CHARLEVOIX COUNTY PARKS COMMITTEE
Monday – May 20, 2019
Meeting Location:
Green Building
Whiting Park
5820 Lake Shore Rd.
Boyne City, MI 49712

Members Present:
Committee Members: Susan Vrondran, Tim Wieland, Amanda Wilkin, Dennis Jason, Brian Williams, Ryan Novotny, and Caroline Kobylczak.

Members Absent: N/A

Staff: Parks and Planning Director Kiersten Stark, Administrative Assistant Lauren Richards, and Parks Manager Mariah Penix.

Public: Eric Knop, Paula Larsen, Brian Towne, Don Lockman, Denny Looze, John Looze, John Thompson, and others.

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:
The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:30pm on May 20, 2019 at Whiting Park by D. Jason.

Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance was led by D. Jason.

Approval of Agenda:
A motion was made by T. Wieland and seconded by B. Williams to approve the Agenda as presented. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.

Public Comment:
J. Looze pointed out a misleading sign off Ridge Road that marks a trailhead for the trails at Whiting Park but there is no parking space at that location. Staff will investigate the signage issue and remove or relocate the sign as needed.

Approval of Minutes:
B. Williams asked about the proposed rule change regarding the requirement to have bow and stern anchors on boats anchored at Whiting Park. K. Stark said that will be discussed later under “Whiting Park Rule Changes- Status Update”.

Motion was made by A. Wilkin to accept the Minutes of the March 18, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by S. Vrondran. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

S. Vrondran asked to have “16 years” of service added to the April 15th minutes on page 8 as well
as “R. Maxwell was presented with outdoor gifts as a token of Parks Committee Members and Staff appreciation for his work”.

Motion was made by T. Wieland to accept the Minutes of the April 15, 21019 meeting with the additions suggested above. Motion was seconded by S. Vrondran. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

**Introduction of New Parks Operations Manager:**
K. Stark introduced the new Parks Operations Manager Mariah Penix:

- She started working at the park approximately one week ago.
- M. Penix recently graduated from Lake Superior State University with a bachelor’s degree in Parks and Recreation.
- She previously worked for the DNR as a Park Ranger and ran the park Explorer Program.
- M. Penix has been training with L. Richards in the park office and has been getting park maintenance training from Josh Cline.

K. Stark had all Parks Committee Members introduce themselves.

**Financial Reports:**
K. Stark reviewed the financial reports. She pointed out two larger expenses; one was to repair a pipe in the shower building that burst and the other was from the power sweeper removing rocks and debris from the trail. K. Stark said the trail will be powerswept each spring and it costs approximately $2,800.

D. Jason said he wished the trails could have been cleared sooner. K. Stark said she agrees, but between the power sweeper’s workload and the weather they were unable to do it until more recently.

K. Stark asked Parks Committee members if they had any further questions. D. Jason said he is still having trouble reading the financial reports. S. Vrondran asked if Becki King (the County’s Fiscal Officer) could come to the next meeting. K. Stark said she would see if that could be arranged.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Motion was seconded by C. Kobylczak. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

**Director’s Report:**
K. Stark reported the following:

- Her primary focus has been the transition in Staff.
- Staff has been getting all the parks up and running and K. Stark has been contacting all the service vendors.
- There have been a couple of campers already and building reservations have been coming in.

**Whiting Park Boat Launch – Status Update:**
K. Stark provided an update on the boat launch conceptual drawing and reviewed the plans with the
Parks Committee and members of the public.

B. Williams asked K. Stark to show community members previous drawings that do not display the new parking in the middle of the loop that allows for an alternate exit. K. Stark reviewed additional conceptual drawings.

E. Knop asked if someone would be directing traffic in and out of the launch. K. Stark said not at this time.

P. Larsen said a sign may be necessary if there is not going to be someone directing traffic.

B. Towne asked if there is a size limit on what size boat can use the launch and if so would there be a sign stating the size limit. K. Stark said there is no sign planned at this time and the launch can accommodate boats up to 26 feet long. B. Towne said he is concerned about the lack of limitation on size because he fears if there is no size limit the launch will be utilized for large boats and will be inaccessible to locals. B. Williams explained that we must accommodate boats up to 26 feet long in order to qualify for the grant we received from the DNR Waterways. B. Towne said he wasn’t aware of that.

A community member asked if the boat launch would be plowed in the winter. K. Stark said yes.

D. Lockman asked if there were cost estimates for the boat launch project. K. Stark said the most recent conceptual drawing is priced out at approximately $275,000. She said we currently have a grant for $89,000. K. Stark explained an additional grant opportunity through the DNR Waterways that will fund up to 50% of the project cost.

D. Lockman asked when construction will begin. K. Stark said the plan was to begin construction this fall, but if we wait until next fall we can apply for the additional DNR Waterways grant.

B. Williams asked how much the previous drawing would cost to build without the parking in the middle of the loop and the alternate exit. K. Stark said $250,000.

D. Looze said it’s worth waiting another year if it means a better boat launch will be put in.

D. Lockman asked if the DEQ is okay with the boat launch location. K. Stark said the DEQ made a preliminary site visit to assess 3 different potential locations in the park for the boat launch and they did not raise any red flags.

J. Looze asked if the County had looked into the cost of drainage. K. Stark said that the engineer has looked at drainage.

D. Jason asked if the wetlands were mapped. K. Stark said the wetlands are outlined on the conceptual drawings.

B. Towne suggested having Steve Voice look at the location for the projected boat launch now, because the conditions of the wetland are going to be different now than they are in the fall.
D. Looze said ice could potentially damage the boat launch. K. Stark said the dock would be removed from the launch in the fall and put back in the spring.

P. Larsen thanked K. Stark for applying for grants to get the boat launch project done.

J. Looze suggested adding on to the parking in the center of the loop to eliminate backing into parking spaces.

D. Lockman asked where the gate for the campground was. K. Stark pointed out where the gate would be moved on the conceptual drawing.

B. Towne asked if neighboring residents have been made aware of the potential boat launch. K. Stark said they will be made aware if they don’t already know. K. Stark said additional trees can be planted as a buffer as needed.

A community member said he liked the plan and thinks all ideas are good.

D. Lockman asked when we could apply for the additional grant money. K. Stark said next spring and we would receive funding in August or September of 2020. K. Stark discussed funding options for the boat launch.

D. Looze asked if there will be a fee to use the boat launch. K. Stark said there will be a fee to launch boats and that fee will be used to maintain the launch.

E. Knop said the funds that are collected from boat launch should go towards hiring someone to direct traffic at the launch.

J. Looze said he thinks a lot of people will pull their boats out at night instead of leaving them anchored for safety purposes.

**Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail Status Report**

K. Stark reported the following:

- **Phase One**
  - The trail was powerswept this month.
  - The new landscaping is to be planted along the trail within the Boyne City limits by Memorial Day weekend.

B. Williams asked if Robinson’s was doing the landscaping. K. Stark said yes.

  - K. Stark is working on completing the declaration and notice form for the Trust Fund grant.

- **Phase Two**
  - The trail was powerswept this month.
  - K. Stark is working on completing the declaration and notice form for the Trust Fund grant.
  - K. Stark would like to discuss trail signage in the coming months.
• Phase Three
  o K. Stark submitted the Trust Fund grant application to the DNR.
  o Gosling Czubak was selected to do the design and construction engineering.
  o County Staff met with Gosling Czubak to review and discuss the project.
  o Gosling Czubak has begun project scoping to get familiar with the project.
  o K. Stark will be receiving assistance from Gosling Czubak to identify locations were easements can be sought to place the trail further from the road.
  o We need to explore options for a trailhead.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of revisiting the concept of a trailhead at Park of the Pines. K. Stark said there was concern regarding the limitations on what they could build on their property and they didn’t want the trailhead preventing them from developing other facilities. K. Stark said she talked with Ron Van Zee, the Bay Township Zoning Administrator, and he said he is willing to sit down with Park of the Pines and discuss what they can develop. B. Williams asked if we could get something in writing from the Township that explains things, so Park of the Pines may be more comfortable with moving forward with a trailhead.

C. Kobylczak said all factions should get involved regarding a trailhead at Park of the Pines. K. Stark said she would like to start a conversation with Park of the Pines again.

S. Vrondran asked if K. Stark had talked with the school or church in Horton Bay. K. Stark said yes and she’s to the point where she needs to sit down with them.

D. Jason said we need to pursue trying to get a trailhead at Park of the Pines. K. Stark said it would be a separate project, and there are Park of the Pines local board meetings in June and September where we could discuss the trailhead with them again.

New Business
Recreation Plan Update
K. Stark said we received bid proposals from two firms (LIAA (Land Information Access Association) and Beckett and Raeder). The Planning Commission interviewed both firms at their May 2019 meeting and recommended Beckett and Raeder. Both firms had comparable rates. LIAA’s proposal seemed to include projects that were not the County’s focus and Beckett and Raeder’s focus was more on allowing the County to determine the direction for a final decision.

K. Stark took the Planning Commission’s recommendation to the Personnel Committee meeting and they supported the Planning Commission’s recommendation. The proposals will be going to the Board of Commissioners on Wednesday May 22, 2019.

The consultant will come to some Parks Committee meetings and Planning Commission meetings.

D. Jason asked when the firm will begin providing assistance. K. Stark said as soon as we have received approval from the Board of Commissioners.

Capital Improvement Plan
K. Stark presented the Capital Improvement Plan from the current Recreation Plan, which had been
reorganized by facility.

S. Vrondran asked when the Recreation Plan needs to be submitted. K. Stark said by February 1, 2020; the preliminary draft needs to be done in November 2019.

D. Jason asked why there is a two-year gap between years of getting the trail done. K. Stark said because the time allows for planning and grant applications. Discussion took place regarding preliminary work that needs to be done prior to applying for grants.

B. Williams asked what the grant application timeline looks like. K. Stark said the new Capital Improvement Plan will help determine that. Discussion took place regarding project timelines.

D. Jason would like to know how much the preliminary engineering would cost for Phase 4 and 5 of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail.

B. Williams said there has been discussion about campground improvements at Whiting Park for over 8 years. K. Stark said the top priority has been completing the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail.

A. Wilkin asked if limited staffing is preventing more progress with grant applications. K. Stark said yes; however, the County just hired a grant writer on contract.

D. Jason asked if we could review the cost estimates for improvements at Whiting Park. K. Stark said it would be easier to break things down into smaller projects. The shower building renovation could be an easier stand-alone project.

**Whiting Park Rule Changes – Status Update**

K. Stark reviewed alternate options for Rule 5. The Board of Commissioners agreed to have campers leave the campground after staying for a period of two weeks; campers are welcome back after they have vacated the park for two weeks.

The Board of Commissioners liked changing checkout to 1:00pm instead of 3:00pm.

Regarding Rule 11, the Board of Commissioners does not support allowing dogs on the beach. B. Williams asked which Commissioners were against allowing dogs on the beach. K. Stark couldn’t remember, but the concerns brought up at the Board of Commissioners meeting were people not cleaning up after their pets and then others would come along and lay in the sand. Another concern was pet dander collecting on the sand.

R. Novotny exited the meeting.

The Board of Commissioners did not approve of requiring boaters to have both bow and stern anchors in Rule 15. They did not want to be liable for damaged boats and didn’t want to require campers to go out and purchase an additional anchor.

K. Stark said Bryan Graham (County Civil Counsel) has some ideas for rewording Rule 21 regarding firearms.
The Board of Commissioners would like Rule 24 changed to allow ORV’s in the campground, but they may only be driven for the specific purpose of leaving the park to reach a destination outside of the park boundaries.

K. Stark said for any of the rules to be enforced they must be adopted as an ordinance. The Board of Commissioners decided to have the rules put into an ordinance format. B. Graham is currently working on putting the rules into ordinance form. The new rules may be put in place this year.

Advocacy Report:
S. Vrondran said she is willing to go to an Eveline Township Board meeting or Planning Commission meeting to represent the County regarding the boat launch project.

T. Wieland asked if additional buffer along the property line could be added to the boat launch. K. Stark said yes.

Discussion took place regarding neighboring homeowners using the campground driveway.

S. Vrondran said there are some people that would like to form a “Friends of Whiting Park” group. She asked M. Penix if this is something they could collaborate on. M. Penix said yes. K. Stark said other Parks Staff would assist.

Meeting Schedule - Change Location for October 21st Meeting
K. Stark said Whiting Park closes on October 13th this year which is before the October Parks Committee Meeting. She would like to move the meeting to the East Jordan Fire Hall.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to change the October 21st Parks Committee meeting location to the East Jordan Fire Hall. Motion was seconded by C. Kobylczak. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

Public Comment
D. Jason welcomed M. Penix.

B. Williams said there are a lot of loggable trees down in the proposed boat launch area and asked if some of them could be logged; that would provide an additional funding source for the boat launch. K. Stark said that’s something to consider.

D. Jason said he ran into Lynn Stephens (Forester) and he is going to begin marking hardwoods again and should have them all marked by the end of June.

A. Wilkin said Charlevoix has been named the first of 4 trail towns in Michigan. It is now known as a “Pure Michigan Trail Town”. S. Vrondran asked how a trail becomes a Pure Michigan Trail. A. Wilkin said you apply through the DNR. T. Wieland asked what trail Charlevoix received the title for. A. Wilkin said she thinks it’s based on being a hub for multiple trails.

T. Wieland said construction has begun on the Traverse City to Charlevoix Trail.
C. Kobylczak asked if the County Building will be moving. K. Stark said yes, in a few years. Discussion took place regarding the new location of the County Building.

Meeting Adjourned:
A motion was made by S. Vrondran and seconded by C. Kobylczak to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54pm.

The next regular meeting will be at 5:30pm on June 17, 2019 at Thumb Lake Park.

Minutes Submitted by:
Lauren Richards