



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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September 7, 2010
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, September 7, 2010 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 Lenore Ryun
Larry Rasmussen Kelle Tobolic
Robert Kaarlie Bruce Culver
Chuck Pullen Maryln Langeance
Fritz Spreitzer

ABSENT: Becky Rininger

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Parks Director
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk
Jim Hoover, Parks Coordinator
Greg Runnels, Property Owner

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Larry Rasmussen, seconded by Bob Kaarlie to approve the August 3, 2010 meeting minutes as presented and mailed. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated the only unforeseen issue at the parks over the summer was a pump repair at Dumont Lake Park; the pump went out in the women's bathroom due to foreign objects being flushed and it turned out to be a costly repair. The revenue side of the report is doing well although there is one item worth noting; the boat launch revenue is currently down at Gun Lake and Dumont Lake parks. Kevin speculates there are fewer people paying with no attendant on duty during the busy weekends. He is awaiting this weekend's figures so he can determine the difference over last year, which may still come out ahead. The season pass sales are much the

same this year, although passes sold for the equestrian trails are up since implementing the overnight trail fee for campers with horses. There were also more special use permits issued for fishing tournaments at Gun Lake Park. Otherwise, the revenue is in good shape with two more months of good camping weather still pending.

A motion was made by Lenore Ryun, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jim Hoover and Greg Runnels are in attendance and have no comment at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PARK LAND OPPORTUNITY

Kevin introduced Greg Runnels, the owner of the property discussed during the July meeting. Greg stated the 266 acres in question would make a great park and has a lot of potential. Currently there is a 5000 square foot lodge that could be rented for events or weddings; he gets about three to four calls a month from folks asking if the building is available for use. There is a nice trail system in place that could be used for equestrians, bikers, or winter recreation activities; there is also a barn with equipment included. It had previously been used as a golf course until around five years ago; Kevin added it would now make a great disc golf course. He continued by saying the topography is very unique and the possibilities are only limited by our imaginations. He believes the facility would be self sustaining and can see it generating more revenue to help offset our other facilities.

A motion was made by Chuck Pullen, seconded by Maryln Langeance to move to a closed session to discuss the park land opportunity. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Chuck Pullen, seconded by Maryln Langeance to move to an open session to continue the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Kevin asked if the Commission would be interested in touring the property before making any decisions.

A motion was made by Lenore Ryun, seconded by Fritz Spreitzer to hold a special meeting at 1:00pm on September 21, 2010 at the entrance to Wilderness Hills Golf Club, 80 – 106th Avenue in Plainwell. The motion passed unanimously.

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

As mentioned during a previous meeting, Kevin asked the Commission if they felt it would be beneficial to harvest some of the trees at Littlejohn Lake and Silver Creek parks. He has talked to three different foresters and has received two proposals; one being more in favor of doing a complete forest management plan over a selective harvest. Although a forest management plan is a good idea, Kevin does not believe it is necessary at this time; a forest management plan would cost \$2500 and a selective harvest would not cost anything. Doing a selective harvest is a way to increase capital improvement funds; the Parks Commission does not want the profits to go towards our operating budget next year.

Basically, if the Commission decides to proceed with a selective harvest, the next step is to go out with the forester and mark the trees to be cut; we can get as extensive as we want and include trees that will eventually have to be cut according to each park's individual master plan. The forester will handle everything with the contractor and is paid a standard 10% of the harvest. Kevin asked what the group's thoughts are; of the foresters he spoke to, Tom Stadt was the best to work with. He then asked if they would like to invite Tom to the October meeting to answer questions.

A motion was made by Fritz Spreitzer, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to table the discussion until after speaking to Tom at the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

AUTOMATED FEE GATE FOR GUN LAKE PARK

Kevin has been in touch with Prairieville Township in Barry County who has a park and boat launch on Gull Lake, very similar to our Gun Lake Park. In previous years they have also had trouble with patrons not paying the boat launch fee and just recently installed an automated gate to solve the problem. The gate is setup to take cash, credit, or season passes which is actually a programmable card that is run through the machine and opens the gate.

The automated gates are not cheap; Prairieville Township paid \$33,000 for theirs but has already collected enough money to pay for the machine during the first season it was installed. Kevin is quite certain that not even half of the folks who currently use the Gun Lake boat ramp actually pay the \$5 fee; revenue is way down this season even though the weather was nicer than last year. At this time he only recommends an automated gate at Gun Lake Park, with an evaluation of how it works after one season. Due to the budget, a gate may not be feasible for 2011 but Kevin suggested the Commission may want to consider purchasing one during the 2012 season. He will continue to gather more information and talk to others who have made the investment. Bruce suggested asking the manufacturer if a payment plan over a few years would be available.

DONOR SIGN FOR NEW RICHMOND BRIDGE PARK

Kevin stated the donor sign at New Richmond Bridge Park is made from the same material as the one installed a few years back at Bysterveld Park, which has worked out very well. For some reason, the sign at New Richmond has not done well and has already warped. Kevin had already made the decision to replace the sign when he received a couple of complaints from donors of the park. He wanted to let this group know that the sign is on order and will hopefully be replaced by this fall.

STREAM GAGING

Kevin had a gentleman from US Geological Society contact him last week and they met onsite at New Richmond Bridge Park. At this time they have a stream-gaging station located on 58th Street along the Kalamazoo River that measures the river water flow and water height, but the site is not working out very well due to too much silt. USGS received a federal grant to do some enhanced stream-gaging to monitor water quality in rivers and streams, and the lower Kalamazoo River is one site that was approved for the grant.

USGS is now looking for a site other than the one on 58th Street and contacted Kevin regarding the possibility of placing the station at New Richmond Bridge Park. After meeting at the park, they both agreed the best location would be off to the side on the southeast side of the bridge which would allow them easy access to the station and would be out of the way for park users. It would be hooked up to a power pole nearby and would continuously transmit new data through a satellite to a USGS facility. Also, a link will be added to the Parks webpage where the data can be viewed. Kevin recommends we allow them to do it; the federal government takes all responsibility for the station.

A motion was made by Bob Kaarlie, seconded by Maryln Langeance to allow the US Geological Society to place a stream-gaging station on the Kalamazoo River on the southeast side of the bridge at New Richmond Bridge Park. The motion carried.

NEXT MEETING – SPECIAL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2010 @ 1:00PM; AND THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING ON OCTOBER 5, 2010 @ 8:30AM

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Larry Rasmussen was at Pine Point Campground on Sunday and ran into some friends who came in to ride for the day. They asked him where they should pay the trail fee and Larry directed them back to the entrance where the fee tube is located. He asked Kevin about getting a fee tube installed at the day riding parking area for

everyone's convenience. Kevin stated if we are successful with the Recreational Trail Grant to expand the parking area, it will include the fee tube which cost \$1000.

Also at Pine Point at the day riding parking area, Larry stated the posted sign that says "Do Not Ride Beyond This Point" is in the wrong spot; it should be further in towards the boat launch to give folks more room to make the turnaround with their trailers; Kevin will talk to Al about getting the post moved. Larry has also received feedback from equestrian campers with larger rigs that they cannot fit them onto the sites at Ely Lake and Pine Point campgrounds.

Fritz Spreitzer drove through Ely Lake Campground over the holiday weekend and saw many campers.

Mark DeYoung went to West Side Park a week ago on Sunday and the park was full.

Bruce Culver asked Kevin about the 2011 budget. Initially, Kevin was asked by Administration to cut the department's budget by 10% but before he was done, they came back and requested only a 5% reduction; he ended up turning in \$15,000 worth of cuts, which is approximately 7%. So far he has not been asked to make additional cuts and hopes more won't be requested before the budget is approved.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk