber cement board or recycled plastic board so that further maintenance is reduced. The wood siding should be repainted in the near future. The roof is in good condition. Some minor repairs should also be made at the soffits to prevent animal infiltration.

The buildings do not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of their limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended. There is no public access to the buildings themselves. The outhouses allow visitors to walk up to them and view them from the adjacent grass. Barrier free viewing is available to the public from the distant path, but getting close to the buildings are not possible.

### **LEE SCHOOL**

Built in 1869 on property donated to Woodland Township by William Lee, this school sat on the corner of Carlton Center (now M-43) and Martin Roads. Children attended the Lee School until 1923 when the Woodland Schools were consolidated. First through eighth grades were taught. The teacher was the educator and disciplinarian as well as the principal, janitor, and nurse. The one room schoolhouse is part of our heritage. Here our ancestors not only learned the three R's, but also formed their ideas about patriotism, honor, and duty.

This building has a field stone and concrete foundation in very good condition. The exterior walls are vertical board and batten in good condition with some deterioration where the wood meets the



foundation. The windows and doors are wood and in good condition. The asphalt shingle roof is older, but in fair to good condition with a very nice pattern. The cupola for the school bell appears to be in excellent condition from the ground.



The interior walls and ceiling are wood and in good condition. The floor is wood board and although it looks rough, is also in good condition. Interior doors have been replaced with new wood doors and they are in good condition. The architectural woodwork around the windows is in good condition.

This building does have electricity and heat (wood stove used only in fall and spring), but not air conditioning or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided but should be and located in areas out of sight rather than in the display areas used for historic purposes.

Barrier free access is not currently provided to this building. Barrier free access is desired for this building because of programming provided to students within this space. Currently, there is only one door, at the front of the school with four steps leading to it from grade. There are three options to consider to provide a barrier free entrance, none of which is ideal. First, a ramp could be provided at the side of the building that comes from the rear of the building to the front to enter into the front door. The door appears to be too narrow, so a slightly wider door would have to be provided that matches the existing door in style. This is not desirable from a historic view point as it will significantly alter the original façade and entry to the building.

Another option would be to provide a ramp and new barrier free door on the back side of the building. This would involve creating an opening where none originally existed. This would not



detract from the façade or original entry, but would significantly alter the historic "teaching wall" at the front of the room and impact the historical interior of the space. A third option would be to remove one of the existing windows closest to the main façade of the building and replace it with a door just wide enough to meet the code requirements. A ramp would be required to come from the back of the building forward toward the entry façade to get to the door. This would alter the rhythm of the windows on one side of the building, but would be less obtrusive than the other two options on both the interior and exterior. In any case, a barrier free access path should be added to connect with the barrier free ramp to this building.

### **WOODSHED BEHIND SIXBERRY HOUSE**

Utilitarian structure used as storage. This structure has a field stone with mortar foundation in good condition. The walls are painted vertical board and batten in good condition. There's very minor deterioration where the boards meet the foundation. Windows and the door are wood and are in very good condition. The asphalt shingled roof is in very good condition.

This building does not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended. There is no public access to the building itself. The woodshed allows visitors to walk up to it and view it from the adjacent grass. Barrier free viewing is available to the public from the path, but getting close to the building is not possible. Better visual access could be provided with a barrier free access path running behind the buildings in this area of the park. Regular, minor maintenance will be required for this building. But, due to its utilitarian usage and because it is not inhabited, other than the few repairs noted, major changes are not recommended.





### 1860 CARRIAGE HOUSE

In town, every home would have a carriage house. Similar to today's garage, the building would contain an area to store the carriage, a stall for the horse and storage area for harness and tack. The upstairs would hold hay and possibly an area for the carriage driver to stay. Currently, this building functions as a storage space for artifact and building material storage and is not open to the public.

The foundation is cut stone on concrete and is in good condition with some organic growth on the stones. This could be a result of either rising damp or condensation from improper ventilation of the airspace under the floor. Good ground and surface drainage of the site around the building is required and may be contributing to the problem. If a new, impermeable layer was added under a new floor, this could force the condensation/damp to try to escape through the walls rather than through a previously breathable floor. This should be investigated further and the damp source discovered before a solution is tried. Providing a physical damp proofing material between the wood and the stone to separate the two materials may be successful. A chemical damp proofing should not be used on natural stone. It will cause rapid deterioration of the stone. When the source of the issue is resolved, the stone should be lightly cleaned with a scrub brush, water, and detergent.

The exterior walls are board and batten in very good condition with some minor deterioration where the wood meets the foundation. This appears to be old damage from a time when the wood may have touched soil. The wood windows and doors are in good condition. The roof is asphalt shingle and in very good condition.

The interior of the building appears dry, but there are signs of earlier water infiltration, including mildew on boards. Some of the interior walls are new. Board with mildew or visible mold should be removed and replaced with new wood. Ceilings are exposed structure and board that are newer and in good condition. The floor boards are older wood and in good condition. The interior doors are newer board. The attic space is also used for storage and appears dry from the first floor.

This building does have electricity, but does not have heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either but should be provided to reduce the cost of insurance in buildings used for artifact storage.

There is no public access to the building itself, only staff access. The carriage house allows visitors to walk up to it and view it from the grass. Barrier free viewing is available to the public from the



path, but getting close to the building is not possible. This could be provided with the addition of a barrier free access path from the main drive.

If the building were to be used as an exhibit space, barrier free access could be provided through the large doors at the front. If there are artifacts that could be appropriately displayed in a carriage house, it is recommended that this building be altered to provide that exhibit space. However, if these are not artifacts already owned by Charlton Park, it is not recommended to use this space for exhibit space, but to continue to use it for artifact and building material storage.

### **SIXBERRY HOUSE**

Built by John C. Dillon in Maple Grove Township in 1858 at a cost of \$792.42. It was donated by the Sixberry family and moved in 1977. It opened to the public in 1984. The house represents the village lawyer's home with a small office. By the turn of the century, the legal profession was rising in status, so a lawyer was part of the upper-middle class. His home would reflect this social standing to include "modern conveniences."

The Sixberry House has a brick foundation in good condition. The exterior walls are wood lap siding with heavy wood trims at doors, windows, and perimeter in the Greek Revival style. All are well kept and in very good condition. The windows are wood framed and the original glass has been replaced with UV filtering glass (Low-e glass). This process is ongoing. The front doors are wood and need to be refinished. This should be completed within the next couple years to prevent further damage.





The roof is asphalt shingle and is in excellent condition. The chimneys appear to be in good condition from the ground.

Interior walls and ceilings are gypsum board with a skim coat of plaster. Floors are board and some rooms have raised wood thresholds. Heavy architectural woodwork surrounds doors, windows, and other openings. All are in excellent condition. The interior doors appear to have been stripped and refinished; they are in good condition and have authentic hardware.

The second floor is also used as exhibit space with gypsum board walls and ceilings, wood floors, and heavy architectural woodwork. These are in excellent condition. Part of the second floor is used for the storage of artifacts. This room has a blackout shade, sturdy floor, is dry and as well finished as the remainder of the house. Second floor exhibits should be available to those not able to access the second floor through another means, such as an exhibit board, a video tour, or similar experience. This will prevent the need for adding barrier free access to the second floor, allowing for an appropriate use of code grandfathering rather than the unrealistic expense of adding an elevator to this historic building.

The building is heated, air conditioned, and has electricity. It does not have plumbing. If not already done, smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas that will not distract from display areas used for historic purposes.

A barrier free access path should be provided off the main road. Barrier free access could then be provided by means of a ramp to the rear door. A slightly wider door may be required, and it should match the existing door in style. The majority of rooms on the first floor should be accessible, although a few wood thresholds may be too high for wheelchair access. If these rooms are visible without requiring complete access, the thresholds should be left in place. If it is necessary to fully access the rooms, the thresholds could be cut down or beveled to provide access to the room.

### **HASTINGS MUTUAL BUILDING**

Founded in 1884 as the Michigan Tornado, Cyclone, and Windstorm Insurance Company, the Hastings Mutual Insurance Company operated out of rented quarters until 1908 when this building was constructed. In 1924, the company outgrew this building and the structure was then used as a church for a number of years. In the early 1970s the building was slated for demolition. To prevent this, Hastings Mutual helped underwrite the costs of moving the building to Charlton Park. It



houses a typical turn-of-the-century bank on the main floor, with a lawyer's office and insurance offices on the second floor.



Cut stone and concrete foundation with brick exterior walls and wood and terra cotta trim in the Italianate style. Exterior brick walls were rebuilt when the building was moved and are in very good condition. Some of the terra cotta at the entry stair has been damaged and should be repaired soon. If water has continual access to the soft, inner layer of the terra cotta, those pieces will soon disintegrate. This is expensive material to duplicate, so great care should be given to hiring an appropriate contractor to complete the work.

The wood entry doors and very large wood windows are in very good condition. A flat roof was new in 2009 and there hasn't been any leaking.

On the first and second floor, the interior walls and ceilings are gypsum board with a plaster skim coat. They are in excellent condition. Floors, stairs, architectural woodwork and doors are newer wood and also in excellent condition. The interiors have been recreated from old photographs. There is peeling paint on a ceiling in the non-public area of the second floor. It is assumed that this is old damage from a previously bad roof.

The building is heated, air conditioned, and has electricity. It does not have plumbing. If not already done, smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas that will not distract from display areas used for historic purposes. There are currently old smoke detectors visible, but these may not be active.



Barrier free access is not feasible or recommended on the front of this building. It would destroy the architectural character. A rear entry could provide access via a ramp to the rear door if an accessible path from the road were to be provided. If at all possible, it is recommended that the existing door be reused rather than trying to cut a larger opening. The majority of rooms on the first floor should be accessible, although there would be no access to the displays on the second floor. Second floor exhibits should be available to those not able to access the second floor through another means, such as an exhibit board, a video tour, or similar experience. This will prevent the need for adding barrier free access to the second floor, allowing for an appropriate use of code grandfathering rather than the unrealistic expense of adding an elevator to this historic building.

### HASTINGS CITY BANK CLOCK



Manufactured by the McClintock Clock Company, this clock was installed on the Hastings City Bank wall at the corner of State and Jefferson Streets in 1926. When the bank changed locations in 1958, the clock was mounted on a post and placed at the Court Street entrance. The piece keeps time much like it did at its Hastings location - very poorly. When working, the clock chimes on the quarter, half and full hours.

The clock appears to be weather tight. The materials are holding up well and have an agreeable patina that comes with age and exposure to the elements.





### MAIN STREET

Constructed during 1976 as part of a Bicentennial Grant. The store fronts are all original, moved here from throughout Barry County. There is a barrier free ramp access from the snack bar. This provides access to the board walk that runs the full length of these three buildings. A long term plan should include the replacement of this boardwalk as age and elements will render it unsafe in a few years. All the buildings share a cut stone and concrete foundation in good condition.



### HARDWARE STORE

Storefront from Nashville, Michigan. The oak cabinets and display cases came from the Hall Hardware to Hastings. The hardware store was often the first specialized retail store in most villages. Farm implements and repair parts were the primary stock items.

Exterior walls are wood lap siding in good condition. The back side of the false front needs repainting. Wood signage is in good condition. Doors and storefront windows are wood framed and in good condition. The current roof is asphalt shingle on the main portion of the building and wood shake over the porch. The underside of the porch structure (soffit area) should be painted to provide a cleaner look. This should not be covered because it provides needed ventilation for the wood roof. The interior walls are gypsum board. The ceilings are wood boards and the floors are newer wood boards. The display cases are wood. All are in good condition



The building has electricity and heat, but is not air conditioned, nor does it have plumbing. If not already done,



smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas that will not distract from display areas used for historic purposes.

### GENERAL STORE

Storefront from Woodland, Michigan. The tin ceiling is originally from a dime store in Kalamazoo. The significance of the General Store cannot be overstated. It was the first and often only retail establishment in small settlements. The store sold everything: groceries, medicines, hardware, seeds, yard goods, household items and even luxury items. If the article was not in stock, the storekeeper could order it for you. People gathered at the general store to get the latest town news.

Exterior walls are wood lap siding in good condition. The back side of the false front needs repainting. Wood signage is in fair condition. Doors and storefront windows are wood framed and in good condition. The front doors don't close properly. The cause should be determined and this corrected. The current roof is asphalt shingle on the main portion of the building and over the porch.



The interior walls are gypsum board. The floors are wood boards. The display cases and interior doors are wood. All are in good to excellent condition. Ceilings are decorative metal and are in need of repair. There has been damage due to water. These should be scheduled for repair in the long term plan. An appropriate contractor who specializes in this type of repair work should be hired.

The second floor of the building was inaccessible to us during our visits. It is unknown what the condition of the building is at that level.

The main floor of this building has electricity and heat but is not air conditioned, nor does it have plumbing. If not already done, smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas that will not distract from display areas used for historic purposes.



### THE THORNAPPLE PRESS PRINT SHOP

Storefront from Nashville, Michigan. An active print shop was essential to the economic growth of any community, as the printed word was the primary means of communication. The newspaper press is an 1875 Cranston donated by the Nashville News.

Exterior walls are wood lap siding in good condition. The back side of the false front needs repainting. Wood signage is in fair to good condition. Doors and storefront windows are wood framed and in good condition. The current roof is asphalt shingle on the main portion of the building and wood shake over the porch. The underside of the porch structure (soffit area) should be painted to provide a cleaner look. This should not be covered because it provides needed ventilation for the wood roof.



The interior walls are gypsum board in excellent condition. The ceilings and floors are wood boards. Both are in good condition. New wainscoting at the front of the shop is in excellent condition. Wood doors are in good condition.

The building has heat, plumbing and electricity, but is not air conditioned. If not already done, smoke and fire detection should be provided, but located in areas that will not distract from display areas used for historic purposes.

### IRVING D. CHARLTON MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Designed by Charlton, himself, construction began in 1941. Due to World War II, construction was halted for awhile. The structure was finally completed in 1950. The first and second floors are used for exhibits with offices and artifact storage in the attic. Entry at grade is barrier free accessible at the second floor. However, getting to that access point is very difficult because of the steep rise above the main path. A barrier free access path must be provided to this entrance. This may involve a fairly long path from the main road behind the building. This path could also be linked to the access path at the church rather than coming up the hill from the main path.

# CHARLTON • PARK



## strategic plan

The grade entrance at the first floor has a slight rise at the concrete pad outside the door. This entry should be made barrier free by relaying the brick path to meet the barrier free code to make it even with the concrete. A barrier free access path should be provided from the main drive. Since there is no elevator for this building, it would be most desirable, for programming purposes and staff access, that both entries on both levels be made barrier free. This would be an appropriate use of barrier free grandfathering.



The foundation of this building is concrete with a stone face. It is in good condition. Some minor repairs have been made in the past, and there are a few loose stones near grade that should be repointed with a mortar style to match the existing. The exterior walls are field stone and are in excellent condition. It should be noted that the style and quality of construction of the field stone work is excellent and when repairs are necessary, an appropriate masonry contractor with stone experience should be hired. This is not the kind of repair work that can be done, to this level of quality, by the typical contractor.

The entry doors on the upper level are wood with glass. They need to be refinished with penetrating stain. The doors on the lower level are wood with glass, but are painted. These are in good condition. Window frames are wood and are in good condition, but require refinishing also. These should be refinished and painted soon so they do not deteriorate from further exposure.

The roof is asphalt shingle and is in good condition except for leaking areas near the chimney. This should be investigated further, flashing added as needed and leaking eliminated. There is some mildew on the soffits that should be scrubbed with detergent and water, and then treated with a



bleach solution before being repainted with a mildew resisting paint. Areas of the soffit appear to have remnants of organic material left from a plant removal process. This should be cleaned and repainted if necessary.

The interior walls are gypsum board and wood and are in good condition. These are repainted and repaired regularly as necessary as exhibits are reorganized. The ceilings are gypsum board and exposed wood structure and are in good condition overall with some water damage near the chimney. When the source of the water infiltration is eliminated, the gypsum board should be repaired and refinished. Where the exposed wood is stained, clean as well as possible and leave in place. Interior wood doors are in good condition.

Floors are wood and vinyl composition material. They are in good condition with some minor staining in the lower level corridor near the restroom. Try to remove the staining if possible.

The attic level is packed with office/workroom area and artifact storage. A structural engineer should verify that the attic floor's structural load level is not exceeded in this current arrangement.

The building is fully heated, air conditioned, has good plumbing and electricity. Some smoke and fire detection was noted, but this should be located throughout the building if not already done. No further renovations or additions are recommended for this building at this time. If better access to both floors is desired in the future, a small barrier free elevator or lift could be considered. Whether provided within the space or with an appropriate addition at the side of the building. However, the cost for this may be excessive for current use of the facility.

### **CARLTON CENTER CHURCH**

Originally located in Carlton Center, this 1885 Gothic Revival structure served as a Methodist Episcopal Church until 1972 when it was moved to Charlton Park. The original steeple was struck by lightning in 1933. The present steeple is similar to the original, but 25 feet shorter.

The church has a community room on the lower level with the sanctuary on the upper level. Barrier free access to the upper level is available at the side of the building. There is an access path at the rear of the building and this should be maintained and modified as necessary to provide barrier free access to the building's ramp. The hand and guard rails should be painted. There is no barrier free access to the lower level. This could only be accomplished with an elevator. The addition of an



elevator is not recommended because of the cost, practicality of an addition to house it, and the lack of economic benefit.



The foundation is brick and concrete and appears to be in good condition. The exterior walls are wood lap siding with wood windows. Both are in good condition. The wood front doors were rebuilt and swell with humidity. The roof is wood shake and in fair to good condition. There are galvanized metal gutters and downspouts in good condition. A long term plan for this building should include a plan to replace the roof. If it is not feasible to replace the wood shakes with new wood shakes, it is recommended that a metal roof be installed in its place.

Interior walls on the lower floor are gypsum board. The floor in this area is composition vinyl tile and the ceiling is a 2x4 lay-in acoustical ceiling. All are in good condition. The architectural woodwork is also in good condition. There was some water discovered on the floor near the kitchen and in the kitchen; the source was not readily known.

The interior walls in the sanctuary are plaster with a wood ceiling. The floor is wood with a creative and well-crafted wood staircase to the lower level. All are in excellent condition as is the architectural woodwork and wainscoting.

The building is heated, has plumbing and electricity. It doesn't appear that there are fire or smoke detection systems. These should be provided.



## CHARLTON GAS & STEAM COMPANY

This building was constructed with volunteer labor by members of the Charlton Park Gas and Steam Engine Club. Begun in 1983, it was completed in 1985. It was built in the board and batten style with white oak timber grown at the park. It houses the Park's gas and steam powered engines, as well as historic machinery on loan to the Park from Club members. This building is open to the public on a limited basis for special events.

The foundation is stone on concrete with wood supports. The floor is a concrete slab on grade in very good condition. There are a number of animals living under the floor with access from grade. They should be discouraged from nesting here as they will eventually undermine the structure of the floor.



The exterior walls are wood board and batten. Some holes need to be repaired and there are a number of boards cracked at the bottom. It's probable that the back sides of the boards or the cut ends weren't properly finished before installation. These should be monitored and replaced when they deteriorate to a point where they will let in animals or water. There is an orange material over the doors; from the ground, it is unclear whether it is a fungus or an expanding adhesive. This appears in areas where the wood is quite deteriorated. Damaged wood members should be removed and replaced with new members. If this is a fungus, it must be removed from the wood surface.

The exterior doors are metal, interior doors are wood, and the windows are wood framed. They are in good condition. The roof is galvanized metal panel and is in very poor condition. This roof should be replaced. There is water damage to the underside that is visible from within the barn. The underside of the roof is pressed board and in some areas, this is wet and coming off in full



sheets. This should be replaced after the roof is replaced. The wood structure is open on the building's interior and is in good condition with some water staining.

The chimney is stone to match the foundation and is in good condition. The building is heated in the office area and has electricity. It doesn't appear that there are fire or smoke detection systems. These should be provided in the office area, but not in the barn itself. There may be too many false alarms with the type of equipment stored and operated in this space.

The barn is barrier free accessible through the large, double sliding doors because the floor of the barn is at grade at this location. Modifications where the concrete at the entry meets the road may be required to provide a barrier free access path.

### **SAWMILL —C1890**

Purchased and reconstructed by members of the Charlton Park Gas and Steam Club. A building typical of sawmills of the period shelters the mill. This building is open to the public on a limited basis for special events.

This is an open air shelter with a partial concrete slab on grade and a partial dirt floor. There are no exterior walls although the mill is roughly enclosed with a wood and metal structure. There are a couple metal doors in this same area. They are all in fair to good condition. The roof is metal on an exposed wood structure and is in fair to good condition. The wood throughout is weathered. Where there is obvious deterioration, the wood should be replaced with a new piece to match.

The building is barrier free accessible, but there is not a barrier free access path to get to the building. This could be provided from the Exhibition Hall building drive. A concrete viewing pad could be provided for wheelchair viewing of the exhibit. It does have electricity, but no other utilities. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use and the fact that it is an open air shelter, none of these are recommended.







### EXHIBITION HALL

This recently constructed building houses large artifacts and machines that depict the evolution from horses to steam to gas power. Farm equipment at the turn of the 20th Century is on exhibit in this barn.



This is a pole barn built on a concrete slab on grade with treated lumber. The exterior walls are plywood/particle board with vinyl panel siding on the exterior. The wood structure is exposed on the interior of the building. Doors are wood and metal. Windows are aluminum. The roof is asphalt shingle and the wood underlayment is dry. All appear to be in excellent condition.

The building is barrier free accessible at the large doors. Modifications where the concrete at the entry meets the road may be required to provide a barrier free access path. It does have electricity, but no other utilities. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended. Also, there would be too many false alarms with the type of equipment operated in this space.

### RESTROOMS

There are two restroom buildings for public use. The one adjacent to the Main Street buildings (25) also houses a concession stand. The restrooms are barrier free accessible; although they may not meet the current code, they would be grandfathered in. A barrier free access path should be provided to the restrooms. Simple modifications could be made at a barrier free stall to make it more accessible. Adding or modifying grab bars, flush valves, faucets, sinks, height of toilet seats, etc. are all examples of modifications that would be within financial feasibility.

The buildings have electricity and plumbing. Smoke and fire detection are not provided. Because of its utilitarian use, these are not recommended.



At the Restroom Building adjacent to Main Street, the foundation is concrete and exterior walls are stone. These are in very good condition. The restroom doors are wood and some of trim at the foundation is deteriorated. This should be replaced or repaired to discourage further deterioration. The windows are wood framed. There is a lot of wood trim on the building, especially at the concession stand. This should be repaired and repainted as needed, but overall appears to be in good condition. The roof is asphalt shingle with a wood soffit. The soffit needs painting, but both are in good condition.

The interior walls are concrete block with wood toilet partitions; both are in fair to good condition. The ceiling (material unknown) is cracked in the ladies room - repairs should be made. The vinyl tile floor is cracked, broken and stained. This should be replaced with an all weather ceramic or quarry tile for easier maintenance.

At the Restroom Building adjacent to the Bristol Inn, the foundation is cut stone and the exterior walls are wood lap siding. The windows have wood frames and the doors are metal. The roof is asphalt shingle. All are in good condition. The barrier free ramp has a lot of rotten wood pieces and should be replaced.

The interior walls are wood paneled and the stalls are metal. The metal panels are rusted and should be repaired and repainted or replaced. The ceilings are wood and the floors are quarry tile. They are in good condition.



### ROBINSON LOG CABIN

The Robinson Log Cabin was originally located on N. Charlton Park Rd., near State Road and was built circa 1870. Acquired by Charlton Park in 1972, it remained in storage until its restoration/reconstruction in 1999. Trail access to the cabin begins behind the Sixberry House.

This very weathered wood structure sits on a rubble stone foundation. Where the wood touches the soil, deterioration will eventually occur. The grade beam appears to have been replaced when the restoration took place. This may have to be replaced occasionally, as the deterioration progresses. The exterior walls are wood, with some areas showing more deterioration than others. Monitoring should take place annually to determine if wood members need to be replaced because of excessive deterioration. The wood door is locked and the wood windows are boarded over or have a hinged enclosure to keep out the elements and animals.



The roof is wood shake with organic plant material taking root. The plant material should be removed to protect the wood. The chimney is rubble stone to match the foundation and appears to be in good condition.

This building does not have electricity, heat, air conditioning, or plumbing. A fire place may exist, but it is unknown whether it is functional. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because of its limited and utilitarian use, none of these are recommended. Access to the building is not barrier free because of its location on a steep hill and within the woods. If barrier free access were to be provided via a path from the entry road, this would allow barrier free viewing by the public.



This building should be open during major events for public viewing. The window shutters and door should be opened to allow in natural light. It is unknown whether this already occurs.

At the side of this building is a three sided enclosure for wood. It is also very weathered and parts will need to be replaced as regular maintenance occurs.

### **BIG RED BARN**

The large red barn located at the director's house is used for the storage of artifacts. The date of construction is unknown but it appears to be from the latter half of the 19th century. The foundation is random field stone with some infill at windows that were removed. The foundation is in fair condition with open spaces allowing animals into the barn. Animal infiltration is extreme.

The exterior walls are board and batten with many missing batten. The wood hasn't been painted in decades, causing it to weather and deteriorate. There is a lot of deterioration where the wood sits on the foundation stones. The exterior walls are in very poor condition in most of the wood areas. Some of the walls have been replaced with metal siding. Although this is not desired as a restoration technique, as a way to preserve and reuse the barn safely, it is recommended that the deteriorated wood siding be replaced with metal siding. The new metal doors are in good condition.





The structure on the interior of the building is exposed. It was rebuilt at the loft and stairs. The floors are wood with water damage because of the poor roof and the water infiltration through walls. Where damage causes structural concern, the floor boards should be replaced with appropriate floor boards, not plywood or particle board. It is obvious that the floor in the loft is carrying too much weight, but it should be verified by a structural engineer.

The lower level barn has a dirt floor with exposed structure and foundation. It is in fair condition, excluding the animal inhabitants. The wood doors at the rear of the barn are rotting at the foundation and should be replaced.

The roof is very old asphalt shingles over wood in very poor condition. This should be replaced as soon as possible with either an asphalt shingled roof or a metal roof.

Ideally, the building would be made as air and water tight as is possible to provide a clean, more controlled space for the storage of artifacts. This would involve eliminating gaps in the siding, trim, around doors and windows, etc. This will be a major undertaking. A short term plan for this building should include a plan to replace the roof and make the building reasonably air and water tight.

Outbuildings of this type can be cleaned with a system of Borax and bleach to discourage further deterioration. Cleaning would be required inside and out. There are only a few recommended contractors who can do this type of work with historic outbuildings. The building would have to be emptied to complete this process. This process will extend the life of the building, however, it should be part of a long term plan because of cost constraints and the effort required to empty it of its contents. Since it is not used by the public, it is a lesser priority for this type of cleaning.

The building is not barrier free accessible and is not open to the public. It does have electricity, but no other utilities. Smoke and fire detection are not provided either. Because it is used for the storage of artifacts, smoke and fire detection is recommended



# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN



## Community Input Report







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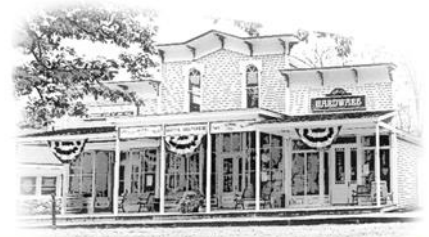
## COMMUNITY INPUT REPORT

The Community Input Report is a compilation of the results of the various techniques used to gather input from citizens and stakeholders regarding Charlton Park. Input was acquired using the following methods:

- ❖ On-line Citizen Survey which was also available as a paper survey
- ❖ Short paper survey on-site at the Irving D. Charlton Museum
- ❖ Leadership Visioning Workshop
- ❖ Mobile Workshops for stakeholder groups
- ❖ Individual stakeholder interviews

This report contains individual discussions of the results of each of the methods of input, and then addresses the input results collectively. The purpose of the Community Input Report is to discover common themes which have emerged throughout the process, and to use these common themes to set direction for the Strategic Plan.

The Community Input Report does not contain every piece of raw data that was collected during the input sessions; the data will be retained as an appendix to the report. While an effort was made to discover common themes throughout the data, many valuable ideas were generated during the course of the input events. These ideas, even if they did not qualify as a common theme, may become the springboard for future endeavors at Charlton Park.



## ON-LINE CITIZEN SURVEY

The On-line Citizen Survey was completed by 75 persons, which includes those persons who completed the survey using a paper copy which was then entered into the results of the On-line Survey.

### *Demographics*

The survey was answered by a variety of age groups, but the greatest number of persons answering the survey was in the 50-65 years age group. The majority of persons answering the survey lived within Barry County. Educational attainment of respondents was primarily a high school diploma, followed closely by those with a bachelor's degree.

### *Who Visits*

Most people answering the survey had first visited Charlton Park during their grade school years; the second greatest number of persons had first visited as young adults. Of the 75 persons who completed the survey, 70 answered that they had returned to the park at some point after their initial visit (the remaining five persons did not answer the question).

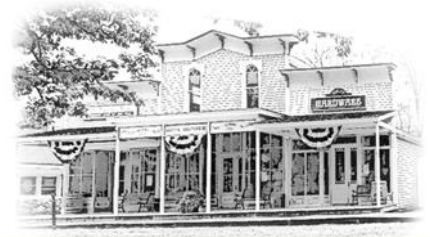
Most persons answering the survey visit the park three to five times per year. Perhaps surprisingly, the next highest percentage of responses showed that persons visit more than five times per year. This data may indicate that the park has a group of loyal, repeat visitors.

### *Popular Special Events*

The five most attended events are:

Annual Father's Day Car Show	(61.4%)
Annual Charlton Park Day	(44.3%)
Annual Gas & Steam Engine Show	(42.9%)
Of Christmas Past	(41.4%)
Civil War Muster	(38.6%)

These results represent only the persons who answered the survey; actual attendance at these events, and other events held at Charlton Park, are necessary to consider when determining the value of hosting the various events currently offered at the park.



## ***Returning Visitors***

Most persons who visit Charlton Park for a special event return for a visit other than a special event (88.1%). The reason given for a return visit is primarily to visit the historic village, followed by visits to the recreation area and visits to the Irving D. Charlton Museum.

Favorite facilities for those visiting for other than a special event are the historic village and the museum. However, many of the facilities listed on the survey had nearly equal ratings as the museum as being favorites for visitors, including the Town Hall or Village Green, the swimming beach, and the trails. Visitors who return for other than a special event are utilizing many of the facilities available at the park.

A clear majority of those who have visited the park for any reason stated that they will return.

## ***Types of Groups***

Visitors to Charlton Park tend to come in family groups of three or more people; the other most common grouping is two persons.

## ***Publicity***

The clear majority of those who answered the survey had heard about Charlton Park from a family member or friend, indicating that “word of mouth” advertising has worked well. The next most common way persons learn of the park is through a school or educational institution, which may occur when grade school children visit the park as part of their classroom experience.

The survey asked how persons usually find out about events, activities, or places to visit in their community. Most persons get their information from an on-line or print newspaper, followed closely by Facebook. Websites are the next most common source.

## ***Other Popular Recreational and Cultural Facilities***

Responses in this category were widespread, and some difficulty exists in attempting to identify the clearly most popular facilities. While percentages of responses were close, the five facilities which have been most often visited by those who answered the survey are:

Yankee Springs State Park/Game Area (73.5%)

John Ball Zoo in Kent County (70.6%)



Binder Park Zoo in Battle Creek	(69.1%)	
Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapid Township-Kent County	(67.6%)	
Grand Rapids Public Museum	(63.2%)	
Gilmore Car Museum in Barry Township	(63.2%)	<i>(The last two items tied for fifth place.)</i>

The most popular facilities visited include those that are fairly near geographically, and those that may include a 30 minutes or more commute. The most important task when analyzing those places that attract visitors is to determine what elements of the facility make it attractive to visitors, and use that information to help set a direction for the Strategic Plan.

### ***Greatest Concerns***

Persons who answered the survey were asked to indicate the greatest concerns with the park. Only one half of all people who filled out the survey answered this question, so the results may not provide as much direction as hoped. However, the clear majority of persons felt that updating the facilities, including the historic village, museum, beach, recreation facilities, and the restrooms, were of highest importance. The next greatest concern was that the park does not offer enough historical activities; and thirdly, persons felt that the park is not accessible to all users (those who use wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers, or who have a visual or hearing impairment).

### ***New Activities Desired***

When person where asked to identify the facilities or activities that would cause them to return to Charlton Park, the top five responses were:

Historic re-enactments (besides the Civil War muster); living history characters, historic dinners	(57.8%)
Concerts/music	(53.1%)
Camp ground	(37.5%)
Outdoor movies	(34.4%)



Natural Playscapes (sand, water, logs, huts, natural labyrinths, rope swings, pathways, rocks, grasses, and gardens for child play)	(26.6%)	
Historic baseball	(26.6%)	<i>(The last two items tied for fifth place.)</i>

### ***Additional Comments***

Survey respondents were able to leave additional comments regarding Charlton Park. Comments were overwhelmingly positive as to the park being a valuable asset and fun place to visit. Some people left suggestions for improvements, such as a cleaner swimming beach. Only two comments were somewhat negative. All comments may be viewed in the data appendix.

### **SHORT PAPER SURVEY**

A short paper survey was made available in the Irving D. Charlton Museum in order to give visitors an opportunity to give feedback while they were visiting the park. A total of 63 persons took time to answer the survey. The survey took place during the Civil War Muster, so some of the answers reflect that experience. A summary of answers follows:

#### ***What did you like best about your experience at Charlton Park today?***

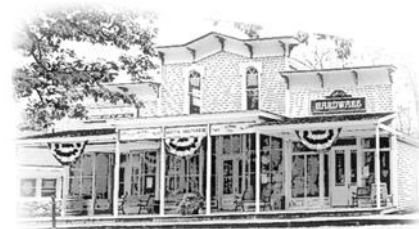
All persons expressed an appreciation of the historic atmosphere and demonstrations, historic buildings, being able to touch things, the nice people and interpreters.

#### ***What do you think would improve the park?***

The answers to this question varied widely, but seemed to focus around the theme of adding more historic events, activities, and facilities to enhance what is already there. Persons who answered this question seemed to have a deep appreciation for the park facility as it is, and would eagerly embrace an expansion of the historic attributes of the park. Several persons simply stated that they like the park just the way it is.

#### ***Will you come back and visit the park?***

100% of the persons who answered the survey stated they would return.



Complete results of the short paper survey may be found in the data appendix.

### **LEADERSHIP VISIONING WORKSHOP**

A Leadership Visioning Workshop was held in May of 2013, where community leaders representing various boards, commissions, and agencies met and brainstormed their vision for Charlton Park within specific topic areas. The topic areas included:

- ❖ Financing/Fundraising
- ❖ Events
- ❖ Vision for Charlton Park
- ❖ Educational Mission
- ❖ Visitor Base
- ❖ Scope and Management of Collections
- ❖ Organizational Structure
- ❖ Inspiration from Other Places
- ❖ Marketing/Publicity/Public Perception
- ❖ Maintenance and Infrastructure

The information generated at the Leadership Visioning Workshop has been compiled into common themes under each category. Overlapping themes among topics, as well as ideas generated on flip chart sheets by the large group at the end of the workshop, were then compiled. This compilation is presented as follows:

### **FINANCING/FUNDRAISING**

#### *Themes:*

- ❖ Additional sources of funding needed
  - Gifts and donations
  - Fees charged
- ❖ Need Director of Development
- ❖ Public awareness of financial needs/value of park





- ❖ Increase marketing, outreach, awareness, factual financial information

### EVENTS

#### Themes:

- ❖ Increase base of visitors with events that have broad appeal
- ❖ New, fresh events
- ❖ Ownership of events by local groups; expand local group use
- ❖ Hands-on experience
- ❖ Define the purpose of having events
- ❖ Events Coordinator-how to fund?
- ❖ Identify trends, markets, ages
- ❖ Volunteers needed
- ❖ Change way of thinking

### VISION FOR CHARLTON PARK

#### Themes:

- ❖ New funding stream-planned giving
- ❖ Expand historic focus, living history, environmental history, historic interpretation
- ❖ Contemporary activities/new events
- ❖ Expand eras, age-group interest
- ❖ Seasonal education



- ❖ Focus
  - existing activities?
  - expanded activities?
  - prioritizing focus
- ❖ Identify user market
- ❖ Need money and staff
- ❖ Possible facility/exhibit expansion

### **EDUCATIONAL MISSION**

#### **Themes:**

- ❖ Experiential
- ❖ Various eras
- ❖ Market to County visitors (campers)
- ❖ Change way of thinking

### **VISITOR BASE**

#### **Themes:**

- ❖ Determine current base/survey
- ❖ Expand base: parents/County, regional, state/marketing/ identify interests/target users/promotion beyond local
- ❖ Drop/add events
- ❖ Promote tourism partnerships



- ❖ Complete historic village
- ❖ Hands-on experience/day camp
- ❖ Lack of staff/resources for park promotion
- ❖ Focus (can't be everything)
- ❖ Staff member dedicated to visitor base/marketing
- ❖ Community alliances
- ❖ Volunteers

## SCOPE AND MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTIONS

### Themes:

- ❖ Enhanced/controlled storage
- ❖ Training
  - Maintenance/repair
  - Documentation
- ❖ Inventory management
- ❖ More space: storage/display/maintenance
- ❖ Disposal of items
- ❖ Funding/donors
- ❖ Volunteers/help
- ❖ Changing policy and mindset



## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

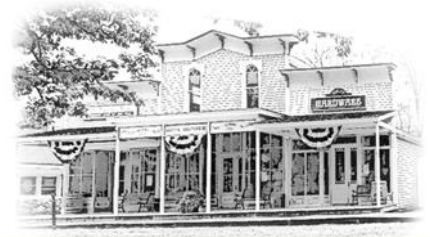
### Themes:

- ❖ One Director for both park boards
- ❖ More volunteers and staff plus training
- ❖ Funding
- ❖ Organizational skills

## INSPIRATION FROM OTHER PLACES

### Themes:

- ❖ Technology (self-guided, QR codes)
- ❖ Experiential/hands-on
- ❖ Period competitions
- ❖ Keep current facilities in good repair
- ❖ More exhibits
- ❖ Better playground equipment
- ❖ Enhanced trails
- ❖ Conference/event facility
- ❖ Evening events/lights
- ❖ New uses for park (beyond historic)
- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ More resources, staff, volunteers needed

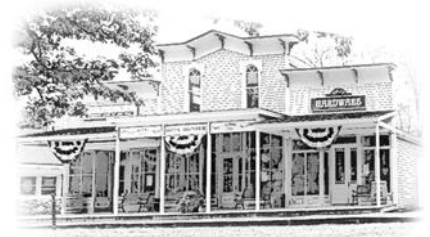


- ❖ Events Coordinator
- ❖ Security
- ❖ Funding/10-year millage/increased financial base/donations/grants
- ❖ Public relations needed

### **MARKETING/PUBLICITY/PUBLIC PERCEPTION**

#### **Themes:**

- ❖ Expand advertising significantly state-wide and nationally; use current tourism campaigns and publications; out of County; west Michigan; outreach to other communities; newspapers
- ❖ Elevate image locally
- ❖ Creative means of publicity (YouTube, flash mobs, technology, web site etc.)
- ❖ Define mission-market those events and exhibits
- ❖ Vibrancy-docents/kids plus parents/daily demonstrations/not only for school kids/village
- ❖ Spend advertising dollars wisely on target users
- ❖ Promote something for everyone/compelling reason to visit
- ❖ Coordination of more volunteers/interns
- ❖ Need staff space
- ❖ Funding/capacity of foundation/millage renewal 2017/philanthropy
- ❖ Events/marketing coordinator/creative person
- ❖ Next generation involvement



### **MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **Themes:**

- ❖ New maintenance shop
- ❖ Maintain/repair recreation area and village items (boat launch, shelter, city Bank clock)
- ❖ Combine park boards/maintenance under one group
- ❖ Need funding/grants/donors/plans

### **OVERLAPPING THEMES AMONG TABLE TOPICS AND HIGH ENERGY SHEETS**

1. Additional funding beyond the dedicated millage
2. Director of marketing, event planning, fund development
3. Increase visitor base/identify and market to target users/go regional and beyond
4. Increase publicity/public awareness/image
5. Define focus of park
6. New events, experiences/eliminate some events/more hands-on/new uses/vibrancy
7. Keep/expand historic focus
8. Increase/train volunteers
9. Increase/train staff
10. Maintain and repair facilities

The themes of the Leadership Visioning Workshop is consistent with the themes that have emerged from other sources of public input: persons appreciate and wish to preserve and expand the historic focus of the park, while realizing that new, fresh ideas are essential to increasing and preserving the visitor base. Increased publicity will be required. Both funding and staffing to accomplish these goals are recognized as essential to accomplishing the preferred future.

Complete results of the Leadership Visioning Workshop may be found in the data appendix.



## MOBILE WORKSHOPS FOR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The Charlton Park Strategic Plan Steering Committee identified several groups from which to seek input regarding the Strategic Plan. Mobile workshops or group feedback sessions were arranged with four groups. The groups are as follows:

- ❖ Charlton Park Foundation
- ❖ Barry Community Foundation
- ❖ Middleville Rotary Club
- ❖ Hasting Kiwanis Club

Members of each group were given the following questions:

1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?
2. What could be improved at the park?
3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?

In three of the four workshops, participants were asked to prioritize the items listed on large flip charts using sticky circles. The following is a summary of common themes and high priority items that emerged in the workshops:

### ***1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?***

- ❖ Historic buildings/the Village
- ❖ Programs (special events)
- ❖ School kids programs
- ❖ Beach/lake/waterfront/swimming area
- ❖ Pow Wow programs
- ❖ Camping



### ***2. What could be improved at the park?***

- ❖ More food vendors
- ❖ ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility/walkability in all weather conditions
- ❖ Promote in and outside of Barry County/publicity
- ❖ Restroom facilities
- ❖ Band shell and marina
- ❖ Live activities related to the collections/ how to make the park “come alive”
- ❖ Beach/greater use of waterfront
- ❖ Reasons to bring young people/attractions for everyday people
- ❖ Connect to other organizations in the community
- ❖ Work with donors
- ❖ Improved playgrounds
- ❖ Activities for older children (high school, middle school)

### ***3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?***

- ❖ Trail system/bike trails
- ❖ More kid activities/better playgrounds
- ❖ Campground/not just for special events
- ❖ Active venues/real people in stores
- ❖ Active farm
- ❖ Beach activities (volleyball, docks, sliders, paddleboats, kayaks, paddle boards, canoes)
- ❖ General store/gift shop
- ❖ Music events
- ❖ Train/tram
- ❖ Collections facility
- ❖ Restaurant/more food
- ❖ Improved restrooms

Complete results of the mobile workshops may be found in the data appendix.





### INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Charlton Park Strategic Plan Steering Committee identified several individuals who are considered to be key opinion leaders and educators from whom to seek input regarding the Strategic Plan. Interviews were arranged with seven individuals. The individuals were asked the same three questions asked of the stakeholder groups along with three additional questions. The three additional questions were:

4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?
5. What is the public perception of the park?
6. Is there anything else you would like to say?

A summary of the common themes that emerged from the individual stakeholder interviews are as follows:

#### **1. *What are the best features of Charlton Park?***

- ❖ Pleasant place for families
- ❖ Well maintained
- ❖ Boat launch/proximity to river/lake
- ❖ Picnic area
- ❖ Historic aspects/living history/historic narratives presented by period guide
- ❖ Buildings/village/collections/artifacts/archiving
- ❖ Activities/events/Father's Day Car Show/Bow and Arrow event/Veteran's 4th of July
- ❖ Educational field trips
- ❖ Location near four major cities and over a million people

#### **2. *What could be improved at the park?***

- ❖ Hard to answer/they do what they do well/I can't think of anything/no strong opinion-it's a great place/they have a good staff
- ❖ Display more artifacts
- ❖ Beach is not very big/improve beach
- ❖ It's not open at all times like Greenfield Village
- ❖ Perhaps barns, storage, space



- ❖ Put life into the park/create excitement-a buzz/create an attraction (steamboat rides, train rides, restaurant)/set a feeling upon entry
- ❖ Need a vision
- ❖ Bakery/general store/commercial venues that promote history/people want to leave with something
- ❖ Facility lunches in inclement weather for school groups in proximity of village
- ❖ Park-wide public address system to facilitate rotation of school groups and other announcements; play period music
- ❖ Period lights for the village for safety and security

### ***3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?***

- ❖ Campground
- ❖ Fishing dock
- ❖ Old candy store (bring back)
- ❖ Make park come alive like Greenfield Village/the saw mill and steam engine exhibits are on the other side of the road and are only active at certain times/ working blacksmith shop
- ❖ I can't think of anything to add/no opinion
- ❖ Disney-like mannequins in period dress that can educate-replace docents
- ❖ Train rides-was Charlton's vision/Steamboats rides/buggy rides
- ❖ Kayak rental-leased option
- ❖ Zip line-leased option
- ❖ Amphitheater/folk and bluegrass festival/could be revenue source
- ❖ Leased commercial with historical theme
- ❖ Petting zoo
- ❖ Stage coach next to the Inn with person in period dress to enhance

### ***4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?***

- ❖ E-coli contamination at Thornapple Lake/County has had to shut down swimming area/lake is dirty
- ❖ Finances/ park is not self-sustaining/funding/admissions



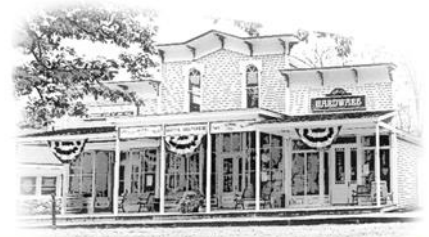
- ❖ Location is an isolated, rural area and difficult to find/need to let people know the park is there/people do not know about the park/need to attract more people/getting more spectators to attend special events/need publicity in the Hastings Banner/marketing-awareness of the park/staff doing a good job but more needs to be done
- ❖ More volunteers needed to teach school groups/would like to see school groups expanded-do afternoon sessions as well as morning ones-will increase revenue
- ❖ Have someone present when general visitors are there
- ❖ Lacks a strong vision/need guts to do something/need a master plan to articulate vision/needs attractions and a marketing plan
- ❖ Kids need reason to come back/kids might be bored there
- ❖ First impression is that park is lifeless

### ***5. What is the public perception of the park?***

- ❖ A little bit of everything but not much of anything/it is not viewed as special/out of site and out of mind
- ❖ Not sure-some people perceive the lake is dirty
- ❖ Those who have visited the park think positively of it/public perception has improved the past few years/I have only heard positive comments from the community
- ❖ Great asset for the schools/good for education
- ❖ Some people use the beach, picnic and fishing area
- ❖ The big events/events are nice to attend but little else to attract people at other times/nice events, car show, etc.
- ❖ No appreciation of the park by the general public/a mini-Greenfield Village right there in their community
- ❖ Public not aware of the constant change-always something new-need to promote that more/"I've visited once; why should I go back again?"/expansion and diversification is needed to attract more people/expand more programs for the community and promote them

### ***6. Is there anything else you would like to say?***

- ❖ The property could have other recreation uses such as hiking trails and sledding hills
- ❖ Consider making it an artistic camp-Frank Lloyd Wright drawing for Circle Pines may fit topography of Charlton Park well
- ❖ Need to put links on the municipalities' web sites



- ❖ Why would people want to go to the park?
- ❖ Park has very small foot path; people who want to walk will stay in the City which has sidewalks
- ❖ Need to have events which would bring people there who otherwise would not come, such as high school cross country meets which use to be held there
- ❖ The staff is overwhelmed-too much to do to maintain it
- ❖ Offering free field trips in November was a wonderful idea; what a nice way to give back to the community; thank you for your time
- ❖ I hope it continues to be an asset for Barry County mainly for education
- ❖ Good job directing it and bringing in events
- ❖ We have to reinvent the park or it will continue to run as is has for years – it's only important to people that are attracted to attend a special event
- ❖ I realize it's importance to our history, but to get people interested in its historical benefits we must come up with a way to package so that it is interesting to large numbers of people; Look at what happened in Grand Rapids with art
- ❖ Charlton Park has a great deal of potential, but we've done little to turn it into an attraction that thousands might want to visit

## SUMMARY OF MOBILE WORKSHOP AND INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

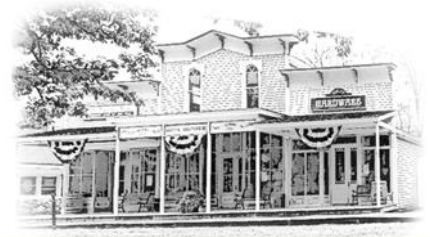
Common themes that emerged throughout the workshops and interviews are as follows:

**The best features** of Charlton Park are widely recognized as the unique collection of historic buildings and artifacts; the living history experiences that are available there, especially to school groups; the special events; and the presence of a waterfront beach area.

**Persons are split** between considering the facility as pleasant and well kept, and recognizing some issues with the beach such as upkeep, size, and possible contamination.

**Improvements desired** center around accessibility, restrooms, improved playgrounds, more living history opportunities, creating excitement, needing a vision, providing more commercial and food options, facilitating tour groups with a public address system, pavilion, and lighting; expanding attractions to bring in other visitors beyond young children and special events; and additional storage and display structures.

**Additions recommended** to the park echo the ideas for improvements desired. They included better playgrounds, improved trail system, campground, more beach/water activities, food and



shopping opportunities, more living history demonstrations, music events, restrooms, train rides, and a zip line.

**Issues identified** include possible contamination at the lake area, finances/funding, lack of publicity, need to expand the educational component, lack of a vision, and lack of vibrancy.

**Public perception** varies from lack of knowledge about the park to a positive perception, especially in regard to the educational value of the park to school groups. People tend to view the special events favorably, but do not necessarily return to the park for other attractions. More diversification and expansion of attractions, along with promotion, is perceived as necessary to attract more visitors.

**Additional comments** covered a wide range of topics, including the need for additional publicity, adding activities, kudos to the staff, and the realization that something has to happen to revitalize interest in the park and to attract new and repeat visitors.

While common themes were identified, during the workshops and interviews, many unique individual ideas also were suggested and recorded. These ideas may serve as a platform for championing new and vibrant ideas for the park.

The complete results of the Mobile Workshops and Individual Interviews may be found in the data appendix.



# CHARLTON PARK STRATEGIC PLAN



**Leadership Visioning Workshop**







## Financing / Fundraising

### What is your vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?

"Gold Club Membership": Annual Giving, Create Special Consideration Outings  
Capital Campaign: Ten year, Corporate Education; adopt a cause/transportation  
Diversity Funding, base: Gift shop; Fundraising Events; Food Service/Dinners  
Non-Resident Daily Fees

Work towards being self-sufficient  
Begin charging minimal fees (i.e. 4th of July/\$5 per carload)  
Fees for races  
Arts & Eats Weekend-charge for food — make profit  
Bluegrass Festival  
More businesses in the area coming forward to help the park

### What is the major challenge with this topic?

Development Director: Staffing  
Community Foundation  
Grants  
Organization  
Change to way of doing business  
Need people to sell Charlton Park to the community  
People have to know that Charlton Park needs money to operate

### What has to happen to accomplish your vision?

Expand Outreach Programming: Marketing  
Visitor Center in Hastings: Sell Charlton Park  
All Related Boards: Sell Charlton Park Awareness  
Commitment  
Campground  
Food  
More finance driven  
Get facts and figures and be sincere  
Get people involved



## Events

### What is your vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?

Increased spectators/visitors/attendance

Annual 'surprise' event – something new (same date every year)

Clear stakeholders to “own” some events, i.e. car club, working with staff and have vested interest in event

More local interest groups using park as their venue

Full-time events planner who can generate new ideas

Hands-on or how-to events: historic, arts, crafts, other

What is the purpose of having events at the park? Money? More visitors? Repeat customers: Millage support? Education? etc.

Winter Events: Sledding, ice rink, ice harvesting

Concerts (at night): Jazz, bluegrass, dulcimers

Camping: Campground limited to special events

Fall Harvest Festival: Invite Farmers Market

Hands-on Experiences Not just look — do

Events involving whole community, all of Barry County

### What is the major challenge with this topic?

Staffing

Funding

Getting volunteer help

Buy in from community/marketing/regional

Multiple ad markets — which to choose?

Local economics

Apathy towards events in general — stay at home mentality

Lighting for night events

What are the trendy events?

Events Coordinator

Finding available days

Finding younger participants

Change of way things have been done

Model train swap meet



## Events

### What has to happen to accomplish your vision?

Help-people willing to get involved

Vested interest in event-some of current event partners are aging

Events Committee

Get people interested in using park as venue — big or small events, sports, etc.

Positive guest experience — they will tell more people

Shower facility-nice place for people to freshen up

Volunteers to run new events and projects

Have visitors become participants at events

More volunteers



## Vision for Charlton Park

### What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?

New funding stream: planned giving through BCF (Barry Community Foundation) or HCP (Hastings Community Partnership Fund) Membership  
Groups having meetings with dinners like in Bristol. Rotary Annual Meeting? Food brings people in.  
History of natural resources, prairies, farming  
Environmental history-how people interacted with land, changing landscape  
Expand living history component for rentals and services  
High ropes course  
Corporate retreats  
Cooking classes with period recipes  
HCP Membership with perks  
Focus on what no one else in area does —historic interpretation  
Seasonal education components-programs that reflect seasonal activities  
People of all ages can get excited being involved at the park — expand the era  
3 years: Have new faces every year 10 years: At least one new event each year

### What is the major challenge with this topic?

All things to all people? Or best at what we do?  
Staff and money  
Prioritizing focus  
Build on what we do well, not reinventing the wheel  
Board training and discipline; knowing limitations of staff, not micro-managing  
Limited space  
Communication and contact with new people  
Internet?  
Never focusing

### What has to happen to accomplish your vision?

Prioritize  
Money  
Staff  
Understand current and potential audiences and properly plan for them



# CHARLTON • PARK

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strategic plan

## **Vision for Charlton Park**

Resources committed to the process  
Facility needs to be able to support any new initiatives  
Possible develop more land  
New exhibits

## **Educational Mission**

**What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?**

Overnight Experience of a period time:      Classes, Families  
30s, 20s, 1880s  
Civil War enactment

**What is the major challenge with this topic?**

Setting up and finding teachers  
Create experiences  
Over 1,000,000 campers at Yankee Springs looking for things to do

**What has to happen to accomplish your vision?**

Change of thinking



## Visitor Base

### What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?

3 Years      Increase visitor base to include parents of school kids  
Survey visitors and non-visitors to determine home location/miles traveled  
Increase percentage of out of the county visitors  
Provide a welcome package for new residents/home sales to introduce them to the park  
Consider changing events (low attendance) to allow newer events or different events of different audiences.  
Get people that haven't been to park in years back

10 Years      Double attendance at the park  
Target programs for audiences that are new or willing to travel and new demographic/new audiences  
Create partnership with other similar facilities such as Gilmore Car Museum, Yankee Springs State Park, all campgrounds, to have special visitors day  
Get every taxpayer in county to the park, Millage Appreciation Day

On-going: Complete historic village, fire barn, jailhouse, saloon, horse drawn hearse  
Hands-on education (youth)

### What is the major challenge with this topic?

Get more local people to participate and attend  
Figure out how to get more adults  
Survey: expertise of writing and conducting survey, difficult to capture "at the gate" and offsite  
Lack of staff and resources to promote the park and "catch 22" if visitors increase beyond staff and resource capacity to attend to them  
Must have a successful...?  
Accepting that we can't be all things for all people  
What interests people that would make them want to attend?  
Targeting the people that might be interested  
Structured summer day camp



## Visitor Base

### What has to happen to accomplish your vision?

Communication

Advertise

Board leadership and Director ability to hire a staff member focused on this and marketing

Form alliances with the community, Chamber of Commerce, and associations to point out benefit to the community

Volunteers to run any new programs

Advertising local and statewide

Advertising Miranda Park Party type event locally and statewide (similar to Charlton Park Day)

More support than what is available locally

Better Chamber of Commerce type promotion





## Scope and Management of Collections

**What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?**

Long Term:                      Adequacy control storage  
   Storage/maintenance area for collections  
   Training maintenance  
   Training documentation  
   Inventory management

New storage space  
Move display area  
Ways to dispose of collections items easily (that won't be used)  
Repairing/upgrading equipment/machine collections

### **What is the major challenge with this topic?**

Funding Issue:                      Adequate controlled storage  
   Adequate maintenance space

Deaccession -changing policy and mindset  
Finding help or volunteers to adopt  
Not enough time to get through all the storage areas

### **What has to happen to accomplish your vision?**

Complete inventory and description of items  
Space requirements: type, area  
Items categories  
Preserving-scheduled maintenance of items  
Lots of help!  
Policy changes  
Mindset changes  
Funding/donors



## **Organizational Structure (volunteers, Board, staff)**

**What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?**

One director for both park boards  
More volunteers and staff

**What is the major challenge with this topic?**

More training for volunteers and staff  
Finding volunteers with time

**What has to happen to accomplish your vision?**

More money  
More volunteers  
More organizational skills (training?)



## Inspiration From Other Places You Have Visited

**What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?**

3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide audio interpreter/equipment with headphones to allow visitors to better self-guide within the village</li><li>QR Codes at stations and virtual tours</li><li><u>More</u> staff in the village and in period attire on featured days</li><li>Have days of hands-on activities, spinning, glass blowing, butter churning, cleaning the privy</li><li>Competitions in the park such as hay rolling, hand pump contest, 5K race, sack races on Charlton Park Day</li><li>Keeping village in tact</li><li>Keeping buildings in good repair</li><li>Better playground equipment</li><li>Increase trail system (cross country skiing, hiking)</li><li>Nature trails (boardwalk in the wetlands, bird watchers)</li></ul>
10 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhance use of recreation area and beach</li><li>Integrate visitors into the village environment (historic photo booth)</li><li>Conferencing/event facility</li><li>Music events, square dancing in period clothing</li><li>Lights in the village</li><li>Having evening events (after dark)</li><li>More handicap accessible areas</li></ul>

## What is the major challenge with this topic?

- Resources and staff/volunteers overwhelmed
- Difficult to add more events due to set-up/break-down times
- Need events coordinator/project manager
- Security
- Funding
- Structure of historical buildings
- More volunteers
- More staff
- More PR
- 10-year millage



## Inspiration From Other Places You Have Visited

### What has to happen to accomplish your vision?

- Access priorities, increase financial base (more \$)
- Consider going outside of comfort zone to use park in ways outside of historical use
- Donations
- Getting more people involved
- Grants (DNR)
- Historic preservation
- More exhibits



## Marketing/Publicity/Public Perception

**What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?**

3 Year:

- Including the park in Michigan Festivals (costs\$) which gets park into Pure Michigan network
- Advertise in free publications such as the Energy Co-op magazines, stuffer in tax assessment mailings
- Submit to Mid-West Living (free)
- "Weekly" press release
- Build on assets and have fun with history: use viral marketing

Find way to get listed on websites such as "go"

Feature pieces throughout county to capture attention and advertise (i.e. Steam Engine)

"Newspaper Boys" at intersections to hand out

Support groups to have a history flash mob and post on youtube and other eye catching activities

Create talking points/positive statements and positive images for community to use and repeat at coffee shop, elevator and small talk opportunities

Outreach to other communities — Lake Odessa Antique Market

Link to newspaper press dates

All park millage - need staff to have this as a resp.

Need the events to market

Mission related events and exhibits

Vibrant docents/programs for kids to get parents out

Things going on; demos every day of the week

Increase out of county marketing

Charlton Park be the Park of Choice for West Michigan

Do the background work: spend advertising dollars wisely to reach target population

Free passes on local radio

Vision: Fill the park every weekend

Promote diversity of park offerings: something for everyone

Fred Jacobs | Bosley Rx columns in Hastings Reminder: free



## Marketing/Publicity/Public Perception

### What is the major challenge with this topic?

- Resources/money; coordination of more volunteers and more interns = a challenge
- Lack of space to house additional staff
- Time to plan an event, market, and be flexible and difficult to reflect on the event and indentify success or failure rate
- Getting to the public, other than school kids, baby boomers (*could not tell if Baby Boomers were already coming or were a possible target group*)
- Perception is that it is for school kids
- Funding
- Creative staff to develop effective ad campaigns
- Events coordinator/intern needed (someone wholly vested in events/marketing)
- Involvement of "next generation" or lack thereof

### What has to happen to accomplish your vision?

- Integrate and increase use of social media into Charlton Park, keep website current
- Identify key or foundation capacity needed to complete these activities
- More volunteers to keep village interesting
- Infrastructure of staff and volunteers focused on marketing
- Vibrant village that is very marketable: street lights, brick roads
- Millage needs to be renewed: up in 2017
- Specialized staffing: local resident mentors intern
- Advertising plan
- Philanthropic involvement (i.e. Larry Baum)
- The public: compelling reason to come to Charlton Park



## Maintenance and Infrastructure

**What is your Vision for this topic; where would you like Charlton Park to be regarding this topic in three years? Ten Years?**

- 3 Years:
- New maintenance shop
  - New rec area, work on boat launch
  - New shelter, repair the City Bank clock
  - To be completed and operational within three years (maintenance facility)
  - Removal of existing facilities in the same time frame
- 10 Years:
- Both park boards will be combined
  - Maintenance under one group

**What is the major challenge with this topic?**

Money  
Money

**What has to happen to accomplish your vision?**

Apply for grants (money)  
Put new guts in clock  
Donors  
Plans

## LEADERSHIP VISIONING WORKSHOP RESULTS OF LARGE GROUP RESPONSE (LARGE POST-ITS)

### What had the most energy?

More Volunteers

Younger

Disney Experience

Hands-on

E.g. the 20s Experience

Actors in Civil War

Possible Weekend

Crossover with Yankee Springs

Not just look

Family

Anticipate Memories (i.e. Disney)

Volunteers Specialized

Blacksmith/sensory

Special training

Diversify Funding Base

\$-enough, or direction of \$?

Shared Vision—how to allocate money, time, resources

### What surprised you?

Park can't be everything for everybody; but how to interest everyone in coming?

Not getting parents back after 2 and 3 graders

Three-year vision preferred-more popular

Volunteers: need more

Events: why so many types?

Coming back realistic?

Expectations of return visits; compare Henry Ford.

Tourist or community destination?

Cost (Kalamazoo Air Zoo e.g.)





## What is easiest to implement?

Corporate sponsors: more

Visitor Studies: those who come/those who don't

Publicity/marketing in other communities; awareness; vibrancy; informally talk about one theme

Lights (night events/concerts)

Charlton Park Day: Competitions, i.e. period activities

Winter: sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.

Choose new events

Assess which events need to continue





# CHARLTON • PARK

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strategic plan

## SURVEY RESULTS

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# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CHARLTON PARK - CITIZEN SURVEY



## 1. What is your age?

		Response Percent	Response Count
18 or younger		4.5%	2
19-24		2.3%	1
25-34		22.7%	10
35-49		22.7%	10
<b>50-65</b>		<b>25.0%</b>	<b>11</b>
65+		22.7%	10
<b>answered question</b>			<b>44</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>1</b>

## 2. Where do you live?

		Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Within Barry County</b>		<b>77.8%</b>	<b>35</b>
The Grand Rapids metro area		6.7%	3
Lansing metro area		2.2%	1
Kalamazoo or Battle Creek metro area		2.2%	1
Other County, City, or metro area		11.1%	5
<b>answered question</b>			<b>45</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>


### 3. What is your educational level?

		Response Percent	Response Count
No high school diploma		4.5%	2
<b>High School diploma</b>		<b>47.7%</b>	<b>21</b>
Undergraduate (Bachelor's) degree		36.4%	16
Graduate (Master's) degree or above		11.4%	5
<b>answered question</b>			<b>44</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>1</b>



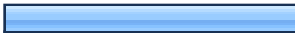

### 4. When did you first visit Charlton Park?

		Response Percent	Response Count
I have never visited the park		2.3%	1
<b>During grade school</b>		<b>56.8%</b>	<b>25</b>
In middle or high school		6.8%	3
As a young adult		25.0%	11
As a middle-ager		6.8%	3
As a senior citizen		2.3%	1
<b>answered question</b>			<b>44</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>1</b>






















### 5. Did you ever return to the park after your first visit?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		100.0%	44
No		0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>			<b>44</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>1</b>

### 6. If you have visited the park more than once, how often do you visit Charlton Park?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Once every few years		18.6%	8
Once per year		11.6%	5
<b>3-5 times per year</b>		<b>44.2%</b>	<b>19</b>
More than 5 times per year		25.6%	11
<b>answered question</b>			<b>43</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>2</b>

**7. If you have visited Charlton Park for a special event, which event(s) did you attend?  
(check all that apply)**



		Response Percent	Response Count
Spring into the Past		11.9%	5
Annual Charlton Park Day		42.9%	18
<b>Annual Father's Day Car Show</b>		<b>61.9%</b>	<b>26</b>
County Yard Sale		33.3%	14
4th of July and Veteran's BBQ		33.3%	14
Annual Gas & Steam Engine Show		45.2%	19
Civil War Muster		31.0%	13
Antique Outboard Motor Show		4.8%	2
Great Lakes Longbow Invitational		14.3%	6
August Fest		11.9%	5
Havoc in Hastings		9.5%	4
Happy Tails 5k		7.1%	3
"Walk in the Spirit" Pow Wow		33.3%	14
All Hallows Eve		31.0%	13
Of Christmas Past		45.2%	19
Wedding		16.7%	7
Ghost Tour		0.0%	0
Ice Fishing Tournament		2.4%	1
Corvette Show		7.1%	3
Lumberjack Show		21.4%	9
Circus		11.9%	5
Bluegrass Festival		35.7%	15









answered question	42
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skipped question	3
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### 8. If you have visited Charlton Park for a special event, have you ever returned for a visit OTHER than a special event?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		88.1%	37
No		11.9%	5
		answered question	42
		skipped question	3






### 9. If you checked "yes" to question 8 above, why did you come back to the park? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
To accompany a school group		30.8%	12
To attend a group function held in a facility (pavilions, Town Hall, Village Green, wedding)		35.9%	14
To visit the Recreation Area (beach, boating, fishing, picnicking, trails, volleyball, softball, etc.)		53.8%	21
To visit the Irving D. Charlton Museum		41.0%	16
<b>To visit the Historic Village</b>		<b>71.8%</b>	<b>28</b>
To visit the Agricultural Equipment		12.8%	5
		answered question	39
		skipped question	6






**10. Which facilities and activities at Charlton Park are your favorites if you visit for other than a special event? (check up to three)**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Not Applicable		2.3%	1
Irving D. Charlton Museum		25.6%	11
<b>Historic Village</b>		<b>76.7%</b>	<b>33</b>
Agricultural Equipment		9.3%	4
Town Hall or Village Green		18.6%	8
Swimming beach		23.3%	10
Boat launch/fishing		23.3%	10
Picnic shelter		20.9%	9
Volleyball		0.0%	0
Softball		0.0%	0
Trails		25.6%	11
Geocache		11.6%	5
<b>answered question</b>			<b>43</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>2</b>


## 11. When you visit Charlton Park, how many people are usually in your party?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1 (me)		4.9%	2
2 (me and one other)		29.3%	12
<b>3+ family members (parents, children, grandparents)</b>		<b>56.1%</b>	<b>23</b>
3+ unrelated friends		7.3%	3
Organized group or club of 6 or more		2.4%	1
<b>answered question</b>			<b>41</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>4</b>


















## 12. How did you first hear about Charlton Park?

		Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Family member or friend</b>		<b>52.8%</b>	<b>19</b>
School or educational institution		27.8%	10
The Barry County web site		0.0%	0
The Charlton Park web site		5.6%	2
The Charlton Park Facebook page		0.0%	0
Organized group or club		5.6%	2
The newspaper or other print media		8.3%	3
Television or radio		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)			7
<b>answered question</b>			<b>36</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>9</b>










**13. If you have visited Charlton Park for any reason, will you come back?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		100.0%	39
No		0.0%	0
<b>answered question</b>			<b>39</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>6</b>


















## 14. What other regional recreation/cultural facilities have you visited? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park (Grand Rapids Township)		70.7%	29
Grand Rapids Public Museum		70.7%	29
<b>John Ball Zoo</b>		<b>85.4%</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Yankee Springs State Park/Game Area</b>		<b>85.4%</b>	<b>35</b>
Middleville State Game Area		34.1%	14
Paul Henry Thornapple Trail		41.5%	17
Fred Meijer Trails		17.1%	7
Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway		12.2%	5
Millennium Park (Kent County)		9.8%	4
Michigan Historical Museum (Lansing)		41.5%	17
Binder Park Zoo (Battle Creek)		73.2%	30
Gilmore Car Museum (Barry Township)		75.6%	31
Air-Zoo (Kalamazoo)		63.4%	26
Kalamazoo Valley Museum (Kalamazoo)		17.1%	7
Kingman Museum (Battle Creek)		24.4%	10
Pierce Cedar Creek Institute (Baltimore Township)		56.1%	23
Bowen's Mill (Yankee Springs Township)		61.0%	25
<b>answered question</b>			<b>41</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>4</b>

**15. Even if you have never been to the park, what do you think are the greatest concerns with Charlton Park? (check all that apply)**

		Response Percent	Response Count
The special events do not interest me		0.0%	0
The historic museum and village do not interest me		3.8%	1
The recreation area does not interest me		7.7%	2
The park does not offer enough historical activities		26.9%	7
<b>The facilities need updating (historic village, museum, beach and recreation facilities, restrooms, etc.)</b>		<b>53.8%</b>	<b>14</b>
I would rather visit other facilities that offer the same activities		0.0%	0
I would rather visit other facilities that offer different activities		7.7%	2
The park tries to be too many things and does not have a clear identity		7.7%	2
The park seems unsafe		0.0%	0
The park is not accessible to all users (wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, hearing or visually impaired, etc.)		15.4%	4
The park is too far away for most people		7.7%	2
The park does not coordinate its activities with other organizations		19.2%	5
<b>answered question</b>			<b>26</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>19</b>



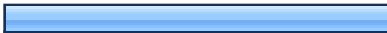





## 16. What facilities/activities would cause you to return to/visit Charlton Park? (Check up to five)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Outdoor movies		31.6%	12
Zip line		21.1%	8
Ropes course		10.5%	4
Camp ground		39.5%	15
Natural Playscapes (sand, water, logs, huts, natural labyrinths, rope swings, pathways, rocks, grasses, and gardens for child play)		26.3%	10
Corporate outing facility		7.9%	3
Tree house		13.2%	5
Paintball		5.3%	2
Historic baseball		23.7%	9
<b>Historic re-enactments (besides Civil War Muster); living history characters; historic dinners</b>		<b>52.6%</b>	<b>20</b>
Athletic events		2.6%	1
<b>Concerts/music</b>		<b>52.6%</b>	<b>20</b>
Winter sports		10.5%	4
Groomed trails (year-round)		21.1%	8
Mountain bike trails		5.3%	2
Canoe/kayak rental		21.1%	8
Environmental education/interpretive center		26.3%	10
Other (please specify)			4

answered question 38

skipped question 7

17. How do you usually find out about events/activities/places to visit in your community?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Radio		17.5%	7
<b>Newspaper (print or on-line)</b>		<b>65.0%</b>	<b>26</b>
Facebook		57.5%	23
Twitter		0.0%	0
Pinterest		2.5%	1
Websites		50.0%	20
On-line calendar		15.0%	6
School newsletters (print or on-line)		5.0%	2
TV		10.0%	4
	Other (please specify)		3

answered question 40

skipped question 5

18. Do you have any further comments about Charlton Park?

	Response Count
	20
answered question	20
skipped question	25



**Page 1, Q7. If you have visited Charlton Park for a special event, which event(s) did you attend? (check all that apply)**

1	just to enjoy the park	Jun 3, 2013 9:45 PM
2	Walks around the park and Senior pictures.	May 30, 2013 8:35 PM
3	Private Parties	May 30, 2013 3:43 PM
4	Family Reunion in Pavillion	May 29, 2013 5:16 PM
5	Boy Scout Klondike Derby	May 23, 2013 9:56 AM
6	Woman's Program	May 22, 2013 2:50 PM
7	Special events ie- church service, school function	May 22, 2013 10:06 AM
8	LONG, long ago the Indian Pow Wow	May 20, 2013 3:52 PM

**Page 2, Q12. How did you first hear about Charlton Park?**

1	We live 5 minutes from it.	May 30, 2013 9:00 PM
2	When I first moved to BC in 1956	May 23, 2013 7:11 PM
3	My wife, Esther Walton	May 23, 2013 2:59 PM
4	Search for lost persons - canine handler	May 22, 2013 12:41 PM
5	Always have gone since i was at least 5	May 22, 2013 10:15 AM
6	Grand parents knew Mr. Charlton.. Many years ago.	May 20, 2013 4:19 PM
7	My grade shool teacher knew Irvin and took us	May 19, 2013 12:41 PM

**Page 2, Q16. What facilities/activities would cause you to return to/visit Charlton Park? (Check up to five)**

1	Update pavillions-electricity-more for kids to do	May 29, 2013 5:26 PM
2	Educational classes and guest speakers	May 22, 2013 2:55 PM
3	PLEASE clean/maintain the SWIMMING AREA!	May 20, 2013 4:19 PM
4	All of the above	May 20, 2013 2:24 PM

**Page 2, Q17. How do you usually find out about events/activities/places to visit in your community?**

1	at Hastings Public Library	May 28, 2013 5:44 PM
2	word of mouth	May 20, 2013 4:19 PM
3	calendar of events posted throughout town	May 20, 2013 12:28 PM



**Page 2, Q18. Do you have any further comments about Charlton Park?**

1	Longer hour when daylight in the spring would be nice for us fisherman.	Jun 3, 2013 9:46 PM
2	It has the best civil war muster I've been in.	May 30, 2013 10:07 PM
3	I wish there were more historic events over the year showing different decades. (1920, 1940, 1880)	May 30, 2013 9:00 PM
4	Keep up the good work!	May 30, 2013 4:22 PM
5	Been coming to park for more than 40 years!	May 30, 2013 4:06 PM
6	I wish that Of Christmas Past was more than one weekend so I could go.	May 30, 2013 3:55 PM
7	LOVE the Historic Village-wish the lake was cleaner so that we may enjoy the beach.	May 30, 2013 3:46 PM
8	great place.	May 28, 2013 5:44 PM
9	Would it be possible to put the buntings out for community events? No excuses for this oversight.	May 28, 2013 10:03 AM
10	A partnership with Kellogg Community College, possibly offering a class on site.	May 26, 2013 10:45 PM
11	You are doing a great job! If I could get around better I'd volunteer. .	May 23, 2013 2:59 PM
12	It a great place!	May 23, 2013 9:59 AM
13	Great park that could partner with Nashville, Vermontville and surrounding areas for tag team events	May 22, 2013 2:55 PM
14	Would be nice to see them involved with more local school activities	May 22, 2013 2:09 PM
15	Great park! Thanks! I would love to see some more work done on lake shore preservation at the park.	May 22, 2013 12:41 PM
16	I wish that the Civil War event wasn't during fair, But really do love that it's back!	May 22, 2013 10:15 AM
17	Thanks for doing this, and keep up the good work!	May 21, 2013 1:47 PM
18	We want to go SWIMMING in the summer! If the beach were cleaner, you would get more people.	May 20, 2013 4:19 PM
19	I really like the park a lot.	May 20, 2013 2:24 PM
20	I think its grown away from regular people. Return it back to the people.	May 19, 2013 12:41 PM


**1. What did you like best about your experience at Charlton Park today?**

	Response Count
	62
answered question	62
skipped question	1

**2. What do you think would improve the park?**

	Response Count
	56
answered question	56
skipped question	7

**3. I will come back and visit the park...**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		100.0%	63
No		0.0%	0
	answered question		63
	skipped question		0



**Q1. What did you like best about your experience at Charlton Park today?**

1	Looking at the different buildings	Aug 12, 2013 12:21 PM
2	All	Aug 12, 2013 12:20 PM
3	kale P. St Louis next year	Aug 12, 2013 12:20 PM
4	All	Aug 12, 2013 12:19 PM
5	Loved all the history - village is awesome. Enjoyed the Civil War event - thanks for hosting it.	Aug 12, 2013 12:19 PM
6	The dance and the medical demo, oh and the battle	Aug 12, 2013 12:17 PM
7	interacting with interpretors	Aug 12, 2013 12:16 PM
8	The saw	Aug 12, 2013 12:14 PM
9	all the tractors	Aug 12, 2013 12:13 PM
10	Everything. Note: my family has an antique corn sheller on steel wheels - original condition. Would Charleton Park be interested in it as a donation? It's about 10ft high and 12ft long. If so please contact me - Fred Ward 616-648-7444	Aug 12, 2013 11:04 AM
11	The originality	Aug 12, 2013 10:58 AM
12	Tractors	Aug 12, 2013 10:52 AM
13	All the things there is for kids to enjoy and learn about	Aug 12, 2013 10:51 AM
14	All the things you can see	Aug 12, 2013 10:50 AM
15	going in the houses and touching stuff	Aug 12, 2013 10:50 AM
16	Like to touch	Aug 12, 2013 10:49 AM
17	Kids activites	Aug 12, 2013 10:49 AM
18	Its a wonderful park	Aug 12, 2013 10:46 AM
19	I like looking at the traditional and historic pieces	Aug 12, 2013 10:44 AM
20	The activities planned from days gone by....great memories	Aug 12, 2013 10:42 AM
21	Everything!	Aug 12, 2013 10:37 AM
22	very nice park and people. The BBQ was very good. We always enjoy coming here.	Aug 12, 2013 10:37 AM
23	contests on the 4th of July	Aug 12, 2013 10:35 AM
24	the service food	Aug 12, 2013 10:34 AM
25	That all the buildings were open	Aug 12, 2013 10:34 AM

**Q1. What did you like best about your experience at Charlton Park today?**

26	Relaxed, historic	Aug 12, 2013 10:33 AM
27	the games and activities	Aug 12, 2013 10:32 AM
28	the sense of community	Aug 12, 2013 10:31 AM
29	Sharing Barry County's history with my family	Aug 12, 2013 10:30 AM
30	different houser	Aug 12, 2013 10:29 AM
31	It's free and informative	Aug 12, 2013 10:28 AM
32	Black Smith	Aug 12, 2013 10:28 AM
33	The food	Aug 12, 2013 10:27 AM
34	Me and my sweetheart enjoying each other	Aug 12, 2013 10:27 AM
35	The events, the food, the sights..... basically everything!	Aug 12, 2013 10:26 AM
36	The historic presence	Aug 12, 2013 10:25 AM
37	the historical aspect	Aug 12, 2013 10:24 AM
38	The games and atmosphere	Aug 12, 2013 10:22 AM
39	All the shops	Aug 12, 2013 10:21 AM
40	Hands on activities	Aug 12, 2013 8:30 AM
41	Old country feel & music playing all day.	Aug 12, 2013 8:28 AM
42	great historic buildings - artifacts, plus knowledgable people	Aug 12, 2013 8:27 AM
43	Looking at all the historic buildings	Aug 12, 2013 8:26 AM
44	The workers and their attitude. Along with the Buildings and the history	Aug 12, 2013 8:26 AM
45	So much to see and experience. Slow paced and very enjoyable	Aug 12, 2013 8:24 AM
46	Everything	Aug 12, 2013 8:24 AM
47	me and my lady enjoying each other again. I so love that woman	Aug 12, 2013 8:23 AM
48	I like that I can cook	Aug 12, 2013 8:22 AM
49	Waling around the park	Aug 12, 2013 8:22 AM
50	Civil war battle	Aug 12, 2013 8:21 AM
51	The event was well planned. Congrats to the hard working event corrdinator	Aug 12, 2013 8:21 AM
52	The research that went into the printed information in each building. the detail in the note books. the wide variety at artifacts	Aug 12, 2013 8:18 AM



**Q1. What did you like best about your experience at Charlton Park today?**

53	The carpenter shop	Aug 12, 2013 8:16 AM
54	The shade. The Battle. The Medical demonstration & lantern tour	Aug 12, 2013 8:15 AM
55	The fun	Aug 12, 2013 8:14 AM
56	All the cool stuff	Aug 12, 2013 8:14 AM
57	The reenactors	Aug 12, 2013 8:13 AM
58	The GW Reenac tours	Aug 12, 2013 8:12 AM
59	Village	Aug 12, 2013 8:10 AM
60	The extensive collections and detailed historic written info	Aug 12, 2013 8:10 AM
61	The museum	Aug 12, 2013 8:09 AM
62	The history	Aug 12, 2013 8:09 AM



## Q2. What do you think would improve the park?

1	Adding some plants in the town square	Aug 12, 2013 12:21 PM
2	more people	Aug 12, 2013 12:20 PM
3	move historic people	Aug 12, 2013 12:19 PM
4	Can't think of anything - Great place	Aug 12, 2013 12:19 PM
5	an ice cream shop would be awesome and could raise funds for the park!	Aug 12, 2013 12:17 PM
6	having a microphone when there is a ceremony (civil war) otherwise attractive, but clueless	Aug 12, 2013 12:16 PM
7	tractor and av contest	Aug 12, 2013 12:14 PM
8	nothing	Aug 12, 2013 12:13 PM
9	Open village earlier on Saturday	Aug 12, 2013 11:04 AM
10	Working exhibits	Aug 12, 2013 10:58 AM
11	more swimming place	Aug 12, 2013 10:52 AM
12	I think the park is fine the way it is	Aug 12, 2013 10:51 AM
13	nothing, everything is very nice	Aug 12, 2013 10:50 AM
14	Build	Aug 12, 2013 10:50 AM
15	Restore museum to former exhibits of relevant examples. Where is the material formerly exhibited. Where is the splendid indian war shirt that was here several years ago	Aug 12, 2013 10:48 AM
16	The park needs a traditional hip roof barn. They are rapidly disappearing from the country side	Aug 12, 2013 10:46 AM
17	make weekend adventures where you can stay the night and go to "hardown" even rent "authentic costumes" back in time experience.	Aug 12, 2013 10:44 AM
18	Handrails for the group less fortunate in their climbing	Aug 12, 2013 10:42 AM
19	everything being open	Aug 12, 2013 10:37 AM
20	Fine just the way it is.	Aug 12, 2013 10:37 AM
21	always have a working carpenter and blacksmith when people are here	Aug 12, 2013 10:35 AM
22	don't know	Aug 12, 2013 10:34 AM
23	getting a carpenter and blacksmith	Aug 12, 2013 10:34 AM
24	more demonstrations. Blacksmith, carpenter and candle making	Aug 12, 2013 10:33 AM
25	more actors to guide you through the buildings	Aug 12, 2013 10:32 AM

**Q2. What do you think would improve the park?**

26	more buildings	Aug 12, 2013 10:31 AM
27	more interactive activities and working exhibits	Aug 12, 2013 10:30 AM
28	nothing	Aug 12, 2013 10:29 AM
29	more events	Aug 12, 2013 10:28 AM
30	nothing	Aug 12, 2013 10:28 AM
31	more sample foods	Aug 12, 2013 10:27 AM
32	A roller coaster	Aug 12, 2013 10:26 AM
33	more activities like churning butter to do	Aug 12, 2013 10:25 AM
34	more working exhibits that was my favorite part of coming here as a child	Aug 12, 2013 10:24 AM
35	carpenter and black smith operating	Aug 12, 2013 10:22 AM
36	Have more things open	Aug 12, 2013 10:21 AM
37	No animal poop on beaches. More sewing items at Hall House. Information how people used the herbs around the homes	Aug 12, 2013 8:30 AM
38	can't think of anything at this time	Aug 12, 2013 8:28 AM
39	More advertisement	Aug 12, 2013 8:26 AM
40	Sorry - no suggestions	Aug 12, 2013 8:24 AM
41	anything	Aug 12, 2013 8:24 AM
42	resturant	Aug 12, 2013 8:22 AM
43	a playground for the little kids	Aug 12, 2013 8:22 AM
44	nothing	Aug 12, 2013 8:21 AM
45	can't think of anything	Aug 12, 2013 8:21 AM
46	More historically accurate flower & veg gardens.	Aug 12, 2013 8:18 AM
47	It's already great	Aug 12, 2013 8:16 AM
48	Ice cream shop & civil war masquerade ball in the fall	Aug 12, 2013 8:15 AM
49	A giant willow tree in the town square	Aug 12, 2013 8:14 AM
50	A lot more trees	Aug 12, 2013 8:14 AM
51	gift shop variety, more signs to park on road	Aug 12, 2013 8:13 AM
52	Bring the lug down to the park	Aug 12, 2013 8:12 AM

**Q2. What do you think would improve the park?**

53	More trees	Aug 12, 2013 8:10 AM
54	keep on going with the AC! charge at least \$12 admission	Aug 12, 2013 8:10 AM
55	a battle	Aug 12, 2013 8:09 AM
56	nothing	Aug 12, 2013 8:09 AM





# CHARLTON • PARK

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strategic plan

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS MOBILE WORKSHOPS

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## Stakeholder Interview: Ann Replogle

### 1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?

- Living history
- Artifacts in buildings
- Educational field trips

### 2. What could be improved at the park?

I can't think of anything.

### 3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?

I can't think of anything.

### 4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?

Main issues are finances and getting more spectators to attend special events.

### 5. What is the public perception of the park?

Public perception has improved the past few years. I have only heard positive comments from the community.

### 6. Is there anything else you would like to say?

I believe that offering free field trips in November was a wonderful idea. What a nice way to give back to the community. Thank you for your time.

## Stakeholder Interview: Barry Wood, Hastings Councilman

### 1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?

- Boat launch
- Picnic area

### 2. What could be improved at the park?

Beach is not very big, need to step down from the grass into the water

### 3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?

Add fishing dock and bring back the old candy store.

### 4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?

It is in an isolated, rural area and difficult to find; lake is dirty; need to let people know the Park is there.

### 5. What is the public perception of the park?

Not really sure but some people have a perception that the lake is dirty.

### 6. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Need to put links for the Park on other municipality's web sites; why would people want to go the Park? - if they want to walk on a foot path they will stay in the City which has sidewalks- the Park has a very small foot path.

Need to have events which would bring people there who otherwise wouldn't come such as high school cross country meets which used to be held there.

## Stakeholder Interview: Carl Schoessel

### 1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?

- Historic aspects
- Collections
- Activities/events
- Buildings
- Picnics

### 2. What could be improved at the park?

It is not open at all times like Greenfield Village

### 3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?

The saw mill and steam engine exhibits are on the other side of the road and are not active – only at certain times. Need to make the Park come alive – like Greenfield Village

### 4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?

Finances. Many people still do not know about it. Need to attract more people.

### 5. What is the public perception of the park?

Those who have visited the Park think positively of it.

### 6. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Staff is overwhelmed- too much to do to maintain it.

## Stakeholder Interview: Jim Atkinson

### 1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?

- Father's Day Car Show
- Bow and Arrow event
- Veteran's 4<sup>th</sup> of July

### 2. What could be improved at the park?

Does not really have a strong opinion; he thinks it's a great place; perhaps barns, storage, space.

### 3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?

No opinion.

### 4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?

More news in the Hastings Banner; admissions are an issue; funding probably.

### 5. What is the public perception of the park?

Great asset for the schools; some people use the beach, picnic, and fishing area; the big events.

### 6. Is there anything else you would like to say?

I hope it continues to be an asset for Barry County mainly for education. Good job directing it and bringing in events.

## **Stakeholder Interview: Jim Brown, Hastings Twp. Supervisor**

### **1. What are the best features of Charlton Park?**

- Pleasant place for families
- Park is clean and maintained

### **2. What could be improved at the park?**

Hard to answer- what they do they do well. It is half historical and half something else. Need to display more artifacts

### **3. If you could add something to the park, what would it be?**

Campground

### **4. What do you think are the main issues facing the park?**

- The e-coli problem at Thornapple Lake- the County Health Department frequently has to shut down the swimming area because the water is contaminated.
- Finances
- Park is not self-sustaining

### **5. What is the public perception of the park?**

Little bit of everything but not much of anything. It is not viewed as a special thing- it is out of sight and out of mind.

### **6. Is there anything else you would like to say?**

- The property could have other recreation uses such as hiking trails and sledding hills.
- Consider making it an artistic camp. Plans drawn up by Frank Lloyd Wright for Circle Pines would fit very well onto the topography of Charlton Park. I have these drawings and have showed them to Dan Patton.

**Project:** Charlton Park Strategic Plan

**Date:** August 12, 2013

**Time:** 11:00 a.m.

**File No:** 57276002

**Conversed**

**With:** Fred Jacobs, Hastings Banner editor

**Telephone:** 1-269-945-9554

**Copy:** Mainstreet Planning - Jan Johnson

**ITEMS DISCUSSED**

On the above date, Greg Scott contacted Fred Jacobs via phone. The following items were discussed.

Charlton Park:

Fred's grandfather sold the property to Charlton.

1. *What are the best features of Charlton Park?*
  - Historic artifacts
  - The Village
  - Location in the center of 4 major cities and over a million people
  - Land that can be developed
  - Proximity to the river/lake
2. *What could be improved at the park?*
  - Put life into the park! Create some excitement/buzz about the park. Create an attraction.. Steamboat rides, train rides, limited restaurant with family style chicken dinners (Frankenmuth). Set a feeling upon entering the park.
  - Need a vision to create the above.
  - Enlarge and improve the swimming beach
  - Commercialize the site with working bakery and general store and other venues that not only promotes history but everyone wants to leave with something
3. *If you could add something to the park, what would it be?*
  - Steamboat rides
  - Disneylike mannequins in period dress that can educate – replace docents
  - Train rides- was Charlton's vision
  - Camping!
  - Kayak rental-leased operation
  - Zipline-leased operation
  - Amphitheater - Reinstitute folk festival, bluegrass festival
  - Leased commercial with historical theme
  - Buggy rides

- Working blacksmith shop
  - Petting zoo
  - 
  -
4. *What are the main issues facing the park?*
- No real strong vision. Takes vision and the guts to do something
  - Financial support
  - Need a master plan to articulate what the vision can become
  - Give kids reason to come back... "most boring day"
  - First impression is the greatest and park is lifeless
  - Need attractions and then a marketing plan
5. *What is the public perception of the park?*
- Good for education
  - Events are nice to attend but little else to attract people at other times
  - Nice events – Car shows, etc...
6. *What else would you like to add?*
- In short - we have to reinvent the park or it will continue to run as is has for years – it's only important to people that are attracted to attend a special event – I realize it's importance to our history, but to get people interested in its historical benefits we must come up with a way to package so that's interesting to large numbers of people. Look at what happened in Grand Rapids with art – Charlton Park has a great deal of potential, but we've done little to turn it into an attraction that thousands might want to visit.

The above constitutes my understanding of items discussed and/or decisions reached during the above-referenced conversation. If there are any additions and/or corrections, please contact me within 7 days.

Gregory H. Scott, ASLA, CPSI

Ghs/ghs

**Project:** Charlton Park

**Date:** August 8, 2013 **Time:** 10:00 a.m.

**File No:** 57276002

**Conversed With:** Steve Evans- Middleville Rotary President

**Telephone:** 269-795-7727

**Copy:** Mainstreet Planning – Jan Johnson, Tim Johnson

#### ITEMS DISCUSSED

On the above date, Greg Scott contacted Steve Evans via phone. The following items were discussed.

Charlton Park strategic plan input:

Steve is the Middleville Rotary president and also a retired history teacher who is a paid guide for school groups during the school year. He works about 15 hours a week providing guided tours in period costume. Following is his input to the predetermined questions.

1. *What are the best features of Charlton Park?*

"Hidden gem"

  - a. Historical narratives as presented by a guide who is dressed in period clothes to school groups.
  - b. Collection and archiving element of the park. Much that has not been presented to the public but Claire is work on that. A tremendous resource.
2. *What could be improved at the park?*

Good staff!

  - a. Facility for alternate lunch area for school groups during inclement weather (covered pavilion or something), needs to be in proximity of village
  - b. Park wide address system to facilitate rotation of school groups (done by watch now) and other announcements during large group events. Could play period music to enhance experience at other times.
  - c. Period lights for the village. Increase safety and security.
3. *If you could add something to the park, what would it be?*
  - a. Stage coach next to the Inn. Would enhance period representation. Local person contacted who may be able to assist.
  - b. Amphitheater. Rustic in nature. Could have blue grass or folk singers. Something appropriate for the park. Another source of revenue.
4. *What do you think are the main issues facing the park?*
  - a. Marketing- awareness of the park. Claire doing a good job but more needs to be done.



- b. More volunteers needed to teach school groups plus have someone present when random/general visitors are there.
  - c. Would like to see amount of school groups expanded. Do afternoon session as well as the morning ones. Additional revenue created.
5. *What is the public perception of the of the park?*
- a. No appreciation of the park by the general public. A mini-Greenfield Village right there in their community.
  - b. Not aware of the constant change. Always something new. Need to promote that more. "I've visited once, why should I go back again?"
  - c. Expansion and diversification is needed to attract more people. Expand more programs for the community and promote them.

The above constitutes my understanding of items discussed and/or decisions reached during the above-referenced conversation. If there are any additions and/or corrections, please contact me within 7 days.

Gregory H. Scott, ASLA, CPSI  
Senior Landscape Architect

Ghs/ghs

**Hastings Kiwanis Mobile Workshop  
Held on August 7, 2013**

**Participants: 23**

**What are the best features of Charlton Park?**

Buildings-16  
Programs (special events)-15  
School kids programs-13  
Beach and swimming area-9  
Pow Wow programs-6  
Antique collection-4  
History of early settlers-3

**What could be improved at the park?**

More food vendors-11  
ADA accessibility-10  
Promote in and outside of County-10  
Restroom facilities-10  
Bandshell and marina-9  
Paved walks in Village area-6  
Collections area-5  
Increased security-3

**If you could add something to the park, what would it be?**

Trail system-20  
More kid activities-12  
Rustic campground-11  
Active venues/real people in stores-7  
Active farm-6  
Winter camp outs-3  
Bluegrass festival-3  
Focus more on history after 1920's and 30's-2

**Barry Community Foundation Mobile Workshop**  
**Held on July 18, 2013**

**Participants: 16**

**What are the best features of Charlton Park?**

Historic artifacts-8  
Potential-8  
Connection to history-7  
Lake-6  
Camping-5  
Location-centrally located-5  
Schoolhouse-1  
Car show-1  
Picnicking-1  
Size-1  
Great job by the staff-1

**What could be improved at the park?**

Live activities related to the collections-7  
Beach-6  
How to make the park "come alive"-6  
Reasons to bring young people/attractions for everyday people-6  
Connect to other organizations in the community-6  
Docents-5  
Bus tour that includes other attractions; connect assets-4  
Less boring/more active/activities-4  
Participate in existing events, i.e. "Arts and Eats"/connect-3  
Camping year-round-1  
Commercialization-need more-0  
Clarity of collections-0  
Bus tours/reason to come/staff on site (visible and interacting)-0  
News releases-0

**If you could add something to the park, what would it be?**

Beach activities such as volleyball, docks, sliders, paddleboats, kayaks, paddle boards-10  
General store-10  
Music events-6  
Train-6  
Campground (not just for special events)-5  
Costume shop (period costumes)-4  
Cabins-3  
Winter activities such as snowshoeing, cross country skiing, etc.-2  
Day camps-1  
Nature center-0  
Venue for meetings/conferences-0  
Concession at the beach-0

**Charlton Park Foundation Board Mobile Workshop  
Held on August 7, 2013**

**Participants: 5**

**What are the best features of Charlton Park?**

The Village-5  
Beach/waterfront-5  
Volunteers-2  
History of the Park-2

**What could be improved at the park?**

Walkability in all weather conditions (rain, snow, even dry); boardwalk-5  
Publicity-4  
Work with donors-4  
Continuing maintenance/upkeep of the Village-2

**If you could add something to the park, what would it be?**

Collections facility-5  
Restaurant-3  
Improved restrooms-3  
Landscaping in the Village-2  
Maintenance building-1  
Gift shop-1  
Fort and other historic structures-0

**Project:** Charlton Park Strategic Plan

**Date:** August 13, 2013

**File No:** 5727

**Present:** Progressive AE – Greg Scott  
Middleville Rotary Club

**Copy:** Mainstreet Planning – Jan Johnson

## ITEMS DISCUSSED

Questionnaires distributed to the Rotary Club. Following are the questions and related comments:

### 1. *What are the best features of Charlton Park?*

- The historical heritage of our county.
- I have not been to Charlton Park.
- The reconstructed village and special weekend events.
- Continued building history of the county.
- Historical village. Buildings are great!
- Historical structures and vehicles.
- Not familiar with the park.
- Historical perspective and outreach to students.
- Historical buildings
- Historical artifacts and buildings. Music programs.
- The village, waterfront and
- A hidden gem.
- The old buildings and antiques.
- The volunteers who interpret and bring history to life.
- Heritage buildings are well maintained.
- Living history.
- Very informative for younger students.
- Historical sessions.
- Buildings and exhibits staffed with period dressed volunteers

### 2. *What could be improved at the park?*

- A large multi-purpose building for large gatherings and artifact display.
- The museum.
- The entrance.
- Programs for middle school and high school students. Civil war reenactment for students.
- Expand picnic areas for family reunions. Campground for children activities.
- Non-motorized trails, beach improvements and playgrounds.

- Playground.
- More advertising of events.
- Greater use of the waterfront.
- More publicity.
- Operating hours. Limited when I visited a number of years ago.
- Less poison ivy. More improved playground. Period playground for village.
- People in costume using and explaining how tools, equipment, etc.. were used in that time period.
- I have not been there in 40 years.
- Need more for middle school students to keep them interested.
- Better play areas.
- A ferris wheel. Class on blacksmithing.

3. *If you could add something to the park, what would it be?*

- A large multi-purpose building for large gatherings and artifact display.
- Featured point to the park. One thing that a visitor can take back with them.
- Gift shop, more recreational trails and food.
- Large building for maintenance.
- Campground, bike trails and playground equipment.
- Offer overnight accommodations and gift shop.
- Campgournd.
- Bluegrass Festivals. Bigger name entertainers.
- Canoe, kayak and bike rentals.
- More volunteers of all ages to supplement what you do best (interpret and bring history to life).
- Play area for children that would be appropriate for that time period.
- Advertising.
- Better play areas. Tram, train or covered wagon to get older/handicapped visitors around. Gift shop and food/drink building.
- More historical items. Camping and adult/family programs.
- A display of the past works and activities of the Michigan militia.

The above constitutes my understanding of items discussed and/or decisions reached. If there are any additions and/or corrections, please contact me within 7 days.

Gregory H. Scott, ASLA, CPSI

Ghs/ghs