

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

*Proposed Minutes*

- Date:** November 7, 2007
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Fillmore Complex, Conference Room D
- Present:** Mark Oppenhuizen, Paul Geerlings, Betty Gajewski, Phil Kuyers, Ted Bosgraaf, Crystal Unema, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Roger Jonas and Joyce Kortman.
- Absent:** Russ Brown
- Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development; Sherry Costello, Administrative Clerk; and Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent.
- Guests:** Jeff Larabel, Jasiu Milanowski, and Fred Vaas.

**Subject: Approval of Minutes**

- PR 07-89      Motion:            To approve the minutes of the Commission's October 3, 2007 regular meeting.
- Moved by:      Bosgraaf            Supported by: Kuyers            Unanimous

**Subject: Upper Macatawa Expansion**

- PR 07-90      Motion:            To direct staff to proceed with acquisition of an approximate 7 acre parcel located on Adams Street from the Ottawa County Road Commission.
- Moved by:      Geerlings            Supported by: Kortman            Unanimous

**Subject: 2008 Fees and Charges**

- PR 07-91      Motion:            To approve the revised schedule of fees and charges for 2008 and forward to the Board of Commissioners.
- Moved by:      Kuyers                Supported by: Geerlings            Unanimous

**Subject: Park 12 Encroachments**

PR 07-92      Motion:            To approve and forward to the Board of Commissioners the request to take legal action against encroaching cottagers at Park 12 who have not executed abatement agreements.  
Moved by:      Bosgraaf            Supported by: Kortman            Unanimous

**Subject: Naming of Property**

PR 07-93      Motion:            To re-name property previously referred to as Community Haven to Eastmanville Farm.  
Moved by:      Phil Kuyers        Supported by: Unema            Unanimous

**Subject: Exercise of Option to Purchase – Cary Trust Property**

PR 07-94      Motion:            To approve and forward to the Board of Commissioners the Exercise of Option to purchase the Cary Trust property located in Polkton Township.  
Moved by:      Bosgraaf            Supported by: Kuyers            Unanimous

**Subject: Exercise of Option to Purchase – SAB Investments Property**

PR 07-95      Motion:            To approve and forward to the Board of Commissioners the Exercise of Option to purchase the SAB Investment property.  
Moved by:      Geerlings            Supported by: Gajewski            Unanimous

**Subject: Extension of Option**

PR 07-96      Motion:            To approve and forward to the Board of Commissioners the Extension of Option for the Seidman Family Foundation property.  
Moved by:      Bosgraaf            Supported by: Kuyers            Unanimous

**Subject: Go Into Closed Session**

PR 07-97      Motion:            To go into Closed Session to discuss property matters.  
Moved by:      Kuyers              Supported by: Geerlings  
Yeas:              Oppenhuizen, Geerlings, Gajewski, Kuyers, Bosgraaf, Unema, Sabine, Jonas and Kortman.  
Nays:              None                  Motion passed 9 to 0.

**Subject: To Rise From Closed Session**

PR 07-98      Motion:            To rise from Closed Session.  
                 Moved by:      Geerlings            Supported by: Kortman            Unanimous

**Other Items Discussed:**

Commission members received the October 10, 2007 letter from Bryan and Jillaine Bunday proposing mobile concessions at Tunnel Park. Scholtz reviewed past Tunnel Park concession operations. Mazurek described the concession situation and reported that he met on site with the Bundays and found a possible location for them to operate near the entrance to the tunnel. Mazurek stated that the question of waste disposal and access to the water system would still have to be addressed. Commission members discussed location of the unit, the possibility of adding septic access in the future and concessions at other park locations. Scholtz gave some background of past concession units and their struggle to make a profit. Unema mentioned the Park User Survey and how recipients had missed concessions at the park. Mazurek added the importance of consistency of the new unit with its hours of operation. Bosgraaf expressed the importance of the unit being visible to the public and the possibility of the vendor renting out other items such as kayaks or umbrellas. Oppenhuizen did not feel that a food vendor would be willing to do other rentals, and Mazurek mentioned that currently there is not a designated area of the beach for launching kayaks. Oppenhuizen stated that historically the profits for these types of vendors have been marginal but the benefit to the park users is a plus. Oppenhuizen called for a general consensus to move forward with the vendor and Sabine supported the idea and questioned the possibility of having other people request concessions at other park sites. Scholtz commented that we do have stated concession goals for each park should a request be made.

Commission members received the October 18, 2007 letter from Mr. Edwin Conger regarding Park 12 encroachments. Commission members will discuss the letter during Park 12 encroachments later in the meeting.

Commission members received the October 19, 2007 email from Mr. Jeff Larabel representing the Georgetown Off Leash Dog Supporters proposing a dog park facility at Fillmore at the Bend. Mr. Larabel requested that he be able to present his proposal during the Public Heard portion of the meeting.

Commission members received the October 26, 2007 letter from Kent Rubley of the Ottawa County Road Commission regarding the vacant property on Adams Street. Commission members agreed to proceed with the acquisition by motion.

Commission members received the October 27, 2007 letter from Joyce F. Smith regarding Park 12 encroachments. Oppenhuizen suggested discussing the letter during the Park 12 encroachment section of the meeting and Commission members agreed.

Oppenhuizen called for discussion in response to the comment cards and email comments received since the previous meeting and no further discussion occurred.

Oppenhuizen called for public comment and Jeff Larabel addressed the Commission with a proposal and map of Fillmore at the Bend to install fencing, lighting and hedges for a possible dog park. He explained that he originally requested the Commission consider fencing the entire 68 acres but now only proposes 22 acres be fenced and divided into sections for large and small dogs along with another area for possible training or classes. Mr. Larabel also mentioned that the site could be a potential source of income for the Parks by renting the facility for dog shows or other dog related events. He also proposed the possibility of working through the Friends group to help with fund-raising for the project. Unema questioned Mr. Larabel's intentions to work with the Friends group as she did not recall the Friends committing to fundraising for a dog park and did not want Mr. Larabel to plan on having the support of the Friends group. Mr. Larabel responded that he had not as of yet spoke to the Friends group as his intention was to speak to them in the event his dog park proposal was approved. Unema stated that the Friends will be concentrating on fund-raising for the Nature Education Center in the near future. Oppenhuizen asked Mr. Larabel what number of dogs could be in attendance on any given day. Mr. Larabel responded that on a busy day there would likely be as many as twenty dogs at the site. He also mentioned the current parking area may be too small to handle a busy day and added the possibility of having water access at the site. Mr. Larabel gave estimates that he had received for his proposal ranging from \$69,246 to \$91,000 depending on the type of fencing used. Geerlings asked Mr. Larabel if he had considered increasing the fence height instead of using shrubs around the fencing to lower the cost. He also mentioned that shrubbery would need maintenance from staff. Mr. Larabel responded that hedges were to help with the aesthetics of the park in addition to the fencing. There was no further discussion and Oppenhuizen thanked Mr. Larabel for his proposal.

Oppenhuizen then called upon Mr. Jasiu Milanowski, a Park 12 resident, who gave his explanation as to why he would not be signing his mooring agreement. He referred to point number 3 in the agreement which states *The County reserves the right to terminate any such agreement in the event it determines that a publicly owned mooring field is not practical, available or in the best interests of the Cottagers and the public as determined in a modification to the County's Park 12 Master Plan.* Mr. Milanowski continued by asking the question "Would any of you sign such a document?" Scholtz indicated the intent is for the moorings to remain in place until June 30, 2009 and at that time, if a mooring field has not yet been permitted, the County would continue to provide a mooring at a reasonable cost to the owner until working moorings were available at Parkside Marina. Scholtz continued by saying that the County needs the right to terminate the moorings and he wouldn't recommend the Commission sign an agreement that would give total control to the mooring owners. Scholtz commented that the County is just doing its job as per the stipulation in recognizing the moorings as encroachments on Park property. Bosgraaf added that the goal of the Parks is to upgrade the area from the State Park to the Coast Guard Station as shown in the Master Plan and questioned Mr. Milanowski as to what language he felt should be in the agreement. Mr. Milanowski responded that there is an obvious decline in moorings in this day and age and that most

people prefer docks. He expressed fear that the County would eventually eliminate all moorings. He added that moorings are a part of history and he is willing to pursue legal action if necessary to retain his. Bosgraaf inquired as to how many mooring agreements we have in total. Scholtz responded that there are a total of four moorings and two agreements have been signed and returned. Bosgraaf then asked if there was time to delay a decision or the moorings any and Scholtz explained to the Commission that the stipulation required that encroachments either be restored or legal action filed by December 29, 2007.

Mr. Vaas then spoke and apologized for his lateness, and his missed meeting with TerHaar earlier in the day. He would like to reschedule. He stated that he has not yet signed his agreement, and he feels that the entire process is moving too fast. Mr. Vaas then stated that the agreement made for improvements does not match what is currently happening and he still has valid concerns and points to make. Oppenhuizen thanked both Mr. Vaas and Mr. Milanowski.

Oppenhuizen moved on and called for the financial report of September 30, 2007 and there were no questions or comments.

Oppenhuizen called for the Director's report and Scholtz had nothing to add to the report given and asked for questions. Gajewski asked for information regarding the Park 12 encroachments listed in paragraph two on Scholtz's report. Scholtz stated that the Park 12 update would be covered later in the meeting. Oppenhuizen asked if action needed to be taken involving the MDEQ funds at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area. Scholtz stated that he was in communication with the MDOT people to obtain records of costs and has been directed to the MDOT website for the information. Scholtz suggested a possible Freedom of Information Act request in order to obtain cancelled check copies to qualify for grant match dollars. Kuyers offered to speak with the MDOT official that would be at his next meeting and Scholtz noted the pressure he is receiving to close the grant out. Sabine indicated she knows the Finance Director at MDOT and offered to speak with him. Scholtz agreed this would be a good approach. Sabine will follow up with Scholtz after she communicates with the MDOT official.

Oppenhuizen asked Mazurek if he had anything to add to his Superintendent's Report for Commission members and Mazurek followed up on one item discussed at the last Commission meeting regarding the request by a Musketawa Trail user to have a moped on the trail due to his handicap. Mazurek summarized the meeting Stinebower had with the gentleman and distributed photographs of his moped. He described the moped as a 50 cc engine with the capability of traveling 30 mph. Mazurek stated that the most troubling concern with this situation is that it is a moped, and other trail users, especially younger people, will see the moped and think that it is OK to have mopeds on the trail. Mazurek would really like to accommodate him but has some concerns. He also stated that he contacted the State of Michigan for their opinion and they have not yet responded. Geerlings asked whether the gentleman would be willing to change to a golf cart and Mazurek did not think that was proposed to him. Kortman expressed concern in regards to signage to identify authorized handicap vehicles and stated that no motorized vehicle should be on the trail without proper signage. Mazurek also expressed his concern with

setting a precedent by allowing this gentleman on the trail with a moped. Oppenhuizen asked if the gentleman was a resident of Ottawa County. Mazurek stated that he was a Muskegon County resident that lived at the far end of the Muskegon County trail. He continued in saying that Muskegon has given him volunteer status and permission to use his moped on that end of the trail which is approximately 14 miles long. Mazurek recommended that we not allow the use. Oppenhuizen asked for a consensus to follow Mazurek's recommendation and all agreed. Mazurek will notify the user.

Mazurek reported on a volunteer group of ninety people from the First Presbyterian Church in Grand Haven that planted dune grass at North Beach Park in conjunction with their Community Action Day. The group planted approximately twelve thousand square feet of dune grass. Scholtz will get a thank you out to the group.

Oppenhuizen moved to the Park Manager's Report and no further discussion occurred.

Oppenhuizen then called for the Park 12 Advisory Council report and Scholtz stated that they have expressed a strong interest in keeping the historic feel to the area. They are concerned the archway to Mt. Pisgah does not fit the historic character of the area. TerHaar is looking at photos of the old hotel to aid in the design of the archway. Oppenhuizen noted that this project is very different from others and should be treated as such. Bosgraaf added that he had been riding around looking at signage at other parks and noted the stone columns are important to give the County Parks identity. He further noted that Black Lake Boardwalk has stone columns and continuing the use of stone columns at the Mt. Pisgah entrance would be good for the County Park identity.

Commission members then received the Planning Committee minutes and Oppenhuizen asked if there was anything to add. Bosgraaf stated that he had nothing to bring up but has been seeing a lot of positive things happening.

Oppenhuizen called for the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting report and Kuyers summarized the meeting by saying that they have recommended an increase in park entrance and reservation fees. He continued in saying that many of our fees have not been raised since 1994. Scholtz reminded Commission members that raising motor vehicle parking fees was recommended last year but the Commission felt that it was not the right time to do so. He continued in saying that the fees are a legitimate part of our park program and the Parks should not totally depend on the millage. Scholtz also brought to the Commission's attention the recommended increase in the boat launch from five to six dollars and stated that Grand Haven Township's boat launch will stay at five dollars for next year. Scholtz recommended keeping the launch fee at five dollars to stay competitive with Grand Haven Township. Support was made by motion to increase fees as stated on the 2008 Fees and Charges Summary sheet with the exception of the boat launch fee remaining at five dollars and send on to Board of Commissioners for approval.

Oppenhuizen called for TerHaar to update the Commission on current projects. TerHaar stated that he has four projects starting: Kirk Park, North Beach Dunes, Riley Trails and Riverside. He added that all is going as planned.

Oppenhuizen asked for the Park 12 update and Scholtz started with the Mt. Pisgah Dune Protection public meeting summary. He felt the session went well and there was a positive atmosphere. TerHaar mentioned a news article that was recently published focusing on the size of the overlook deck that was more negative than the actual meeting. Jonas questioned how big the deck will be and TerHaar responded that it is a 30 x 30 foot deck. Scholtz commented that the area will get a lot of use and it is critical to provide adequate space.

Scholtz reviewed the status of agreements with the Park 12 cottagers and went through the report explaining which agreements have been received and which were under discussion. He went on to explain the unique agreement with Prins/Zeitse in that they have requested to have the money that it would have cost to demolish the garage applied toward moving the structure to their property. Scholtz then requested the approval to offer this to Prins/Zeitse. Gajewski felt that if we give them the dollars to move then the Commission should shorten the time to keep the structure where it is now. Oppenhuizen responded that we would be agreeing to give them 2007 dollars and Jonas added that it would be in their best interest to move it sooner than later as costs would inflate over time. Jonas commented on how many people have turned in their agreements and Gajewski asked how many houses are involved. Scholtz answered eighty or so and noted that the final day to turn agreements in was Tuesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>. He requested from the Commission the authority to take a recommendation for legal action to the Planning and Policy Committee tomorrow and then to the Full Board. Authorization to take legal action against Park 12 Cottagers who have not signed the agreements and forward to the Board of Commissioners on behalf of the Parks was granted by motion.

Oppenhuizen called for discussion of naming the Community Haven property. It was recommended at the previous Commission meeting by the Public Relations Committee and tabled that the Community Haven property be named Eastmanville Farm. Kuyers commented that he had spoken to several people in the Eastmanville area who really like the proposed name. Action was taken by motion to change the name of the Community Haven property to Eastmanville Farm.

Oppenhuizen called for new business, and the report of the Parks User Survey prepared by the Frost Center at Hope College was received. Scholtz commented that he was surprised by the high non-resident and out-of-state use at the parks. Gajewski commented that she had counted and there were twenty-four positive and fourteen negative comments in reference to having a dog park. Unema added that only 3% of park users at Grand River Park and 2% of users at Hemlock Crossing expressed interest in a dog park. All agreed the report will be useful reference on a range of issues in the future.

Oppenhuizen then called for the public to be heard and there were no additional comments.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.