

Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Proposed Minutes

- Date:** May 30, 2007
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Board Room, Fillmore Street Complex
- Present:** Mark Oppenhuizen, Russ Brown, Betty Gajewski, Joyce Kortman, Phil Kuyers, Ted Bosgraaf, Crystal Unema, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Roger Jonas.
- Absent:** Paul Geerlings
- Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development; Sherry Costello, Administrative Clerk; Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent; and Carla Hill, Intern.
- Guests:** Paul Fox, Jeff Larabel, Captain J. Milanowski, Karol Skutnik, Vince Skutnik, Fred Vaas, Arlene VanEssen, Dr. Willard VanEssen.

Subject: Approval of Minutes

- PR 07-42 Motion: To approve the minutes of the Commission’s May 2, 2007 regular meeting.
Moved by: Brown Supported by: Bosgraaf Unanimous

Subject: Park 12 Parking Guidelines

- PR 07-43 Motion: To approve the Park12 Parking Guidelines.
Moved by: Kortman Supported by: Brown Unanimous

Subject: Smoke Free Beaches

- PR 07-44 Motion: To approve new park rules defining smoke and tobacco free areas on County Park beaches and forward to the Board of Commissioners following legal review.
Moved by: Kortman Supported by: Bosgraaf Unanimous

Subject: National Clean Beaches Week

PR 07-45 Motion: To approve the proposed proclamation for National Clean Beaches Week beginning June 29, 2007 and forward to the Board of Commissioners.
Moved by: Jonas Supported by: Unema Unanimous

Subject: Go Into Closed Session

PR 07-46 Motion: To go into Closed Session to discuss property matters.
Moved by: Brown Supported by: Kuyers
Yeas: Oppenhuizen, Brown, Gajewski, Kortman, Kuyers, Bosgraaf, Unema, Sabine, Jonas.
Nays: None Motion passed 9 to 0.

Subject: To Rise From Closed Session

PR 07-47 Motion: To rise from Closed Session.
Moved by: Brown Supported by: Kuyers Unanimous

Other Items Discussed:

Commission members received the May 15, 2007 email from Dave Alderink regarding after hours use at Deer Creek Park. Mazurek stated that he has been having park monitors watch the after hours use at Deer Creek and had Eastmanville Bayou checked as well. Commission members discussed the fact that there is not a gate at Deer Creek. Kortman inquired if the township has a patrol and Brown inquired as to where the signage is that states the hours of the park. Mazurek mentioned that adding a gate is an option, but with the boat launch it is difficult to know when people would be returning to their vehicles. He also has encouraged surrounding residents to call 911 to report problems. Mazurek explained that the excessive use of the park after hours is the responsibility of the Parks Department and requesting more frequent Road Patrols should be limited to resolving specific problems. Brown suggested putting signs at the boat launch along with the entrance sign may help with communication of park hours.

Commission members received the May 16, 2007 letter from Vince Skutnik and family restating his concerns in regard to the area he currently uses for parking. Skutnik suggested the parking guidelines should reference the Park 12 Master Plan. He asked the Commission if they had any questions he could answer regarding the said issue. Bosgraaf suggested that cottage owners should have their parking rights recorded with their deed to assure continuity.

Skutnik explained that there has always been uncertainty regarding the property lines. He stated that his and his neighbor's situation regarding parking and property lines is unique

within Park 12. Scholtz stated that the residents of the Lower Boardwalk also do not have parking on their property and asked why Skutnik feels his situation is unique. Bosgraaf suggested Parks Commission representatives visit Skutnik in an effort to better understand his situation. Skutnik agreed and a meeting was arranged.

Commission members received the summary of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) plan for Grand River water quality research in 2007. Scholtz met with Sonia Joseph of Michigan Sea Grant and NOAA to get more details. NOAA has used modeling to predict beach closures successfully in the Indiana area. Bosgraaf inquired as to what beaches have been closed in the past and Scholtz mentioned Kirk Park, Tunnel Park and North Beach to name a few.

Commission members received the May 23, 2007 letter from Randall Schipper of Cunningham Dalman PC representing Ron and Linda Kronemeyer regarding Park 12 parking. Scholtz stated that Mr. Kronemeyer is concerned about the bike path and their parking situation and the bike path will not significantly impact their current parking area. Scholtz added that tentative plans call for Kronemeyer's parking to be relocated to Park 5.

Commission members received the May 23, 2007 letter from Allison Sluis requesting written permission to ride horses through the Port Sheldon area. Scholtz commented that the Commission should not make it a practice to give permission to one individual and not anyone else. Kortman mentioned that the area there is fragile and is not sure if the soil could sustain that type of use. Oppenhuizen pointed out that this is a weak area in Section 9.1a of the park rules and may need to be re-evaluated. Mazurek mentioned that the rules give the public the ability to request accommodation for special circumstances. Scholtz recommends to not grant permission to Ms. Sluis and requested permission to send a letter with an explanation. There was a consensus of Park Commission members to deny the request and Oppenhuizen asked Scholtz to write a letter of explanation to Sluis.

Commission members received an email from Jeff Larabel addressing the barbed wire that is located at Fillmore at the Bend. He expressed his concern for the safety of animals and offered support to help take the wire down. Mazurek stated that because of the Memorial Day holiday his crew has not been able to get out there to inspect the area and he would be making an assessment later this week. He also commented that barbed wire removal would not be a suitable volunteer activity.

Oppenhuizen called for public comment and Captain J. Milanowski addressed the Commission relative to the Park 12 property and bike path safety issues. He stated that Mr. Skutnik helps maintain the public land at Park 10 and requested sensitivity to neighbors' parking concerns. He expressed his concern about the bike path's close proximity to traffic and was surprised that no one had been injured in this area in the past. However, Milanowski expressed concern regarding location of the new bike path and asked for minimal impact on the neighbors. TerHaar stated that the new bike path is scheduled to be placed 6 feet off the edge of the pavement and will be 8 feet wide. Mr.

Skutnik thanked Scholtz and TerHaar for input and visits to the property. TerHaar stated that the construction on the bike path is scheduled to start next week.

Fred Vaas, a landowner and neighbor of Mr. Skutnik gave some history of Park 12. Jonas inquired as to how Mt. Pisgah was named. Vaas wasn't sure but stated that it was biblical and the thought was to fashion it after Bay View, a resort in the Petoskey area.

Jeff Larabel addressed the Commission members and submitted pictures showing the barbed wire concern. Larabel stated that the original two tracks have not been mowed or maintained and will eventually be gone. He requested that these be mowed. Bosgraaf stated that the Planning Committee recommends directing staff to study the dog park issue and report back in January of 2008 with a recommendation. Scholtz stated that the barbed wire issue should be addressed and Mazurek indicated he will assess the situation and begin removal.

Commission members reviewed the report of Parks and Recreation expenditures through April 30, 2007.

Scholtz commented on various items included in his Director's Report. He commented on how wonderful the Friends sponsored boat trip down the Grand River was and mentioned that if this were to become an annual event the department could help improve upon activities during the trip.

Mazurek submitted his Superintendent's Report and asked if there were any questions.

The Parks Naturalist's Report was received.

Oppenhuizen called on Bosgraaf to comment on the Planning Committee meeting report of May 16, 2007 and it was noted that the items have already been covered earlier in the meeting.

Sabine gave a brief summary of the Public Relations meeting that occurred just before the Commission meeting. She indicated the committee discussed their overall objectives and naming issues including a discussion of when to label sites as parks versus natural areas. She indicated a report will be submitted when completed.

Oppenhuizen called for updates on Old Business. TerHaar reported on the Community Haven site and stated that a second master plan meeting is scheduled for June 20th, at 7 p.m. Bosgraaf stated that there was a Planning Committee meeting that same day at 2 p.m. and also a Friends meeting at 4p.m. TerHaar also stated that the Kirk Park irrigation had been completed for the holiday weekend. Scholtz submitted the proposed rules for Smoke Free Beaches and requested that they be approved contingent upon legal review. Action was taken by motion to approve the rules and forward to the Board of Commissioners contingent upon legal review.

In other business, Brown commented that he and his wife visited Hager Park due to several complaints he had received about the creek restoration fencing. Brown feels that the restoration appears to be complete and the fencing should be removed. He requested that an evaluation of the restoration be undertaken and a staff recommendation be developed as to whether the fencing should be removed. Scholtz commented that he had not heard of any complaints or concerns at the office level and will look into an assessment of the restoration.

Action was taken by motion to approve the proclamation for National Clean Beaches Week starting June 29, 2007.

Scholtz presented a summarized list of 2008 preliminary capital outlay projects and explained that the budget is due to Fiscal Services by June 15, 2007. He asked the Commissioners to review and provide comments as to what they felt were top priority. The major projects were outlined briefly. Oppenhuizen asked staff to come up with a priority list and submit for Commission review. Kortman stated that they could give authority to the budget committee for approval and Kuyers will meet with Scholtz in this regard to schedule a Finance & Personnel Committee meeting.

The Parks Commission went into Closed Session to discuss property matters.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.