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**OLIVE SHORES COUNTY PARK MASTER PLAN  
OTTAWA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
Public Meeting No. 1 Notes, June 17, 2009**

Curt TerHaar, Ottawa County Coordinator of Park Planning and Development, opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public. Curt gave an introduction to the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department, the existing County park and recreation facilities, and greenway opportunities. He described the location of the project site, its history and the County's recent acquisition, with the help of the DNR's Natural Resource Trust Fund grant, to complete the parcel. Olive Shores is a 20-acre site with 738 feet of Lake Michigan frontage. The County has secured a Coastal Zone Management Grant to develop construction plans for the proposed development and has secured the services of M.C. Smith Associates to assist in this process.

Jim DeWilde of M.C. Smith Associates discussed the existing site features, which include a large dune, which is a designated Critical Dune requiring a permit from the DEQ for all construction activities. Site photographs were presented illustrating the different features and vegetation types on the site.

The existing concept plan for developing the site was presented, which is intended to be a starting point for the final design. This includes a 50-space parking lot with an off-set entrance from Olive Shores Drive; modern restroom building; trails, including beach access and dune stairs; picnic table pads; benches and interpretive signs.

The meeting was then opened up to the public for comment and questions. The following is a summary of the discussion.

- The property is approximately 1200 LF deep
- Are there any rare or endangered species on site? Curt indicated that none were known to be present on the site based on investigation by the County's naturalist. He also indicated that the County would be doing a plant and tree inventory in the future.
- The size of the parking lot was questioned as being too large. In response, it was noted that this is the same size as the lot at Rosy Mound and it is anticipated that this park will receive more beach goers but fewer hikers than Rosy Mound.



**M.C. SMITH  
ASSOCIATES AND  
ARCHITECTURAL GROUP**

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- Is the location of the stairs based on the topography of the site? Could the stairs be more centrally located on the beach? Jim explained that the location makes use of the lower, less steep areas of the dune.
- What is the schedule for development? Curt responded that the County will immediately locate the property boundaries and provide for limited public use. Further development is unlikely before 2011 as grant funding will likely be sought as the preferred method of paying for construction, and the grant process takes some time for application and award.
- The lack of facilities to be provided at the beach was cited. Boaters will likely add to the number of park users.
- Security was questioned. The site will be gated and locked at night. It will be a pay for use facility, like other County Lake Michigan Parks.
- The location of the trail connection to Olive Shores Drive was questioned. It was suggested that this be relocated adjacent to the drive entrance.
- Is there a demand for the development? Does it need developing now? The park is close to other County lake front facilities such as Kirk Park.
- The proximity of the site to the Consumers outlet and the potential for beach walkers between the two was discussed.
- The approximate cost for the development was estimated to be between \$750,000 and \$1 million.
- A designated swimming beach was suggested to restrict boaters.
- Potential traffic increase on Olive Shores Drive was noted. The park entrance will be designed to Ottawa County Road Commission standards.
- Trash and fires are a concern. Curt responded that fires would not be allowed on the beach and the site would be managed in a manner similar to the County's other Lake Michigan Park properties.
- Dogs would not be allowed on the beach and perhaps not on the site at all, as is the case at Rosy Mound.
- The staffing levels and upkeep costs of the development were questioned.
- Does the County measure park demand? Curt responded that a Countywide survey and park user survey are undertaken at regular intervals.



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- After the meeting, some meeting attendees that did not comment during the meeting said they were in favor of the project, but did not feel comfortable speaking out during the meeting.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at which the proposed Master Plan for the site will be presented.**