CHARLEVOIX COUNTY PARKS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES
Monday – September 16, 2019
Meeting Location:
Green Building
Whiting Park
05820 Lake Shore Rd.
Boyne City, MI 49712

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

Members Absent: None

Staff: Parks & Planning Director Kiersten Stark, Administrative Assistant Linda Prescott, Parks Manager David Bertinelli, Assistant Parks Manager Mariah Penix and County Commissioner Shirley Roloff

Public: None

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:
The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:30 pm on September 16, 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 S. Vrondran and seconded by C. Kobylczak to approve the Agenda as presented. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.

Introduction of New Staff:
K. Stark introduced two new staff members to the Parks Committee: David Bertinelli, who is the new Parks Operations Manager and Linda Prescott, who is the new Administrative Assistant in the Parks and Planning Department. Lauren Richards has moved to the Equalization Department but is still covering the Parks office a couple of days a week until the end of the season. There are now two management positions in the Parks, David is the Manager and Mariah will be the Assistant Manager.
Public Comment:
None.

Approval of Minutes:
Motion was made by Tim Wieland to accept the Minutes of the August 19, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by Ryan Novotny. Voice Vote, All in favor. Motion passed.

Financial Reports:
K. Stark reported that all of the information is now on one report as requested at a previous meeting. She reviewed the Parks budget report. The Committee also received the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail budget report.

T. Wieland asked why the phone bill is $2,000 higher than it was last year at this time. K. Stark said there was a problem when the cell phone for the Park Manager was set up. The phone number assigned to the Manager’s cell phone was a local toll call from the Park Office. So, whenever a call came into the main park line and then was automatically forwarded to the Park Manager’s cell phone, we were charged for local toll charges. K. Stark disputed the charges with AT&T because we pay for a phone package that includes call forwarding. They said that in order for them to waive those local toll charges, we would have to either sign up for long distance service with them or let them know who we would be using for long distance. At the same time, the county decided that they were probably not going to be staying with AT&T for phone service at the park. Further discussion took place. The Park Manager’s cell number has been changed, so it’s a local call now when calls are forwarded from the Park office.

D. Jason asked if we are still going to buy a tractor for Whiting Park. K. Stark said that before he retired, Ross Maxwell had done some research and selected a new tractor. However, she would like D. Bertinelli and Josh Cline to review the proposal, before the tractor is actually purchased, and make sure that it will adequately serve the needs of the parks. The purchase has been approved in the budget but will still need to be approved by the Building and Grounds Committee. It has also been included in the FY 2020 budget, just in case it doesn’t happen before the end of this fiscal year.

D. Jason thinks we need to move forward and is concerned about how long it is taking to purchase this piece of equipment.

D. Bertinelli said that he and J. Cline will get some pricing together. D. Jason said there are already guidelines put together for them to work with.

K. Stark said there weren’t any expenses for the trail in August, however, S. Vrondran had asked at the last meeting about getting a report on where we are with the trail expenses and K. Stark said she is still working on that with the fiscal officer.

K. Stark said that last month S. Vrondran had asked about a budget report for the Parks millage. K. Stark requested a budget report and was given information explaining that this is the 5th year of the Parks millage and every year $100,000 is allocated. Since the beginning, $500,000 has been awarded. S. Vrondran said she is aware of that but would like to see an itemized report showing what has actually been spent. K. Stark said the reason she did not receive a report is that there is a difference between what was appropriated and what has actually been spent. The county board has appropriated $451,884.75 to date, but that figure would not show up on a financial report because they haven’t actually spent that money yet. Each township, as they complete their project, submits receipts and is reimbursed for their expenses. Not all the projects...
have been completed, so less than that has actually been expensed to date. The difference between the $500,00 that has come in and been allocated since the beginning of the Parks millage, and the amount that has been appropriated ($451,884.75) is $48,115.25. That is the amount of money that has not been appropriated and gets carried over every year, unless we get a year where we get more projects, and more is appropriated.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Motion was seconded by T. Wieland. Voice Vote, All in favor. Motion passed.

**Director’s Report:**
K. Stark said Whiting Park will be closing a week early this season to allow staff extra time to complete some maintenance projects at both Whiting Park and Thumb Lake Park. Whiting Park will close on October 7, 2019. At the time that decision was made, that was the latest reservation that had been taken, so there will be no disruption to any camping reservations or building rentals.

M. Penix said that the beach has been repaired again where there have been some erosion issues.

D. Bertinelli said that he doesn’t have anything to report yet, but he will next month once he has been here a little longer.

K. Stark said that one of the projects that needs to be worked on is to rebuild the ramp and the platform in front of the Park Office. This can be taken care of as soon as the Park closes. There are also some tree branches that need to be trimmed, erosion issues that need to be addressed and some projects in the buildings that need to be taken care of.

D. Jason asked about rip rap on the shoreline where there are some erosion issues. He asked if the DEQ or the Corp of Engineers had been contacted. K. Stark said not yet, we will need to have someone come in and take a look and give a recommendation on what we need to do first. There was discussion on what the options might be to take care of this issue.

**Old Business**

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

K. Stark reviewed the status report for the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail project:

- **Phase I**
  - A second site visit was held at the Grams property last week to discuss trail-related soil erosion issues and potential solutions. The engineer that had gone on the first site visit has taken a job elsewhere and is no longer with Gosling Czubak, so it was important for the new engineer to see first hand what the problems are.
  - Staff is working on the Declaration & Notice document for final Trust Fund grant reimbursement. Assistance was needed from civil counsel and that is being worked on now.
  - Fence repair along the trail adjacent to the Grams property was completed in August. Staff reported that the holes where the old fence posts were cut off flush with the top of the wall were left hollow. Maintenance can pour cement in those posts so that we don’t experience freezing and thawing problems in the future. The replacement fence looks the same as the original.

- **Phase 2**
  - Staff is working on the Declaration & Notice document for final Trust Fund grant reimbursement.
Phase 3
- The County Board approved the engineering services contract with Gosling Czubak.
- We received our preliminary score from the DNR on the Trust Fund Grant for Phase 3. The preliminary score is 320. They pointed out a few spots where we could earn some added points by submitting additional information or more detail about things that we already submitted. That information will need to be submitted by October 1, 2019, and we should find out in November what the recommendation is on whether we will get funded.

Upcoming Work:
- Gosling Czubak is still planning on having a walk-through tour, but it has not been scheduled yet. It will include the Project Engineer, County Staff, Parks Committee Chair and Road Commission Staff.

Phase 4
- D. Jason spoke to Mike Dow who owns approximately 1,400 feet of frontage along the road. He is willing to give the County an easement, but only up to the existing fence. M. Dow is also selling the parcel that runs along the lake. The Little Traverse Conservancy will have control over the back portion of the property and M. Dow suggested that the County should talk to them. D. Jason suggested that after the sale is complete and the Little Traverse Conservancy has control over that part of the property, we could talk to them and see about the possibility of winding that trail further off the road similar to the state park. D. Jason recommended the County wait until the deal is finalized with M. Dow and the new owners and then get with the Conservancy and talk about how it might work to wind the trail further behind the fence. Another possibility would be to relocate the fence, although it would be expensive, so that people that have property on the lake would still be protected like they are now. K. Stark talked with Kieran Fleming, the new director for the Conservancy. She asked if there would still be a possibility for the County to work with the Conservancy and the new owner to obtain an easement. K. Fleming said he will do some research and see where the conversation left off before he was involved.

S. Roloff asked about the flexible delineators along the Boyne City/Charlevoix Road near See Road, noting they could be a hazard in the winter. She is concerned that people won’t see them and could run into them. K. Stark said these types of poles are called flexible delineators and they were required to be put in by the Charlevoix County Road Commission. Since they are flexible, they would “give” if someone were to hit them, however, they may still do some damage. It was also noted they have reflective tape on them for increased visibility.

Whiting Park Hardwood Timber Harvest Status Update
K. Stark said that last week she went to the County Board’s Building and Grounds Committee meeting and they approved releasing the bid request for the timber harvest.

Last Friday, September 13, Lynn Stephens sent out the bid request to 7 different logging companies. The potential bidders have until September 23 to go to the Park and make their own assessment of the timber stand and submit a bid. After the bids are received and reviewed by L. Stephens, he will make a recommendation which K. Stark will take to the Building & Grounds Committee on October 2. The recommendation will go to the full Board for approval on October 9th. The harvest can begin anytime after mid-October and will have to be done by May 2. K. Stark distributed copies of the bid request forms for information and reference.
Whiting Park Boat Launch Project Status Update

K. Stark said that the County Board approved the engineering services agreement with Performance Engineers for $41,500, which also includes environmental consulting services at $6,525. This environmental consulting fee includes putting together all of the documents and information necessary for the EGLE permit. A large part of the permitting process is developing the analysis that demonstrates that we considered alternatives to impacting the wetlands as much as possible.

Aaron Nordman, the engineer, will update the project schedule so we will know what to expect between now and the end of next year. Construction will most likely happen next September or October. Detailed design engineering will be done over the next year as well as the development of the EGLE permit application and extra documents that go along with it.

K. Stark said that at the last meeting, B. Williams had requested that the Committee discuss the boat launch fee at this meeting. She has not had a chance to do any research on that yet, but she asked B. Williams if he had information he wanted to share.

B. Williams shared information regarding boat launch fees at various area boat launches and recommended that the County should have comparable fees.

S. Vrondran asked how this launch fee would be managed since this will not be a manned boat launch. B. Williams suggested a lock box system which operates on the “honor system”.

T. Wieland is concerned that there might be some complaints from the local fishermen who will feel that they are already being taxed for the park system and now have to pay more for launch fees. S. Vrondran said that the fishermen should have some input and B. Williams agreed.

D. Jason said that there is quite a bit of time before this issue has to be resolved. Discussion took place regarding how different townships and cities handle this and how the monies collected are tracked and earmarked.

D. Jason asked when the decision phase would be done and whether or not there is a time limit. K. Stark said she will have more information at the next meeting. A. Nordman will be updating the project schedule, and this will include when S. Voice expects to submit the application to EGLE and the steps A. Nordman will be going through to complete the detailed design.

S. Vrondran asked when the grant deadline is. K. Stark said the deadline is April 1st and she will be working with A. Nordman and S. Voice to make sure they have whatever they need to submit the application.

D. Jason recommended that there should be a time limit on the contract with S. Voice. K. Stark said S. Voice is subcontracted by Performance Engineers because A. Nordman was concerned that the County might not be eligible for reimbursement through the Waterways grants for S. Voice’s environmental fees if there was a separate agreement from the engineering contract.

Recreation Plan Status Update

K. Stark said that the first public input session was held on August 19th with about 15 to 16 people in attendance. Carrie Klingelsmith, the Planner, had poster boards around the room featuring each of the parks. There was space on each of the boards for people to put sticky notes with their comments on what they would like to see at each of the parks, or things that they like about what is already there. The second input session is planned for this Thursday, September
19th, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at the Charlevoix Library. In addition to the park poster boards, C. Klingelsmith will also have poster boards with all the projects listed from the capital improvement section of the current Recreation Plan. Attendees will be able to comment on the level of importance of each project.

B. Williams asked when the new deadline is to have the surveys in. K. Stark said the deadline has been extended to September 30.

K. Stark reported that as of today, we have received 214 survey responses.

A third public input session has been scheduled on Beaver Island on Thursday, September 26, from 2:00 – 4:00 pm at the Peaine Township Hall. C. Klingelsmith, K. Stark and K. Shepard will be flying over to the island that morning. They will tour the lighthouse property first, hold the public input session from 2:00 to 4:00 pm (which she expects will primarily focus on the lighthouse property) and then fly back in the late afternoon. K. Stark is anticipating receiving some very valuable input about what people want to see at that property.

S. Vrondran asked if there is a cost overrun for C. Klingelsmith to hold the third public input session on the Island. K. Stark said that this trip will be an additional cost and the County will be paying for her flight over to the island. S. Vrondran asked how much over budget she is currently. K. Stark replied that she is not overbudget at this time.

D. Jason asked if the Beaver Island Lighthouse property is going to part of the Park system and if it will be fully under the county’s purview or if it will also be under Networks Northwest. K. Stark said that the County owns 51% and Networks Northwest owns 49%. Currently, everyone is working together, and the expectation is that this will be a county park property.

K. Stark said that one of the things that has been discussed is that there was a rustic campground on the property in the past. There is interest in getting the campground back up and running again. It would be a rustic campground with approximately 10 campsites. There is currently a working well pump and two vault toilets which would have to be cleaned up to be usable.

B. Williams asked if the Parks Committee will have some input on this project. K. Stark said yes.

S. Vrondran asked if this could be a stop along the Beaver Island Water Trail. K. Stark was supportive of that possibility.

S. Roloff said that the County Commissioners purchased this because they would like this for Charlevoix County. There are a lot of people on the island that are supporting this as well and volunteering to help. She said that in 10 years, the County will be able to purchase the remaining 49% interest in the property from Networks Northwest.

C. Kobylczak asked if the Parks Committee would be kept up to date on the progress of this project. K. Stark said she would bring information to the Parks Committee meetings and they will also be discussing it as part of the Recreation Plan update.

B. Williams asked if the funds used to purchase this property came out of County funds or Parks funds. S. Roloff said it was County funds. B. Williams asked if the remodeling and repair costs are being paid with County or Park funds. S. Roloff said they are being paid out of the County General Fund. B. Williams asked where the revenue from the apartment rental would go. S.
Roloff said that was too far in the future and that has not been determined yet. D. Jason said he feels it should go into the Park funds to support the Park since it is part of the County Park system.

A. Wilkin said that she thinks there is some confusion about what the Parks Committee role is when it comes to projects like this. There was discussion regarding the Parks Committee’s role and how it has changed over the years.

D. Jason said that he is pleased that the County bought the lighthouse property and that they had the funds available to do that. He is hoping that the Parks Committee will have a part in the operation and development of this property in the future.

**New Business**

S. Vrondran asked when the Parks and Recreation Plan was due. K. Stark said it is due February 1, 2020. S. Vrondran asked if there were any other specific deadlines that the Committee should be aware of. K. Stark said there are no other deadlines. C. Klingelsmith has been working on updating some of the other sections and has sent them to the Parks and Planning Department for review. S. Vrondran asked if the Parks Millage funds that have been awarded will be listed in the new Recreation Plan. K. Stark said there will be more information about the Parks Millage included in the updated Recreation Plan, and the Parks Committee can decide how much detail they would like to include.

D. Jason said that he has talked with residents in Boyne Valley Township regarding their trail from Boyne City to Boyne Falls. They have a contract to have it done, but they are short $150,000. He is not sure if they generated the additional funds to cover the total cost yet or not. They were hoping to start this fall, but it looks like they are not going to be able to do that now.

**Advocacy Report:**

No reports given.

**Public Comment**

B. Williams asked if there was an update on the Wi-Fi for Whiting Park. K. Stark said she does not have any new information on that. She will check with K. Shepard’s office for an update. B. Williams said it was in the budget two years ago, but then they took it out. He asked if that can be put on the Agenda for next month.

**Adjourn**

A motion was made by A. Wilkin and seconded by S. Vrondran to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 pm by Chairman Jason.

The next regular meeting will be at 5:30pm on October 21, 2019 at the East Jordan Fire Hall.

**Minutes Submitted by:**

Linda Prescott