

**Regular Meeting of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission**

*Proposed Minutes*

- Date:** May 2, 2007
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Board Room, Fillmore Street Complex
- Present:** Mark Oppenhuizen, Ted Bosgraaf, Phil Kuyers, Joyce Kortman, Paul Geerlings, Betty Gajewski, Russ Brown, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Roger Jonas and Crystal Unema.
- Absent:** None
- Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development; Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent; and Carla Hill, Intern.
- Guests:** Joe Beal, Joy Seeley and Lee Karner.

**Subject: Approval of Minutes**

- PR 07-035    Motion:        To approve the minutes of the Commission's April 11, 2007 regular meeting.
- Moved by:    Brown            Supported by: Unema            Unanimous

**Subject: Bikepath Grant Match**

- PR 07-036    Motion:        To support the City of Ferrysburg's proposed bike path grant application for transportation enhancement funding for the North Shore Drive pathway adjacent to North Ottawa Dunes and agree to fund half of the approximate 40% grant match up to \$150,000.
- Moved by:    Kortman        Supported by: Bosgraaf        Unanimous

**Subject: North Ottawa Dunes Master Plan Approval**

- PR 07-037    Motion:        To approve the North Ottawa Dunes Master Plan with revisions as presented.
- Moved by:    Kortman        Supported by: Gajewski        Unanimous

**Subject: Riley Trails Master Plan Approval**

PR 07-038    Motion:        To approve the Riley Trails Master Plan with revised trail layout.  
                 Moved by:    Kuyers            Supported by: Unema            Unanimous

**Subject: Kirk Park Concession Agreement**

PR 07-039    Motion:        To approve the concession agreement for Kirk Park with Laurie and Warren Guthrie.  
                 Moved by:    Unema            Supported by: Brown            Unanimous

**Subject: Riverside Park Consultant Selection**

PR 07-040    Motion:        To receive proposals for the Riverside Park Improvement Project and select O’Boyle, Cowell, Blalock and Associates at a cost of \$19,000.  
                 Moved by:    Kortman        Supported by: Geerlings        Unanimous

**Subject: Community Haven Barn Straightening**

PR 07-041    Motion:        To receive bids for the Community Haven Barn straightening project and recommend Doornbos Builders at a cost of \$9,350.  
                 Moved by:    Kortman        Supported by: Unema            Unanimous

**Other Items Discussed:**

Commission members received the April 27 e-mail from Jeff Larabel requesting improvements to the Fillmore at the Bend Open Space. A comment card was also received relative to Pigeon Creek Park.

Oppenhuizen called for public comment and Jeff Larabel addressed the Commission relative to the Fillmore at the Bend Open Space. Larabel reiterated his e-mail requesting installation of gravel on pathways and maintenance of pathways at the site. He also volunteered to help with site clean-up and requested approval to plant shade trees. Larabel also suggested “poop stations” be donated and installed at the open space property. Unema recommended the request be referred to the Planning Committee and Larabel asked when the meeting would be held. Bosgraaf indicated a May 16 meeting is scheduled at 2 p.m. Scholtz cautioned the Commission against making improvements to the site for several reasons: 1) there is no master plan for the site and any improvements completed now may not be consistent with the future plan, 2) “Open space” properties are by definition primarily undeveloped, 3) maintenance commitments need to be planned in advance, 4) making improvements to facilitate dog use is premature – further

study is needed to assess the Commission's role with dog parks and the potential of this particular site to function as a dog park.

Lee Karner, a landowner adjacent to Riley Trails, addressed the Commission regarding the proposed Riley Trails Master Plan. Mr. Karner stated he is a trail user and is happy to see the Commission take over management of the park. He indicated, however, that he feels the trailhead signs proposed on 168<sup>th</sup> Avenue near his home should be relocated and a section of trail removed. He referred to the master plan and provided the Commission with some background as to how the trails in his area evolved and how they are used. TerHaar expressed support for Mr. Karner's position and recommended certain portions of trail be removed and the two trailheads shown on the plan be consolidated into one and relocated to a more central point. Commission members expressed agreement with the proposed changes.

Commission members reviewed the report of Park and Recreation Commission expenditures through March 31, 2007 and Scholtz commented on the status of various accounts.

Scholtz commented on various items included in his Director's Report. Regarding the naming of various park facilities, the Public Relations Committee was asked to review the issues at their next meeting.

The smoke free beach issue was discussed briefly and Brown asked what other types of trash are common on the beaches and should other restrictions be put in place to help alleviate trash problems in addition to a ban on smoking? Kortman commented that smokers have typically thrown cigarette butts on the ground which makes smoking somewhat unique from a litter perspective. Mazurek concurred noting there is no other single item of litter that compares to cigarette butts. Jonas suggested the ban be extended to other smoking related products and others agreed this should be considered in the final rule language.

Mazurek commented on various items in his report to the Commission. Mazurek reported that garlic mustard control is underway at 25 different sites in the park and open space system. As planned in the budget, some seasonal employees have started early and are focusing on garlic mustard. They have completed five sites and treated approximately 15 acres. Most of the control is accomplished by hand pulling the plants, but herbicides are used when the plants are dense and no other vegetation is at risk. Mazurek explained regulations relating to pesticide application that complicate matters. The question of whether county inmates can legally spray herbicide has been directed to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Mazurek is hoping for a response in the near future.

Mazurek indicated that a volunteer day is planned for the upcoming Saturday at Tunnel Park for garlic mustard control with a hot dog lunch planned for participants. Kortman suggested staff try to connect with area churches that typically join forces to carryout a

big volunteer day each spring and fall. Geerlings added that some high school class reunions include a volunteer activity as part of their reunion.

Kuyers asked whether any full time staff are certified to apply pesticides and Mazurek responded that five staff are currently certified. However, Mazurek added that regulations limit our ability to supervise others applying herbicide when we mix the herbicide ourselves which is the most cost effective way to purchase the chemicals.

Mazurek reported that the Weaver House security system has been installed at a cost of \$1,400 for the equipment and monthly fees of \$15. Mazurek also reported on some very busy early season use in the parks including April 21 which saw some parks, including the Rosy Mound Natural Area, fill to capacity. Mazurek concluded with some comments on the Park Manager's report for April.

Scholtz introduced Carla Hill, parks intern for 2007, and Carla provided some personal background including her degree program at Grand Valley State University in Natural Resources Management.

Oppenhuizen called on Bosgraaf to comment on the Planning Committee meeting of April 25. Bosgraaf briefly summarized committee discussions regarding parking issues at Park 12. Draft parking guidelines have been developed to provide direction in addressing the many issues in a fair and consistent manner. Bosgraaf also explained that the committee discussed Community Haven and the possible farm park and recommends the Parks Commission be open to considering a possible public-private partnership to provide the farm park. He explained that the Critter Barn board recently asked if the Parks Commission would be open to this type of idea since they are out-growing their site and considering future options. Parks Commissioners expressed a willingness to consider a public-private partnership with the Critter Barn if their Board desires to explore it further.

Scholtz distributed copies of the report of the Park 12 Advisory Council meeting of April 30, 2007. Parking issues for cottage owners affected by the bike path were discussed. Staff explained how each landowner including Pollock, VanEssen, Vaas, Skutnik and Milanowski/Schaeffer would be affected by the proposed policy. Vaas's situation was discussed and there was agreement that parking could be allowed for Vaas on the ROW property for a five year period followed by a requirement he relocate to new parking to be provided on Auburn. Skutnik's situation would be similar in that his parking could continue for five years followed by relocation to Auburn. Kortman asked whether five years is too long a time period for the transition and staff expressed their feeling that it is a reasonable length of time and will help gain acceptance. Bosgraaf strongly advised the parking and sidewalk to access the parking be created now so that it is very clear to all concerned that the transition to the Auburn parking will indeed occur in the future. Gajewski asked whether we have defined the word "historic" as used in our parking guidelines. Scholtz responded that we have not. He agreed it is an important point and he offered to make an attempt at creating a working definition.

Considerable discussion occurred regarding the VanEssen's parking situation. Scholtz and TerHaar explained that the Advisory Group questioned the logic of providing an additional parking space on the ROW for the VanEssens since they have their garage and room to park one car in front of the garage. Staff explained that a complicating factor is that the VanEssens own the lot next door and have historic vehicle access to that parcel through the ROW. One solution would be to allow a second parking space in front of their home in return for agreement not to provide vehicle access to their second lot. There was basic agreement to approach the VanEssens with this request. Bosgraaf noted that all cottage owners have the court as a vehicle for appeal if they feel they are not being treated fairly by the Parks Commission. Gajewski reported on a situation in Seattle where licenses are granted for encroachments in return for payment of a fee.

TerHaar commented briefly on items included in his project update report. With the weather improving, TerHaar expects three projects carried over from last year to be completed in the spring. Included are the Tunnel Park restroom project, the Upper Macatawa Conservation Area Facilities Improvements and the Upper Macatawa Phase II wetland project.

TerHaar also reported that planning for the Mt. Pisgah Project is moving forward with surveying completed and design work underway. Bike path construction should begin soon at Park 12 with an approximate 45 day construction window.

Oppenhuizen presented more detailed nature center plans and explained the most recent changes and updates. Staff indicated they are excited with the way plans are shaping up. Oppenhuizen explained the next step will be to obtain a detailed cost estimate to be used in fundraising. He is also considering using an outside source to produce illustrations to assist in fundraising. Bosgraaf asked whether the current thinking is to pursue LEED certification. Kuyers asked how far we are willing to go in the LEED process. Oppenhuizen explained a quick LEED review revealed that it should be relatively easy and inexpensive to obtain basic LEED certification and this is the approach being considered at this point. Some more advanced energy efficiency measures might be considered including installation of a heat pump. Bosgraaf noted that his son is installing a heat pump for a home on Lake Macatawa using the lake as the source of ground water heat. Bosgraaf suggested exploring use of the river for the nature center. Bosgraaf also asked whether the Building Authority could be enlisted to tackle construction of the nature center building. There was some question whether this would be possible if the building was not bonded and Scholtz indicated he would inquire.

Action was taken by motion to approve the North Ottawa Dunes Master Plan, the Riley Trails Master Plan, the Kirk Park Concession agreement, selection of a consultant for Riverside Park Improvements and contractor selection for the Community Haven barn straightening project.

Scholtz advised he would not require a Closed Session for property matters.

Agreement was reached to hold the June meeting one week earlier on May 30 to avoid conflict with the Special Parks District Forum. The Commission also agreed to hold the July meeting on June 27 to avoid conflict with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday. Oppenhuizen noted he would be absent at the June 27 meeting and Bosgraaf agreed to lead the meeting. Geerlings indicated he would be absent on May 30.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.