

# **Grosse Ile Township Centennial Farm Draft Master Plan Summary**

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## **Introduction**

On April 6, 2000, Grosse Ile Township held a public meeting to review the January 13, 2000 Centennial Farm Master Plan Workshop. The meeting was designed in two parts. The first part was to summarize the four workshop group's individual ideas for the future of the Farm. The second part was to present Wade-Trim's Summary Graphic. The Summary Graphic was prepared to help merge different group ideas about the Farm and apply those ideas to the physical conditions of the Farm.

The Summary Graphic was well received by all attendees that voiced an opinion. There were some minor disputes but overall the graphic was favorable. With the general acceptance of the Summary Graphic Wade-Trim was asked to prepare the Draft Master Plan of the Farm and this report summarizing the Draft Plan. This report is to help the Township Recreation Commission, Township Board, and Township Staff make a final decision on the Farm's Master Plan.

Below are the summaries of the Draft Plan broken down by general location.

## **Entry**

Improve the first impression that visitors have of the Farm. This can be accomplished by enclosing the ditches, improve the condition of the driveway, and increase the landscaping, particularly trees and the expansion of the garden. It is critical to keep the landscaping realistic with regard to the maintenance required to keep it looking beautiful.

## **Overflow Parking Lot**

The overflow parking lot will continue to be a parking lot with site improvements. These improvements begin with the construction of a grassed lot that has a base and sub-base that is designed to allow for turf establishment and vehicle parking. Another improvement is to use shrubs to screen the neighboring property from this lot.

## **Open Space**

Work with the Open Space Committee to develop guidelines for the development of a nature area. The nature area could be used for; education, passive recreation, bridle trails, and provide alternate pedestrian access to Meridian and Manchester Roads. In developing the trails it is important to keep horses and pedestrians separated. Also, in developing these trails there is the need to buffer surrounding homeowners from uses that are proposed. This is extremely important at Meridian and Manchester Roads. The improved overflow parking lot would double as a parking lot for the nature area and also provide a small area for the trailhead.

## **Recreation Area near the Recreation Center**

This area was identified to have several uses. The overall purpose of this area is to create an area that can be used for junior camping, family outings/re-unions, and group

gatherings. This area will also provide a place for school gardens and provide a ten foot wide pathway for pedestrians to travel from the overflow parking lot to the Recreation Center without being in the driveway. An additional 5-foot pathway is proposed from the 10-foot pathway to the school gardens, shelter, playground, and around the Recreation Center.

The area was chosen to facilitate the junior camper due to the sites maturing trees, proximity to the Recreation Center and restrooms, and location of the existing playground. To have this area serve these groups: picnic tables, fire rings, and a shelter are proposed. The shelter would also be able to support Recreation Center activities.

## **Recreation Center**

The Recreation Center is to continue to be used for various activities for multiple groups. To improve the Centers ability to provide additional recreational uses and improve the structure's appearance several improvements are proposed. The most major renovation for the Center is to pave and expand the parking lot. As the Plan shows a total of 23 parking spaces are proposed. The need for providing the "hard surfaced" parking is to make the Center and Farm more accessible to everyone, especially the seniors. Horses should not be in this area so the concerns about horses being harmed due to surfacing is not an issue, but getting the seniors safely into the Center is. The parking lot is to have trees planted near by to help minimize the negative impacts of the automobile.

The Recreation Center is to have a plaza off the north wall. This plaza area is to be use for gatherings of all types and to allow an area within the Farm for outdoor performances of various types. Locating the plaza in this area allows for the Recreation Center's facilities to be easily accessible during major events. The shelter placed near the Center would also cater to the major events.

Building improvements include façade and foundation landscaping. The façade should represent the character of the Centennial Farm. The landscaping should compliment the facade. For the landscaping to accomplish this it is proposed to relocate the existing sidewalk away from the building to allow for appropriate foundation plantings.

## **Outdoor Arena**

The small paddock east of the Recreation Center is to be reduced in size and changed into an outdoor arena. To make this possible the existing west railing is to be moved approximately 50-feet east. This will provide an area for moveable bleachers. These bleachers then could be used for the plaza entertainment by simply turning them around. It is also possible to use this type of bleacher through out the Township when needed.

## **Paddocks**

All of the existing paddocks are to remain exclusively for equestrian use. The only departure from this was mentioned regarding the Outdoor Arena. It was noted that some paddocks have low-lying areas that need to be re-graded. It is also recommended that any type of improvement to a paddock be first reviewed by a horse expert to review the proposed improvement and approve or make a recommendation on the most appropriate construction materials and techniques.

## **Centennial Farm, Animal Shelter, and Shed Area**

These facilities are to remain as is. Some improvements to the outdoor area near these buildings are a pathway, picnic area, landscaping to screen neighbors, and to renovate the smokehouse. The pathway would be a 5-foot extension of the pathway from the Recreation Center to the Pond. This pathway is to facilitate pedestrian movement without conflicts with vehicles or horses. The idea behind proposing a picnic area is to provide an additional gathering spot or an overflow picnic area if others at the Farm become crowded. To help “keep peace” with the neighbors landscaped screening is proposed. The intent of this landscaping is not to block the view into the Farm but to soften it. The concern with over planting this area is that the neighbors will not be able to help in keeping surveillance on the Farm. The smokehouse is a unique feature and should be turned into a working facility if feasible. If this is not feasible then the smokehouse should be removed. The Herb Garden has been well received and has been recommended to be preserved.

## **Pond Area**

The pond area is to become the large major event area, catering to various groups and activities. The proposed amenities include a shelter, seating, gazebo, pathway, and camping area. The shelter is to provide the facility and amenities for large family and group gatherings including the scouts. The proposed seating is to be placed around the pond to provide a place to rest and simply enjoy the view. The gazebo is proposed to be located on the north side of the pond. The gazebo is to be a destination point, lookout area, and shelter for small performances. The pathway in this area is to be 5-foot wide and designed to connect these various activities and provide an alternative route around the pond.

The Pond Area being the premier special event area at the Farm, special consideration was given to improve access to groups hosting the event. Reviewing site constraints it appears that the best possible access is to provide a restricted unloading area for the events hosts only. This restriction is to minimize conflicts between the neighboring stables and moving vehicles while allowing the hosts to be within a reasonable unloading distance.

## **Indoor Arena/Stables**

The indoor arena is to be improved by the addition of a viewing area. This viewing area is to allow spectators to safely and comfortably view horse shows and activities. The stables are proposed for expansion. The expansion is to fill the need of additional stables to help make the Farm self-sufficient and to possibly provide a meeting area for the Grosse Ile Equestrian Team and 4H Club.

## **Bridle Trail**

The bridle trail around the property is to remain. One necessary safety improvement is to bridge or culvert the southeast ditch. One change that was analyzed but was rejected

was the idea that it would be desirable to have a trail for pedestrians around the property. This was rejected due to the need to separate people and horses for various reasons. Also, the proposed pathways will provide additional means to view the Farm.