



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



July 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, July 7, 2009 at 8:31am 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 Kelle Tobolic
 Larry Rasmussen Bruce Culver
 Robert Kaarlie Maryln Langeance
 Fritz Spreitzer

ABSENT: Chuck Pullen
 Georgina Rozeboom-Doster
 Becky Rininger

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

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Fritz requested an addition to the agenda to discuss Littlejohn Lake Park's current use and if the collection of entrance fees are still feasible. A motion was made by Larry Rasmussen, seconded by Bob Kaarlie to approve the addition to the agenda under Unfinished Business, 10a Littlejohn Lake Park Use, and the agenda as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Bob Kaarlie, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the June 2, 2009 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is not much to report since the last meeting regarding park expenditures; the beach drain repair at West Side Park for \$2200 is completed although the invoice will not show as paid until next month's report along with the crushed dolomite purchased for the repair at Bysterveld currently in progress. Turning to park revenues, they are on par or slightly up over last year; the boat launches and Silver Creek are doing well while Pine Point and Ely Lake are down. Kevin reported that according to the park manager, Pine Point was

only half-full over the Fourth of July weekend with Ely Lake fairing only slightly better. Kevin stated the fact Silver Creek is doing well is good news looking forward to next year when both equestrian trails and equestrian campsites are added to Pine Point and Ely Lake; the parks are not popular in their current state and are getting hard-hit by the economy. In Kevin's opinion, it seems the very high or low-end campgrounds in the region are the most affected with mid-range camps actually doing better. He commented how nice it would be to get some pleasant weather over the next few weekends in order to draw more folks to the campgrounds. A motion was made by Bob Kaarlie, seconded by Maryln Langeance to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW RICHMOND BRIDGE PARK UPDATE

Kevin began the New Richmond Bridge Park update by saying the recent heavy rains have setback the project monumentally. He had just met with the Apex crew and the project engineer from MC Smith the Thursday before the storms on June 19, and the site had just dried up enough for work to continue on the boat launch; the following Monday the whole parking lot was under two feet of water. Adding to the problem, Kevin reported the ditch on the north side of Old Allegan Road was flooded and was funneling more water into the parking lot. He sent a message to Bill Nelson at the Road Commission to see if they could get the ditch excavated to prevent this from happening in the future. Though the water has now receded, it will take a while to dry up enough for the project to continue. In hopes of resolving the issue for the boat launch where the riverbed is not viable enough for the original plan, the engineer believes the solution is to put down 30-foot sections of sheet piling for support, with every third section going deeper. This will add additional costs but the sheet piling is necessary to hold the limestone and Kevin is currently awaiting cost estimates to see if this is feasible. He stated one thing is for sure, they cannot proceed with the original plan so whatever is necessary to solve the problem will have to be done. Although the south side of the park had also been flooded, there is progress to report as the boardwalk and three fishing piers are almost finished; construction for the boardwalk on the north side of the park will begin soon. Kevin's main concern at this time is getting the whole project completed by the end of September deadline; if not, he will have to go ask the DNR Trust Fund for an extension on the grant.

WIA WORK CREW UPDATE

Kevin reports this is the second week using the WIA work crew whose schedule is every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 9 am – 3:30 pm until August 12, 2009. The first project they are tackling is the trail that is in disrepair at Bysterveld Park; they are breaking up 2" thick asphalt and once removed, are replacing it with crushed dolomite. Kevin anticipated the project would take at least three weeks and as of today, they only have one hour's worth of work left. He stated the crew is doing a great job and the trail is looking very nice. While stopping in to check on their progress, Kevin saw some walkers who were thrilled with the improvement. The crew's next project will be adding mulch to the playground at West Side Park; the job will probably last the rest of this week. From there the crew will be sent to work with Bob and the volunteers from FACETS to clear and mark the equestrian trails. At some point, Kevin may split the WIA crew up to have them build manure pits at Silver Creek Park.

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS UPDATE

Bob stated people do not realize that there is a lot of water back on the trails and there are spots where they are still impassable; Bob's crew has been bypassing those areas and will return once they dry up. So far, SC 2 is marked and done, which is the northeast corner of Silver Creek; they will start on Area 4 next. The volunteers are checking water levels in the area and will proceed based on those findings. If it rains and saturates the ground again, their plans may have to change. Once the WIA crew joins the team, Bob stated he plans to split them up and have a group start from both ends meeting somewhere in the middle; he noted that when there are more people working in the same area, they tend to start tripping over each other after a while.

Bob asked Kevin if he could order a dozen more cans of white spray paint for the crew. The spray paint they have been using contains a larger pigment made specifically to mark trails and when sprayed, it sticks to all the surfaces instead of soaking in as a common spray paint would. Kevin collected the paint information and stated he will place an order. Bob also informed him the stake driver the crew has is not working very well as it tends to twist the posts. He knows someone who makes drivers for about \$40 and states it works much better than the one they have now.

WEST SIDE BEACH DRAIN UPDATE

Kevin reported the drain repair at West Side Beach turned out very nice. To prevent further erosion and ensure public safety, the Department of Environmental Quality expedited the permit process and had it completed in approximately two weeks; under normal circumstances, the process would have taken much longer. Kevin stated he is not saying the drain will no longer erode but it should be in good shape for a while.

LITTLEJOHN LAKE PARK USE

Fritz began by asking where attendance is for the year at Littlejohn Lake Park, and should the entrance fees be eliminated. Kevin stated the attendant's hours of 8am - 8pm on Fridays were modified this year to 1pm - 8pm, although they are still 8am - 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays. As far as attendance, the park is still not showing any marked improvement though it is still early in the season and the weather has not been the best. Fritz then asked if the fees collected cover the attendant's wages, and Kevin replied that information would not be available until the end of the year. Bruce interjected that the Parks Commission had decided last year the entrance fees would continue for another season and after that time, they would decide if a recommendation should be made to the Board of Commissioners. Although the park's attendance is not great, Kevin stated the pavilion is used for family reunions and company picnics, and there are teams who have Special Event Permits to use the ballparks Monday - Thursday through the month of August. The pavilion at Dumont Lake Park is very popular and heavily used, most of the time beyond capacity. Whenever someone calls the office to inquire about reserving the Dumont pavilion, or to complain because of the number of people in the park, Kevin always recommends they try Littlejohn Lake Park. In Kevin's opinion, Dumont is more popular due to the proximity of the picnic area to the playground and beach; people can relax while keeping an eye on their children. At Littlejohn, they have to run down a flight of stairs to the beach area; that is why the proposed changes to the layout of the park would be such a big improvement. As for this season, Kevin predicts the revenue from the park will end up like last year. Regarding the other parks attendance, both West Side and Dumont Lake Parks are doing well; Gun Lake is having problems due to folks parking in the neighboring business's lots and walking into the park without having to pay the entrance fee.

Finishing the discussion, Mark informed the Commission that FOX 17 News aired a segment this morning regarding the Parks Comprehensive 5-Year Master Plan Public Workshop tonight. The station also brought up the Allegan County Parks website on-air and clicked through the various parks. He commented that hopefully the airing will generate interest and more of the public will attend the workshop.

NEW BUSINESS

DOGS IN PARKS

Just as a point of discussion, Kevin stated that dogs in the parks have become an increasing problem over the past few years; the worst offenders are at Dumont Lake, Littlejohn Lake, and Bysterveld Parks. Kevin is receiving a lot of feedback from both the park managers and users; pet owners are letting their dogs run free and do not clean-up after their pets, which is left for the manager to pick-up. Based on the number of complaints, Kevin stated addressing the problem may be something to consider for next season; currently several signs are posted at all the County Parks that state dogs must be kept on a leash and cannot be left unattended. Kevin reminded the Commission that the leash law is mandated by the State of Michigan; he even recommends to those who call to report an offender they should call the police. Fritz stated why wait and suggested putting a notice in the newspaper to inform people of the leash law and they will face fines if they break the law. On the

other hand, he also suggested an ordinance that would make no dogs allowed in any park. Kevin stated, although “no dogs allowed” would be easier to enforce, he believes most dog owners are responsible and would not want to take the privilege away from the majority because of the irresponsible minority. Another suggestion was made that new rules could be applied park specific and could target the parks with the most complaints, and Kevin stated that could be a possibility. He stated a decision does not have to be made at this time, although he would like everyone to think about it and later see if a resolution can be found. Looking forward, Kevin stated a dog run is already part of the Littlejohn Park Master Plan and believes it will be very popular; he added Bysterveld would be a great park for a dog run too.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Kevin reminded everyone of the Parks 5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan Public Workshop tonight at 6 pm upstairs in the Zimmerman Room. He stated the meeting will be very focused; the current plan will be available and the goals and objectives will be reviewed along with their priorities. The fact this is a five-year plan will be stressed; what goals can realistically be accomplished in the next five years. Kevin stated he hopes members of the public will attend to provide their input.

NEXT MEETING – AUGUST 4, 2009 @ 8:30AM

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Larry Rasmussen asked if there is a sign on 58th Street to direct people to New Richmond Bridge Park; Kevin stated no but there will be when the park is finished.

Bob Kaarlie asked if it would be possible to have the spray paint by the time the WIA crew comes to work; Kevin stated he would order it today and it will be delivered in one to two days. Kevin also informed him that two more boxes of posts and arrows were ordered a couple weeks ago and will be delivered soon.

Mark DeYoung stated he might miss the August meeting and will let us know ahead of time.

Bruce Culver asked about the Parks tour; Kevin stated it is set for October 6, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Clerk