



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: February 9, 2021
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom Digital Meeting

Members Present: Patricia Scribner, WCPARC President (attending from Pittsfield Township, MI); Janis Bobrin, WCPARC Vice President (attending from Ann Arbor, MI); Daniel Ezekiel, WCPARC Secretary/Treasurer (attending from Ann Arbor, MI), Ricky Jefferson (attending from Ypsilanti Township, MI), Robert Joerg (attending from Delta Township, MI), Robert Marans (attending from Ann Arbor Township, MI), Jo Ann McCollum (attending from Ypsilanti Township, MI), Brenda McKinney (attending from Superior Township, MI), and Jason Morgan (attending from Ann Arbor City, MI)

Members Absent: Evan Pratt

Staff Present: Coy Vaughn, Director; Meghan Bonfiglio, Deputy Director; Ginny Trocchio, Superintendent of Park Planning and Natural Areas; Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration; Rhonda Bouma, Superintendent of Rolling Hills County Park; Edward Holley, Superintendent of Park Maintenance; Jeffrey Dehring, Park Planner; Kira Macyda, Park Planner; Peter Sanderson, Park Planner; Rosie Pahl-Donaldson, Park Planner; Hannah Cooley, Management Analyst; and Karen Lewis, Management Analyst

Others Present: Phil Enderle, The Collaborative

1. Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. with a moment of silence in appreciation of first responders.

2. Roll Call and Announcement of Location

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 12, 2021 regular meeting were included with the agenda material. Ms. Bobrin stated that “Dominion” needs to be changed to “Dominican” in the public commentary by Mr. Barry.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Joerg to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2021 regular meeting, as amended. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

The minutes of the January 27, 2021 special meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2021 special meeting. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Ms. Scribner reported that item number 8A, the parking update, would be moved up on the agenda to item 5A.

Mr. Vaughn reported on the January communications which were included in the packet.

A. Project Update – Parking

Mr. Dehring provided an update on parking at both County Farm Park (CFP) and the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center (MLM). He stated that issues that have started to come up in the Platt Road lot have gone beyond what routine maintenance can address. He added that there are also capacity issues at County Farm Park as people have parked on grass and in landscaping. Mr. Dehring provided a list of proposed improvements to the CFP parking area. He stated that 29 additional parking spaces could potentially be added at the MLM at a cost of around \$160,000. Mr. Dehring reported that a component of this project would be repaving the path along Washtenaw Avenue. Mr. Marans stated that there has been some talk of using the initial parking lot as spillover for Recreation Center parking and asked if there would be a pedestrian link between the Platt Road lot and the Recreation Center. Mr. Dehring stated that there is currently a lighted sidewalk along Platt Rd, as well as a pathway through the park until the rear area of MLM. He added that there is a challenge with the creek in creating a more direct link.

Mr. Marans asked which project would go first. Mr. Dehring stated that the package could be rolled together to contain all elements. He added that the priority would be the County Farm lot. Mr. Marans asked how much traffic goes into and out of the Field Operations Building (FOB). Mr. Vaughn reported that the traffic out of the FOB is heaviest in the morning and end of day which includes large pieces of equipment that come in and go out. Ms. McCollum asked if the \$160,000 is for everything and asked how many total spaces will be gained. Mr. Dehring reported that the \$160,000 is just for the 29 spaces at Meri Lou Murray. He stated that the estimated cost for the project on Platt is \$360,000.

Mr. Ezekiel asked if any thought has been given to bike parking. Mr. Dehring stated that the addition of more bicycle hoops is being investigated as well as the addition of a covered structure but that the specific configuration is still being kicked around. He added that there is also a need for additional bicycle hoops in the playground area. Mr. Ezekiel asked about the possibility of solar shades. Mr. Vaughn reported that he has just had a conversation with the lead at the Veridian Development because they are trying to make the project into a micro grid project and that we are discussing providing some sheltered parking with solar panels. Ms. McKinney asked for the total additional parking spots. Mr. Dehring stated that it would be 74 spaces between the two. Mr. Joerg asked for the cost estimates for the projects. Mr. Dehring reported that the parking lot at the Admin offices is \$360,000, the parking lot at MLM is \$160,000, and the pathway reconstruction will be around \$60,000. Mr. Joerg asked if there is a general timeline. Mr. Dehring stated that we are in the final stages of preparing the RFP which will be broken into the three areas with the goal of breaking ground by mid to late summer. Ms. McKinney asked where funds would be taken from for this project. Mr. Vaughn stated that these costs have been included in the Capital Improvement Plan.

B. Summer 2021 Update

Ms. Harris reported that the Summer Playground Camps started in 2008 and now offers an enhance, licensed camp at three locations on the east side of Ypsilanti. She stated that camps are hosted at local

churches in neighborhoods. Ms. Harris discussed that there will need to be changes made for the 2021 camps due to the COVID-19 virus, which will include reduced attendance (30 campers versus 70), daily health screenings and temperature checks, as well as providing sanitation stations. She added that registration is anticipated to begin in March. Ms. McCollum asked how many children will be in a group. Ms. Harris reported that ten children would be in a group. Ms. Bobrin stated that she is happy that the program is resuming at a smaller scale and asked if there is any way to provide lunches and other resources offsite for children that cannot be accommodated. Ms. Harris reported that Growing Hope has volunteered to provide resources and that she is continuing to work out details with Food Gatherers. Ms. McKinney stated that she would like to echo Ms. Bobrin. Mr. Jefferson stated that he was pleased to see in-person camps returning since many children are swamped by the virtual meetings. He also asked how outreach will occur. Ms. Harris stated that she will be reaching out to participants from 2019/2020 and will post information online. Mr. Marans asked if the Commission could receive a report in April as to the number of sign ups. Ms. McKinney asked how many meals are served every day. Ms. Harris reported that the meals are provided by Food Gatherers. Ms. McCollum asked if there would be advertising in the schools. Ms. Harris reported that she typically does advertise in the schools. Ms. Scribner stated that this is one of her favorite programs and wished for her success.

Ms. Bouma gave a brief overview of the summer camp plans for Rolling Hills and Independence Lake. She stated that directives are being taken from LARA and added that guidelines are being updated frequently. She reported that both locations would have a maximum of 30 campers. She reported that the Recreation Center is still weighing camp options given that the facility is a public building.

Ms. Bouma also provided a water park update. She reported that water parks have not been permitted to open since late July 2020. Ms. Bouma reported that we are currently planning for a full opening but anticipates that we will be at a reduced capacity. She stated that the initial plan is to offer two sessions per day of about three-four hours each with online sales only for contact tracing. Ms. Bouma added that we may limit these offerings to residents only.

It was moved by Mr. Morgan and seconded by Ms. McCollum to accept and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of January 2021, as submitted. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Dominican Meadows Update

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to increase the previously approved service contract to the amount not to exceed \$123,554 to Carver Construction, which includes \$9,687 in contingencies. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

B. NAPP – Rouse Sales Contract

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to authorize preparation of a sales contract in the amount of \$95,000 for the fee simple purchase of the Rouse Property in Scio Township, contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence investigation and final approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

C. NAPP – Northfield Hills Sales Contract

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to authorize preparation of a sales contract in the amount of \$575,000 for the fee simple purchase of the Northfield Hills property in Northfield Township, contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence investigation and final approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

7. Financial & Recreation Reports – January 2021

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported and stated that the total for the claims for the month of January was \$1,249,150.50.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and seconded by Mr. Marans to accept and file the Financial Reports for the months of January 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on recreation reports for the month of January 2021.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McKinney to accept and file the Recreation Reports for the month of January 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

8. Old Business

A. Preliminary North Side Site Plan – Staebler Farm

Ms. Macyda stated that Staebler Farm is a historic farmstead that represents a very nice collection of farm buildings. She reported that plan development began in 2020 and design meetings were held with stakeholders, commissioners and the public which included voting on various potential elements. She reported that items that garnered strong support included farm animals on site, a dairy barn for exhibits/events, a focus on the barnyard and on natural element (garden and flowers). Ms. Macyda stated that the top desired recreation elements included a playground, walking trails and a fishing pier.

Mr. Enderle, The Collaborative, reported on the Preliminary Site Plan for Staebler Farm County Park and discussed the south side of the park. Ms. McCollum asked of the outlines on the provided map reflect anything. Mr. Enderle reported that those are potential septic fields as more development occurs. Ms. McKinney stated that she feels that there will be a need for additional parking and added that she appreciates that it was on the map. Mr. Marans stated that the items on the map tie together well. Mr. Ezekiel stated that he wanted to make sure there was continued consideration for bicycle parking.

Mr. Enderle presented a preliminary plan for the north side of the park. Mr. Morgan asked if there are going to be working pastures and live animals. Ms. Macyda stated that we do intend to have animals on site but that it would be limited to smaller livestock due to space constraints. She reported that details will be clearer within the next year. Ms. Scribner asked if sheep were under consideration. Ms. Macyda stated that they are. She added that the target is the late spring to bring this back to the Commission.

B. NAPP – Bassett and Deloof Final Approval

Ms. Trocchio reported on the 164-acre farm which is in Freedom Township on both sides of Ernst Road. The property was reviewed by ALPAC as part of Round 18 and determined to be a priority. Ms. Trocchio stated that the property was submitted for USDA-ACEP matching funds, which were awarded in the amount of \$216,825. The commission previously approved a sales contract and subsequently all due diligence has been completed. She reported that no issues were identified during the due diligence period and that staff is still waiting on final approval from USDA in order to schedule closing.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McKinney to authorize the purchase of a conservation easement on the Bassett and DeLoof property in Freedom Township in the amount of \$494,179, contingent upon attorney approval of final documents and to authorize \$15,000 be contributed to the stewardship special revenue fund for the future monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

C. NAPP – Kidder Final Approval

Ms. Trocchio reminded the commission that this is a property in Scio Township, adjacent to the existing Scio Woods Preserves. Scio Woods is one of NAPP's most visited preserves. The City of Ann Arbor and Scio Township are partners on the transaction and the total cost will come to \$117,000 after a three-way split. She reported that all due diligence has been completed and no major issues were identified. Once partners approve the final documents, NAPP is ready to close on the purchase.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Ms. Bobrin to authorize the purchase of a conservation easement on the Kidder property in the amount of \$351,000, contingent upon attorney approval of final documents and to authorize \$6,700 be contributed to the stewardship special revenue fund for the future maintenance and management of the property. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

D. Other New Business

None

9. New Business

A. LED Lighting Project

Mr. Holley reported that he has been working with the Office of Infrastructure Management (OIM) on a LED light replacement project. He stated that he has provided WCPARC facilities lighting fixtures data (interior and exterior) for inclusion with the OIM request for proposal. The proposal will give an estimate of costs as well as rebate potential for future retrofit projects. Mr. Holley stated that the bid is currently out and that responses are due back in early March. Mr. Ezekiel thanked Mr. Holley for his presentation. Mr. Morgan stated that this falls in line with environmental issues being considered by the Board of Commissioners and added that he appreciates the consideration for reducing energy usage.

B. NAPP – Stillwood Farm Partnership

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson stated this is a conservation easement being led by Webster Township. The property was reviewed and prioritized by ALPAC as part of Round 18 nominations. The property is located just east of Hudson Mills and is in proximity to several other protected properties. Webster Township has received a USDA – ACEP grant for a portion of the purchase price and is requesting a contribution of \$115,200 or 15% of the purchase price.

Mr. Ezekiel asked if the large part of the excluded portion is buildable or if it would have road access and asked if anyone has talked with the landowners regarding their plans. Ms. Bobrin asked what could be done based on zoning. Ms. Pahl-Donaldson stated that larger portion of the excluded area is only accessible from the smaller portion. Therefore, the two parcels will have to stay together. If developed would have to meet criteria for private road, to the larger area.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Ms. McCollum partner with Webster Township for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Stillwood Farm property in Webster Township and contribute \$115,200 toward the purchase, contingent upon attorney review of documents and execution of participation agreement and to contribute \$7,500 to the stewardship special revenue fund to cover

potential future costs associated with monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 2 Nays (Scribner & McKinney), 1 Absent, the motion was approved.

10. Commissioners/Directors Comments

Ms. Bobrin stated that she wanted to express appreciation for the number of staff presenting today.

11. Adjournment

It was moved by Ms. McCollum and seconded by Mr. Joerg to adjourn the meeting. Ayes all; the motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.