MEETING MINUTES
Monday – January 13, 2020
Meeting Location:
Boyne City Hall
(First Floor Meeting Room)
Boyne City, MI  49712

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

Members Absent:  Ryan Novotny (excused)

Staff: Parks & Planning Director Kiersten Stark, Administrative Assistant Linda Prescott, and Parks Manager David Bertinelli

Public: Carrie Klingelsmith (Beckett & Raeder)

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:
The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:30 pm on January 13, 2020 at Boyne City Hall by K. Stark.

Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance was led by B. Williams.

Election of Officers:
K. Stark opened nominations for Chairperson.

MOTION by S. Vrondran to nominate D. Jason for Chairperson.
Seconded by B. Williams.  K. Stark asked for any further nominations.  No further nominations were cast.  Voice vote: all present in favor.  Motion passed.

D. Jason opened nominations for Vice Chairperson.

MOTION by C. Kobylczak to nominate B. Williams for Vice Chairperson.
Seconded by S. Vrondran.  D. Jason asked for further nominations.  No further nominations were cast.  Voice vote: all present in favor.  Motion passed.

MOTION by S. Vrondran to nominate T. Wieland for Secretary.
Seconded by C. Kobylczak.  D. Jason asked for further nominations.  No further nominations were cast.  Voice vote: all present in favor.  Motion passed.
Approval of Agenda:
K. Stark asked to have “Milfoil Treatment at Thumb Lake” added under “New Business”.

A motion was made by A. Wilkin and seconded by S. Vron德拉an to approve the Agenda as amended. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

Public Comment:
None.

Approval of Minutes:
Motion was made by T. Wieland to accept the Minutes of the December 16, 2019, meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by D. Jason. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

Financial Report:
K. Stark reviewed the financial report. We received some revenue for reservations for this year in one of the buildings at Whiting Park and we also had a small amount of revenue for the sale of some old folding chairs from the green building.

K. Stark said she checked with the Fiscal Officer (Becki King) regarding T. Wieland’s concern about the Health Insurance line item. B. King had said when the new Park Manager’s benefits became effective in October, the County made a deposit into his Health Savings Account for the 2019 calendar year. This is reflected in the increase for that month in this line item. The amount came back down in November and December, and then will jump back up again in January when the 2020 HSA deposit is made.

The Capital Outlay line item shows the purchase of the new tractor at Whiting Park for $29,531. The tractor will be delivered to the park this week.

Motion was made by S. Vron德拉an to accept the Financial Report as presented. Motion was seconded by B. Williams. 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.

There was discussion regarding the maple tree that is leaning over the shop at Whiting Park. Al and Jim’s Tree Service inspected the tree and submitted a quote for $1,200 to $1,500 to remove the tree and stump or $800 to install a cabling system to save the tree. D. Bertinelli said he prefers to save the tree rather than remove it. Firman Tree Service also looked at the tree and D. Bertinelli feels that they have a much better system. It is a self-adjusting strapping system that will stretch and allow the tree to continue to grow. Firman’s quote is $1,350 for strapping and stabilizing the tree and trimming some of the branches. D. Bertinelli said something needs to be done soon so the tree doesn’t fall on the building and the nearby propane tank.

There was further discussion regarding completely removing the tree, removing part of the tree, or cabling/strapping the tree. D. Bertinelli again recommended that the tree be saved.

D. Jason asked what the County’s insurance would cover if the tree were to fall on the building and/or propane tank. K. Stark said she is not sure; she would have to check with the Fiscal Officer.
Motion was made by T. Wieland to recommend to the County Building and Grounds Committee to accept the quote from Firman Tree Service for $1,350 to trim some branches and put up a self-adjusting strapping system to stabilize the tree. Motion was seconded by S. Vrondran. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

Old Business

Draft 2020-2024 Recreation Plan
An updated draft copy of the Recreation Plan was distributed to the Committee members. C. Klingelsmith reviewed some edits, updates and changes that have been made since the Committee reviewed the Plan in December. K. Stark reviewed the changes she made to the Action Plan and Budget including the new timeline for the remaining phases of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail project since the County was notified that our project was not recommended for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant in December.

There was discussion regarding how the County will move forward on the repair of the Little Traverse Wheelway where the trail has failed due to the erosion from Lake Michigan. K. Stark said that there is a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at the Road Commission to talk about this issue and how it will be addressed. K. Stark, D. Bertinelli, K. Shepard, staff from the Top of Michigan Trails Council and MDOT officials will be in attendance. D. Jason said he would like to attend that meeting as well.

K. Stark said that she met with Klaus Heinert of Gosling Czubak to talk about the Trust Fund grant application for Phase 3 of the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail and to try to determine our next steps on the project. Two options would be to either reapply for the Trust Fund Grant or to apply for a DNR Recreation Passport Grant. K. Stark said that it makes more sense to reapply for the Trust Fund Grant because it would give the County $300,000, which is what is needed to complete Phase 3 of the trail. The Recreation Passport Grant would only be for $150,000. However, starting this year, the DNR has changed some of their scoring criteria for the grant applications. K. Stark has a conference call set up with the County’s DNR grant coordinator and K. Heinert to learn more about these changes and how the Phase 3 project would fair under the new scoring criteria. She will have more information after talking with the grant coordinator.

S. Vrondran asked if the County Board has offered any assistance with this project now that we won’t be receiving the Trust Fund Grant. K. Stark said no.

K. Stark said that she also has a conference call scheduled with MDOT later this week to see if not receiving the Trust Fund Grant this year will affect our TAP grant conditional commitment and if it is possible to shift the TAP Grant conditional commitment another year out, so we don’t lose that funding. Once she receives this information, she will consider the next steps.

T. Wieland asked if we are required to use the money from the TAP grant this year, can we use it to construct the base for the trail, but not pave the trail at this time? K. Stark said, in that event, we would probably have to consider a crushed limestone surface for the trail.

S. Vrondran said the Recreation Plan looks great.

K. Stark said the Planning Commission will review the draft Recreation Plan at their meeting on January 15, 2020 and make a recommendation to the County Board to approve the Plan. The County Board will then hold a public hearing on the Recreation Plan on January 22, 2020. Once C. Klingelsmith receives the meeting minutes and resolution approving the Recreation Plan from
the Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners, she will be able to upload the final document to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website. Paper copies will be printed for all Parks Committee members and the Recreation Plan will also be available on the Charlevoix County website.

Motion was made by A. Wilkin to recommend approval of the 2020 – 2024 Parks & Recreation Plan. Motion was seconded by S. Vrondran. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed.

**Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail Project – Status Update**

K. Stark said there is nothing new to report on Phase I or Phase 2 of the project. She met with Klaus Heinert of Gosling Czubak and set up specific dates for conference calls with the two grant coordinators to discuss Phase 3 of the Trail. In the past, MDOT has been willing to move the TAP conditional commitment to a future year, and she does not anticipate this will be an issue. K. Stark will have more information on this after she talks with the grant coordinators and will update the Committee at their next meeting.

The County Board has agreed to cover approximately $30,000 for Phase 3 of the project.

K. Stark said she received a phone call from Bill Prall, Top of Michigan Trails Council, who oversees the maintenance on the Little Traverse Wheelway in Emmet County. He would like to meet with County Parks Staff to discuss trail maintenance. K. Stark explained that the parks had staffing issues the last couple of summers, and hopefully this summer will be better. We’re going to post the position openings for seasonal park maintenance staff in additional locations this year in an effort to get more qualified applicants.

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

K. Stark said Performance Engineers is still working on the permit application. They have provided drawings to Steve Voice and it is close to being submitted to the State and the Corps of Engineers. K. Stark is not sure how the high-water issues will affect the plans.

B. Williams asked if there is a tentative date that the project will start. K. Stark said a preliminary start date has been set for September. This is when the contractors will start bringing in equipment and doing some tree clearing. K. Stark and D. Bertinelli have determined that for safety reasons, the campground will need to be closed right after Labor Day this year. The contractors will be using the campground entrance to bring in and stage equipment. The rest of the park will remain open.

B. Williams asked what conversations have occurred with the immediate next-door neighbor. K. Stark said she has talked to him about the conceptual plans and he didn’t seem to have any concerns. She also emailed him the detailed plans and ensured him that the project will include adequate screening (vegetation) to buffer his property from the boat launch.

S. Vrondran said she is really hoping the boat launch permit application will be submitted in time. K. Stark said A. Nordman told her that because EGLE has already been out to see the site more than once, it will help speed up the process.

**New Business**

**Advocacy Report**

S. Vrondran said Charlevoix County is currently accepting applications from the individual townships for the Parks Millage funds with a due date of February 1, 2020. She asked the Committee members to reach out and remind the townships that they should be applying, if they
haven’t already done so, and that they will need to pass a resolution at their township meetings in order to apply. Chandler, Hudson, Marion, Norwood and South Arm Townships have not received any funds from this millage in the last 5 years.

S. Vrondran said she has volunteers interested in helping to clear the area for a footbridge over Porter Creek. She is wondering if that is a possibility. D. Bertinelli said first we need to figure out the best route over the creek and then figure out what needs to be cleared. Once that is done, volunteers would be great.

2020 Meeting Schedule
K. Stark said the February Parks Committee meeting has been put back on the 2020 Meeting Schedule. There have also been some changes in the meeting locations.

The Parks Committee reviewed the revised schedule.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to accept the revised schedule below. Motion was seconded by T. Wieland. Voice Vote. All present in favor. Motion passed.

January 13, 2020 at Boyne City Hall
February 17, 2020 at Boyne District Library
March 16, 2020 at Charlevoix Conservation District
April 20, 2020 at East Jordan Fire Hall
May 18, 2020 at Whiting Park
June 15, 2020 at Thumb Lake Park
July 20, 2020 at Whiting Park
August 17, 2020 at Whiting Park
September 21, 2020 at Whiting Park
October 19, 2020 at East Jordan Fire Hall
November 16, 2020 at Boyne Valley Township Hall
December 14, 2020* at Charlevoix Conservation District

*all meetings will be held at 5:30 pm unless otherwise noted

Public Comment
Milfoil Treatment at Thumb Lake
K. Stark reviewed the letter and packet from Leslie Helwig, the President of the Lake Louise Cottagers’ Council (Lake Louise Christian Community), which summarized the group’s milfoil mitigation efforts on Thumb Lake during the 2019 season, and included a timeline showing the background of this effort since they began in 2007. K. Stark said she budgets $3,000 in the Park’s budget each year for the County’s share of these annual expenses, even though some years they haven’t asked for any funds. They divide their total annual expenses evenly between the 4 landowners around the lake. The LLCC had detailed their expenses for 2019 and asked for reimbursement from the County in the amount of $2,032.90.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to approve the payment of $2,032.90 to the Lake Louise Christian Community to reimburse them for their expenses incurred during their milfoil mitigation efforts on Thumb Lake during 2019. Motion was seconded by C. Kobylczak. Voice Vote. All present in favor. Motion passed.

B. Williams asked if any members of the Parks Committee have talked with the Charlevoix Marathon group about the Wheelway not being available for them to run on in late June due to the erosion issue. K. Stark asked if there is a place that lists all the marathon events that will take
place this summer. A. Wilkin said visitcharlevoix.com has these events listed, and B. Williams said there is also a Michigan Run website. K. Stark questioned whether there is enough room along the high side of the trail for people to go around the washed-out section that is right down by the lake. D. Bertinelli thinks there is still enough room to make a detour around that section if we flag it and have it safely roped off. T. Wieland wondered if this would be too close to the highway. D. Bertinelli said that he thinks there is enough room down by the trail to be safe. D. Bertinelli said he will look and see what the County might be able to do. Currently, there has been nothing done to try to slow down the erosion issue since it was discovered. D. Bertinelli is concerned that with more high water and wind, the erosion will continue to get worse and it will then cost even more to repair.

C. Kobylczak said she has been on the Parks Committee since 2000 and she feels that the people who are currently serving as members and the current staff are the best that she has worked with and she would like to say thank you.

**Adjourn**

A motion was made by T. Wieland and seconded by B. Williams to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote, all present in favor. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm by Chairman Jason.

The next regular meeting will be at 5:30 pm on February 17, 2020 at the Boyne District Library.

**Minutes Submitted by:**

Linda Prescott