



## Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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**October 7, 2008**

Human Services Building

Spartan Conference Room

8:30am

### Minutes of a Scheduled meeting of the Allegan County Parks and Recreation Commission

A scheduled meeting of the Allegan County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by the Chair Bruce Culver on Tuesday, October 7, 2008 at 8:30am in the Spartan Conference Room in the lower level of the Human Services Building, 3255 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave, Suite 102, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

PRESENT:	Mark DeYoung	Georgina Rozeboom-Doster
	Larry Rasmussen	Becky Rininger
	Fritz Spreitzer	Robert Kaarlie
	Kelle Tobolic	Chuck Pullen
	Marylne Langeance	Bruce Culver

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Parks Director  
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk

#### ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Kevin presented two items that he would like to add to the agenda under "New Business": 10a. Silver Creek Special Use Permit and 10b. Boy Scout Klondike Derby. A motion was made by Fritz Spreitzer, seconded by Becky Rininger to approve the additions to the agenda. Motion carried by all present.

#### APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES

A motion was made by Robert Kaarlie, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the minutes from September 2, 2008 as printed and mailed. Motion carried by all present.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin reports the park season is winding down for the year, although there are still big weekends of camping to come in October. We will finish the year as we had hoped, even though Dumont and Gun Lake Parks were significantly down from last year. This is due more to low boat launch fees collected than the entrance fees. Kevin reports the boat launch fees were the least amount collected since he's been here and is hopeful next year will be better. He explained boating is a luxury and with the high price of oil, folks are cutting back on their luxury expenses. Season Pass sales were significantly down at Gilletts Bait Shop in Gun Lake causing us to fall short on our revenues collected from them. Kevin reports the expenditures are good, although errors are showing on the temp line items due to Human Resource and Finance incorrectly allocating Jim Hoover's wages.

Kevin has reported the problem and those departments are working to correct the error. Everything else on the statement is in line where we should be. Bruce suggested waiting to approve the financial statements until these errors have been corrected. A motion was made by Fritz, seconded by Robert to table the financial statements until corrected. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Many members of the public participated in the Silver Creek Park Master Plan discussion as follows: Kris Allred of Hamilton; Sonya Wentzel of Allegan; Carol Hiscock of Allegan; Lenore Ryan of Allegan; Jill Gale of Allegan; David Gale of Allegan; Evey Heppe of Hopkins; Ranger Randy Wilson of Dorr; Cindi Van Nostrand of Allegan; Christine Waynick of Allegan; Steve Volkers of Hamilton; Kat Cassady of Allegan; and Bill Brown of Allegan.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **PRESENTATION OF SILVER CREEK PARK MASTER PLAN DRAFT**

M.C. Smith began the presentation of the Silver Creek Park Master Plan Draft by saying everything discussed from the previous meetings have been taken into consideration while working on this concept plan. Overall, the intention of the whole plan is to accomplish needed improvements without changing the character or quaintness of the campground, and they have tried to maintain what is currently there.

One of the first changes M.C. Smith proposes is for the campground to renovate the entrance off of 38<sup>th</sup> Street making it the main entrance, with an improved registration area that would include a turnaround and state required sanitation station. The second entrance off of 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue would become a gated emergency entrance/exit only. There will be several loops added throughout the park where traffic will be one direction only utilizing as much of the existing roads as possible. The roads would have an improved surface that would be less susceptible to erosion.

The existing campsites will be spread further apart and additional sites will be added by creating a road that will veer north-west just past the registration area at the main entrance, connecting the two existing equestrian campsite roads. M.C. Smith explained that each tree will be surveyed, and the campsites will be designed around them, in order to preserve as many trees as possible. To meet state requirements, each site will have a back-in space with room to accommodate a large trailer and vehicle, plus an additional vehicle. The equestrian and non-equestrian sites will be similar; each site having a fire-pit and picnic table on a natural wooded setting. There will be ten non-equestrian sites with an addition of ten equestrian sites, bringing the total number of equestrian sites to 75. M.C. Smith proposes the 26 equestrian sites, located on the main road just past the entrance, will have electricity added while the remaining 49 equestrian sites will be left rustic.

The day use area will be significantly expanded to three parking areas for a total of 27 parking spaces and the addition of hitching posts. Not far from the day use parking area, a restroom and shower building is proposed along with a picnic shelter and group grill. Located within the vicinity of the campsites, M.C. Smith suggests five locations with vault toilets and two manure pits; one near the main entrance and the other near the day use area. To meet all of the A.D.A. requirements, the toilets will be handicap accessible. The existing picnic area will be left as is and a new maintenance building will replace the old building.

M.C. Smith states the horse trails will remain as they are with only a couple of exceptions. A short trail is proposed to be added that will connect the two trails currently known as Fork Trail and Middle Trail. Also, near the main entrance, Boundary Trail/East Boundary Trail will be moved further away from 38<sup>th</sup> Street. He also suggests modifying Pine Trail where it crosses over 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue to North Trail to address safety issues. One of the Council members suggested that maybe a wooden bridge could be built on the trail to cross over 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which M.C. Smith felt was a good idea to take into consideration. He ended the presentation by saying the fine details will evolve as the final design is developed.

As M.C. Smith opened the floor for questions from the public participants, a comment was made that the two manure pits seemed far from the campsites. Both M.C. Smith and Kevin Ricco agreed that at least one more pit should be added. The discussion became heated as the results from the park surveys were questioned and individuals stated they were happy with the park as it is. Kevin relayed that the survey results and direct contacts he had received have been both pro and con, and that public notices were posted to inform neighboring residents of the plan. M.C. conveyed that the survey results were taken into full consideration and the proposed plan is an effort to make everyone who uses the park happy. Noise level issues were then raised regarding the sites with electricity. M.C. made clear the campsites that would have electricity added would be in an area away from the rustic sites, although he remained open to suggestions of another area that could accommodate these sites.

The decision to make the entrance on 38<sup>th</sup> Street the main entrance became the focus of the conversation. Concerns were raised about the possibility of increased traffic along 38<sup>th</sup> Street and congestion at the main entrance due to the addition of ten campsites and having only one entrance. M.C. Smith cited the reasoning behind the decision of having only one entrance to the park that included maintaining better control of the traffic within the campground and also reiterated that bypasses were part of the plan for improvements. He also stated the elimination of horse trailers passing by the non-equestrian sites would be safer and user-friendly for those without horses who come to enjoy the park. Fritz Spreitzer added that the ten additional campsites should not have a huge impact on increased traffic. Kris Allred, the Silver Creek Park Manager, confirmed the 38<sup>th</sup> Street entrance is used more than the 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue entrance right now. She also stated that she has received complaints over the past ten years concerning unauthorized vehicles coming in one entrance and speeding out the other during the evening hours. Becky Rininger agreed by saying the sheriff has told her it would be easier to patrol the park with only one entrance.

As the discussion started to wind down, M.C. Smith tried to reassure those individuals who are displeased with the plan by saying the park will still function very similar as it does today, and he does not believe that an increase in noise will be a factor either. Kris Allred added that she has talked to neighbors in the area and no one has ever complained to her about the noise level. One participant expressed how the changes to the day use area would be a welcomed improvement while someone else commented that she has camped all over where there was electricity and larger rigs and has never had a problem with the noise. Another individual said she was pleased with most of the plan but raised a point about where the hitching post would be located on the campsite; she was concerned about keeping a close eye on her horse. Kevin understood her concern and said they will reevaluate where the hitching posts would be located within the site. Another suggestion was made that solar lights should be put in with the toilets and Kevin agreed and said that would be a fairly inexpensive addition. An additional question was asked regarding the impact these improvements will have on the user fees. Kevin explained the user fees will eventually go up, although not drastically, and the fees would have to be restructured in the future regardless of whether any improvements were made or not. He went on to say that it will be years before this project is completed and we will have to obtain grants to fund it. Bruce added that the Master Plan is the first step in the process and that people will be notified before anything is done. The public participation portion of the presentation ended and a short break ensued.

The meeting was called back to order and Kevin stated he would like the Councils input. After discussing the remarks made during the presentation, everyone agreed there were a lot of good comments made and felt the whole concept of the plan is good. They also mentioned that whenever changes are made, you will never be able to make everyone happy. As far as the comments concerning having only one entrance, Kevin stated that for safety and security reasons, only one was necessary. He also said the same was true for the improved surfaced roads; they cannot be left as sand because of the maintenance costs and hazards posed by washouts. A motion was made by Robert, seconded by Larry that an additional manure pit and trail crossing improvements along 134<sup>th</sup> Avenue be added to the Silver Creek Master Plan. The motion carried by all present.

Kevin reports the New Richmond Bridge Park is now out for bids, although hold-ups and deadlines that were moved up almost caused us to lose the trust fund grant on the last day. The contractor bids are due by October 21 and Kevin hopes to get them in front of the Board of Commissioners by November 6. Construction has been tentatively set to be completed by September 30, 2009. M.C. Smith has already sent out 12 sets of plans and hopes to have 12 to 15 bids with good prices. Kevin is also hopeful that by this time next year we will be in the first phase of construction and the public access boat launch can be worked on during late winter since it cannot be closed for more than 30 days.

#### **LEADERS MARINE PROPERTY**

Kevin was joined by Kelle, Chuck and Maryln to tour the Leaders Marine Property in late September. The asking price is \$575,000 and Kevin reports the owners are willing to wait for us to go through the grant process. The only item the sellers would like in place is a buy/sell agreement contingent on us obtaining a successful grant application. Kevin feels there is a tremendous potential for a return on the investment and we could make a good case to the Board of Commissioners. Kevin informed the Council that the state requires a fair market appraisal and the grant would be based on that appraisal. Currently, the property is permitted for seven slots, although Kevin reports we could do a lot more. The slip rental is now at \$1000 per month with an annual rental of \$13,500. The building on the property that is used for boat storage would most likely be leased out to a private party. We would also obtain 50' of Gun Lake frontage property. Concerns were raised and discussed among the Council whether this is more a business than a park and should the county be getting into a commercial business. A motion was made by Becky, seconded by Larry not to pursue the buy/sell agreement to purchase the Leaders Marine Property. The motion carried with a count of 7 ayes; 2 nays; and 1 absent.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### **GUN LAKE PARK RESTROOM BUILDING**

Kevin reported the old Gun Lake Park restroom building is in rough shape and an eye sore. The roof needs replaced and repairs are needed for the partitions and concrete floor inside the building. Kevin states it would require a few thousand dollars for repairs or to have it razed. He went on to say that the newer restroom is used more often and in his opinion, the old restroom is not really needed. A motion was made by Chuck, seconded by Maryln to tear down the old restroom. Motion carried by all present.

##### **SILVER CREEK SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

Kevin received a request for a Special Use Permit for a benefit to be held at Silver Creek on October 17, 2008. The benefit is to raise funds for an equestrian, Bob Poll, who was in a serious accident on August 30, 2008 and is still in a coma. A pig roast and other activities are planned. A motion was made by Becky, seconded by Larry to allow the permit. Motion carried by all present.

##### **BOY SCOUT KLONDIKE DERBY**

Kevin reports he was contacted by a Boy Scout troop who would like to hold a Klondike Derby at Silver Creek in February 2009, along with a request the fees be waived. Kevin states this was the same group whose fees were waived in February 2008 on the condition they volunteer for spring clean-up at Silver Creek or any of the other county parks. Although their fees were waived for the event, they failed to come on the arranged date or at any time to assist with the clean-up of the parks. Kevin received an apology letter from the troop leader explaining the troop's reason for not showing up on the scheduled day was due to trustees being there who were also working in the park. Kevin relayed he is willing to give the troop another shot but they had better hold to their agreement since part of being a Boy Scout is to keep promises made. A motion was made by Chuck, seconded by Robert to permit the event and waive the fees on the condition that if they do not hold to the agreement of spring clean-up at the agreed upon county parks by the end of April, they will be responsible for paying half the fees for the event held in February and will pay 100% for all future events. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

**The next meeting of the Allegan County Parks Commission will be on Tuesday, November 4, 2008 at 8:30am in the Spartan Conference Room.**

ROUND TABLE

**Chuck Pullen** questioned Kevin whether anything has come back on the trails. Kevin stated he received a message from the D.N.R. Wildlife Division and the drafts are complete. Copies have been sent to the field personel and he is hoping to get them to the N.R.C. once comments come back.

**Maryl Langeance** informed the Council she would be absent on November 4th since she will be working on the elections that day. She also reported going to Bysterveld Park and commented it was a well used great park.

**Bruce Culver** went on record to have Chuck Pullen be reappointed to the Parks and Recreation Commission since his term is set to expire the end of this year. A motion was made by Becky, seconded by Robert that Chuck be reappointed. Motion carried by all present.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ronda Foreman, Clerk