

MINUTES



CALHOUN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, August 4, 2016
315 W. Green St., 1-400, Marshall, MI 49068

1. Chair King called the meeting to order at 4:09

2. Roll Call – Michigan State University Extension Support Staff, Pat Dadow

Present: Annette Chapman, Lindsay Johnson, Derek King, Allyn Miller, Ron Sootsman, Blaine VanSickle

Absent: Bill Comai, Jesse Jacox, Christine Kosmowski, John Rodwan

Also Present: Community Development Educator Ingrid Ault, County Administrator Kelli Scott, GIS Coordinator Brent Thelen, MSU Extension Support Staff Pat Dadow

A quorum was not achieved until 5:09, so discussion ensued until that time.

5. Public Comment

Mr. Lindsey Wheeler commented that he is amazed that no one knows the meaning of a nature preserve. He mentioned that he counted the rings on a tree that was cut down to make room for the Trailway in the Ott Biological Preserve and it was approximately 130 years old and feels this is a shame. Mr. Wheeler wondered why the Parks and Recreation Commission wasn't asked to manage the Metcalf Lake property and expressed his concern that the Department of Natural Resources person has a say in what happens in the Ott Biological Preserve.

Audience member Jim Coury spoke to Mr. Wheeler about practices of tree harvesting. Mr. Coury mentioned preservation can be a way to manage a property, but conservation can also be a good way to manage a preserve. He also stated that forestry harvesting can be a very good tool if done correctly.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Trailway Workgroup

Community Development Educator Ault stated the Trailway Workgroup is scheduled to meet Thursday, August 11, 2016, 4:00 pm room 1-400. Ault has been working to finalize the Trailway Maintenance and Management Plan. She stated that there are many new updates and feels it is a comprehensive plan. She noted the recent

data provided by contractor Brian Huggett completed the missing pieces of the plan. Member King thanked Mr. Huggett for his work.

b. Finance Subcommittee

Community Development Educator Ault stated the Finance Subcommittee has not scheduled their upcoming meetings as of yet. She stated the budget numbers will be out next week and they will be reporting at the next meeting.

c. Historic Bridge Park Workgroup

Community Development Educator Ault stated the Historic Bridge Park workgroup has not met yet.

d. Interactive Map – Staff report

Community Development Educator Ault stated there is no new information to report.

7. Communications

a. Thank you letter to Chad Osborne

Community Development Educator Ault forwarded a thank you letter from the Park and Recreation Board of Commission to Chad Osborne of the Battle Creek Public Schools for the donation of the park bench to replace the stolen one on the Trailway.

b. Patti Vahary – Horses on the Trailway

A concerned citizen, Patti Vahary reported that she saw horses on the Trailway and in Historic Bridge Park and she wondered if this was okay. Ault indicated that it states in the Parks Rules and Regulations that no hooved animals are allowed. Ault feels that this needs to be made more clear in the verbiage and that we may need to post signs regarding this rule. Member VanSickle suggested that the Rules and Regulations subcommittee discuss the issue and bring something together for review to the Parks and Recreation Board of Commission at a later date.

c. Lindsay Wheeler – ATV in Ott & Comments on Metcalf property

Community Development Educator Ault brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission Board the concerns of Mr. Lindsay Wheeler who encountered All-Terrain Vehicles in the Ott Biological Preserve. Mr. Wheeler feels there should be a sign stating no “No ATV’s allowed in the Parks” close to the area where he found them.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Ott Biological Preserve Workgroup

Community Development Educator Ault will schedule a public meeting the last week of September to review the Ott Biological Preserve Management and Maintenance Plan.

b. Any other unfinished business

There was none.

9. New Business

a. Second Quarter Budget Review

Community Development Educator Ault reviewed the parks budget. The Parks and Recreation Commission Board members discussed the budget of the four Parks owned by Calhoun County.

b. Girl Scouts: Gold Award Project – Sam Reasons

Community Development Educator Ault introduced Sam Reasons a Girl Scout who is trying to achieve the Gold Award which is the highest achievement award possible in Girl Scouts. Miss Reasons explained, “To accomplish this goal she decided to do a service project to help bats”. Her intent is to build six bat houses and place them in suitable areas in the Parks. Miss Reasons stated placing the bat houses in the parks will help educate the public about bats with signage, help the endangered and threatened bat population, and also help keep bats out of unwanted spaces.

c. Historic Bridge Park – Docent Lead Tours by Vern Messler

Mr. Vern Messler would like to lead tours in Historic Bridge Park about the history and fabrication of the bridges. Community Development Educator Ault has put signage in the Kiosks at Historic Bridge Park to call the Parks and Recreation number if interested in Mr. Messler leading a tour.

d. Volunteer Recognition Program

Community Development Educator Ault proposed having a celebration on an annual basis at a county owned park to recognize volunteers and promote the parks.

e. Kalamazoo River Watershed Council support letter

Community Development Educator Ault presented a letter of support for the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council to develop and build the Kalamazoo River Water Trail. She is asking the commissioners to authorize the board support and forward it to Ms. McCarthy at the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council.

10. Community Development Educator Report

Community Development Educator Ault provided an update of what has been happening in the parks.

- Updated the kiosks at Historic Bridge Park with a new map and information on the bridges,
- The parks are looking amazing because of all the work the Juvenile Home Probation department has been doing all summer,
- The EZ dock parts that were stolen have been replaced,
- The two additional bollards along the Trailway have been installed at the end of Vernon,
- regrading has been done on troubled areas along the Trailway, but there are concerns that the road keeps washing out and needs a permanent solution to stop this from occurring.

Quorum was achieved at 5:09.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Member Miller, second by Member Johnson to add agenda item 9e Kalamazoo River Watershed Council letter of support as an action item and approve the August 4, 2016 agenda of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented by Ault.

On a voice vote, Motion **CARRIED**.

4. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Member Chapman, second by Member VanSickle to approve the July 7, 2016 minutes of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented by Sootsman.

On a voice vote, Motion **CARRIED**.

9. New Business

b. Girl Scouts: Gold Award Project – Sam Reasons

Moved by Member Chapman, second by Member Sootsman to approve Sam Reasons' Girl Scout project to place bats houses in the Calhoun County Parks.

On a voice vote, Motion **CARRIED**.

e. Kalamazoo River Watershed Council support letter

Moved by Member Miller and second by Member Chapman to authorize a letter of support to the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council to develop a water trail.

On a voice vote, Motion **CARRIED**

11. Commissioner's Time

There was none.

12. Public Comment

Mr. Coury stated that there are River Conservation Days being held all over in different cities on the first Saturday of October.

13. Adjournment

The August 4, 2016 regular session of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission adjourned at 5:14 pm.