



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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October 5, 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, October 5, 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
	Maryln Langeance	Chuck Pullen (excused at 9:37am)
	Fritz Spreitzer	Becky Rininger

ABSENT: None

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, Parks Director
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk
Tom Stadt, Consulting Forester

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

A motion was made by Bob Kaarlie, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Lenore Ryun, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to approve the September 7, 2010 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried by everyone present.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated there is not a lot of change from last month's financial report. On the expenditure side we are right where we need to be. The day use parks are all closed for the season with the exception of Bysterveld Park, which remains open until mid October. Everyone received a handout with the entrance fee revenue totals for West Side Park and Dumont Lake Park. The numbers are all good and very close to where we anticipated they would be. Gun Lake Park is down due to no attendant at the boat launch; a lot of users are not paying the \$5 boat launch fee. Kevin went back five seasons and found the total revenue for the Gun Lake Park boat ramp is

down 50% compared to five years ago. During the discussion at last month's meeting, Kevin had informed the Commission of an automatic gate and he remarked that it would be a step in the right direction to solve the problem of folks not paying the boat launch fee.

A motion was made by Lenore Ryun, seconded by Bob Kaarlie to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tom Stadt is in attendance for the next item on the agenda, Forest Management Plan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN – TOM STADT

Kevin introduced Tom Stadt who is a certified forester. Back in the summer, the two walked Littlejohn Lake Park and Silver Creek Park to evaluate the health of the forest and see if there is potential to generate revenue by doing a selective cut of trees in the parks. At this group's request, Tom is here to answer questions. He stated currently, the mills are out of logs and not much is available because of the poor economy. There is a lot of white oak in the game area and if it is high quality wood, it should sell very well. The most he saw at Silver Creek was located on the northwest side of the park. He believes a selective cut would be the best solution and would like to see it done during the winter months when the parks and trails are not busy. Kevin shared with Tom the two park's conceptual master plans that may play a part if there are any trees that will have to be removed.

From Kevin's perspective there are many reasons to do the cut, including forest health and regeneration and the possibility of gaining funds. All profits would be put towards the Park's capital improvement fund and could specifically be used to leverage grant funds when submitting applications for phase one of the master plans. If we did a harvest this winter and were able to raise enough matching funds, a grant application could be submitted by next spring. He asked Tom what the deadline would be to move forward with the selective cut this winter; if we are able to take contractor's bids by Thanksgiving with a signed contract by the end of the year, it would be possible to complete the job by spring. Kevin stated if this group is in agreement and make recommendation to the Board of Commissioners today and they subsequently approve the project by the end of October, we could still make it happen this year. Bruce asked the Commission what their thoughts are regarding a selective cut; everyone was in agreement with the exception of Chuck who believes the forest should be left to nature, and Bob who has concerns about the tree tops that will be left on the ground.

A motion was made by Fritz Spreitzer, seconded by Larry Rasmussen, to recommend a selective tree harvest at Littlejohn Lake and Silver Creek Parks to create a more healthy forest ecosystem on these properties. All proceeds from such a harvest would be set aside in the Allegan County Parks capital improvement fund. The motion carried, with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes - Mark DeYoung	Yes - Lenore Ryun
Yes - Larry Rasmussen	Yes - Kelle Tobolic
Yes - Robert Kaarlie	Yes - Bruce Culver
Yes - Maryln Langeance	Yes - Becky Rininger
Yes - Fritz Spreitzer	No - Chuck Pullen

Ayes 9; Nays 1; Absent 0; Abstaining 0

As soon as Kevin gets word back from the Board of Commissioners, he will contact Tom Stadt with the outcome. He added if it doesn't work out for this season, there will be time to work on the project for 2012. He thanked Tom for attending the meeting.

PARK LAND OPPORTUNITY

A special meeting was held on September 21 at Wilderness Hills in Plainwell where most of the Commission took the opportunity to tour the property in question. Kevin stated there was a good discussion after the meeting with lots of pros and cons. The general consensus from the group is, although it is a beautiful piece of property with a lot of potential, this would not be the right time to take on another project of this magnitude. During tough economic times, the acquisition would not be perceived well by the public. Kevin agrees with that notion but added, if the economy was any better we would not have been presented with this opportunity; the DNRE has available grants we can use and the owner is willing to donate the entire 25% match if the appraisal comes back with the right amount. An appraisal would cost \$3000-\$4000 which we have in our own capital improvement fund. Maryln believes the property would offer more opportunities to the public for activities like cross-country skiing and disc golf, plus rental of the clubhouse could bring in more revenue.

A motion was made by Lenore Ryun, seconded by Kelle Tobolic to proceed with an appraisal of the Wilderness Hills property in Plainwell. The motion failed, with a roll call vote as follows:

No - Mark DeYoung	Yes - Lenore Ryun
No - Larry Rasmussen	No - Kelle Tobolic
No - Robert Kaarlie	No - Bruce Culver
Yes - Maryln Langeance	No - Becky Rininger
No - Fritz Spreitzer	No - Chuck Pullen

Ayes 2; Nays 7; Absent 0; Abstaining 0

NEW BUSINESS

BLUE STAR TRAIL

As mentioned a few meetings back, Friends of the Blue Star Trail (FOTBST) is a volunteer group that is looking at Blue Star Highway as a right of way to put in a trail for a north to south link from Saugatuck to South Haven; the trail would be an off road 10' wide paved corridor along the west side of the highway. The group hopes to fund the project with a combination of state and federal grants and we are the entity that could apply for the DNRE Trust Fund grant; FOTBST is asking the application get submitted by April 1, 2011. Bill Nelson and the Road Commission are on board with the plan which would connect different trail systems in west Michigan. Kevin just wanted to keep this group informed and will continue to do so as he receives more information.

2010 ENTRANCE FEE NUMBERS

The 2010 entrance fee totals for West Side and Dumont Lake parks were already discussed under Item 4. Financial Statements. Kevin added the returns were good this year; just using gross numbers, the revenue collected from the two parks this season was more than all four of the parks combined in 2009.

On another note, the two shelters at West Side Park are in poor shape and need to be replaced. The pavilion at Bysterveld Park cost about \$90,000 installed. Kevin stated the West Side pavilions should be our next capital improvement project. Bruce believes we need to proceed with the automatic gate at the Gun Lake Park boat launch, which cost around \$30,000-\$35,000 installed. Kevin is waiting to hear back from one of the sales reps so he can set up a meeting at the park to talk directly about the gate and if a payment plan over a couple of seasons would be possible. He hopes to have all the details before next month's meeting.

NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 9, 2010 @ 10:00AM; JOINT MEETING WITH TOURIST COUNCIL

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Lenore Ryun belongs to two horse clubs; both groups would really like a pavilion at Silver Creek Park for their events and would probably be willing to donate part of the cost. They suggested a shelter similar to the one at

Yankee Springs Park which is sturdy but movable. Kevin stated a pavilion is part of the master plan at Silver Creek Park and in the meantime, he does not want a temporary solution. We have a standard now that he would like to keep with the nice pavilion at Bysterveld Park.

Bob Kaarlie asked if horses can go down to the pond at Pine Point Campground for a drink; Kevin stated the DNRE has not said “no” so as far as he is concerned, it is okay for them to do so.

Bruce Culver announced that after being a member of the Road Commission for the past 25 years, he will be resigning at the end of this year; he is currently the Chairperson. Since the Road Commission Chairperson is automatically a member on the Parks Commission, he will no longer be a part of this group either.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:16am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk