



MINUTES

CALHOUN COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, August 2, 2018
315 W. Green St., 1-400, Marshall, MI 49068

1. Chair King called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.
2. Roll Call – Community Development Support Staff, Pat Dadow

Present: Fred Heaton, Jesse Jacox, Lindsay Johnson, Derek King, Allyn Miller, John Sackrider, Ron Sootsman (via phone)

Absent: Annette Chapman, Bill Comai, John Rodwan

Also Present: County Assistant Administrator Brad Wilcox, Community Development Director Jen Bomba, Community Development Program Manager Doug Ferrall, Community Development Support Staff Pat Dadow

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Member Miller, supported by Member Jacox to approve the August 2, 2018 agenda of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented.

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

4. Approval of Minutes

Moved by Member Jacox, supported by Member Johnson to approve the May 3, 2018 minutes of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented.

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

5. Public Comments

There was none.

6. Unfinished Business

There was none.

7. New Business

There was none.

8. Department Report

1. Calhoun County Trailway

- a) Boardwalk insurance claim and remediation- Program Manager Doug Ferrall stated the insurance claim for the damaged boardwalk has been approved. But after inspecting further, the impression of the damage is mostly aesthetic and may just need the boards to be flipped over or use a sealant to add more life to the boards. The Trailway maintenance group is looking into adding winter bollards to stop snowmobiles coming into the parks and riding on the trails.
- b) Trail paving project- Commissioner King and County Administrator Scott signed a support letter for a grant to the Battle Creek Community Foundation to pave a small section of the trail by the Calhoun County Trailway Alliance. This would be long lasting, less maintenance more accessible and be close to the Medical Care Facility.
- c) Invasive species- Ferrall also noted they had GEI consultants tour the trail and look for invasive species. They found a problem in Kimball Pines with Japanese Knotweed. Brian Stiesma of Enbridge is covering the cost of the remediation of this invasive species. Mr. Coury mentioned taking care with the herbicide to not kill wanted plants species. Member Johnson assured him that GEI is a great company and will do a good job.

2. Historic Bridge Park

- a) Foundation visit and grant request- Ferrall informed the Commission that he met with the Kalamazoo River Community Recreational Foundation (KRCRF), to tour the park. They were impressed with the way the park looked and especially the automatic locks that were installed on the restroom doors. He stated they were planning on installing them in some of their parks. Ferrall was encouraged by the Foundation to submit a grant to help fund the rain garden project, replace some plants in other areas as well and to increase the concrete pads around the picnic tables. The total request was under \$3,000. He has taken this to the Board of Commissioners for approval. He hopes to hear back on that request soon.
- b) Lunker Structure- Another thing they looked at was the Lunker Structure. Ferrall explained he met with the original installer of the structure, a representative from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and KRCRF. They are getting quotes on removal, remediation and restoring the riverbank. He is working with Michelle DeLong, DEQ who is looking into the permits and costs required to do this. The KRCRF is also encouraging him to apply for a grant for this project. Ferrall mentioned this will also go before the Board of Commissioners once they get all the quotes in.
- c) Southwest Michigan Disability event- Ferrall was asked by Southwest Michigan Disability of Kalamazoo to come to an event and talk about the handicap accessibility features of the dock in Historic Bridge Park. He expressed how excited they were for him to promote this feature

because it is rare and the only other one in the area other than Paddlers Grove. He would like to have an event next year to promote this feature of the park.

- d) Angler's bend update- Ferrall discussed the changes being made to the Anglers Bend river access. He mentioned this is not a Calhoun County owned park, but that we do get a lot of calls about it since it connects to ours along the river. He stated the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has a right-of-way and it needs to be moved. Member Jacox had some input from Enbridge that they are footing the bill to move the access point to the river per the requirements of MDOT.
- e) Other projects- A retaining wall in Historic Bridge Park is in need of attention, stated Ferrall. The area is next to Dixon Creek and has knee high erosion. He explained that even though it has been repaired many times, every time it rains it is washed out again. Ferrall stated MDOT Rail is going to put up a new retaining wall this Fall that will take care of the problem. He also mentioned another MDOT group of youth, 12 to 20, high school to college age volunteers did some much needed clean up in the parks. They worked in the park and along the Trailway for approximately 3 weeks. Ferrall was impressed with the group and stated this crew really helped out; he feels the park has never looked better.

3. Albion Project

Community Development Director Jen Bomba stated the County's request to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund was approved. This is the 65 acre project south city limits in Albion. The next phase is to do an environmental assessment and 40 year title search. Once those two things are secure the DNR will look at them, then the County will get an appraisal of the land from a State certified appraiser. Then negotiation from with the landowner begins. Ms. Bomba stated that the appraisal will be the price they can pay for the land and hopes the landowner will agree to it. Commission members discussed the value of the land and how it would be determined. Bomba mentioned the soft cost of the environmental assessment and title search will be covered by the grant even if it the county does not acquire the property.

4. Kimball Pines

- a) Community Development Program Manager Doug Ferrall and the Kimball Pines workgroup met. Ferrall reported the group discussed the many options of what Kimball Pines can be and what's next with the park. He mentioned there have been several wonderful improvements to the park including the reestablishing of the disc golf course and new barriers to close off the two back roads. He stated the Visitors & Convention Bureau grant member Linda Freybler is on the Kimball Pines workgroup and they discussed the \$50,000 slated for a new pavilion can be used for matching dollars for a larger grant, for a recreation or trust fund. These funds could greatly enhance the park with possible outdoor seating and other recreation. Ferrall realized this may take longer but doing it right is more important.
- b) Ferrall brought up the invasive species problem of Oriental Bittersweet in Kimball Pines and along the Trailway. He stated about 65 percent of the parks is invaded with it. GEI consultants looked into it but they can only do along the trails and roadway. Ferrall wonders what is it will take to get it completely out. He will discuss this with the workgroup at the next meeting. They will look into what are the priority areas.

5. Ott Preserve

Ferrall discussed several maintenance issues and projects. North Country Trail is coming to look at the erosion issue with a plan to possibly resurface the trail or other options as to how to control the problem.

9. Commissioners' Time

Member Jacox mentioned the group that was put together to discover ways to finance the parks met. They tossed around some ideas and will meet again soon. He also mentioned he felt the new part time seasonal staff employee; Mackenzie was doing a great job.

Chair King brought up that we need to schedule a date and time for a fall parks tour. Ferrall mentioned this is in the by-laws and would like some feedback on when and what they would like to see during the tour. Ms. Bomba mentioned having the disc golf course crew show off the course.

10. Public Comment

Vern Messler talked about the Indian Trail Bridge that we sold to Purdue University. He mentioned they use it in training and education. He shared pictures and a newspaper article about the selling and setting up of the bridge. He mentioned that you could go to the Purdue website and check it out, search for Steel Bridge Research. Ferrall wanted to thank Mr. Messler for helping us out on getting a potential load rating for the Charlotte Road Bridge to see if we can have weddings and other activities on it.

Member Jacox asked. next time we get volunteers maybe they could clean out the area so the park can be better seen from the road.

Members also discussed the ITC project and how it was going.

Mr. Coury suggested planning ahead with the new expansion of the Trailway possibly we could put in another bridge along the trail. Mr. Coury also commented on the Oriental Bittersweet and gave his suggestions of trimming it back and letting the natural habitat take over.

11. Adjournment

The August 2, 2018 regular session of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission adjourned at 4:44 pm.