

Charlevoix County Parks Committee

Meeting Minutes

09/18/2017

Members Present:

Committee members: Susan Vrondran, Tim Wieland, Pete Gaskin, Dennis Jason, Jessica Parks, Caroline Kobylczak, Brian Williams

Staff: County Commissioner Liaison Shirley Roloff, Planning Coordinator Kiersten Stark, Parks Director Ross Maxwell, County Clerk/Fiscal Officer Cherie Browe

Guests: Aaron Nordman (Performance Engineers), Lynn Stephens (Forester), Dave Boyle (Northwest Design Group), Ron Rushton (Northwest Design Group), Bob Jess, Don Lockman, John Vrondran, Eric Knop, Dave Olach, and others

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:

The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:30 pm on 09/18/2017 at Whiting Park by Dennis Jason, with recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Motion was made by P. Gaskin to accept the agenda. Motion was seconded by B. Williams. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion was made by S.Vrondran to accept the consent agenda to include the minutes of the August 21st meeting, the Financial reports and the Director's report. Motion was seconded by T. Wieland. Motion passed.

Public Comment

Bob Jess commented on the retaining wall placed in the right-of-way at See Road, adjacent to his property and wants to know why the plans for the boulder wall that were presented to Hayes Township citizens not followed.

At the last Parks Committee meeting, the Committee voted to recommend replacing the segmental wall with a boulder wall, as indicated in the project plans. The County Board discussed the issue and sent it back to the Parks Committee for further review.

Whiting Park Boat Launch

Aaron Nordman, Performance Engineers, attended the meeting at no cost to the committee. R. Maxwell and A. Nordman presented a drawing showing an alternative

location for a boat launch north of the campground. They emphasized that the north area would be a better solution because it would separate all of the different recreation uses along the waterfront, including the campground, swim area, and boating area. The DEQ will need to evaluate the north site due to the presence of wetlands.

Several fishermen attended to advocate for a boat launch at Whiting Park. Several spoke to what they would prefer see happen. Different options for the location of the launch were discussed, including south of the swimming beach, at the existing kayak launch, and north of the campground. Comments were made that Whiting park is a rustic park that will mainly be accessed with smaller boats. A letter from the Paga family was read to the committee in support of a boat launch north of the campground. A question arose regarding the grant funds and how long the grant will be available. C. Browe stated the grant funds do not expire. The Boyne City Fire Chief voiced concerns about getting pumper trucks down to the lake to pump water in case of emergencies. Other comments and requests included:

- Boat launch to be open 24 hours/day
- Use existing kayak launch area where parking is available
- Use allocated grant money
- Swim area is too large, need to re-evaluate
- Concerns regarding grade/slipperiness of the entrance road to access a launch at the north end due to steep incline of the area

R. Maxwell and A. Nordman will continue to work out the details for a proposed launch. C. Browe said a typed memo to the County Board is needed for any actions the Board needs to take.

Whiting Park Forest Management

Lynn Stephens, Forester, was invited to present a plan to the Committee for harvesting timber at Whiting Park. Three (3) objectives were reviewed- generate revenue for park projects, proactive forest health plan, and remove hazards. L. Stephens suggested red pine clearing is a good start and can be done quickly with market price good right now. High quality Northern hardwoods are also present in the Park and could be harvested. Committee agreed that all funds from timber harvesting should remain strictly for Whiting Park. C. Browe will look into this. S. Vron dran would like to ensure that measures are taken to prevent damage to the existing areas in the Park during timber harvesting. D. Jason stated the 12% fee for the Forester's services is reasonable and we should move forward with the timber sale.

Motion was made by S. Vron dran to recommend to the County Board we contract with Lynn Stephens, Forester, for timber sale at Whiting Park . Motion seconded by B. Williams. Motion passed.

Parks Budget

Cherie Browe, County Clerk/Fiscal Officer, attended the meeting to review the history of the Parks Budget. Documents were distributed to the Committee for review. Kiersten noted that all overages for the trail project will come out of the Parks budget. B. Williams questioned the 313K spent in 2009, and those funds were for Whiting Park improvements.

Dave Boyle, NDG – Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-Motorized Trail

Dave Boyle and Ron Rushton from Northwest Design Group (NDG) attended the meeting to explain the events leading up to the decision to construct a segmental retaining wall instead of a boulder retaining wall at See Road. A photo of the wall was projected for the Committee to view. D. Boyle and R. Rushton explained that the wall had to accommodate a utility vault (box) that is also located within the road right-of-way. After reviewing the slope of the ground (incline), limited space available within the road right-of-way, and the height of the wall that was needed to screen the utility box from view, Northwest Design Group had recommended a segmental retaining wall instead of a boulder wall for stability and maintenance. D. Boyle said the Road Commission (Staff) was consulted during the process and they were supportive of the change to a segmental retaining wall. NDG had also contacted K. Stark, the County Planning Coordinator, with their recommendation and for authorization to make the change. K. Stark had authorized making the change to a segmental wall, based on the recommendation of NDG. S. Roloff reported that at the Building and Grounds Committee meeting, a motion was made to leave the segmental wall in place to ensure no additional costs. R. Rushton noted that an error was made in the height of the wall at the west end (closest to See Road), which will be corrected by Elmer's at no additional cost. K. Stark stated she had been asked by the County Board to oversee the trail project and she had given authorization to NDG to go ahead with a segmental wall. She noted that changes are often necessary during construction and not all changes can be vetted through committees beforehand due to time constraints. B. Jess, property owner adjacent to the wall, stated his concerns and inquired why the utility box cannot be moved back. He also questioned other utility box placements along the trail, and noted a lack of communication to the property owners and community.

Motion was made by T. Wieland to recommend keeping the retaining wall as is with punch list fixes to be completed . Motion seconded by J. Parks. Motion passed with one vote in opposition.

Old Business

Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail Status Report

K. Stark provided the Committee with the status report. Key points included:

PHASE I

- A sediment tube will be placed at the Grams property for storm water control
- Benches have been installed. R. Maxwell provided pictures for the Committee to view.
- NDG reported that a barrier between the trail and the retaining wall within the Boyne City limits is recommended, based on trail development guidelines used by MDOT. NDG suggested planting shrubbery as a barrier, but did not recommend a fence due to drainage ways associated with the retaining wall that were installed underground, behind the wall.
Motion was made by S. Vrondran to recommend placing shrubbery as a barrier between the trail and the retaining wall within the Boyne City limits. Motion seconded by B. Williams. Motion passed.

Whiting Park Wi-Fi

R. Maxwell reported that Aspen Wireless recently visited Whiting Park, and they're putting together a quote for providing Wi-Fi at the park.

New Business

Parks Committee member terms are expiring at the end of this year for B. Williams, S. Vrondran, and P. Gaskin. The members need to send a letter of interest to the County Commissioners by October 1, 2017 to be considered for reappointment.

Public Comment

B. Jess stated the letter/minutes from the Road Commission on approval was after-the-fact and he believes a bait and switch occurred, and approval was by only one person at the County. He stated a process change needs to occur so not only one person at the County is approving changes. He will pursue his complaint with the County Board. Dave Olach voiced his concerns regarding comments made earlier by B. Jess.

Other Comments

D. Jason stated that, 10 years ago, the Parks Committee was a Parks & Recreation Commission made up of residents and County officials, and they had control over their own budget.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm by Dennis Jason. The next regular meeting will be at 5:30 pm on October 16, 2017 at Whiting Park.

Minutes submitted by: J. Parks