



## MINUTES

### CALHOUN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, May 5, 2016  
315 W. Green St., 1-400, Marshall, MI 49068

1. Vice Chair Chapman called the meeting to order at 4:00.
2. Roll Call – Michigan State University Extension Support Staff, Pat Dadow

Present: Annette Chapman, Bill Comai, Jesse Jacox, Christine Kosmowski (arrived at 4:11), Lindsey Johnson, Allyn Miller, Ron Sootsman, Blaine VanSickle

Absent: Derek King, John Rodwan

Also Present: Community Development Educator Ingrid Ault, County Administrator Kelli Scott, Assistant County Administrator Brad Wilcox, GIS Coordinator Brent Thelen, County Facilities Manager Curtis Smyers, MSU Extension Support Staff Pat Dadow, Emmett Charter Township Public Safety Chief Mike Olson

3. Approval of Agenda

*Moved by Member Miller, second by Member Jacox to approve the May 5, 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 VanSickle, second by Member Miller to approve the March 31, 2016 minutes of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented by Sootsman.*

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

5. Public Comment

There was none.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Ott Biological Preserve Workgroup

Member Comai reported the Ott Biological Preserve workgroup had not met recently, but is scheduled to meet May 19, 2016.

b. Trailway Workgroup

Member Sootsman reported the Trailway Workgroup had not met.

c. Finance Subcommittee

Member Chapman stated the Finance Subcommittee had not met but have scheduled upcoming meetings.

d. Interactive Map – Staff report

Community Development Educator Ault stated that staff is updating the park inventory and making progress on the Interactive map.

7. Unfinished Business

a. Trailway Safety – Edgewood and Evanston Road

Community Development Educator Ault reported the split rail fence has been installed at the corner of Edgewood and Evanston and the two bollards are on order and should arrive in two. She mentioned the local residents have been notified and are pleased that the Parks and Recreation Commission have taken action.

b. Any other unfinished business

There was none.

8. New Business

a. Research Proposal – “Insects of Ott Biological Preserve”

Community Development Educator Ault explained the memorandum regarding the research proposal sent to the Ott Biological Preserve Work Group for review. Kyle Johnson, Honorary Fellow from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Entomology Department would like to conduct research for the purpose of studying and documenting insect biodiversity with emphasis on moth and butterflies this summer in the Ott. The questions that the work group had were answered to their satisfaction, therefore staff and the workgroup were supporting this request.

*Moved by Member Miller and second by Member Jacox that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve this research project in the Ott Biological Preserve.*

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

b. Park Activity - Theft and Vandalism

Community Development Educator Ault provided an update of what had been happening in the parks. She began with park improvements that included:

- Cleaning and installation of the EZ Dock at Historic Bridge Park,
- Routine maintenance performed to the playground at Historic Bridge Park,
- Replacement of the split-rail fence at the Jameson Road and Arlington Road parking lots at the Ott Biological Preserve,
- New split-rail fencing placed at the corner of Edgewood St. and Evanston Rd.,
- A new gate at the Arlington Road entrance to the Ott Biological Preserve,
- The front nine holes of the disc golf course at Kimball Pines have been almost completed,
- The men's room at Kimball Pines has a new restroom door,
- Both restrooms at Kimball Pines have hot water due to a recently installed hot water tank.

Ault went on to further explain that there had been quite a bit of theft and vandalism over the last year. She mentioned the following issues that occurred:

- Three hidden cameras to capture theft and vandalism were reported stolen on April 22, 2016,
- The playground tunnel at Historic Bridge Park was stolen in 2015,
- Several solid flat metal sidewalk drain covers were stolen in Historic Bridge Park,
- The Trailway bench was stolen in the Ott Biological Preserve in 2015,
- The Men's and women's restroom signs and a trout fish sign were stolen,
- Many Bridges, kiosks, benches, and signs are repeatedly spray painted,
- Benches are vandalized,
- The children's slide at Historic Bridge Park was burned,
- The Kimball Pines men's restroom door was ripped from its hinges,
- A toilet at Historic Bridge Park was used prior to open season causing damage to the plumbing system,
- Two trashcans were ignited. One was burned to the ground; while just the liner was destroyed in the other.

She also showed several slides of motorized vehicles traveling on the Trailway. There are all kinds of vehicles that travel along the trail including golf carts, ATV's, Quads, dirt bikes, cars, trucks, and tractors. One of the people shown in the pictures was in the audience and admitted to being on the Trail in his golf cart. He added he thought it prevented people from behaving badly.

Ault finished her presentation by describing some activity that had been happening in the Ott Biological Preserve. She noted someone had been clearing and marking trails in the south end of the park. She asked for input for the group about what about the theft? Vandalism? And unauthorized work in the Ott?

Emmett Township Public Safety Director Mike Olson spoke to the Commission about how they need to keep his department aware of what is going on, using 911 or a non-emergency number. Chief Olson stated his department now has mountain bikes to patrol the Parks and he feels cameras are a worth every penny to keep installed. He stated the Police force will help in any way they can and are committed to the keeping the Parks safe and guarded as much as possible.

The Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners deliberated over what to do and brought up many ideas to prevent theft and vandalism such as:

- A public awareness campaign,
- A telephone number to call (promote),
- Free App to report problems,
- Having a news reporter talk about problems on Channel 3,
- Signage stating: “We have camera’s watching you” or “You are under surveillance”,
- New cameras installed (still in site but harder to reach),
- “Facebook” and website postings of stolen or damaged items,
- Reward money for information,
- Deputize volunteer citizens to patrol parks and Trailway,
- Hire a Park Ranger,
- Write an article for the “Battle Creek Shopper” to print.

Member Chapman asked Community Development Educator Ault to do a synopsis of the ideas.

- c. Any other new business

Community Development Educator Ault welcomed the new Parks and Recreation Commissioner Lindsey Johnson.

#### 9. Community Development Educator Report

Community Development Educator Ault mentioned that Enbridge notified her they are doing work along the river bank with invasive species.

#### 10. Commissioner’s Time

Member Sootsman asked that since the Historic Bridge Park pavilion is so busy, should we repair and open another one? He stated that there is one that might work in Kimball Pines that is close to the Disc Golf Course. Member Sootsman will work with County Facilities Manager Smyers to look at costs and whether this is a viable option.

Community Development Educator Ault noted she has a meeting with Enbridge on the grant that might help with this undertaking in Kimball Pines.

#### 11. Public Comment

Jim Coury mentioned to check with Western Michigan University that has a Recreation grant for an AmeriCorps person to be hired as a Park Ranger for the summer.

Eric Kerney from Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi noted he was attending the meeting for John Rodwan.

## 12. Adjournment

The May 5, 2016 regular session of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission adjourned at 5:00 pm.