



## MINUTES

### CALHOUN COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, November 5, 2015  
315 W. Green St., 1-400, Marshall, MI 49068

1. Chair King called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.
2. Roll Call – Michigan State University Extension Support Staff, Pat Dadow

Present: Bill Comai, Jesse Jacox, Derek King, Christine Kosmowski (arrived 4:07), Ron Sootsman, Blaine VanSickle,

Absent: Annette Chapman, Allyn Miller, John Rodwan (sent alternate Eric Kerney)

Also Present: Calhoun County Community Development Educator Ingrid Ault, Assistant County Administrator Brad Wilcox, GIS Coordinator Brent Thelen, MSU Extension Support Staff Pat Dadow

3. Approval of Agenda

*Moved by Member Jacox, second by Member VanSickle to approve the November 5, 2015 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 Jacox to approve the October 1, 2015 minutes of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission as presented by Ault.*

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

5. Public Comment

There was none.

6. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Ott Biological Preserve Workgroup

Community Development Educator Ault stated the Ott Biological Preserve Workgroup has been making discussing who to engage and share the plan with and making sure they have included stakeholders in the review process. She stated the next meeting was scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup>. Then she passed a draft of the Management and Maintenance Plan for attendees to view.

b. Trailway Workgroup

Member Sootsman stated there has been progress and they hope to have the plan ready early next year.

c. Finance Committee

Community Development Educator Ault stated the Finance Committee had not met.

d. Membership Vacancies

Community Development Educator Ault stated they were scheduled to meet November 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the procedure for filling the vacancy due to the resignation of Chad Curtis.

7. Special Presentation – John Macfarlane: Kalamazoo River in Battle Creek

John Macfarlane, Larry Rizor and other concerned citizens of Battle Creek received a mini grant in 2003 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to hire Whitewater Parks International to evaluate the Kalamazoo River and determine whether there was potential for restoration to reestablish the Kalamazoo River as a natural waterway for recreational purposes. They determined the river has sufficient water flow to create recreational activities along the waterfront.

Macfarlane explained the group formed a 501C3 nonprofit called Battle Creek Whitewater Incorporated to promote the restoration of the river, create a recreational kayak and canoe courses, and install park space along the river banks. This was explained with a PowerPoint presentation that showed how and where the restoration of the river would take place.

Macfarlane stated that removing the concrete and reestablishing the river for recreational use would be an economic development tool that will attract citizens, visitors and new businesses to the area. He noted the river is centrally located and a key crossroad for downtown Battle Creek.

Macfarlane ended his presentation by asking for a letter of support to endorse the idea of reestablishing a natural waterway of the Kalamazoo River from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

*Moved by Member Comai, second by Member VanSickle to draft a letter of support to the Battle Creek Whitewater Incorporated for the Kalamazoo River project.*

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

8. Unfinished Business

There was none.

9. New Business

a. Park Update

Community Development Educator Ault gave an update regarding the parks stating that the dock at Historic Bridge Park will be removed before Thanksgiving and that the restrooms have been closed for the season. Ault reported that the Historic Bridge Park pavilion was rented 28 times resulting in \$1400 in revenue. She added that the park Kiosks have been updated with information and maps.

Ault reported that there were fires in two of the trash cans at Historic Bridge Park in October that are suspected as arson.

She noted that the Disc Golf Course implementation at Kimball Pines has been postponed until spring of 2016.

Ault concluded with pictures of the 4<sup>th</sup> Trailway boardwalk in Kimball Pines where there has been flooding due to the arrival of a beaver or beavers and that she is addressing the issue.

b. Letter of Support (Tracy Bronson)

Tracy Bronson Executive Director of the Calhoun Conservation District asked the Parks and Recreation Commission to approve a letter of support to create a new agency called the Barry, Calhoun, and Kalamazoo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area. This new organization will apply for a grant through the Department of Natural Resources for a proposal for education to deal with regional and statewide aquatic and terrestrial invasive species issues.

*Moved by Member Jacox, second by Member Sootsman to approve a written letter of support for the formation of the Barry, Calhoun and Kalamazoo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area.*

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

c. Accessibility Presentation

Community Development Educator Ault presented a Power Point presentation of Accessibility Protections through the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which recognizes and protects the civil rights of people with disabilities. She discussed the guidelines and provided questions to consider as the management and maintenance plans are established in the County Parks.

10. Community Development Educator Report

Community Development Educator Ault stated she was asked to provide more information to the Enbridge Donation Program regarding the grant proposal she submitted in September. She had hoped to hear back from them prior to the meeting, but did not have an update beyond this information.

11. Commissioners' Time

Member Comai stated the Schwinn Bike Shop owners asked what signage was planned for at the start of the trail at the corner of Emmett and Raymond Road. Community Development Educator Ault stated there are plans to add a Kiosk and signage in the area. Member Comai suggested a sign visible from the road stating "Bike Trail" or "Bike Parking". Community Development Educator Ault stated this will be addressed next year.

Member Jacox asked if the Kiosk at the boat ramp in Historic Bridge Park could be moved to the corner of Emmett and Raymond Road since it is always getting vandalized. Member Jacox read a letter he received about how to financially fund the Calhoun County Parks. Community Development Educator Ault stated that the Finance subcommittee will be determining this in the near future.

12. Public Comment

Eric Kerney, Tribal Water Resources Specialist stated he was attending to update member John Rodwan who was unable to make the meeting.

13. Adjournment

The November 5, 2015 regular session of the Calhoun County Parks and Recreation Commission adjourned at 5:14 pm.