



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: May 11, 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 Glen Arbor, MI); Daniel Ezekiel, WCPARC Secretary/Treasurer (attending from Glen 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), Evan Pratt (attending from Scio Township, MI) and Jason Morgan (attending from Ann Arbor, MI)

Members Absent: Brenda McKinney

Staff Present: Coy Vaughn, Director; Meghan Bonfiglio, Deputy Director; Ginny Leikam, Superintendent of Park Planning and Natural Areas; Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration; Ann Ziolkowski, Communication Manager; Peter Sanderson, Park Planner; Kira Macyda, Park Planner; and Rosie Pahl-Donaldson, Park Planner

Others Present: Toni Kayumi, CEO of the Ann Arbor YMCA

1. Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:01 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 March 23, 2021 working session were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2021 working session. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney), the motion was approved.

The minutes of the April 13, 2021 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Ms. Bobrin to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney), the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Barry Lonik spoke in favor of the Schwark partnership project in Webster Township and the Rosko partnership project in Scio Township.

Heather Jarrell-Roe, Ypsilanti Township Clerk, spoke in favor of the Ypsilanti Township YMCA project but asked that it not be referred to as a "Community Center". She commented that she didn't see any reference to early childhood development in the project description.

Ms. Bonfiglio commented about the 128 survey respondents to the Michigan Folk School-initiated survey and the 24 letters of support that were received for the Staebler Farm site plan development. She also noted that three additional letters were submitted that were not included in the packet. These letters are from Josh Williams, Maker Works; David Staebler; and William & Mary Ellen Doty.

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

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

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

6. Consent Agenda

Mr. Joerg requested that item 6A, Award of the Watkins Lake Trail Construction, be removed from the Consent Agenda to be discussed and voted upon separately.

A. Award of the Watkins Lake Trail Construction

Mr. Joerg expressed his concern that the low bid on the project, submitted by JB Contractors of Detroit, was considerably less than the engineers estimate and the next lowest bid. He asked if staff could provide more detail regarding the low bid. Mr. Sanderson explained that the contractor understood the scope of the project and was likely lower because JB Contractor is a smaller firm with less overhead, and possibly more hungry for work. Mr. Vaughn noted that staff would look into the matter in more detail and provide a follow up at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Pratt commented that he too was curious and supported the idea of seeing additional detail on future bids if it is recommended to award a bid that is significantly higher or lower than the other bids.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. McCollum to award the Watkins Lake Trail Construction project, RFP 8101, to JB Contractors in the amount of \$731,313.00 and authorize a 10% contingency of \$70,000. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney) the motion was approved.

B. B2B Special Revenue Fund

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Mr. Marans to make a one-time deposit to the Special Revenue Fund for trail maintenance of \$808,000 and allow the fund to grow, without withdrawals until 2026 or later and authorize staff to amend the budget in alignment with this deposit. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney) the motion was approved.

C. Kosch Wetland Agreement

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. McCollum to authorize staff to execute the project agreement with the Washtenaw County Road Commission for the Kosch Wetland Project contingent upon final review and acceptance by legal counsel and the Washtenaw County Road Commission. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney) the motion was approved.

7. Financial & Recreation Reports – April 2021

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported and stated that the total for the claims for the month of April was \$515,711.67.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and seconded by Mr. Morgan to accept and file the Financial Reports for the month of April 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney), the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on recreation reports for the month of April 2021 and highlight the impact of the pandemic on the membership categories at the MLM Recreation Center.

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

8. Old Business

A. Adoption of Site Development Plan – Staebler Farm

Ms. Macyda explained that in the winter 2020, staff engaged The Collaborative Inc. to develop a comprehensive Park Development Plan for Staebler Farm Park. The goal of the plan was to incorporate the southside development with program elements north of Plymouth Road and guide development over the next 10+ years. In preparing the plan, input was obtained from Parks Commissioners, stakeholder groups, other government and non-profit agencies, and members of the public. At the March 2021 Parks Commission meeting, TCI presented a draft of the plan to confirm that its general direction aligned with Commission priorities. She noted that the plan was made available for additional public comment since last meeting and it is now time to adopt the final plan.

Mr. Ezekiel asked if we anticipated using fossil fuel to heat the proposed buildings. Ms. Leikam responded that we are not approving specific buildings at this time. She added that current plans are for new buildings to be all electric.

Mr. Marans asked how we will be communicating to the public that the Site Master Plan has been approved and that there is exciting new development planned for Staebler Farm. He suggested a press release would be appropriate and reaching out specifically to the Ann Arbor Observer.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. McCollum to adopt the Staebler Farm County Park Site Development Plan. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney), the motion was approved.

B. Staebler Farmhouse/Multi-Purpose Building RFP's

Ms. Leikam explained that O|X Associates completed a condition assessment report (CAR) of the farmhouse at Staebler Farm Park in 2017. Based on the CAR, critical repairs were completed in 2018 to stop further deterioration of the house for 5-7 years until redevelopment plans could be implemented. She added that there is currently \$500,000 in CIP for renovations to the farmhouse.

Ms. Leikam noted that In 2019, staff engaged architects from The Collaborative Inc. (TCI) to provide programming and schematic design of a multipurpose building at Staebler Farm County Park to accommodate WCPARC needs and classes for partner, the Michigan Folk School. At the October 2019 Parks Commission meeting, architects from TCI presented the initial design of the building. Subsequent to the meeting, TCI addressed Commissioners' concerns regarding design elements of the new building to ensure it complements the historical character of the park including repeating elements on the existing structures, such as roof pitch and window ratios. In addition, TCI investigated and modified elements to address the sustainability concerns of the Commission, including the design of an all-electric building.

Staff also engaged consultants, Bonner Advisory Group and Gritter Real Estate Services, to conduct a cost benefit analysis for the construction of the multipurpose building and renovations to the farmhouse and evaluate partnership with the Michigan Folk School. Their recommendations included moving forward with construction of the multipurpose building and renovations to the farmhouse. These recommendations were presented to the Commission in March 2021.

Ms. Leikam outlined the next phase of this project which is to prepare and release a Request for Proposal in order to receive bids for the construction of the building, extension of the parking lot, installation of necessary infrastructure, and construction of the left hand turn lane on Plymouth Road. In addition, staff will need to engage an architecture firm to develop drawings for renovations to the farmhouse.

Ms. Bobrin offered a cautionary note regarding the Zeeb Road project that was developed years ago by the County on a tight budget. She explained that many corners were cut on that project and the result is a very unpleasant office building. Mr. Pratt agreed with her comment.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. Bobrin to authorize staff to work with County Purchasing to prepare and release bid documents for the construction of the multi-purpose building at Staebler Farm Park and authorize staff to engage an architecture firm to develop necessary construction documents for renovations to the farmhouse. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (McKinney), the motion was approved.

C. Contribution to the East Washtenaw YMCA

Mr. Vaughn presented a proposal to partner with the Ann Arbor YMCA and Ypsilanti Township to construct a new East Washtenaw YMCA facility on a 25-acre parcel in Ypsilanti Township. He also provided background regarding previous efforts to build similar facilities in the Ypsilanti area. He emphasized a demonstrated need for a community recreation center and referenced the results of a recent community survey indicating strong community support. Mr. Vaughn indicated that a \$3.5M request had been made by the Ann Arbor Y to serve as a catalyst for kicking off the capital campaign that will focus on raising the needed funds to complete the project.

Mr. Vaughn explained that the facility design and program development elements will be facilitated by GRO Development and informed through three steering committees comprised of the representatives of the project partners, as well as community leaders in the Ypsilanti area. The three

steering committees are *Design/Construction*, *Community Engagement*, and *Capital Campaign*. He emphasized the need for drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the scope of the project and the roles and responsibilities of each partner. He explained that the \$3.5M financial commitment will also serve as the initial contribution to the Healthy Washtenaw Initiative, that will ultimately provide funding for renovating the Meri Lou Murray Rec Center and the Chelsea Wellness Center.

Ms. Bobrin commended staff for putting forward a proposal that not only addresses the need on the east side of the County, but also includes much needed updates to the Meri Lou Murray Rec Center and potential future contributions to a west County facility. She added that the recent working sessions were helpful to understand all of our capital needs for the next several years and constraints of our current budget situation.

Mr. Marans expressed his appreciation for the three steering committees and that he felt the WCPARC staff and Commission should be represented.

Mr. Morgan indicated that he was supportive of the proposal, but somewhat concerned that the Ypsilanti Township Supervisor feels that she is being left out on some of the communications. He also mentioned the \$5M funding request that was recently submitted to Representative Dingell's office.

Mr. Jefferson wanted to make sure there is an understanding of the exact scope of the project and avoid duplicating other services that are already established in the community. He indicated that he would like to see the results of the feasibility study. He suggested that "Eastside" should not be used in the name of the facility. Mr. Jefferson also emphasized the importance of carrying out the Equity Resolution and taking community disparities into consideration. He opined that \$3.5M was not enough and believed that WCPARC should do more.

Ms. McCollum commented that she was not familiar with the Five Healthy Towns Foundation (5HF) and asked if they were introduced at a previous meeting. Mr. Vaughn answered that 5HF was introduced and presented to the Commission at two previous meetings.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and seconded by Mr. Marans to authorize staff to work with project partners and legal counsel to draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the terms and conditions of the East Washtenaw Community Recreation Center project and contingent upon a successfully executed MOU, make a financial commitment of \$3,500,000 towards the project. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (McKinney and Joerg), the motion was approved.

D. Other Old Business

None

9. New Business

A. NAPP – Schwark Partnership Project

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson reported that the 80-acre Schwarck property was located on the northeast corner of Merrill and Barker Roads, at the edge of the county. Pasture and some hay fields can be seen from several spots along its nearly one mile of road frontage. There are no other conservation easements in the nearby area, but Independence Lake County Park and Mud Lake Bog are just a half-mile away. She noted that the Schwark property received 60/88 points on ALPAC's scoring system. Notable high-

scoring areas include its prime farmland composition (95% prime or important) and its 4300+ feet of road frontage.

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson explained that Webster Township ordered an appraisal that was completed in January 2021 and valued the 80-acre conservation easement at \$520,000 or \$6,500/acre. Webster Township applied for and was awarded an ACEP-ALE grant for 45% of the value. They are requesting \$235,200 (45%) from WCPARC. Webster Township will contribute \$49,600 (10%) and be responsible closing and due diligence for monitoring and enforcing the conservation easement. ALPAC recommended to partner with Webster Township and contribute \$235,200 at their March 2021 meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Mr. Pratt to partner with Webster Township for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Schwarck property in Webster Township and contribute \$235,200 toward the purchase and \$7500 to the stewardship special revenue fund, contingent upon attorney review of documents and execution of participation agreement. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (McKinney and Joerg), the motion was approved.

B. NAPP – Rosko Partnership Project

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson explained that the highlight of the Rosko property is its adjacency to NAPP's Scio Woods Preserve. The Rosko property alone abuts about 14% of the perimeter of the preserve; placing an easement on a preserve's neighboring property helps to protect the preserve's conservation values. This partnership follows two other active acquisitions related to Scio Woods Preserve: Kidder and Rouse. She noted that the property has no road frontage and is accessed via a 66' wide easement from Knight Road. There is an existing house and some accessory structures on the site, though they are dilapidated and will likely be replaced by the current landowner.

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson reported that the Assessment & Prioritization Mapping labeled one of the easement parcels as medium-high quality and prioritized it based on its proximity to other protected areas (Patch Expansion). It received 63/88 points on ALPAC's scoring system, which tied it for the 3rd highest scoring nomination in Round 20. Notable high-scoring areas included its prime farmland composition (89% prime or important); high percent of soils suitable for septic system development; and its proximity to available sewer service. The Commission's scoring system for NAPP properties yields 69/100 points

Scio Township ordered an appraisal that was completed in January 2021 and valued the 72.49-acre conservation easement at \$733,000 or about \$10,112/acre. Scio Township is requesting to split the cost approximately evenly among the Township, the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt, and WCPARC. Ann Arbor City Council approved the \$244,000 contribution requested of them at their April 5, 2021 meeting. ALPAC recommended to partner with Scio Township and contribute \$244,000 at their March 2021 meeting.

Mr. Ezekiel asked for an explanation of what was proposed for the existing buildings on the site. Ms. Pahl-Donaldson explained that the dilapidated house was planned to be torn down and a new house may be constructed on the site.

It was moved by Ms. McCollum and seconded by Mr. Marans to partner with Scio Township for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Rosko property in Scio Township and contribute \$244,000 toward the purchase and \$7,500 to the stewardship special revenue fund, contingent upon attorney review of documents and execution of participation agreement. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (McKinney and Joerg), the motion was approved.

C. Other New Business

None.

10. Commissioners/Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn suggested that a sub-committee be formed to help guide the discussion regarding the Michigan Folk School and look into alternative relationship models for WCPARC/MFS and the possibility of acquiring MFS. He asked for volunteers to serve on the sub-committee. Mr. Pratt, Mr. Marans, and Ms. McCollum agreed serve on the sub-committee.

Mr. Marans commented on how great it was to see long-time members of the Meri Lou Murray Rec Center finally starting to return after the pandemic. He noted how friendly and accommodating the staff has been at MLM.

Ms. Scribner Commented that her and some friends had an encounter with Katie Carlisle, Stewardship Coordinator, doing some work in County Farm Park. She was impressed and commented that Ms. Carlisle was knowledgeable and friendly.

Mr. Jefferson reiterated that he would like to see Ypsilanti Township included in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) conversations with the YMCA.

11. Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to adjourn the meeting. All ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.