

Minutes of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee
Monday ----July 17, 2017, 5:30 pm
Whiting County Park

Members Present: Pete Gaskin, Dennis Jason, Susan Vron dran, Tim Wieland and Brian Williams.
Absent Members: Caroline Kobylczak and Jessica Parks County Commissioner Liaison: Shirley Roloff
Staff: Director Ross Maxwell; Absent : Kiersten Stark

Guests: Gretchen Stelter, and sixty plus Charlevoix County Residents advocating for a small (20 foot) Boat Launch and concerns to coordinate for swimmer's safety.

Call to Order: The monthly meeting was called to order by Chairperson D Jason at 5:31 PM, with recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

T Wieland made the motion of the Approval of Agenda, seconded by B Williams. Motion passed.

Public Comment: The Audience was informed that they could comment at this time but would not have much opportunity for input after we went into Old Business. Guest comments: Lou Marusell submitted a packet of 200 signatures entitled "Replacement request of Charlevoix County Park Boat Ramp/Launch". He started the public comments with stating he felt many residents would like to have the boat launch replaced.

Dennis Amesbury, Firechief of Boyne City, expressed this would be another access to get water for emergency since the Ridge Road access is frequently not working.

Susan Le Vasseir, Swim School Director, commented on safety concerns with boats encroaching into the swim area frequently.

Sheri Patton, bus driver for the Swim School also commented about the boats anchoring near by were a factor of safety concerns with swimmers from those boats. Another Guest pointed out this was a water Patrol responsibility.

Keith Hausler and Don Lockman brought up the fact that the original boat launch should not have been removed since the campers and other boaters depended on this service and wanted to know who made the decision to remove it and replace it with a handicap kayak launch?

Shirley Roloff commented that the present Parks Committee Members were not serving at that time and that the County Board of Commissioners decided to remove the launch because of the safety of the 4-H Swim School.

Director Ross Maxwell defended the decision of not having a launch for the public at Whiting Park since there was one two miles east at Sommerset Pointe and he had made a deal for the campers to have that access.

Charles Ratliff, a resident of Advance, commented that presently the gates are locked at 8 PM and there are discussions of shutting off use to the public altogether.

John Cosier agreed that the Sommerset Launch was not a valid alternative since he experienced being locked in with his boat just last week. B Williams stated the same happened to him.

Brian Towne, adjacent land owner to Whiting Park, questioned why the handicap launch for kayaking was installed when it seldom gets used thus it is a waste of tax funds. He has observed many boats anchoring there so this would be a concern, however he was in favor of a small boat launch to replace the much used boat launch from before.

Don Lockman pointed out that he had never heard of a public launch being removed and not being replaced. He also wanted to know how much revenue was loss because of campers not returning due to the lack of this service. Don also wanted to know what happened to the cement pads from the original launch.

Derby Hayden, nearby land owner of Whiting Park, said the cement pads were given away to anyone who wanted them. He said a small boat ramp needed to be at our county park with parking right across the road from that location with removal of the pine trees which could bring in some revenue to offset the costs.

Eric Knop, John Thompson, Joni Zucchiatti, John Looze, Wayne Sobleski, Woody Hardy and Henry Erber expressed a need for coordination with a small boat launch, boat traffic use and swim areas emphasizing safety for all areas working together positively on this Park.

George Lasater, county Commissioner, agreed safety was a must and this launch was needed since it was a distance from other launches and this should be free with a donation box at the site. He stated other resources of funding need to be obtained for the average citizen of Charlevoix County so we must 'keep feet to fire' to pursue this.

Pat Mitchell shared that the Walleye Group helped with the Boyne City Launch and with many other recreation facilities in Boyne City years ago. He said our County of this size should be able to raise \$89,000 for this Boat Launch.

Robin Berry, Clerk serving Melrose Township, said regulations of the Launch, depends on the grant obtained. Everyone needs to talk to the County Commissioners to find funds so citizens can use the Park and beach access more. A " Friends of Whiting Park" group is needed. She has read Perry Whiting's book realizing his gift of this property was his vision for the people of Charlevoix to care for the land for all the people.

Eric Larsen questioned what happens to the grant monies if Charlevoix County does not accept it for the Boat Launch at Whiting Park.

The question was asked of how much the fee would be for launching? Director Maxwell stated seven dollars (\$7). S Vrondran interjected with a statement "that is yet to be determined".

James Karlskin encouraged the Parks Committee to go see how well the folks on Burt Lake have worked on best use of many needs on the lake with their Boat Launch, being roped off, well marked and maintained.

S Vrondran made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda including approval of June 19, 2017 Minutes, Financial Reports and Director's Report, seconded by P Gaskin. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

> Boat Launch- Chairperson D Jason thanked the Citizens for attending and their input. Discussion concluded that we need more information 1) actual DNR Waterways requirement of minimum size of boats for the proposed Boat Launch Grant, 2) Sommerset's future commitment to accommodating the boat launching, parking and getting out of that site before dawn and after dark, 3) resources of funding, 4) Actual location of Boat Launch and parking for that use, 5) Water Patrolling/ Policing of multiple uses in the waterway around Whiting Park. P Gaskin made the motion seconded by T Wieland to table the decision for recommending the Boat Launch until this information is obtained. **Motion carried.**

> Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail Status Report

Upcoming Work for Phase 1: (3.04 miles)

>DNR reimbursement request: Project engineer's assistance to submit request to DNR and to complete paperwork

> Project engineer to draft letter to Mr. gram for storm water runoff issue

> Contractor to install sediment tube at top of driveway for storm water management

> provide photos of trail within Boyne City limits to DNR

> schedule conference call with DNR, MDOT and County Staff to discuss trail within Boyne City

limits

> Project engineer to draft letter to Mr. Davis concerning barrier along retaining wall within

Boyne City limits

> remove temporary snow fence and plant shrubs along retaining wall

> install the two (2) benches

Total Estimated Project Cost:.....\$1,189,587

Total Committed Funding for Phase 1:\$1,157,500

Phase 2 (2.97 miles)

Two of the local match contributors expressed interest in formally presenting their contributions for This phase - scheduled for July 12, 2017 to Co Bd of Comm.

Inviting other local match contributors to make formal presentations

Upcoming Work:

Trail construction planned through July 2017

Install benches and trail signs -- Summer 2017

Press release to thank all contributors to date (Phases 1 and 2)

Total Estimated Project Cost:.....\$1,287,740

Total Committed Funding for Phase 2:.....\$1,162,000

Phase 3 (2.83 miles)

Upcoming Work:

> develop long term plan, including cost estimates, for remainder of trail

> apply for TAP grant thru MDOT ---August 7, 2017

> Project engineer to update conceptual plan for trail route and trailhead at Park of the Pines

> provide updated conceptual plan to Park of the Pines for approval by their governing board--

Summer 2017

> seek zoning approval for the trailhead --Summer 2017

- > draw up easement document for a portion of trail and trailhead---Fall 2017
- > determine maintenance plan for the trailhead--Fall 2017
- > apply for remaining grants for this phase --Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Total Estimated Project Cost (Trail):.....\$964,000

Total Estimated Cost (Trailhead):.....\$131,000

Proposed Funding (Trail):.....\$964,00

Includes \$10,000 from Charlevoix County Parks Funds

Proposed Funding (Trailhead):.....\$131,000

Includes \$ 5,000 from Charlevoix County Parks Funds,

\$10,000 from North Country Bicycle Club/Top of Michigan Trails Council
and \$10,000 from Great Lakes Energy People Fund

Phase 4

Finalize plans for trail route---2017

Apply for grants ----2018

Status Report prepared by Kiersten Stark and Ross Maxwell

> Whiting Park Wi-Fi for campground:

Discussion about the need for high speed internet at the Park and lack of knowing what service coverage would actually be available. R Maxwell stated that he gets few requests for the service. Aspen Wireless appears to be the one to get more information from.

> Whiting Park modernization project:

L Stevens, forester, is scheduled in August to give the estimates for logging this park to off-set modernization costs

Director Maxwell will be attending the Government Committee of the County on July 19, 2017 to discuss both the Boat Launch and Modernization issues

> Benches for B/C Non-motorized Trail Phase 1 will be installed by September 1

> Shrub barrier for Phase 1 retaining wall:

S Vron dran made the motion to purchase the Spirea shrubs (\$1,176) by September 15, seconded by B Williams. Motion passed. Tim suggested that the shrubs be planted in early fall so they will get a better start and the fall rains.

New Business

> MSU Extension: Gretchen Stelter introduced herself as a new Staff Member of MSU Extension working out of the Boyne City Office. Gretchen offered to lead programs for 'Disease Prevention and Management', mostly for Seniors. Director Maxwell said the building rentals would be waived for these Programs to encourage citizens to use the Park Trails and improve their health and nutrition education. Gretchen left brochures and her contact number for us to work in coordination with the Health Department and other County Departments.

Public Comment:

> the "Much Obligated" article for the Petoskey News Review was presented to the Membership for the thank you to the 2017 Leadership Charlevoix Group's work.

> Chairperson Jason announced the anonymous, generous donation grant to the Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail Fund for \$250,000 from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation. The Members expressed appreciation!

Adjournment:

B Williams made the motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by P Gaskin. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: August 19, 2017 - 5:30 pm @ Whiting Park

We will be celebrating Whiting Park's 94th birthday!

Commissioner Roloff suggested that the Committee and Guests take a walk around the Park to envision enhancements and appreciate this quaint Park.

Submitted by Susan Vron dran, member of Parks Committee