



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

3255 122nd Avenue, Suite 102

Allegan, MI 49010

Phone: (269) 686-9088 • Fax: (269) 673-0454

Parks Web: www.allegancounty.org/Parks

Tourism Web: www.visitallegancounty.com

E-mail: parks@allegancounty.org



April 7, 2009

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 Chairman Bruce Culver on Tuesday, April 7, 2009 at 8:28am in the Spartan Conference Room in the lower level of the Human Services Building, 3255 122nd Ave, Suite 102, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

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

ABSENT: None.

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

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Robert Kaarlie, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the meeting minutes from March 3, 2009 as presented. Motion carried by all present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there was nothing new to report at this time and asked if anyone had any questions. Becky and Bruce both inquired about how the reservations are coming along and if the parks are preparing for the upcoming season. As far as reservations go, Kevin said they are the same as in the past, and the parks are preparing to open; Kris Allred started at Silver Creek Park yesterday. A motion was made by Larry Rasmussen, seconded by Bob Kaarlie, to approve the financial statements. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were four people in attendance to observe the meeting as follows: Lenore Ryun, Vickie Cassidy, Kaytlynn Smith, and Clay Smith, all of Allegan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW RICHMOND BRIDGE PARK UPDATE

Kevin went to New Richmond Bridge Park last Thursday, April 2nd, to check on the progress of the boat launch construction. Due to water levels, the project is about two weeks behind schedule and should be completed in the next couple of weeks. In preparation for the new boardwalk, the trees have been removed and the lumber has been delivered. Four interpretive signs have been placed; two on the north and two on the south side of the river. Once the parking lot is finished the dock will be constructed; at that time the parking lot will have to be closed for a period of time.

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS LEASE UPDATE – AGREEMENT WITH FACETS

Kevin reported the Board of Commissioners has signed the Equestrian Trails Lease, although we have not yet received copies from the State. Also, the agreement with FACETS (Friends of Allegan County Equestrian Trail System) that was drafted by our County Corporate Council has been finalized and is now awaiting FACETS signature before completion. Last week the trail markers and signs were ordered. Once work begins on marking the trails we will be systematic as it happens, doing one area at a time and closing trails in sections as they are being marked. Any work that is necessary in the parking lots to provide a staging area to the trails will be funded by a cost share with the DNR. They were approved and will make it a part of their budget; may be 50/50 or possibly more. Kevin stated the goal is to have all 50 miles of trails marked by the end of this year.

LAKE MICHIGAN PROPERTY UPDATE

Kevin updated the Commission on the Lake Michigan property that was discussed during a closed session in last month's meeting. The Township where the property is located has decided to move forward and make it a Township acquisition. The Township already owns the adjoining property and as long as we have lake access, we will support them to make sure the procurement happens.

NEW BUSINESS

5-YEAR MASTER PLAN – SET PUBLIC MEETING DATE

As discussed in February, the Parks 5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan Kevin has been working on is right on schedule. At this time, Kevin stated a date should be set for the public meeting to be held sometime in July. The evening would probably be best and the meeting shouldn't take more than an hour and a half. Once the date is set Kevin will do a press release, public notice, and will post it on the website. After much discussion, it was decided the public meeting will be held on July 7, 2009 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm at the Human Services Building, Zimmerman Room.

KALAMAZOO RIVER HERITAGE WATER TRAIL – SITE SPONSORSHIP

As previously mentioned, Kevin reported he has been involved with a group for the last few years that are made up of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Kalamazoo County, Allegan County, Jackson County, and Calhoun County, who are looking to turn the Kalamazoo River Watershed into a state designated heritage water trail. There is a state program that designates heritage water trails and includes a list of criteria necessary to obtain the state designation. Dr. Dave Lemberg from Western Michigan University has been designated as the State Coordinator of the Heritage Water Trail Program, and he and his group are the ones who have established the criteria to get the designation which include:

- Detailed mapping of the river, including take-out points and mileage between points.
- Locate sites/buildings along the waterway with historical significance.
- Designate the historical sites with signs (2'X3' sign with 50'-75' distance visibility range).

- Complement the signs with a guide book that gives more details about the various sites.

Up to now the primary focus has been on the main stream, from its head waters in Jackson County to where it empties in Saugatuck/Douglas. There have been 100 sites identified in Kalamazoo and Allegan counties, 60 of which are in Allegan County. For the Kalamazoo and Allegan sites, the text for the guidebook, photos for the sites, detailed river maps, and the design of the signs, have all been completed. Kevin explained the way this is funded is by selling site sponsorships, which is a great advertising opportunity. Each site has a sign posted on the river stating what the site represents and the organization that is sponsoring the site, along with their contact information. In the guidebook, there will also be a listing of all the sponsors and their contact information. The cost is \$500 for a three year sponsorship and so far, enough have been sold to complete all of the river signs in Kalamazoo and Allegan Counties. Although there are not enough funds to print the guidebooks at this time, the group will post a PDF version online for anyone who would like to see or print it. Right now, the goal is to have the first segment completed by the time of our Kanoë the Kazoo event which will be held on May 30th; the event will begin in New Richmond and end in Douglas. Kevin asked the Parks Commission if there is any interest in being a site sponsor, stating most of the sites in Allegan County are still available and the Tourist Council has committed to sponsoring a site still to be determined. Anyone who would like more information on the Heritage Water Trails or to see the detailed river maps can go to www.wmich.edu/glcms/watertrails/.

A motion was made by Fritz Spreitzer, seconded by MaryIn Langeance to sponsor the New Richmond Bridge site along the Kalamazoo River Heritage Water Trail at \$500 for three years. The motion carried by everyone present.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Allegan County Parks Commission will be on Tuesday, May 5, 2009 at 8:30am in the Spartan Conference Room.

PUBLIC

Bruce asked the public participants if they had any questions or comments. Kaytlynn Smith stated she was in attendance as part of a class requirement to attend a government meeting and had found it to be interesting.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Bruce Culver asked Kevin about a “21st Century Meeting” invitation he received in the mail. Kevin reported that everyone should have received an invitation to attend an Economic Development Workshop scheduled for Tuesday, April 21st at the Silo in Allegan from 2 – 8:30pm, with dinner from 5 – 6pm. As many already know, for the past year and a half Kevin has been the Interim Economic Development Coordinator for the County, and one of his tasks has been to develop an Economic Development Plan for what the County needs to do at the county government level to help facilitate economic development. Last year they had a small project team working on some concepts and the Board set aside some capital funds and ended up hiring a professional consultant who has recently begun working with the team to complete the plan. Essentially, the plan is to bring together all of the stakeholders in the county and ask them what do they need from the County to facilitate economic growth. The workshop, which is being partnered with AAESA (Allegan Area Educational Service Agency), will be in two parts. The first part will be presented by AAESA from 2 – 5pm, and they will talk about the 21st century workforce. After dinner from 6 – 8:30pm, will be the economic development portion where we will be getting the stakeholders’ input regarding countywide economic development; what should we be doing as a County entity to help get new business in and retain the business we have, and what do the stakeholders need to make progress from an economic development standpoint.

Kevin Ricco reported the Gun Lake restroom building will come down on April 13 and 14, 2009. The electricity has been turned off and the dumpsters have been ordered. He also reported there was no damage caused by Winterfest at Gun Lake Park in February, and attributed the better line of communication this year as the primary factor. He also reported that last November a grant was received from MMRMA who did a 50/50

cost share towards purchasing concrete fire rings for Ely Lake Campground. The fire rings have been delivered and placed, and although Pine Point Campground already has concrete fire rings, Silver Creek still has metal rings that will eventually be replaced.

Becky Rininger informed the Commission she may miss the May meeting.

Maryln Langeance informed the Commission she will miss the next meeting due to the election.

Fritz Spreitzer attended a meeting last week regarding DNR's plans for the State Game Area. Initially, Fritz was told 80% of the Game Area would be clear-cut and then when it came out in the newspaper, the DNR stated there was a misunderstanding of what the percentage means. Fritz still doesn't understand what their strategy is, only that they are working off a draft plan used in the UP. The DNR has scheduled another meeting to discuss the State Game Area plans exclusively on April 14, 2009 at Allegan High School.

Bob Kaarlie attended a meeting last Saturday in Clare, Michigan, where his attendance was requested. The organization asked that someone from FACETS attend to get input into their efforts of opening up all State land for horseback riding. Bob let them know this will not be an easy task; just because it is State land does not mean it will be opened up. He informed them of what the Parks Commission went through in regards to the State Game Area trails. Bob stated the State is closing down campgrounds and trails that are located on State land unless another government entity takes the initiative to take the responsibility to oversee them, such as what Kevin did with the trails in the Game Area. The organization is trying to get a Right-to-Ride Bill passed by the State and Bob advised them to be persistent but patient; it will not happen overnight.

Mark DeYoung commented he has noticed that many cars have been lining up for Bysterveld Park for several weeks now; everyone is anxious for the park gates to be opened.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:33am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Clerk