

# THE PAR PLAN NEWS

ISSUE 129

MARCH 2018

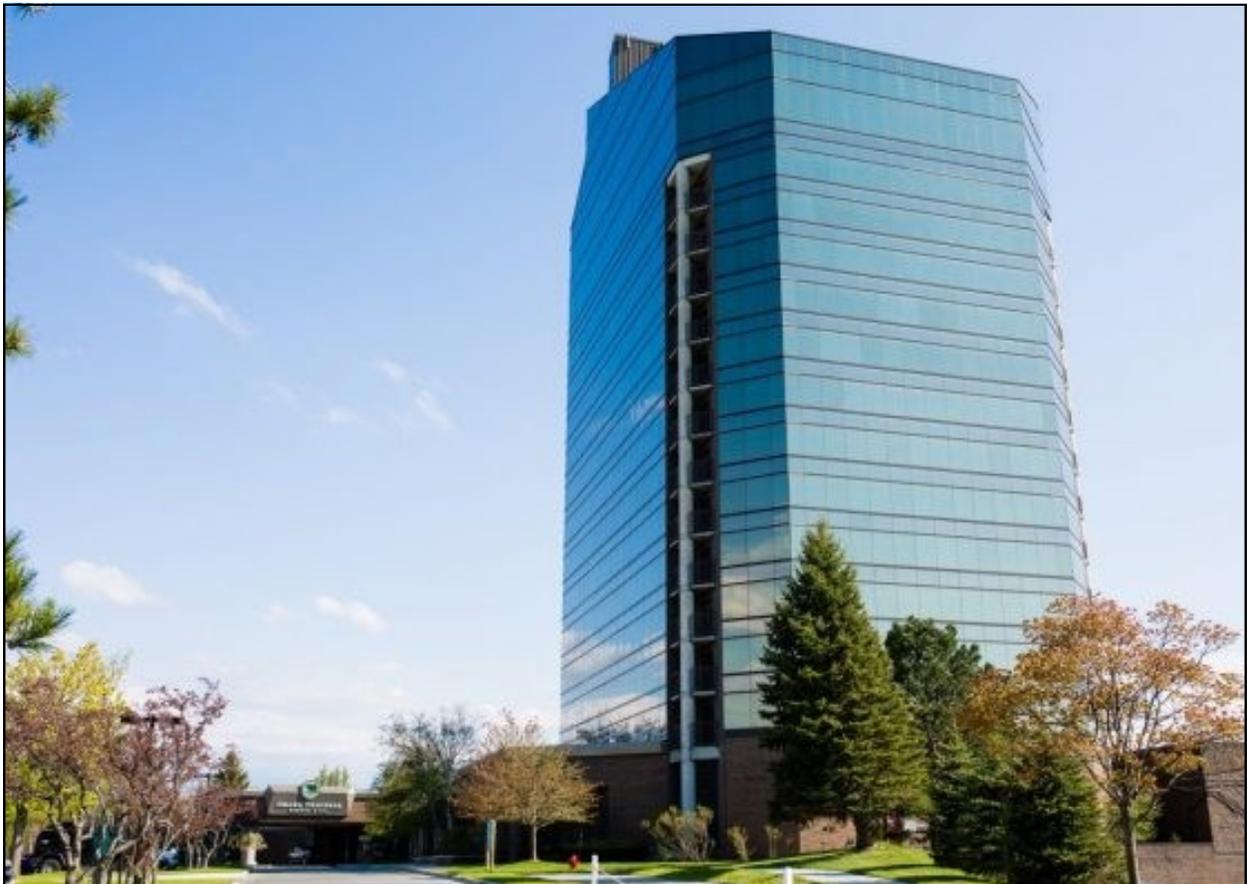


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## Michigan Township Participating Plan Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting

*The Michigan Township Participating Plan's quarterly board of directors meeting is scheduled for 2:00 p.m., Monday, April 23, 2018, Directors Room, lobby level at Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, Michigan. All Par Plan members are encouraged to attend.*



MTTP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Zone 1

Paul Lehto  
Calumet Township  
(906) 337-2410

Zone 2

Marvin Besteman, Jr.  
Kinross Charter Township  
(906) 478-5412

Zone 3

Glen Lile, Chairman  
East Bay Charter Township  
(231) 938-2762

Zone 4

Joanne Donaldson  
Markey Township  
(989) 366-9614

Zone 5

Jennifer Venema  
Caledonia Charter Township  
(616) 891-0070

Zone 6

Gary Brandt  
Monitor Charter Township  
(989) 684-3366

Zone 7

William Walters, Vice Chairman  
City of Brown City  
(810) 346-2043

Zone 8

OPEN

Zone 9

William Bamber, Secretary  
Oceola Township  
(517) 546-3259

Michigan Township Participating Plan  
UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

During the next several months, member representatives will be electing Zone Representatives to serve on the Par Plan Board of Directors. This year Zones 2, 5, 8 are up for regular election with representatives serving a three year term.

Zones up for election consist of the following counties:

**Zone 2:** Alger, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Delta, Emmet, Luce, Mackinac, Presque Isle, Schoolcraft

**Zone 5:** Barry, Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Ottawa

**Zone 8:** Allegan, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren

Par Plan members of the above respective zones should designate a person to serve as their member representative. Only member representatives are eligible to serve on the Par Plan Board of Directors. A completed nomination form, candidate/conflict disclosure statement and resolution confirming membership are required to be submitted to participate in the Michigan Township Participating Plan’s Board of Directors election.

According to the Par Plan Bylaws: Member shall mean a local unit of government participating in the Michigan Township Participating Plan. Member representative shall mean the member representative to the Par Plan. A member representative must be an elected official of the unit of government that is a member of the Par Plan. If the unit of government does not have elected officials, a member from the Board of that unit of government may be its member representative to the Par Plan.

Appointed officials such as City Managers, Township Superintendents or DPW Superintendents are not eligible. Units of government that would not have elected officials might be fire authorities and library boards.

If you are uncertain of your eligibility to run for the Zone Director or the procedure to vote, please contact William Walters, Chairman of the Election Committee at (810) 346-2043, or Rita Evans, Par Plan Administrator at the Par Plan office (800) 783-1370.

The winner is selected based upon the highest number of votes received. Elected Directors are required to attend at least (4) four board meetings per year in addition to committee meetings.

Look for a nomination form along with the election required documentation in the mail. If you wish your nomination form to receive consideration, please return the nomination form and all required documentation no later than May 4th to the Michigan Township Participating Plan, 1700 Opdyke Court, Auburn Hills, Michigan 48326.

The election committee has set the following election timetable:

March 16th - Nomination and election forms mailed to zone members

May 4th - Nomination and election forms must be postmarked to receive consideration

May 11th - Nomination and election forms confirmed by committee

May 25th - Election ballots mailed to zone members

June 20th - Election ballots must be postmarked to receive consideration

June 26th - Committee meets to count ballots

July 1st - Par Plan Directors take office

July 26th - Par Plan Annual and Quarterly Board of Directors Meeting



**T**he Michigan Township Participating Plan Board of Directors is extremely pleased to advise our membership that the Plan will be accepting Risk Reduction Grant Requests beginning April 1, 2018 through May 31, 2018. Grant guidelines have changed. Please visit [www.theparplan.com](http://www.theparplan.com) to download new documents.

## SPRING PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, & RECREATION FACILITIES

*It's been a long winter! – Soon it will be time to evaluate if 'ole Man Winter has caused any type of damage within your parks & playgrounds.*

By this time of year it seems like 'ole man winter has been hanging around for an awfully long time. Many of us are feeling a little stir crazy and ready to get outside and play; well, except those who are more active and love winter and its activities. But with spring just around the corner, soon it will be time to open parks, playgrounds, and sports complexes that have been closed during the winter months.

Winter weather can be brutal and can cause some pretty significant damage to your park buildings and playground equipment. And, what about those wild animals that need a place to keep their families warm; they too can cause some significant damages to a building. Early spring is a great time to perform a comprehensive and thorough inspection of all park buildings, playground equipment, and park grounds before opening for the season. Boat launches, docks or piers, and seawalls in parks situated along a body of water should also be inspected and evaluated for potential damages caused by ice dams or from the winter freezing and thawing.

A comprehensive park and playground inspection program will help to identify damages that have occurred, assist in evaluating what repairs or replacements need to be done, assist in prioritizing any repairs or replacements needed, and will help to provide a time line when it should be completed. **Documentation is essential.** A simple checklist that includes what damage or hazard has been found, the date it was first observed, and the date it was repaired will assist in providing a stronger defense posture should there be a potential claim of negligence against your public entity. Once the park has been opened to the public, regular and frequent inspections should be performed with documentation maintained. It is suggested they are done at least weekly during the peak use season and at least once a month during the off season.

**PLAYGROUNDS** – Each year more than 200,000 children end up in the emergency room due to injuries from falls at public playgrounds. Maintenance and repair of playground equipment is critical and should be based on the manufacturer's recommendations and/or guidelines pursuant to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). A few key areas to keep in mind during inspections include, but are not limited to:

- Improper protective surfacing. Ensure there is adequate fall material, as specified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), around all playground equipment.
- Dangerous hardware (such as open "S" hooks on swings or protruding bolt ends).
- Choking hazards (such as strings from clothing getting caught on equipment).
- Trip hazards (such as exposed concrete footings due to erosion, tree stumps, or exposed rocks).

Other challenges for public playgrounds include improper installation of playground equipment or installing backyard equipment (such as purchased at Home Depot or Walmart) instead of commercial grade equipment. Public playground equipment should be of commercial grade and installed by the manufacturer. If community volunteers are utilized to install the equipment, the manufacturer should supervise the installation and sign an affidavit that it was properly installed.

**PARK BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES** – Park buildings and other structures (such as dug outs and bleachers at ball fields, permanent soccer goals, and signs) should be included as part of the comprehensive inspection program to ensure the integrity of the building or structure. All damages and repairs should be made prior to the official park opening and public use.

**RECREATION PROGRAMS (ORGANIZED SPORTS LEAGUES)** – Ball fields, soccer fields, football fields, and sports complexes should be inspected for any potential bodily injury hazards to the users. Key areas to consider for recreation programs are as follows:

- Ensure that any electrical panels are working, properly grounded, and secured.
- Ensure that fencing is sturdy and adequately grounded, dugouts are in good repair and that the seating is sturdy and adequately grounded, and that bleachers are in good condition.
- Outside organized sponsor (such as a Little League or a School organization) – The public entity should ensure that a written Field Use Agreement that includes a hold harmless be signed by the user and require that provide proof of insurance be provided and includes the public entity named as an additional insured.

**SKATE PARKS** - A comprehensive inspection of the equipment and skate surface should be performed and any damaged equipment should be repaired or replaced prior to opening of the park. Regular and frequent inspections should be performed throughout the season with documentation being maintained.

**TRAIL SYSTEM (WALKING / BIKE PATHS)** – Many trail systems are open year round and regular documented inspections should be performed to ensure they are free of debris or any other hazards. Bridges located along the trails should also be inspected to ensure they are in good repair. Proper maintenance based on the type of trail system (paved or natural) should be performed and proper signage posted (such as no motorized vehicles allowed).

The Consumer Product Safety Commission publishes voluntary standards for public playgrounds and included within the "Handbook for Public Playground Safety". Although these are voluntary standards, they are widely recognized as being the authority on public playgrounds and are often used by plaintiff attorneys as a benchmark in lawsuits. NOTE: The easiest way to obtain a copy of the handbook would be to Google [CPSC.gov playground safety](https://www.cpsc.gov/playground-safety). Click on **Public Playground Safety Handbook**, which is a PDF format, and print. Make sure it is the 2010 version, which is the most current at this time. Also click on **Public Playground Safety Checklist** for a more comprehensive listing of key safety precautions.

For a sample Park and Playground Inspection form or a Trail Inspection form, or should you have any questions regarding any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact the Risk Control Department at any time at (1-800-536-7425).



By: Pam Code, MTPP Risk Control Representative

**2018 MTA Annual Education Conference ~ Grand Traverse Resort , Acme Township  
April 23-26, 2018**

We hope that all the Par Plan members have marked their calendars and plan on attending the Michigan Township Association’s 65th Annual Educational Conference & Expo coming up April 23-26. As always, this conference offers many educational workshops as well as a little fun. The Par Plan looks forward to seeing you.

**Par Plan Exhibit Booth**

*Tuesday, April 24 - 9:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.*

*Wednesday, April 25 - 9:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.*

Be sure to stop by our booth and meet with your regional risk manager.

**Par Plan Business Solutions Session —“Harassment In the Workplace”  
Wednesday, April 25, 2018 from noon until 1:00 p.m., Lower Level Tower Ballroom**

In this session you will be given tips for navigating the liability maze of unwanted conduct - protect your township and your team! Presented by Stacey J. Belisle, Attorney & Partner, McGraw Morris P.C. *McGraw Morris P.C. is appointed counsel for The Michigan Township Participating Plan.*

**Par Plan Fun Night**

**1950’s Sock Hop**

**Join us Tuesday, April 24 from 6-9 p.m. in the Governor’s Hall, Grand Traverse Resort for three hours of non-stop entertainment and fun. Hor d’oeuvres and beverages provided.**

**Par Plan’s At the Hop—Par Plan will be Rockin’ the Night Away. Who wouldn’t want to take a trip back to the Fabulous 50’s when the rock was just beginning to roll. Journey back with us to the days when hula-hoops and dancing provided entertainment for hours.**

**Dress in your favorite 50’s wear; (leather coats, blue jeans, bobby socks, poodle skirts, saddle shoes, bowling shirts) or dress as your favorite actor/actress of the 50’s.**



**Par Plan News Editorial Staff:**

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Rosecommon County  
Gary Brandt - Monitor Charter Township  
Bay County

Rita Evans - MTPP Program Administrator

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