



Allegan County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism

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December 6, 2011

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 Parks Commission Secretary Becky Rininger on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 at 8:30am in the Spartan Conference Room in the lower level of the Human Services Building, 3255 - 122nd Avenue, Allegan, Michigan.

Roll Call showed the following members:

PRESENT: Lenore Ryun Dean Kapenga
 Larry Rasmussen Becky Rininger
 Mark DeYoung Chuck Pullen
 Bruce Brandon

ABSENT: Robert Kaarlie Bruce Culver
 Maryln Langeance

Also Present: Kevin Ricco, County Development Director
 Ronda Foreman, Parks and Tourism Clerk
 Kris Allred, Hamilton Resident

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda; Becky welcomed new member, Bruce Brandon, to his first Parks Commission meeting.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Larry Rasmussen, seconded by Lenore Ryun to approve the November 1, 2011 meeting minutes as presented and mailed. The motion carried.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Kevin stated the financial statements are fairly unchanged from last month. On the expenditure side the majority of the larger expenses have been paid. There is a shortfall in the revenue for the year at Pine Point and Ely Lake campgrounds and also at the Dumont Lake Park boat launch. The revenue at the Gun Lake Park boat launch is at 90%; Kevin stated the numbers are based on the revenue we expect to collect after a full year using the automated entry gate that was just installed in May of this year. Next year he anticipates the revenue will meet expectations and believes an automated entry gate would also help at the Dumont Lake boat launch since

the vast majority of users do not pay the launch fee. Mark asked if the projections for Pine Point and Ely Lake campgrounds were lowered for next year; Kevin replied no.

A motion was made by Lenore Ryun, seconded by Chuck Pullen to approve the December 2011 financial reports as presented. The motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No comment at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2012 PARK USER FEE CHANGES – UPDATE

Kevin reports the Board of Commissioners approved the recommended changes presented to them by the Parks Commission. Beginning January 1, 2012, the boat launch fee at Gun Lake, Dumont Lake, and New Richmond Bridge parks will be increased from \$5 to \$6, and the fee for the pavilion at Bysterveld Park has been raised from \$50 to \$80 for a half day rental, and from \$80 to \$150 to reserve it for the entire day.

2012 DNR TRUST FUND GRANT APPLICATION

This item was talked about at the October meeting and was suggested to be put back on the agenda for December. Up for discussion is which of the two projects, the Silver Creek Park master plan or the Littlejohn Lake Park master plan, should the Commission move ahead with and utilize the timber harvest revenue as matching funds for the DNR Trust Fund Grant application. The timber harvest revenue is a one time opportunity and Kevin is unsure if there would be much benefit by doing phase one of either project, especially at Littlejohn Lake Park; there would be no impact there until revenue for camping could be collected. Silver Creek Park is currently holding its own however Littlejohn Lake Park is not. That being said, if the Commission wants to proceed with improvements at Littlejohn Lake Park, Kevin believes they should rethink where to locate the campground.

Kevin has another proposal he would like the Parks Commission to consider. He stated there is a great need for a campground on Lake Michigan in Allegan County. At West Side Park there is enough space available to put in thirty to forty campsites and there is already a good level of infrastructure available. Another plus is the park already has a modern restroom facility that could have showers added.

Grant applications are due by April of each year and take time to assemble. None of the footwork has been done for a project at West Side Park so it is too late at this time to complete a grant application by April of 2012. If the Commission decides they would like to proceed with a campground at the park then the next step would be to get a topographical layout of the land; Land Information Services can provide this information. Next, a landscape architect firm would be hired to draw up the master plan, which would probably cost between \$6000 and \$7000. After that is completed and we get to the point of a monetary investment, the plans would be presented to the Board of Commissioners for their approval before applying for the grant by April of 2013. Once all the preliminary steps have been taken, Kevin speculates construction would probably not begin until early 2015.

A motion was made by Dean Kapenga, seconded by Larry Rasmussen to authorize Kevin Ricco to amend the master plan to include camping at West Side Park and further authorize him to proceed with preliminary planning for the campground with a deadline of December 2012 for completion of the conceptual master plan. The motion carried.

GOVPAY FOR CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

As a follow up to last month's discussion, Kevin stated the Park's office is switching to GovPayNet for credit card payments and should be live in the next week or two. He also informed the Commission that payments for all campsite and pavilion reservations are due immediately at the time the reservation is made.

NEW BUSINESS

2012 BENEFIT RIDE AT SILVER CREEK

Last week Kevin received a request from the Pleasure Riders to waive the \$25 special use permit fee for the benefit ride at Silver Creek Park on April 28, 2012; the fee has been waived in the past.

A motion was made by Chuck Pullen, seconded by Dean Kapenga to approve the request from the Pleasure Riders to waive the \$25 special use permit fee for their benefit ride at Silver Creek Park on April 28, 2012. The motion carried.

PIER COVE PARK MEETING

Kevin informed the Commission of an upcoming meeting he will be attending regarding Pier Cove Beach which is located in Fennville near West Side Park; the meeting is on Thursday, December 15, 2011 and is by invitation only. Those invited include Bob and Bruce who will be representing both the Parks and Road Commissions, along with representatives from the township, Sheriff's Department, and Lakeshore Association.

Kevin stated there is a segment of the community who believe the entrance fee at West Side Park is what causes people to go to Pier Cove Beach where, not only are there no entrance fees but there is no parking, bathrooms, or other amenities. Beachgoers end up parking along the street and area residents complain people are urinating in the brush along the road. Kevin reports Pier Cove has always been crowded, even before the entrance fees at West Side Park, and eliminating the entrance fee is not on the agenda. Pier Cove is owned and run by Ganges Township and they must take care of it. The hope for the meeting is the real issues will be brought to the forefront along with what can be done to resolve them. Kevin will report back to the Parks Commission at the January meeting.

PARKS/TOURISM CLERK POSITION

Kevin reported the Michigan State University Extension secretary, Chris Cosby, is retiring at the end of the year. Since the office moves last summer, the Parks Department now shares office space with MSU Extension. Although a part time person will be hired, Ronda will be picking up a portion of the duties.

NEXT MEETING – JANUARY 10, 2012 @ 8:30AM IN THE SPARTAN ROOM

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Chuck Pullen reported going to Silver Creek Park in October and there were people all over the place. There was no one there to supervise the campground and Chuck thinks someone should be present during October since the park is so busy.

Next, since equestrians have not taken to camping at Ely Lake Campground, Chuck asked if we can open up all areas to equestrian camping to see if more folks will use the park and trails. Kevin stated that when equestrian camping at Ely Lake was first discussed a couple years ago we specifically wanted to separate the equestrian sites from the non-equestrian sites. He is not opposed to the idea but believes there would be some negative feedback from regular campers who use the campground. Chuck stated he is just trying to come up with some way to save the campground because of all the time and money that has been put into it; he would like everyone to give it some thought.

Bruce Brandon stated he is on the Casco Township Parks & Recreation Commission and they are currently putting in two parks on Lake Michigan; the first phase is under construction and should be done in late spring or early summer. He agrees it would be a good idea to make camping available at West Side County Park and believes 99% of the users would probably be folks from Illinois; he is concerned whether Allegan County residents would ever get the chance to use the sites.

Lenore Ryun agrees with Chuck in regards to the usage at Silver Creek Park in October. While she was there, she received several complaints about the bathrooms and was asked if anyone ever checks them once the seasonal staff is gone. Kevin stated Jim Hoover, the Parks Coordinator, typically goes to the park every Monday to collect the fees from the tubes and clean up the bathrooms. In regards to staffing the park through October, besides the fact there is not enough funds in the budget, this fall was unseasonably warm and typically there are not that many campers.

Kevin Ricco reports Curt DeYoung, the property owner next to New Richmond Bridge Park, has applied for a DEQ permit; he wants to put in some riprap to stop erosion along the banks of his property. By virtue of being a neighboring property owner, DEQ sent us a copy of the request. Kevin has no issue with it but thought he would share the information with this group in case someone else has any objections.

Also, Kevin received a Gun Lake Protection Association Newsletter which is published quarterly. He stated there is interesting information about Gun Lake in the newsletter and passed it around if anyone is interested in checking it out.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53am.

By: _____
Ronda Foreman, Parks Clerk