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

Members Absent: Tim Wieland (excused) and Ryan Novotny.

Staff: Parks and Planning Director Kiersten Stark, Administrative Assistant Lauren Richards, and Shirley Roloff (County Commissioner).

Public: Crystal (Performance Engineers)

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance:
The regular meeting of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee was called to order at 5:30pm on February 18, 2019 at the Boyne City Hall by D. Jason with recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda:
K. Stark asked to have “City of Charlevoix Proposed Trail Route Change” added under “Old Business”.

A motion was made by S. Vrondran and seconded by C. Kobylczak to approve the Agenda with the suggested addition. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.

Public Comment:
None

Approval of Minutes:
Motion was made by S. Vrondran to accept the Minutes of the January 21, 2019 meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by A. Wilkin. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

Financial Reports:
K. Stark said some of the reports from last month were wrong but the reports for this month are correct. She also reviewed all Financial Reports with the Parks Committee.

S. Vrondran asked how much of the Phase Two trail overages the Parks Committee is responsible for paying for. K. Stark said that there is an approximate $152,000 overage that has not come out of the Parks budget yet.
A. Wilkin asked about various categories on the Financial Reports. K. Stark explained what they were for and how they are accumulated.

S. Vrondran told A. Wilkin the Parks Committee gets approximately 2/3 of the Parks Millage which equates to $200,000 of the approximately $300,000 collected annually.

D. Jason asked about the proposed budget line. K. Stark explained how the report reads.

K. Stark said she talked with Becki King (Charlevoix County Fiscal Officer) and Becki said she would be happy to attend a Parks Committee meeting to explain the Financial Reports.

K. Stark said the Parks Committee receives the Trial Balance Report, so they can compare this year’s expenses and revenues to last year’s expenses and revenues at the same point in the fiscal year.

S. Vrondran asked K. Stark to explain the last page of the Revenue and Expenditures Report. K. Stark said this is for the Non-motorized Trail and shows the funds we have on hand to cover any expenses that come in for the trail project. She said there is $100,000 in funds. K. Stark said she just received a construction bill from MDOT for Phase Two so next month’s report will show this expense.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Motion was seconded by C. Kobyleczak. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

D. Jason thanked K. Stark for explaining the Financial Reports.

**Manager’s Report:**

D. Jason directed members to the copy of the Manager’s Report that was provided in their Parks Committee packets as R. Maxwell was absent.

S. Vrondran said she hopes R. Maxwell is out monitoring trails and hiking because his report states all he has done is snowplow at Whiting Park and Porter Creek in the last month. She said the Parks Manager should be out doing things in the parks even during the winter. K. Stark said she agrees that various things should be checked and monitored. She said R. Maxwell has been out checking the trails.

K. Stark said she hopes that maybe someday in the future we can offer groomed trails, so they’re open year-round.

K. Stark said she will review the responsibilities and expectations of the Parks Manager during upcoming interviews with prospective candidates. S. Vrondran said all of the Manager’s activities need to be included in the Manager’s Report for the Parks Committee to review. S. Roloff said she believes R. Maxwell has been cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on the trails and was doing some work inside the Park Manager’s house.

Motion was made by S. Vrondran to accept the Manager’s Report as presented. Motion was
seconded C. Kobylczak. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

**Old Business**

**Whiting Park Boat Launch:**
K. Stark explained that Performance Engineers was having technical difficulties with their phones and computers last week, so they were unable to print new conceptual plans showing the changes suggested at last month’s meeting.

Crystal from Performance Engineers shared the following regarding the conceptual plans for the boat launch:
- They have eliminated the vehicle stacking area next to the drive going into the park.
- They have looked at different parking layout options, but the topography presents limitations.
- Performance Engineers will need to go to the park in the spring to obtain more field data in order to depict the topographic lines between Lake Shore Road and the drive coming into the park. This is needed to evaluate how much space we will have to provide additional parking at that location.
- With the parking adjustments that have been made, the number of parking spaces have been reduced.
- The grading changes needed to provide a more level surface for the ADA parking and the portable restroom pad will create a steeper slope on the north side of the loop, which will limit parking on that side of the loop.

Discussion took place regarding parking angles and vehicle/trailer maneuverability.

B. Williams asked if the area where the boat launch would be could be flagged by June, so Parks Committee members could see what the boat launch would look like. K. Stark and Crystal both said yes.

Discussion took place regarding the steps in the process and the timeline for completing the boat launch this year.

Further discussion took place regarding parking and the slope grade of the loop drive.

D. Jason asked if the portable restroom could be moved to the other side of the ADA parking spaces to lessen the grade on the north side of the loop. K. Stark will check on this. K. Stark said the greenbelt zoning requirements will need to be looked at as well.

S. Roloff pointed out the cost difference in a single-lane and double-lane boat launch. B. Williams explained why the Committee was considering the double-lane boat launch, based on discussion at last month’s meeting.

K. Stark asked the Parks Committee if they think further input is needed from community members who expressed interest in the boat launch initially, as they have not had a chance to see the updated plans.
S. Vrondran asked if a public hearing needs to be held. K. Stark did not think a formal public hearing is required, but public meetings are a good idea.

Committee members thought we should continue moving forward with the conceptual plans.

The Parks Committee should focus on getting final drawings then invite community members to come and voice their opinion.

Discussion took place regarding other potential funding sources for the boat launch, give that the cost will be more for a two-lane launch.

Discussion also took pace regarding presenting the conceptual plans to the County Board and obtaining further public input.

Further discussion took place regarding potential funding sources.

**Whiting Park Forest Management Update:**
K. Stark received a letter from Lynn Stephens since the last Parks Committee meeting. Mr. Stephens indicated he is marking the hardwoods on the west end of the Butler property near Ridge Rd. He will be gone for the winter but will be back in May. Lynn said the hardwood harvest looks promising as the wood is high quality.

K. Stark told the Parks Committee the red pine harvest this fall came to a total of $3,500.

B. Williams asked how much profit would come from the hardwood harvest. Further discussion took place.

**Boyne City to Charlevoix Non-motorized Trail Status Report**
K. Stark reported the following:

- Phase One and Two
  - She is checking the status of the Declaration and Notice the DNR Staff is drafting.

- Phase Three
  - She contacted prospective engineering firms to submit proposals for the detailed design and construction engineering.
  - She is working on the grant application for the DNR Trust Fund grant.

Discussion took place regarding the engineering for Phase Three of the Trail. S. Roloff said there was a lot of confusion in the process of deciding if the detailed design and construction should go out for bid.

**Phase 1 Trail Landscaping Bid Award**
K. Stark said the project was awarded to Robinson’s Landscaping. They must complete the project by Memorial Day weekend.

D. Jason asked how much the project will cost. K. Stark said approximately $4,766.

**City of Charlevoix Proposed Trail Route Change**
K. Stark said last month Bob Boch (a Charlevoix Citizen) came to present. She asked if members supported the proposed change.

S. Vrondran asked A. Wilkin if she supports the change. A. Wilkin said she does support it and is on the project committee.

S. Vrondran said she is still concerned about the portion of the route that’s on Michigan Avenue.

D. Jason said there will have to be a painted bike lane. A. Wilkin said there are already three lanes. S. Roloff said she is not sure where they would put a bike lane with the three lanes already there.

B. Williams showed the drawing of the proposed change to S. Roloff that was presented at last month’s meeting and explained it to her.

A motion was made by S. Vrondran to support the proposed trail route change as presented by the Charlevoix Trail Ambassadors. C. Kobylczak seconded the motion. Voice Vote: all in favor (with A. Wilkin abstaining). Motion Passed.

K. Stark will send a letter of support for the project to the City of Charlevoix.

**New Business**

**Advocacy Report:**

S. Vrondran explained the Advocacy Report for A. Wilkin, as she is a new member of the Parks Committee. S. Vrondran explained that each member was assigned different entities (townships, cities, villages) in the County and are responsible for staying informed on local parks and recreation activities in their assigned entities and reporting back to the Parks Committee. A. Wilkin said she could take over the entities formerly assigned to Jessica Parks.

**Recreation Plan Update:**

K. Stark said there was discussion at the Planning Commission meeting about the Recreation Plan update. The Planning Commission recommended seeking outside planning assistance for the plan update. K. Stark said planning assistance will be needed for updating the census and demographic data, goals and objectives, and Capital Improvement Plan, and adding new content, such as information about the Parks Millage Appropriations Program. K. Stark said Department Staff can update the inventory of local recreational sites, and the sections describing the Administrative Structure.

K. Stark said she needs to seek approval from the Internal Government Committee to send out a Requests for Proposals (RFP) for Planning Assistance.

K. Stark said the County has worked with Networks Northwest in the past on the Land Use Plan; their firm is an option for planning assistance. K. Stark said Beckett and Raeder has been suggested as well. Beckett and Raeder have a planner on staff who specializes in Recreation Plans. K. Stark said the third firm she has been considering is LIAA (Land Information Access Association); they submitted a bid in the past to aid with the Land Use Plan. K. Stark said it was suggested at the Planning Commission meeting to publish the RFP to open the opportunity up others.
K. Stark said the Planning Commission is supportive of forming a sub-committee. The sub-committee will be made up of two members from the Planning Commission and two from the Parks Committee. K. Starks said the sub-committee will make the Recreation Plan update easier.

K. Stark wants to allow a month for firms to respond to the RFP. The sub-committee will be able to interview representatives from the firms and make a recommendation. K. Stark said they will probably have someone hired to provide planning assistance in May.

S. Vrodran asked how much the planning assistance will cost. K. Stark said she won’t know until she has received the proposals, but $15,000 was budgeted this year for planning assistance and she can request to budget more (if needed) in the next fiscal year that starts in October.

B. Williams said he could be on the sub-committee if he is needed. S. Vrodran said B. Williams could be an alternate for her if she is unable to attend a sub-committee meeting.

S. Vrodran said she is concerned about the cost of hiring someone for planning assistance. A. Wilkin said the City of Charlevoix just updated their Recreation Plan and it cost them $10,000.

D. Jason asked what members from the Planning Commission would be on the sub-committee. K. Stark said Michael Buttigieg, and Ron Van Zee with Michael Ritter as an alternate.

A. Wilkin said she would be willing to help with a survey. K. Stark explained that the survey was done online last time, but they had little input from younger generations. K. Stark is hoping that the new Facebook page will help us reach out to a greater age range.

Discussion took place regarding the new Charlevoix County Parks Facebook page.

**Whiting Park Rules- Proposed Changes**
K. Stark reviewed proposed changes to the Whiting Parks Rules and Regulations.

K. Stark said Rule 5 says “No person, persons, or camping party shall camp for a period of time exceeding fifteen nights” and she would like that to be changed to fourteen nights to reflect the reservation system.

Discussion took place regarding individuals staying at the campground for extended periods of time.

A. Wilkin asked if the Parks Committee could eliminate individual’s ability to jump sites every two weeks which allows them to stay in the campground for extended periods of time. K. Stark said yes.

B. Williams said he would like to see a rule that states boats need to have bow and stern anchors. He said this is a safety issue, as a boat will swing if it only has one (1) anchor.

D. Jason asked S. Roloff if a Planning Commission member could be on the Parks Committee and vice versa since Parks and Planning have been combined into one department. He feels it is a good idea. S. Roloff said this would have to be brought up to a Personnel meeting. S. Roloff said K. Stark
currently acts as the communication link between the Planning Commission and Parks Committee.

S. Roloff left the meeting.

The discussion turned back to the Whiting Park rules. K. Stark said she would like to change the checkout time from 3:00pm to 1:00pm in Rule 10 to allow time for the Park Maintenance staff to prepare a campsite for the next group, since check-in is at 3:00pm.

Rule 20 says “It shall be unlawful to post, place or erect signs or advertising material, erect a fence or barrier, or to construct, maintain or occupy any improvements in this park without the approval of the Charlevoix County Parks Committee”. K. Stark said this should be changed to the Charlevoix County Board of Commissioners because only the Board of Commissioners has this authority.

Rule 22 says “A person expelled from the park for any reason whatsoever shall not be permitted to re-enter for a minimum of fifteen days”. She suggested changing it to fourteen days to be consistent with the campground reservation policy.

Discussion took place regarding campers staying at the campground for extended periods of time.

K. Stark suggested changing rule 5 to read as follows: “No person, persons, or camping party shall camp for a period of time exceeding fourteen (14) nights. The person, persons, or camping party, and their respective camping unit(s) shall be required to leave the campground upon reaching their fourteen (14) night limit. The party is not eligible to return to the campground until fourteen (14) nights have elapsed”.

K. Stark said some time in the future she would like to increase the number of campsites that are reservable. B. Williams said this is a good idea. K. Stark said the park has had to turn people away who come from a distance because they cannot guarantee there will be a site when they arrive.

K. Stark said she would also like to change the refund policy. She thinks if campers provide 14 days’ notice they should receive all their camping fee back minus the reservation fee and credit card fee (if any). The current policy says they lose their first night’s camping fee as well.

B. Williams asked why all the campsites aren’t reservable. He asked if things could be changed. K. Stark said the Parks Committee could provide a recommendation to the County Board to make a change.

A motion was made by B. Williams to make all campsites at Whiting Park reservable. A. Wilkin seconded the motion. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

B. Williams asked if there needed to be a motion to implement the rule about anchoring both the bow and stern of boats. K. Stark said she’ll add it to her list of changes to the Rules and Regulations and take it to the County Board. B. Williams said it’s a safety issue and could just be added to rule 15.

B. Williams asked about a fee for using the boat launch. K. Stark said that has been brought up for discussion previously. A. Wilkin said she thought the Parks Committee was going to look at fees for
boat launches in the surrounding area before deciding. B. Williams said he thinks $7.00 per launch or $30.00/ $40.00 for the season sounds reasonable. C. Kobylczak said a fee should be added in the rules. K. Stark said the specific fee should fee should not be included in the rules, but we could add a rule that use of the boat launch will require paying a fee.

B. Williams asked if the new list of rules would be passed out to campers. K. Stark said yes.

S. Vrondran commented that the rules are very negative. She asked if they could be reworded to be more positive.

B. Williams pointed out there needs to be a sanitation station for the dog beach area for waste.

A motion was made by A. Wilkin to recommend the changes in the Rules and Regulations for Whiting Park. S. Vrondran seconded the motion. Voice Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.

**Summary of 2019 Parks Millage Applications**

K. Stark said the Parks Millage Work Group needed addition information on some of the applications, so a summary of the applications is not available at this time.

C. Kobylczak noted that applicants were given additional time to submit applications this year.

S. Vrondran shared an email that was sent to local communities regarding the need to prioritize projects if submitting multiple applications.

S. Vrondran asked if someone could make a chart of what entities are using the Parks Millage funds for and how much they received. K. Stark said there is a list on the County website of the projects that have been awarded funding.

Further discussion took place regarding the Parks Millage Appropriations Program. Committee member discussed the value of communities collaborating on projects.

**Public Comment**

B. Williams is concerned about R. Novotny’s attendance. Further discussion took place.

Discussion took place regarding changes in Parks & Planning Department Staffing.

D. Jason said he will be absent at next month’s meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned:**
A motion was made by D. Jason and seconded by S. Vrondran to adjourn the meeting. Voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

The next regular meeting will be at 5:30pm on March 18, 2019 at the East Jordan Fire Hall.

**Minutes Submitted by:**
Lauren Richards