MEETING MINUTES
Monday – February 17, 2020
Meeting Location:
Boyne District Library
(Lower Level Meeting Room)
Boyne City, MI 49712

Members Present:
Committee Members: Dennis Jason, Caroline Kobylczak, Ryan Novotny, Tim Wieland, and Brian Williams (arrived at 5:33 pm).

Members Absent: Susan Vrondran and Amanda Wilkin.

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

Public: Robert Boch and Don Lockman.

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:
The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:30 pm on February 17, 2020 at the Boyne District Library 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 R. Novotny to approve the Agenda as presented. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

Public Comment:
Don Lockman asked about the status of the application process for the new boat launch at Whiting Park. D. Jason said this will be covered later in the meeting under Agenda item “Old Business – Whiting Park Boat Launch Project – Status Update”.

Approval of Minutes:
Motion was made by R. Novotny to accept the Minutes of the January 13, 2020, meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by T. Wieland. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.
**Financial Report:**
K. Stark reviewed the financial report. We received some revenue for Building Reservations. There were expenses for refinishing the picnic tables for Thumb Lake Park. The Capital Outlay line item shows the purchase of a new laptop for the Parks Manager for $1,720. The Utilities line item is high compared to last years at this time due to the propane bill for heating the green building this winter. We will not be able to do this again next year because this is an uninsulated building and the cost to keep it open during the winter is too high. K. Stark suggested the possibility of putting a small addition on the maintenance shop which could be insulated and heated during the winter. This would allow staff to work on projects year-round, and particularly during the winter months when there is more time to get these projects completed.

B. Williams arrived at the meeting at 5:33 pm.

Motion was made by T. Wieland to accept the Financial Report as presented. Motion was seconded by D. Jason. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

**Park Manager’s Report:**
D. Bertinelli reviewed his report on park maintenance activities covering all of the parks over the previous month.

- **Timber Harvest** - There was discussion regarding the timber harvest at Whiting Park. The County currently has a signed contract with Matelski Lumber to complete the timber harvest by May 30, 2020. However, due to a decline in the hardwood timber market, Matelski has asked for an extension until this fall or next winter.

B. Williams asked if Matelski and the County had signed a contract for a certain price. K. Stark said yes. B. Williams asked if Matelski would be willing to do anything additional for the County if the County is willing to extend the deadline.

D. Bertinelli said that it won’t harm the County to extend the deadline.

K. Stark said Lynn Stephens, the Forester, had suggested the County could require Matelski’s to provide an additional non-refundable deposit up front, which would be a portion of the final payment.

C. Kobylczak asked if the County has ever done this with any other company. K. Stark said she did not know.

K. Stark said L. Stephens is out of town this month but will be attending the Parks Committee’s March meeting. He will be discussing some different options available to handle this situation, which would probably necessitate amending the contract.

R. Novotny asked if Matelski’s will lose money if they do the harvest now, or if they will just make more money if they wait and do the harvest next fall/winter. K. Stark said they would lose money if they did the project now.

R. Novotny said he doesn’t feel there is any need to make them complete the project right now.

D. Jason said perhaps they could provide an additional deposit toward the final payment.
S. Roloff asked if the ground is frozen enough right now for them to take the trucks in without doing a lot of damage. D. Bertinelli said the ground is still soft in that area.

- **Little Traverse Wheelway** – Discussion took place on the repairs needed to the Wheelway and how they will be paid for.

- **Maple Tree Failure Mitigation** – Since the last Parks Committee meeting, there has been additional damage from woodpeckers to the maple tree that is leaning over the shop at Whiting Park. The decision was made at the County Board’s Building & Grounds Committee meeting to remove two of the three stems (the two that are damaged). This will leave the far-right stem, which appears to be healthy and should survive with the addition of fertilizer and pruning seal.

- **Log Cabin Floor Refinishing** – At the Building and Grounds Committee Meeting, it was decided that due to other financial obligations at the Park this year, the log cabin floor refinishing project will be put on hold for now. The floor will be sanded, prepped and repainted this spring.

- **Bid Request for Trail Mowing** – The bid request should go out in the next week.

- **WiFi Quote** – Scott Silberhorn from the County GIS/IT Department sent D. Bertinelli a quote for $28,000 to install WiFi at Whiting Park, including the campground and beach area. This could be done by this spring if the County Board approves.

**Old Business**

**Proposed Charlevoix Connector Trail – Phase 1 (Robert Boch)**
K. Stark introduced Robert Boch who updated the Parks Committee on the progress of the proposed Charlevoix Connector Trail project. R. Boch reviewed the route that the proposed non-motorized trail would take to connect the Little Traverse Wheelway from Waller Rd. to downtown Charlevoix. R. Boch explained they are trying to raise $30,000 for OHM Advisors to do an Engineering and Scope of Work Study. At this point, they have a combined total of $16,500 from the City of Charlevoix, Charlevoix Township and the Top of Michigan Trails Council (through private donations). They have also applied for other local grants. They are requesting the Parks Committee contribute $5,000.

T. Wieland said the Parks Committee has several other financial priorities right now including repairing the section of the Wheelway that has failed due to the erosion along Lake Michigan. He does support the Connector Trail project but feels the Parks Committee has other obligations currently.

B. Williams suggested R. Boch look into free publicity such as television news coverage, newspaper articles, and private donations from interested and supportive individuals through a GoFundMe page or similar platform. R. Boch agreed those are all good ideas but is concerned that until they have the actual study from OHM, people may form negative opinions before they have all the correct information about the project. He feels it would be better to have something definite to show people before asking for that type of financial contribution.

S. Roloff said she doesn’t think the homeowners on Michigan Avenue are going to look on this project favorably. R. Boch said Michigan Avenue is fairly wide and bikers coming down that
street should not present a problem for the homeowners.

**Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail Project – Status Update**

K. Stark reviewed the status report of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail Project.

- **Phase I**
  - Nothing new to report.
- **Phase 2**
  - Nothing new to report.
- **Phase 3**
  - Staff and Project Engineer talked with our DNR and MDOT grant coordinators to discuss next steps. Our DNR grant coordinator was very helpful and said our grant application is very strong. The grant coordinator had explained changes in the grant scoring criteria starting in 2020. K. Stark thinks these changes will work in our favor. Our grant coordinator said the Trust Fund Board also welcomes correspondence from our state legislators and senators on our behalf, and she encouraged the County to pursue this as well. K. Stark reported that MDOT will allow the County a one-time extension on our conditional commitment for the TAP funding. After evaluating available funding options, the Project Engineer recommended that the County reapply for the Trust Fund Grant this year. K. Stark thought our grant coordinator also suggested applying to have a representative from the County give a brief presentation on our project to the Trust Fund Board in October.
  - The County Board approved a contract amendment with Gosling Czubak to shift funds ($4,800) from a grant-reimbursable category to a non-grant reimbursable category to enable work to continue moving forward on the project.

**Whiting Park Boat Launch Project – Status Update**

K. Stark reported she talked with Aaron Nordman from Performance Engineers right before the Parks Committee meeting and was told that the EGLE permit application has not been submitted yet for the boat launch project. Steve Voice and Performance Engineers are still working on the application.

K. Stark said there are three projects at Whiting Park that are going to need to be addressed this Spring. The first priority is over 600 feet of frontage on Lake Charlevoix that runs right next to the road through the campground that is eroding due to the high-water level on the lake. This will be addressed with shoreline stabilization using larger rip rap than what is currently there. The second project is an area on the concrete walkway at the base of the kayak launch that has collapsed and needs to be repaired. The third project is a portion of the sidewalk in the day use area where there has been erosion over the years from people stepping onto the sand off the sidewalk and from children digging the sand out from underneath that area.

K. Stark talked with the County financial officer and determined there is approximately $425,000 in the budget available for capital projects. The boat launch is estimated to cost $350,000, which leaves an available balance of $75,000. The Parks Manager has received two quotes for the needed repair work. One is from Landscape Logic for $44,000 (this quote does not include the large rip rap needed) and the other quote is from Drost Landscape for $165,000 (this quote does include all materials).
B. Williams asked why Landscape Logic’s quote did not include materials. D. Bertinelli said we have an agreement with St. Marys Cement where they will supply the stone (rip rap) at no cost, and we will pay to have it hauled to Whiting Park. He said he will be going out to St. Marys, with a representative from Landscape Logic, later this week to look at the rock and make sure it will be acceptable for this project. If it is, then we will need to get quotes from local excavating companies to see what the cost to transport it to the Park will be.

T. Wieland asked if D. Bertinelli would be doing the placement of the rip rap. D. Bertinelli said he would not be doing the placement but can assist if needed.

R. Novotny left the meeting at 6:47 p.m.

K. Stark said once we get the information regarding the materials in Landscape Logic’s bid and the cost of getting the rock to the Park, then a determination can be made whether the boat launch project will be able to be done this season.

D. Jason asked if the drawings for the boat launch are ready. K. Stark said the drawings are ready, but S. Voice is still working on the application. D. Jason said he was concerned that this is going to hold up the project. S. Roloff asked if the Parks Committee had paid S. Voice anything so far on this project. K. Stark said he has been paid a retainer of $1,500.

D. Jason invited D. Lockman to address the Parks Committee.

D. Lockman asked questions regarding the overall cost and funding for the boat launch project as well as whether the County has applied for any grants. He also asked how much has been spent so far. K. Stark said she could compile those figures which will include expenses for conceptual drawings, a wetland delineation study and permit application costs.

D. Lockman asked if the delay in submitting the permit application is going to cause a delay in the project and said the fisherman would be very angry if that is the case.

**Whiting Park Hardwood Timber Harvest – Status Update**
This item was covered under the Park Manager’s report.

**Proposed Changes to Whiting Park Rules**
The Committee members received a copy of the proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of Whiting Park by the Public. Most of the changes are what was discussed last year, but there are a few new changes proposed.

- **Rule 1**
  - Changed title from “Park Manager” to “Parks Manager”.
- **Rule 2**
  - Grammatical changes.
- **Rule 3**
  - Grammatical changes.
- **Rule 4**
  - Grammatical changes.
- **Rule 5**
  - Changed the time restraints from 15 to 14 nights to be consistent with the reservation policy currently in place.
Rule 6  
- Grammatical changes.

Rule 7  
- No changes.

Rule 8  
- Grammatical changes.

Rule 9  
- The proposed change was to have visitors leave the Park at 10:00 pm instead of 11:00 pm.

B. Williams said 10:00 pm is too early. He said as long as campers are quiet, visitors should not have to leave until 11:00 pm. It was noted that it’s not dark yet at 10:00 pm. D. Bertinelli said this rule does not have to be strongly enforced, but if there is a problem, this gives more reason to ask them to leave.

After discussion, the Committee decided to leave Rule 9 unchanged. Rule 9 will remain “Visitors shall leave the campground by 11:00 pm.”

Rule 10  
- Checkout will be at 1:00 pm instead of 3:00 pm to give Park Staff time to prepare campsites for the next arrivals.

Rule 11  
- Changing leash length to 6 feet to be consistent with State law.
- Allowing dogs to be on longlines on their campsite if they stay within their campsite’s boundary.

B. Williams asked what happened to the proposed change to this rule last year regarding allowing dogs on the south boundary of the boating area of the beach. K. Stark said when she took the proposed changes to the County Board last year, they felt strongly that they did not want dogs on any part of the beach due to sanitary issues and also concerns about the possibility of campers having allergies to dogs/dander.

B. Williams asked if trash cans can be put on the beach for boaters and swimmers to dispose of their trash when they are in that area. D. Bertinelli said this could be done.

Rule 12  
- No changes.

Rule 13  
- Grammatical changes.

Rule 14  
- New Rule. “Using the kayak launch for fishing, swimming, or jumping is prohibited.”

D. Bertinelli requested that this be added for safety reasons.

Rule 15  
- Grammatical changes.

Rule 16  
- Added sentence “All boats to be anchored overnight shall be registered with park staff at the time of campsite registration.”
K. Stark said that there have been a lot of problems with deer remains being dumped down by the water in the Fall. There have also been incidents of animal remains being dumped in the woods.

T. Wieland asked if this rule also applies to campers who catch fish while staying at the campground and then dispose of the carcasses (after they have cleaned the fish) in the garbage cans. D. Bertinelli said this rule would not apply in that case, as long as the remains are disposed of properly in the garbage receptacles.

T. Wieland said Michigan is an open-carry state, and you cannot prohibit campers from carrying or possessing firearms.

B. Williams said this rule should be completely removed. It is not “unlawful” to carry or possess a firearm and this rule cannot be enforced.

B. Williams asked what prompted this change. K. Stark said they received complaints last year about loud and disruptive campers late into the night. It was noted that beginning quiet hours a little earlier is more conducive to maintaining a family-friendly atmosphere. It was also noted this is consistent with other area campgrounds.

K. Stark said these proposed changes will now go to the County Board for their approval. Last year when she took the proposed changes to the Board, civil counsel recommended that these
rules be put into an ordinance so they can be enforced.

Motion was made by B. Williams to approve the proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of Whiting Park by the Public, with the recommended changes. Motion was seconded by T. Wieland. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

New Business
Advocacy Report
No reports given.

Public Comment
D. Lockman thanked the Parks Manager for plowing the parking lot at Thumb Lake. He was at the Park yesterday and counted 24 cars in the lot.

D. Lockman asked if the rules for Thumb Lake Park have been reviewed recently. K. Stark said they have not been reviewed in a while. K. Stark said she will put that on the Agenda for next month’s meeting.

Adjourn
A motion was made by T. Wieland and seconded by C. Kobylczak to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm by Chairman Jason.

The next regular meeting will be at 5:30 pm on March 16, 2020 at the Charlevoix Conservation District.

Minutes Submitted by:
Linda Prescott