



MINUTES

CALHOUN COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, May 3, 2018
315 W. Green St., 1-400, Marshall, MI 49068

1. Vice Chair Chapman called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.
2. Roll Call – Community Development Support Staff, Pat Dadow

Present: Annette Chapman, Bill Comai, Fred Heaton, Jesse Jacox, Allyn Miller, John Rodwan, John Sackrider, Ron Sootsman (via phone)

Absent: Lindsay Johnson, Derek King

Also Present: County Assistant Administrator Brad Wilcox, Community Development Director Jen Bomba, Finance Director Michele Johnson, Community Development Support Staff Pat Dadow

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Member Miller, supported by Member Jacox to approve the May 3, 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 Miller to approve the March 1, 2018 minutes of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented.

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

5. Public Comments

Jim Coury made the announcement the City of Marshall is doing an annual tree planting on May 5th with the help of the Conservation District who have planted over 100 trees in the city over the past 15 years. He also mentioned on May 12th the Children's Water Festival will be held at Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek with a lot of people donating their time.

6. Subcommittee Reports

Community Development Director Jen Bomba mentioned the Subcommittee workgroup meetings have been put on hold until the new Project Manager was in place. She introduced Doug Ferrall, who has been hired to fill that position. She stated he has hit the ground running and is immersing himself into the parks. Doug gave some background information about himself explaining he worked in non-profit and he is a big park user and he is excited to be here. Vice Chair Chapman welcomed Doug on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

7. Unfinished Business

There was none.

8. New Business

- a. Proposed change to the Calhoun County Parks Rules & Regulations prohibiting alcohol in the County Parks.

Member Chapman made sure the Commission members were aware of the proposed change to prohibit alcohol in the parks. She asked if there were any adverse conditions that happened to bring about this rule change to not have a special use permit with alcohol for larger events.

Community Development Director Bomba explained that when she started her role there were two special permits granted in 2017 to have alcohol. The permits states that the permittee will have liability insurance of no less than \$1,000,000.00 per person which is not unusual for a company but for a family this is very unusual. Consequently one of the two permits last year was a family that most likely did not have this kind of insurance. Bomba feels like there are a lot of grey areas.

Project Manager Doug Ferrall checked with several other parks to see whether they allowed alcohol and he found that they were either all for it or completely against allowing it. He feels that when it is sporadically permitted we are sending a mixed message and people see someone drinking in the parks and decides that it must be acceptable. He also stated we do not have the capacity to check the ins and outs of people having liability and/or liquor liability insurance.

Moved by Member Comai, supported by Member Jacox to adopt the proposed change to the Calhoun County Rules & Regulations to prohibit alcohol in the Parks.

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

- b. Any other new business

Community Development Director Bomba introduced John Sackrider, our new appointed Parks and Recreation Commissioner designee from the Planning Commission.

9. Department Report

Finance Director Michele Johnson gave a financial update:

2017 Park Actuals-

- Revenues: total 38,028.41
- Expenditures: 90,437.31

- Net Position Change: (52,408.90)
Year end 2017 numbers result in a \$52,409 use of fund balance. This brings the Parks fund balance to \$132,175 at the beginning of 2018. 2018 budget includes a projected use of \$35K of fund balance. Should Enbridge reimburse 2017 Historic Bridge Park at a decreased amount as has recently been alluded to, an additional \$21,325 will be utilized to cover expenditures over revenues for 20147.

2018 Financials 1st Quarter-

- Revenue totals are at 0.43 %
- Expenditure totals are at 17.79%
- Expectation totals: 25.00%
2018 Expenditures are currently under the 25% quarterly benchmark at 17%, but are running at a faster rate than in 2017 at the same time this year:
Because the parks are seasonal, a majority of the revenue is not realized until they open with rental income and at year end when reimbursements are billed.

2018 Preview:

- Addition of Doug Ferrall as Community Development Program Manager
- Hired part-time seasonal maintenance employee dedicated to the Parks
Salary/fringe savings-\$10,000
Reductions of contractual expense
- Installation of automatic locks in bathrooms
Reductions of contractual expense
- Start pavilion construction at Kimball Pines
Insurance money totaling \$36,000
CIP funds totaling \$20,000
- Gator purchase: CIP funds \$12,525
- Park signs: CIP funds \$6,000 (incomplete in 2017 due to logo re-design)

Ms. Johnson explained we are spending at a faster rate and revenues are coming in at a slower rate for the 1st quarter. She noted the major take-a ways: Enbridge reimbursement starting 2018 is a new fixed amount of \$12,500 and will only increase as an inflationary rate. This amount is based on funds from what is left of the endowment, but in reality the cost is 3 times this amount. The challenge is to find funding sources or reduce our operating costs. Another take-away is to understand the fund balance will soon be depleted.

Member Chapman asked if we are tracking grant programming money separately. Ms. Johnson answered she has set up projects as they come in under the Parks business unit. Community Development Director Bomba interjected they have separate deferred accounts for each grant to make sure the money gets spent on what it is intended for. Member Chapman would like to see a report of these grant deferred accounts. Ms. Bomba suggested making a grant form and felt that is something they can do as we move forward.

Member Comai stated that this brings up the fact that none of these monies will sustain the parks in the future and he feels we need a millage to maintain Parks and Recreation in this county. Ms. Bomba explained that neither the County nor its staff can propose a millage. Members Comai and Jacox both restated they felt most residents would support a small millage to fund the parks.

Member Chapman suggested getting a committee together to start working and planning things out while staff finds out the appropriate steps.

Project Manager Ferrall looked into where the fund balance came from. He found the two main places are the Solid Waste and hotel accommodations tax. He feels if they formalized how much they receive each year in these areas and if it's a fairly standard allocation each year maybe it could stabilize the parks as a baseline so they are not scrambling each year.

Member Jacox suggested asking ITC who has worked well with us in the past, and this may be the last time they will need to work in our parks, for more money. Bomba stated we could ask for more, we just need to request it for a specific use. She feels they are working well with us and could possibly sponsor a new playground or a new project if it was proposed to them.

Member Chapman asked for volunteers to form a small planning committee. Member Comai, Member Jacox expressed interest in volunteering on this committee. Nancy Macfarlane of the Calhoun County Trailway Alliance also volunteered. Member Comai suggested asking the Chair of the Kingman Museum to come to a committee meeting. Member Ron Sootsman also volunteered. Mr. Coury asked about seeing if someone from the Kellogg Foundation would like to be on the planning committee.

Member Rodwan asked about having entrance fees for the parks. Bomba stated we are not at that level yet, not really enough assets. Member Chapman thanked Johnson for the financial update.

Maintenance: Project Manager Ferrall stated the Parks are open as of May 1st. He has purchased and had new automatic locks installed in the bathrooms, this will save money by not having someone drive out to the parks and have this done every morning and night. He stated the water has been tested. He mentioned they have condensed the maintenance contract and are now using Diamond Cut Lawn Service. To cut costs they have hired a seasonal employee to pick up litter and clean the bathrooms at a smaller hourly rate. Bomba explained the seasonal maintenance employee will also use a Gator that was purchased with CIP funded money to also monitor the parks and the Trailway.

Ferrall indicated they have purchased more cameras and these will be checked more frequently with the addition of new staff. He mentioned they are working with the insurance company on replacing the damaged boardwalks. Bomba explained the boardwalks will be replaced with the claim but she wants to be proactive to prevent this snowmobile damage from happening again. Macfarlane suggested temporary blockades for winter or a simple maize that snowmobiles could not get through. It was also brought up that we need additional signage stating no snowmobiles and additional trail cams. Bomba explained we need to catch them in the act or have evidence which the cameras would provide. She also wants to get across to the public to call 911 right away if they see something, not the park's number after the fact.

Ferrall proposed using a portion of the \$36,000 from an insurance claim to open Kimball Pines and get the disc golf course completed. As of right now there is only 9 holes and he would like to see all 18 finished and ready to use this summer. He also suggested using gates we already have to block off three access points into the park that motorists are using and putting cameras up in these areas so the baskets do not get stolen or vandalized.

Member Chapman asked for clarification as to what money was allocated for a new pavilion in Kimball Pines. Bomba responded that there is \$50,000 from the Battle Creek Visitors Bureau specific to the pavilion and the \$36,000 is from 2011 which is earmarked for Kimball Pines but not for a specific use. There was some concern from members that \$50,000 will not cover the cost of a new pavilion.

Ferrall would like to sit down the Battle Creek Visitors and Convention Bureau (BBVCB) to voice his concerns of building a new pavilion without first taking precautions to make sure it is not vandalized. He feels we need to take measures to protect the park before we rebuild a pavilion in it. Bomba agreed that we need to make a commitment to envision Kimball Pines and to talk with the BCBCB about helping the disc golf course crew get the course ready to be used again. We need to look at long term use and resources to build it back up again along with getting other partners who have interest in the park to help.

Ferrall wants to get the Kimball Pines workgroup committee reorganized and get the community involved to help rebuild. He asked for current members on his list; Comia, Jacox, Sootsman, and any other interested volunteers to contact him. Member Chapman, Jim Coury and Brian Huggett were also mentioned as interested workgroup members.

Community Development Director Jen Bomba discussed the Michigan Natural Resources and Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant. She informed the members that the County Board of Commission passed the resolution in favor of the application and it has been submitted. The 65 acres has been awarded and acquisition grant has been approved. The governor is expected to sign the grant soon and then negotiations will begin with the property owner. The money will not be available until 2019.

Ms. Bomba mentioned that phase one of the plans for development of the property is a parking lot with little or no maintenance and a kiosk with information about the Trailways connecting in this area. She explained Albion College has interest helping develop the property with match funds because it is adjacent to property owned by the college. Bomba stated developing this property would meet goals in the Parks and Recreation Plan to serve underserved areas for the County.

Member Chapman asked if this grant would be included in the budget review since this will be property owned by the Calhoun County. Bomba answered, yes.

10. Commissioners' Time

Member Sackrider asked how the bathroom automatic locks work so people do not lock themselves in. Ferrall explained they are automatic egress locks and will open for the inside. Member Jacox mentioned he has some placards that could be placed inside the restrooms to use for signage and he would bring them in.

11. Public Comment

Mr. Vern Messler asked if the money the County received from the scraping of old bridges would be used for maintenance of the bridges. Ms. Bomba answered yes, it is earmarked specifically for the maintenance of the bridges in Historic Bridge Park.

Member Comai wondered if Mr. Messler had pictures from the bridge sold to Purdue University. Messler stated he did and he would send them to the members. He is also working on selling another unused bridge in the park. He mentioned he would like to see the County purchase the Shay Town Road Bridge to set up in the parks.

Nancy Macfarlane invited everyone to the spring "Trailabration" which will be the end of May or the beginning of June. She talked about the receiving a Michigan National Resources Trust Fund grant for the City of Albion to expand the Trailway through the city.

Member Chapman expressed the allocation of the \$6,000 from the sale of scrap iron to go specifically to bridge maintenance.

Moved by Member Jacox, supported by Member Comai to approve allocation of the \$6,000 revenue from the selling of scrap iron go directly to maintenance of the bridges in Historic Bridge Park.

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

12. Adjournment

The May 3, 2018 regular session of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission adjourned at 5:30 pm.