

Charlevoix County Parks Committee

Meeting Minutes

4/18/16

Charlevoix County Building, Commissioners' Room

Call to Order: The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:32 p.m. on 4/18/16 in Charlevoix by Chairperson S. Vron dran, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. All members present including Pete Gaskin, Caroline Kobylczak, Dennis Jason, Jessica Parks, Susan Vron dran, Tim Wieland, and Brian Williams. Staff: Director Ross Maxwell, Planning Coordinator Kiersten Stark. Absent: Shirley Roloff, Commissioner Liaison

Approval of Minutes: The March 21, 2016 meeting minutes were approved, after a brief discussion regarding the thoroughness of topics discussed in regards to the minutes.. Motion made by D. Jason and seconded by P. Gaskin.
Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: none

Financial Report:

After no discussion, a motion to approve the monthly financial was made by Pete Gaskin, and seconded by Caroline Kobylczak. Motion carried unanimously.

Directors Report

1. R. Maxwell reported on the operations of the Parks Department over the last month. There were a couple of trees that have fallen at Whiting Park. Both summer employees started as of today. Checked the other parks and the Little Traverse Wheelway. There is some maintenance that needs to happen on the Little Traverse Wheelway, i.e. trees down and railing repair deemed not dangerous.
2. Ross met with engineers and property owners on the Boyne City-Charlevoix Trail, came to an agreement with Mr. Heaton, agreement is not in writing, but the trail is in the road right of way, regardless.
3. There was a problem with Leonard Nelson's driveway that was damaged by the construction equipment.
4. There was a lull in construction during the "return of winter".
5. Met with Mr. Zitka, who had a drawn a future plan for the county property ("stump dump" used by the Road Commission) at the corner of Quarterline Road. The Road Commission does not want to give up the use of the property, and there

is a possibility that the trail would still fit in the road right of way. Ross stated that the County Building and Grounds Committee was aware of this, but ~~he~~ **they** didn't want to start trading property for the trail, as it would set a precedent. Discussion followed about land owners who wanted to have trees replaced between the trail and their property. The consensus was that if the trees were on the right of way, that the County was not responsible to replace them, but we could help them locate a local vendor.

6. There still is not a construction bid letting date for Phase Two of the trail, until the County Internal Government Committee meeting is held and the issue of the trail location along the Zitka property is resolved.
7. There was discussion between Ross and Park of the Pines, for a trail head on their property in Phase #3.
8. Ross had his evaluation with Kevin Shepard (the County Administrator), and also went to the MDOT Bicycle –pedestrian meeting to meet with contractors, and trail experts.
9. There was discussion about why Ross was going to the Internal Government Committee meeting as opposed to the Building and Grounds Committee meeting. He stated that the time frame of their monthly meetings was such that we couldn't wait until the next Building and Grounds Committee meeting to resolve the issue of the trail location along the Zitka property. Also, County Staff was not aware that the trail easements needed to be notarized at signing, which also delayed the project.
10. Denny asked if there is an up-to-date set of plans for the trail project, to which Ross responded that County Staff does not have the latest version of the plans.

The Director's Report was approved with a motion by D. Jason and seconded by P. Gaskin. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business

1. Ross talked with Kevin Shepard about a pay increase for the seasonal park employees. Ross stated that they are worth the pay increase because they can cut down trees that would have to be hired out to clear, but assured that the county was insured for them to do that.
2. Ross had his evaluation with Kevin Shepard also. There was discussion about comparison with other local county Park Directors including housing that Ross has as a benefit. It was concluded that Ross does more with planning for improvements to county parks and grant writing with the trail responsibility than any one has done in the past. T. Wieland questioned whether the grant writing was a responsibility of the Parks Director in the job description. Ross stated that

he took over the lead on the project based on financial questions from the commissioners at the time.

3. D. Jason questioned what the match would be for the improvements to Whiting Park. Ross stated that it would be \$300,000-400,000, depending on what was done, but then moved back to the Boyne City-Charlevoix trail.
4. Kiersten was questioned about the status of the Parks brochure. She stated she had not spent much time on that, due to the new County website, which should go live in early May, but stated that we may still want to consider a parks only brochure.
5. A letter of support for Eveline Township's grant application to purchase property at Evergreen Point for a nature preserve was sent in and is pending.
6. Peaine Township's grant application to the Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program to develop the Beaver Island Water Trail is still pending.

New Business:

Parks Millage Applications

1. There were sixteen applications that were reviewed and scored by the Parks Millage Work Group, and then the Work Group made funding recommendations. Kiersten stated that the County Board would like the Parks Committee's input on the funding recommendations.
2. There was discussion about what should happen with applicants that request more than the suggested \$10,000 limit.
3. B. Williams expressed that the county may be better served by using the funds to make renovations to Whiting Park, so it could be a money maker, or at least self-sufficient.
4. MOTION by Dennis Jason, seconded by Pete Gaskin, to support the Parks Millage Work Group's funding recommendations, except for the City of Boyne City's application for the Veteran's Memorial Park Pavilion, which should be funded in the amount of \$10,000 to be consistent with the funding of other projects where the community requested more funds, but the Work Group recommended less; and to further recommend that Hudson Township's application for funds to treat the Eurasian Water Milfoil on Thumb Lake should be funded at \$10,000 as requested because 1) the Eurasian Water Milfoil will decimate the water quality and recreational value of the lake, directly impacting Thumb Lake Park, and 2) Hudson Township previously owned the property that is now Thumb Lake Park, so their application would have qualified for consideration, but the Township gave their property to the County. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.
All other non-recommended applications were rejected.

5. Discussion followed about how long the monies given from the county to the local communities could stay in “limbo” before actually being used. Kiersten said this issue is addressed in the contract/agreement signed between the county and the local community. S. Vrondran asked if there is a plaque up for any of the grants that have been given in the past. Kiersten said she was wasn’t sure if any of the plaques had been put up yet, as this part of the program is handled by the County Administrator’s office.
6. K. Stark was questioned by S. Vrondran why the first time applicants last year were “guided” through the application process, while this year’s first-time applicants were not. Kiersten stated that last year (2015) was the first year of the program. It was new to everyone, so more leeway was given. The county also held an informational session on the application process last fall. A check list is also included in the application packet to help applicants ensure that they’ve included all required items.

New Website Update

1. Kiersten showed the Committee the new County Website that will come online in early May. The new site will be more user friendly.
2. There were critiques about the township listings and the background of the main page. Kiersten stated that she would work with Ross to fine tune the Parks Department pages to his preference.

New Parks Employee

Ross stated that Robert Brown, the new Parks employee, started work today.

Other Items

The honorary plaques for the Eagle Scouts are in and a photo shoot will be set up for the dedication. The next meeting was moved to Whiting Park, from Thumb Lake. It was suggested that everyone chip in \$4.00 for Pizza at the meeting.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m. by S. Vrondran. The next meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. on May 16, 2016, at Whiting Park.

Minutes submitted by: Tim Wieland
Secretary