



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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May 5, 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, May 5, 2009 at 8:40am 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 Bruce Culver
Robert Kaarlie Georgina Rozeboom-Doster
Kelle Tobolic Fritz Spreitzer

ABSENT: Maryln Langeance Becky Rininger

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Parks Director
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk
Al Weener, President, Allegan Chapter of Sturgeon for Tomorrow

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF APRIL MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Chuck Pullen, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the April meeting minutes as presented and mailed. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated not a lot has changed since last month with one exception; an expenditure for the purchase of new concrete fire rings for Ely Lake Campground at a cost of \$7100. We received a grant for 50% of the cost through MMRMA, although we had to pay for them up front and will be reimbursed once the rings have been placed. Since Ely Lake's budget could not cover the \$7100, Kevin split the cost between other parks and when the grant is received, he will deposit the funds back into those accounts. Kevin also reported he purchased park supplies for the whole season, so next month there will be large expenses that will show on the financial

statements as the invoices are paid. A motion was made by Larry Rasmussen, seconded by Chuck Pullen to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW RICHMOND BRIDGE PARK UPDATE – AL WEENER FROM STURGEON FOR TOMORROW

Kevin introduced Al Weener to the Commission, who is in attendance to discuss the Sturgeon for Tomorrow project. Al is the president of the Kalamazoo River Sturgeon Restoration Project in New Richmond Michigan and began by thanking the Parks Commission for their support and cooperation with the project. He passed around a photo of a sturgeon caught and released last week that was 6'7" in length and 200 pounds; an indication of a viable sturgeon population although minuscule. His organization has partnered with the Gun Lake Tribe; they were awarded a two year grant for the research of juvenile sturgeon in the Kalamazoo River which will begin the spring of 2010. Kevin stated he had a lengthy conversation with Kregg Smith from DNR Fisheries who is overseeing the sturgeon program, and although they are still considering New Richmond as a site for a streamside rearing facility, there are some drawbacks. Water temperature and sedimentation in that part of the river is an issue and would require cooling and filtration. Al added studies are still being conducted as to when a certain location is imprinted and if a location can be re-imprinted; sturgeon like rough cobble stone, the bigger the cobble the better. Kevin stated the DNR's top priority is what's best for the sturgeon and the streamside rearing facility and, even if New Richmond is not deemed the perfect site, this does not mean we can't play a role in the education process and the importance and historical significance of sturgeon. There will be an interpretive sign along the river about sturgeon and it is possible New Richmond will get a tank for an education facility to house a juvenile for visitors to observe. Al ended his presentation by again thanking the Commission for their interest and support in the sturgeon project.

Moving on, Kevin gave an update on the construction projects at New Richmond Bridge Park. Due to the high water levels, work is at a standstill at the boat launch and only some of the boardwalk could be completed. At this rate he has no idea when work can continue; the water is holding up the whole project. Although the completion date for the project is September 30, 2009 and is still realistic, Kevin said the heavy downpours must stop now.

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS LEASE UPDATE

Kevin reminded everyone the Equestrian Trails Lease was approved and signed by the Board of Commissioners in early March and was sent back to the State for their signature. Currently, we are still waiting to receive it back from the State and when Kevin contacted them a couple of weeks ago, although they have already approved the lease they forgot to have it signed at their last meeting. Kevin said he will start emailing them every other day until they send it back.

Included in the handouts is a copy of the Volunteer Agreement that was drafted by the County Corporate Council, reviewed by the insurance company, and agreed to by FACETS. The agreement was sent to the Board of Commissioners for their approval and yesterday Kevin was contacted by Administration who asked if the Parks Commission had made a motion to approve it. Upon looking the agreement over, a motion was made by Fritz Spreitzer, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve and support the Volunteer Agreement as presented. With Bob Kaarlie abstaining from the vote, the motion carried by all present.

Kevin reported the trail marker posts were delivered yesterday and we are ready to start marking the trails. He stated it makes sense to concentrate on Silver Creek first. The northeast portion of Silver Creek used to be off limits but will now be opened. Down the road the trails will have connections to Littlejohn Lake Park; Pine Point and Ely Lake trails will be connected, although they will not be connected to Silver Creek due to their division by M-40 and the Kalamazoo River. Ronda took several calls last week from folks who read an article in Trail Rider Magazine regarding the trail system in the State Game Area; they are thrilled with the prospect of

not only the addition of more riding trails but the improvements proposed at Silver Creek. Kevin stated the DNR is getting a volunteer crew together to work on the trail closures and we will get to count those hours as part of our project. The total number of volunteer hours we are targeting is 400 per the agreement and the volunteers will have a worksheet to keep track of hours worked.

GUN LAKE RESTROOM UPDATE

Kevin announced the old restroom building at Gun Lake Park is gone and the well has been capped. All that remains is the concrete slab and Kevin obtained quotes to have the slab removed which he hopes will happen in the next couple of weeks. He stated the area looks much better and he was told by the contractor who razed the building that the tresses were in such bad shape, it would have cost a lot to repair. Kevin also reported that as of last Friday, May 1st, the parks are now open for the 2009 season.

NEW BUSINESS

STRIDES FOR LIFE EVENT REQUEST

Kevin received an email from Gale Fischer who is a representative for Strides for Life, a fundraising event for cancer research being held on June 18 - 21, 2009. They would like to use West Side County Park on the morning of Friday, June 19, for a stopover for the runners and are in the process of obtaining a special use permit. They have asked the entrance fees into the park be waived for their support vehicles (8-10) during the event. A motion was made by Chuck Pullen, seconded by Robert Kaarlie to approve the request to waive the entrance fees for the 8-10 support vehicles during the Strides for Life event on Friday, June 18, 2009. The motion carried by all present.

MICHIGAN ENERGY CORP INITIATIVE

Kevin reported as part of the stimulus package, the County will be getting a skilled-labor crew who will be able to help with projects at the parks through September. Although we would be responsible for the cost of materials, the labor would be covered by stimulus funds. Kevin has started a list of projects and has asked the parks' managers for their input with ideas for projects. Some examples of projects that are on his list are:

- New display signs are needed for the staging area for the trails at Pine Point and Ely Lake Campgrounds.
- Manure pits for Silver Creek.
- Maintenance buildings at Silver Creek and Littlejohn Lake need repair.
- Repainting of various buildings throughout the parks.

Anyone who has an idea for a project in one of the parks should let Kevin know. Although some things may be too costly for materials or out of the scope of the crew's expertise, it all depends on the project. Right now everything is still in the early stages but Kevin plans to take advantage of the crew as much as possible on behalf of the County parks.

NEXT MEETING – JUNE 2, 2009 @ 8:30AM

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Fritz Spreitzer reported he will be attending a meeting on May 12, 2009 with Sara Schaeffer from the DNR regarding the plans for clear-cutting in the State Game Area.

Mark DeYoung stated it's good to see Bysterveld Park open. He then asked Kevin if anything can be done for the sprouts that are coming up through the asphalt. Kevin replied that is one of the projects being considered for the crew from the Michigan Energy Corp. Initiative; he would like to have them break-up and remove the bituminous layer from that section and instead of pouring new asphalt, apply crushed dolomite which would harden over time. In the meantime, as the seedlings push through they will be sprayed although that always leaves a big mess; Kevin stated the black willow is an aggressive weed and spraying them is only a temporary fix.

Kevin Ricco gave an update on the Boy Scouts, reminding the Commission of the agreement we had with them where the scouts used Silver Creek in February for their Klondike Derby and had their campsite fees waived in exchange for them returning in the spring to help clean-up the County Parks for the 2009 season. Since they defaulted on their agreement in the spring of 2008 by failing to help with the clean-up, it was written into the agreement this year that if they do not fulfill their commitment they will have to pay back 50% of the waived camping fees. The Boy Scouts have already been to Silver Creek on April 15th and Kevin was disenchanted with the work they did, or lack thereof. Instead of the 15-20 scouts and 1-2 leaders expected to show up for two days and work a minimum of 6 hours per day, there were only 3-4 scouts with approximately 7 adults who worked for 3-4 hours; this was a big disappointment when compared to the 300 who showed up for the Derby in February. Just this past weekend, more scouts were scheduled at Dumont Lake Park and Littlejohn Lake Park until Kevin received a call last week that no one would be showing up on the scheduled days, which has left the parks in a huge bind. In years past, Kevin had arranged for trustees from the County Jail to come out for the clean-up but had not done so this year mainly because that was one of the excuses given by the scouts' leader for not fulfilling their commitment in 2008; they did not want the scouts around the trustees. Since promising the scouts would not default again, the parks were totally reliant on their assistance which Kevin says will never happen again. Now Kevin is trying to make arrangements to have some of the trustees come out, although he is unsure how many he can get since their schedules are all finalized in December or January.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:48am.

By: _____

Ronda Foreman, Clerk