



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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August 4, 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, August 4, 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:

Kelle Tobolic	Becky Rininger
Larry Rasmussen	Bruce Culver
Robert Kaarlie	Maryln Langeance
Fritz Spreitzer	Georgina Rozeboom-Doster

ABSENT:

Chuck Pullen
Mark DeYoung

Also Present:

Kevin Ricco, Parks Director
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF JULY MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Larry Rasmussen, seconded by Fritz Spreitzer to approve the July 7, 2009 meeting minutes as presented and mailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is nothing specific to highlight on the expenditure side. He then commented revenue for the parks is down primarily due to all the lousy weather experienced this summer. Practically every weekend has been cold and windy and after having the coldest July on record, we cannot expect to come out ahead. Kevin hopes the month of August will be better and heard the coming weekend is supposed to be warm. Bruce added there is an extra weekend this year with Labor Day being late, so hopefully that will make a difference to the bottom line. Kevin agreed and stated, overall September is usually a good month for camping; there are less mosquitoes and the temperatures are cooler. On the plus side, season passes have done well and the boat launch revenue is up over last year.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW RICHMOND BRIDGE PARK UPDATE

Kevin has a couple updates on the New Richmond Bridge Park project; the Board of Commissioners approved the change order to the boat launch ramp that amounted to a \$32,000 solution. There is approximately \$16,000 left in contingency as part of the project and we had funds left over from the \$80,000 that was set aside a while back and we are using up the remainder of that now. The funds were available and did not require any additional appropriation but because of a change order of that size in the contract, Kevin had to present it to the BOC for their approval. Kevin expressed his appreciation for the BOC acting quickly to get the issue on their agenda and having it approved; now the project can finally move forward. Construction can begin once the steel is delivered in the next couple of weeks and once the ramp is done, they can put in the parking lot. The flooding that took place in June finally dried up and the crew has been making progress in other areas of the park. The bathroom has been delivered and is ready to be installed, and the boardwalk on both sides of the park is almost finished with the exception of the areas designated as railroad right-away. The engineer for CSX does not want to be called out until those sections are getting done, so they will be saved until the end to do all at once. Kevin does not see how the project can get done by the September 30 deadline. The contractor has not requested an extension; they had a year from when the contract was signed to ask for one. On the other hand, Kevin will have to ask the DNR for an extension of the grant funding; he believes the extension will be granted but hates to even ask. He stated the project will be 85 – 95% done by the deadline, but it will not be completely done.

WIA WORK CREW UPDATE

Kevin reported the WIA work crew's last day was yesterday; the City of Allegan had projects they wanted done and asked if they could have them for a couple of days. Parks did get a fair amount of work done with big projects; West Side Park received playground mulch and Bysterveld had approximately 185' x 6' of walkway replaced. For the last couple of weeks the WIA crew worked with Bob and Larry clearing and marking the equestrian trails and according to them, there were some issues working with the crew. Kevin stated they worked hard at West Side and Bysterveld parks, and was surprised to hear otherwise when they went to work on the trails. He stated we were in an awkward position because even though we assigned the tasks, we had no control because they felt they were not our employees. All in all, Kevin felt it was a good experience and would do it again, although next time he would make some changes.

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS UPDATE

Bob updated the Commission on the equestrian trails reporting there are still areas underwater at Silver Creek Park. Although a lot cannot be done at this time, there is not much left to do; once the water is gone they just have to mark the remaining trails, which can be done quickly. Ely Lake trails are another story; they have not yet been cleared and it will take some hard work to complete. Kevin asked about area three; as far as he knows, those trails are already in existence so he is hoping there is not a lot of heavy clearing to do. Larry replied most of that area has not been used in years and is overgrown; although there will not be much heavy clearing the area will still take some time and be a lot of work. Bob stated they want to be sure the trails are being done correctly the first time; they do not want to go back later to try to move the trails. They have been working with Maria from the DNR, and she has been good about staying ahead of them. Bob and Larry have split the crew and have been starting at both ends and meeting in the middle. Bob informed Kevin they are going to need more stakes and decals; Kevin stated they take four to five weeks to get in once they are ordered. He placed an order last week for more decals and will add stakes to the order. Kevin asked how far apart the stakes are being placed; Bob stated it depends on how the trail jogs, some areas require more than others. Also, to identify them as equestrian trails, a horse sticker is on every marker. Kevin and Bruce commended and thanked Bob, Larry, Chuck, and the volunteer crew for all their hard work.

MASTER PLAN WORKSHOP UPDATE

The Parks Master Plan Workshop was held on July 7, 2009, and Kevin stated he appreciated the Parks Commission members who attended. During the workshop, goals and objectives for a five year plan were ascertained and Kevin has put together an action plan. Copies of the action plan, along with the goals and objectives, were handed out to the Commission. Although there is more work to be done than what is listed, the action plan is a realistic plan of what can be accomplished in five years. Standards have changed in the application process with more emphasis on the goals and objectives; any unforeseen issues are okay as long as they relate back to the goals and objectives. First looking at the action plan, Kevin stated he would like to focus on the facilities we already have versus property we don't have; there is much work and updating that are needed at the current facilities as follows:

- **2010 Action 1:** Replace concrete planks at Gun Lake Park boat launch ramp.
- **2010 Action 2:** Add equestrian campsites at Pine Point and Ely Lake campgrounds.
- **2011 Action 3:** Work with Parks Commission and members of the community to create a special event, such as a 5k run or movies in the park.
- **2012 Action 4:** Replace existing picnic shelters at West Side Park with larger and more modern facilities. Resurface existing bituminous walkway. Install additional playground equipment.
- **2013 Action 5:** Replace picnic shelter at Dumont Lake Park.
- **2014 Action 6:** Start construction on Phase I improvements at Littlejohn Lake Park. These improvements include an improved park entrance, a dog park, and additional picnic shelter, barrier free access to the lake, additional play equipment near the picnic shelter and at the beach, a floating fishing pier, entrance booth, and a canoe/kayak storage and launch area at the beach.

Kevin stated for action 6, he chose Littlejohn Lake improvements over those proposed at Silver Creek because Littlejohn is not getting used at all in it's current state and both cannot be done at the same time; it is up to the Parks Commission if they decide they want a different focus. Kevin believes once the improvements start getting done it will increase the amount of people who will use the park. Bruce expressed apprehension over moving forward with the plan at Littlejohn Lake; he does not believe the improvements will make any difference. Kevin reports the complaints he receives are always about the distance between the areas in the park, such as the playground being too far from the beach. If the complaints are addressed, Kevin is confident the park users will come, and simply not doing anything is not the answer. As far as the goals and objectives, Kevin stated this is a good list corroborated from the workshop, and a health component has been added along with more focus on winter access in the parks. If something is not on the action plan that does not mean it cannot be added later. Bruce asked the Commission what they would like to do. Kevin suggested giving everyone time to look over the action plan, goals and objectives, and discuss them again in September; he just wanted to introduce the plans today.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 1, 2009 @ 8:30AM

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Georgina Rozeboom-Doster apologized for missing the last two meetings. She also extended her thanks to Bob, Larry, Chuck, and to all the volunteers who are busy marking the equestrian trails.

Becky Rininger stated the City of Allegan is going to put in a skate park and mini sled hill at Jaycee Park starting in the next week or so. They had to move where the skate park would be located inside the park because the ground was not stable where it was originally planned.

Kevin Ricco gave a quick update on the Heritage Trail Water Trail project; the online editorial is almost complete and should be done in the next four to five weeks, although they are still working on the signs for the trail. It has been an interesting project for him to be involved in. Kevin also wanted to make the Commission aware of a section of the Kalamazoo River near Plainwell that will be closed for cleanup by the DNR and will probably take two years to complete. The section that will be affected is a one mile stretch between the Penn Central Railroad crossing and the Plainwell dam near Mill Race, and will be closed to all watercraft for safety reasons. Kevin stated everyone should try to get the word out that the takeout point for river users is at D Avenue in Kalamazoo County, and the put-in point is at Main Street in Plainwell.

Bruce Culver asked Kevin if Parks should have a small booth at the Allegan County Fair for advertising. Kevin replied it would be great to have a display that is ready to be put up on a moments notice; it would cost a few hundred dollars for a decent display. It is too late this year to do anything for the County Parks, although Kevin believes the Fair would be willing to give us some space for free. He stated it should be seriously considered for next year when the equestrian trails are all marked and there are equestrian campsites added to Ely Lake and Pine Point Campgrounds, among the many other amenities the County Parks have to offer.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:19am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Clerk