

Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Approved Minutes

- Date:** October 1, 2008
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Fillmore Complex, Conference Room D
- Present:** Ted Bosgraaf, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Joyce Kortman, Roger Jonas, Paul Geerlings, Ray Statema, Jim Miedema and Phil Kuyers
- Absent:** Crystal Unema and Russell Brown
- Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development; Sherry Costello, Administrative Clerk; Chip Francke, Naturalist/Information Specialist; and Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent
- Guests:** Fred Vaas, Joyce Smith, Jeff Larabel, and Greg Chandler

Subject: Approval of Minutes

- PR 08-071 Motion: To approve the minutes of the Commission’s September 3, 2008 regular meeting.
- Moved by: Statema Supported by: Kortman Unanimous

Subject: Park 12 Bike Path Project

- PR 08-072 Motion: To approve the low bid by Denny’s Excavating in the amount of \$17,949 for the project to repair the cross-slope at Herb and Sally Pollock’s driveway for the Park 12 bike path with the Pollock’s paying the contractor \$10,046 for additional work to improve their driveway.
- Moved by: Kortman Supported by: Kuyers Unanimous

Subject: Park 12 Bike Path Project

PR 08-073 Motion: To approve payment of an additional \$628.50 to Denny's Excavating, new project total to be \$18,577.50, with the Pollock's amount reduced to \$9,417.50 to keep their commitment consistent with the original project cost estimate.

 Moved by: Kortman Supported by: Kuyers Unanimous

Other Items Discussed:

Commission members received the September 3, 2008 letter from Gary A. Rosema, Ottawa County Sheriff, regarding SWAP (Sentenced Work Abatement Program) likely cost increases for the program. Bosgraaf confirmed with Mazurek that approximately two hours a day was being spent in a non-productive capacity with the inmates in order to have them processed and travel from the jail to the designated work site. Scholtz explained park staff is assessing whether less expensive alternatives exist to meet labor needs.

Commission members reviewed comment cards and emails received since the previous meeting. Mazurek gave more input regarding a comment card thanking two trail attendants for assistance during a recent visit to the Musketawa Trail. He explained that the two attendants were Ottawa County Park Monitors that volunteer their time to assist park staff. The two monitors, Chuck and Sandy Stephens, assisted the park users with a flat bike tire and were able to get them on their way to enjoy the rest of their bike trip that day. Bosgraaf commended the volunteers for going above and beyond the call of duty to assist. Bosgraaf then moved on to an email comment regarding the reporting of trash and debris along Perry Street near Tunnel Park. Scholtz reported that Park Supervisors pick up trash daily in that area and most residents are grateful for the extra attention park staff gives to the area. Bosgraaf noted that park users still park on the street outside the park in the off season when entrance fees no longer are being collected when they could drive in and enjoy the park for free. Scholtz then reviewed three additional emails supporting a dog park at Fillmore at the Bend in light of the recent option to purchase adjacent property on the Grand River.

Bosgraaf then called on Mr. Jeff Larabel, a resident of Jenison to speak. Mr. Larabel congratulated the Commission and staff on their most recent option to purchase land on the Grand River. He then had three questions for the Commission:

- 1) What can be done ahead of time to get involved with the Master Plan at Fillmore at the Bend?
- 2) Can sanitation stations be installed at Fillmore at the Bend for dog owners?
- 3) Would the SWAP crew be a possible source of labor to help with the removal of debris in the ravine at Fillmore at the Bend?

Mazurek addressed the sanitation station installation question and reported that a station was in the works for that site and would be installed at the trail head soon. Bosgraaf reported that a clean up had been done at Fillmore at the Bend last year and Mazurek confirmed that they did remove a dumpster full of junk but the site is still on their list to visit again for additional cleanup.

Ms. Joyce Smith, a resident of Black Lake Avenue, spoke and requested consideration of the following points:

- 1) Requested that a friendly reminder be given to the State of Michigan in regards to the restoration at the back of Mt. Pisgah. She has witnessed a great deal of erosion.
- 2) Ms. Smith submitted for viewing two types of eco food containers that could be used at park facilities.
- 3) Recommended a sign be installed at the bike path connection on Ottawa Beach Road to the State park as she has witnessed cars driving on this path.
- 4) Requested that the Corps of Engineers be consulted when doing any work at the point (fishing cove) area.

TerHaar addressed the last point and confirmed that the Corps of Engineers have been included in the planning process for the point area.

Commission members received the Parks and Recreation expenditures through August 31, 2008. Scholtz explained how overtime is sometimes necessary at the end of the summer season due to seasonal park attendants leaving early for school and the need to fill those hours. An adjustment is made at the end of the season out of the temporary salaries account to cover the additional costs.

President Bosgraaf asked if there were any questions or comments on the Director's report. Scholtz reported that he notified the Human Resources Department that two Commission seats were expiring at the end of 2008. Bosgraaf reported that Unema would not be reapplying for her expired seat as she is not able to maintain the time commitment required to serve. Scholtz then explained that the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners appointed one Commission member and their Human Resources Committee will recommend the second at the next Ottawa County Board of Commissioners meeting.

Bosgraaf called on Mazurek to present the Park Operations Report. Mazurek distributed photos of the volunteer day at North Beach Park and reported that there was a good turnout. Kuyers asked if there were any plans in the future to install any more removable barrier free access decks at any other lakeshore facilities. Mazurek listed North Beach Park and the end of the gap at Park 12 beach as two sites that currently have them and explained that there were not any other opportunities to install this type of deck due to the steep dune topography at the other sites.

Bosgraaf moved on to the report from the attendees of the Special Parks District Forum held in Portland, Oregon from September 8-10, 2008. Sabine, TerHaar and Scholtz

presented a slide show of the conference. TerHaar added that the Forum was hosted by three different parks groups, one hosting each day. Scholtz commented on how amazed he was at Portland's commitment to bike paths and conveyed that 8% of the city's commuters are bikers. TerHaar reported that the City of Portland spends approximately sixty dollars per resident per year for their parks, which is a very large amount. Ottawa County Parks is doing everything they are doing just on a smaller scale at approximately fifteen dollars per resident per year. Sabine closed the presentation with two points picked up at the Forum: First, it is important to "think big" as a general parks philosophy; secondly, she is impressed she was with how much our county parks system does with the dollars it has.

Bosgraaf received the Planning Committee meeting report and Scholtz highlighted the proposed long range budget adjustments in response to the potential budget cuts from the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. He reported that further review would be needed as the process moves forward. Bosgraaf suggested a special meeting to work with the proposed adjustments. Kuyers suggested scheduling a meeting for late February 2009 in order to include the new Parks Commission member that would be starting in January. Bosgraaf then moved on to the fundraising for the Nature Education Center and reported that it is going well and noted that \$350,000 is still needed to construct the facility. He added that staff would be going out for bids in late November for the committee to look at in January. Francke added that the fundraising committee is planning to kick-off the public campaign on October 26th, with a press release and open house to generate interest. Bosgraaf continued with the Ottawa Beach museum planning and reported that the item was slated for the 2011 budget, however, \$300,000 would need to be received in donations to make the project work. Scholtz then reported on the Bend Area project and the next Planning meeting was scheduled for October 17th.

Bosgraaf then called on Sabine to summarize the Public Relations meeting held before the Commission meeting. Sabine recapped the meeting with the following points:

- It was decided to table the decision to hunt at the newly acquired properties and discuss before the next hunting season as the properties are not yet marked.
- Reviewed warning card for off leash dog offenders.
- County park tour to be held in the spring with a tentative date of May 12, 2009.
- Nature Education Center open house to be held on October 26, 2008.
- Recognition for retiring Parks Commissioner Unema to be held after the December Parks Commission meeting at the Weaver House with the Commission meeting starting at 3 p.m. and the open house starting at 5 p.m.
- Discussed newsletter distribution and decided that a checked box option to receive the newsletters would be put on the cards people fill out when buying an annual permit.

Bosgraaf then called for discussion of Old Business and TerHaar presented a slide show of the following current projects:

- Hemlock Crossing wetland project
- North Ottawa Dunes trailhead and new parking area
- North Shore connector
- Bur Oak Landing parking areas and eastern access
- Eastmanville Farm equestrian facilities
- Black Lake Boardwalk walkway extensions
- Mt. Pisgah dune protection project

Scholtz then gave an update on the Red Pine management project. Francke added that the west side of the Port Sheldon site has been completed with the loggers now moving to the east site. Scholtz continued to report that two sites, Pigeon Creek Park and Hemlock Crossing, would be done next year. Kortman suggested Riley Trails be considered for logging and Scholtz reported that this site was not in the original plan. Francke stated that Randy Kuipers, the contractor for the current logging project, could prepare a forest management plan at that site for staff to review. Kuyers noted that he revisited previously cut areas and is amazed at the number of the younger trees thriving now.

Bosgraaf called for New Business and TerHaar reviewed the bids for the Park 12 path project to repair the cross-slope at Pollock's driveway. He reported that Denny's Excavating submitted the lowest bid in the amount of \$17,949.00 for Ottawa County's share and \$10,046.00 for the Pollock's cost. TerHaar requested, on behalf of the Pollocks, that the Commission consider dropping their cost to 40% of the retaining wall expense which would be a \$1,100 reduction for them. TerHaar went on to explain that the original estimate for the Pollocks came in at \$9,417.50. A motion was supported and carried to accept the low bid from Denny's Excavating. Further discussion occurred regarding the Pollock's cost of the retaining wall and Sabine suggested backing down the cost to the original estimate which would be a \$628.50 savings to them. A motion was made and supported to lower the cost of the Pollock's expense to the original estimate amount.

Bosgraaf then called for Public Comment and Ms. Joyce Smith spoke in regards to the Mt. Pisgah dune stairs. She suggested enforcement right away in order to protect the dune ecology. Mazurek reported that signage is being worked on right now and a plan for enforcement is being developed for next year.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.