

Parks and Recreation Commission

Approved Minutes

- Date:** July 2, 2008
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Conference Room D, Fillmore Street Complex
- Present:** Roger Jonas, Joyce Kortman, Phil Kuyers, Ray Statema, Russell V. Brown, Jr., Joyce Kortman, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Paul Geerlings, Ted Bosgraaf and Crystal Unema
- Absent:** None
- Staff:** John A. Scholtz, Director; Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent; Diane L. Huhn, Parks Secretary; and Katie Klunder, Intern.
- Guests:** Adam Kantrovich, Fred Vaas and Press

Subject: Approval of Minutes

- PR 05-051 Motion: To approve the minutes of the Commission’s June 4, 2008 regular meeting.
Moved by: Geerlings Supported by: Brown Unanimous

Subject: Approval of 2009 Parks and Recreation Budget

- PR 05-052 Motion: To approve the 2009 Parks and Recreation budget proposal with revisions as recommended by the Finance and Personnel Committee.
Moved by: Kuyers Supported by: Jonas Unanimous

Subject: North Ottawa Dunes Trailhead Project

- PR 05-053 Motion: To recommend approval of the low bid by De Sal Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$51,246.70 for the North Ottawa Dunes Trailhead Project.
Moved by: Brown Supported by: Geerlings Unanimous

Brown agreed with a comment card calling for play equipment at Riverside Park to make the park more of a family attraction. Brown requested park staff assess the potential to add play equipment in the near future.

Commission members asked about the dog situation at Riley Trails after reading the email from Tony Reidsma who wrote concerning problems with dogs off-leash at the park. Mazurek explained that dog owners have used the site extensively long before the county park designation. Mazurek was hopeful that the final park signs, which are not yet installed, will help educate users and deter dogs off-leash. Unema added that there were two dogs off-leash at Grand River Park during the Friends' fishing clinic which caused some minor problems.

Scholtz distributed a letter from Glenn Nykamp, Supervisor of Zeeland Township, requesting consideration in naming a section of pathway at the Upper Macatawa Natural Area in memory of the late Gord Ellens, a past Township Supervisor. Bosgraaf explained he was approached by Nykamp with the request and asked him to put the question in writing. The issue was referred to the Public Relations Committee for a recommendation.

Bosgraaf called for public comment and Adam Kantrovich, Director of Ottawa County MSU Extension, addressed the Commission concerning the proposed educational farm at Eastmanville Farm. Kantrovich explained that Ottawa County has the highest value agricultural output of any county in Michigan and tremendous diversity in agricultural products. Ottawa County would be a logical location for an educational farm and MSU Extension is interested in partnering with Ottawa County Parks to assist with the project. Senior faculty at MSU has expressed their support for the project and Kantrovich is expecting letters of support from key officials. Kantrovich indicated he will be unable to attend the July 30 Commission meeting when a decision to undertake a fund-raising feasibility study is expected but he urged support for the project. Bosgraaf thanked Kantrovich for his comments and Unema commented that his support and enthusiasm makes it easier to proceed with the project.

Commission members reviewed the report of expenditures through May 31, 2008.

Commission members briefly discussed the issue of Arthur Wood's apparent dune permit violation and disturbance of Park 12 property during a house construction project. The DEQ has issued a stop work order while it investigates disturbance of the Mount Pisgah dune outside of the permitted construction boundary. Scholtz indicated he wrote Wood a letter expressing concern over disturbance to the county-owned right-of-way called North Park Avenue that runs through the property. Although the damage is not extensive to the right-of-way, Scholtz emphasized that Wood needs to respect the county's ownership of the right-of-way and seek permission before impacting the area. Commission members expressed concern regarding the park land disturbance but agreed that at this point it is a matter for the DEQ.

Scholtz reported that the Timberland Resource Conservation District desires to proceed with work to improve trout habitat in the Pigeon River at Hemlock Crossing. Commission members were supportive of the project provided proper permits are obtained.

Mazurek introduced intern Katie Klunder and explained she is working out of the Park Operations Center on invasive species control, GPS mapping, and a variety of other projects. Mazurek explained Katie is a recent graduate of GVSU in Natural Resources Management and will be looking for full-time work after the summer internship.

Both Bosgraaf and Statema complimented Mazurek on his expanded report format. Jonas asked whether horse-back riding is a common rule violation at North Ottawa Dunes. Scholtz explained that historically horseback riding was permitted on Lake Hills School property and that use would spill over to the Construction Aggregates land which is now the park.

Brown asked whether vandalism is increasing in the county park system. Mazurek indicated that vandalism did increase this past month but typically is quite low. More vandalism has been evident at Grose Park recently while a few years ago Hager Park was a problem. Overall, we have less vandalism than we did five years previously. Brown asked whether we have staff stationed at Grose Park and Mazurek indicated we do have seasonal employees staffing the park between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Sabine briefly reviewed the report of the Public Relations Committee meeting of June 18. She requested the minutes be corrected to show that Kortman was present and also note that the next meeting is scheduled for July 30 at 2:30 pm.

Bosgraaf next called for discussion of the June 23 meeting of the Planning Committee. The committee discussed plans to examine the potential for campground development at Connor Bayou. The campground feasibility work needs to be completed before initiating the park master planning process tentatively scheduled to begin this fall.

Kuyers reported on the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held July 1. The focus of the meeting was the 2009 budget proposal and Kuyers briefly reviewed highlights of the document and proposed changes. Scholtz explained that new positions as requested for 2009 have not yet been included in budget numbers as per county policy. Commission members voiced support for the budget as presented and the budget proposal was approved by motion to be forwarded on to the County Administration for review.

Scholtz reported that the next meeting of the Park 12 Advisory Council will be held July 29 and will include a tour of the Saugatuck-Douglas Museum. The museum, located in a restored historic pump-house structure, has the potential to be a great model for the Park 12 museum. Interested Commission members are invited to attend.

Scholtz reported the contractor for the Mount Pisgah Dune Protection Project will be starting work on the dune stairs after the July 4th holiday. In other Park 12 business, Commission members reviewed a request by Jake and Nelly Quartel to relocate a shed from the park parcel where it is currently located to the rear of their lot where it would sit partially on park parcel and partially on Quartel's property. The matter was referred to the Planning Committee for a recommendation. Kortman requested the matter also be brought before the Park 12 Advisory Council.

Commission members received bids on the North Ottawa Dunes Trailhead Project. Scholtz recommended proceeding with the low bid from De Sal Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$51,246.70. Scholtz advised the Commission that the project does not include donor recognition signage which will be bid separately. The Commission approved the low bid by motion.

Commission members next received bids for Black Lake Avenue Phase II Project at Park 12. De Sal Excavating was again the low bidder with a bid of \$118,258.60 and the Parks Commission approved the bid, including Alternates 1-4, by motion.

Bids were received next for the Hemlock Crossing Wetland Project. Ron Meyer Associates Excavating was the low bidder at \$7,800 and the Commission approved the bid by motion. Scholtz explained the project estimate was \$15,000 and contractors are apparently desperate for work.

Commission members next reviewed a draft lease with the City of Ferrysburg for the North Ottawa Dunes Trailhead Project. Scholtz advised the Commission that the City has not yet signed off on the lease terms but it is important to begin the approval process or the lack of a lease will delay construction. Scholtz explained that the proposed leased area includes a minimal area within Coast Guard Park to accommodate the parking area and support facilities plus a trail route to connect to North Ottawa Dunes trails. Jonas commented that the City of Ferrysburg is very supportive of the project and anxious to partner with the County to provide space for the trailhead. He described the lease arrangement as a “win – win” for the City and County. Recognizing the City of Ferrysburg may want to make revisions to the lease terms, the Parks Commission proceeded to approve the lease terms with the understanding the Board of Commissioners and its committees will have the ability to respond to issues raised by Ferrysburg and modify lease terms if necessary.

Scholtz reported he and Francke had a meeting recently with our consulting forester for red pine management, Randy Kuipers, to discuss the dramatic change in the logging market. The huge increases in diesel prices combined with the decline in the housing market in the past year have hurt the logging industry. We have been informed by Rothig Forest Products, the firm with the contract to log the Port Sheldon Natural Area at \$68 per cord, that they cannot honor their contract price approved in July of 2007. They have requested a revised contract amount of \$55 per cord which is an amount equal to the next highest bidder from last year’s bidding process. Kuipers strongly recommended accepting the reduced per cord amount on the basis that comparable bids for recent logging contracts in the area have been lower than \$55 per cord. Kuipers also provided a sample letter from the U.S. Forest Service in which they are offering to re-negotiate timber contracts due to the unusual market conditions. Commission members concurred with Kuipers’ recommendation and agreed to recommend a contract price reduction to the Board of Commissioners.

Geerlings explained that he has a ditch cleaning project that will result in a fairly large quantity of topsoil near the Riley Trails site. He asked whether there is a location at Riley Trails that would benefit from the topsoil material. Scholtz indicated he is doubtful there would be a good use for the material at Riley Trails but offered to discuss it with park staff.

Commission members went into Closed Session to discuss property matters.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.