



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: June 8, 2021

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Digital Meeting

Members Present: Janis Bobrin, WCPARC Vice President (attending from Glen 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), Evan Pratt (attending from Ann Arbor, MI), Brenda McKinney (attending from Superior Township, MI) and Jason Morgan (attending from Ann Arbor, MI)

Members Absent: Patricia Scribner, WCPARC President

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; Jeff Dehring, Park Planner; Peter Sanderson, Park Planner; Kira Macyda, Park Planner; and Rosie Pahl-Donaldson, Park Planner

Others Present: Rick Bunch, Michigan MAUI; Valerie Brader, Attorney; Susan Faulkner, HWPI; Kristin Warzyniec, HWPI; Neal Billetdeaux, Smith Group; Angela Perry, WC Purchasing; Beth Duffy, WC Purchasing

1. Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Ms. Bobrin called the meeting to order at 2:00 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 April 19, 2021 working session were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. McKinney to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2021 working session. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner), the motion was approved.

The minutes of the May 11, 2021 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner), the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the May communications which were included in the packet. Ms. Ziolkowski, Communications Manager, presented the departmental communications framework.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to accept and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of May 2021, as submitted. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner) the motion was approved.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Mitchell Satyr Butterfly Safe Harbor Agreement

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McKinney that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission approve the Safe Harbor Agreement and sign the Certificate of Inclusion for reintroduction of the Mitchell Satyr butterfly at Park Lyndon prairie fen, contingent upon final review and approval by Corporation Counsel. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner) the motion was approved.

B. Draper Houston Boardwalk RFP

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McKinney to authorize staff to finalize design plans with ROWE and develop an RFP to be released for reconstruction of the boardwalks. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner) the motion was approved.

7. Financial & Recreation Reports – May 2021

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported and stated that the total for the claims for the month of May was \$260,026.72.

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

B. Recreation Reports

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

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

8. Old Business

A. Michigan MAUI Update

Mr. Vaughn introduced Rick Bunch of Michigan MAUI and Valerie Brader, lead attorney on negotiations with DTE. He explained that Mr. Bunch and Ms. Brader were working on behalf of the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County to help improve the terms of DTE's *MI Green Power* program for local governments.

Mr. Bunch explained that he is very happy with changes to the program that will make municipal solar programs much more cost-effective, inclusive of low-income customers and consistent with public-agency procurement requirements. We also have DTE's commitment to collaborate on ways to assure that carbon is reduced in step with renewable energy purchases - a prerequisite given that the County's commitment is to reduce carbon.

Ms. Brader explained that under the new terms local governments can now host large solar projects. Currently, utility restrictions prevent anybody else from generating more power on a site than is used over the course of a calendar year. She explained that under the new agreement DTE will own the solar pv equipment, but not the land. Because DTE will generate the energy, there will be no barrier to using DTE's electric grid to other municipal sites or customers. This will allow the City or County to serve as an "Anchor Tenant", hosting the site and guaranteeing the sale of energy.

Mr. Ezekiel thanked the team for the presentation and their outstanding work negotiating with DTE. He asked if a school district could be an anchor tenant. Ms. Brader responded that a school district, park district or even a private entity could serve as the host.

Mr. Marans voiced his support for the new terms and thanked the team for their work. He asked if WCPARC had a site that would be a good fit to host a solar array. Mr. Vaughn responded that Rolling Hills has been identified as the best park facility due to the existing electrical transmission line near the northern property boundary and the abundance of vacant land that is currently open and under agricultural use.

B. B2B Website Update

Mr. Sanderson provided an update regarding a joint effort between WCPARC and HWPI to create a new website that is focused on the B2B Trail. He introduced Susan Faulkner and Kristin Warzyniec from HWPI who proceeded to walk the commission through a demonstration of the new website. The HWPI team emphasized that the new format puts the B2B trail and the trail users at the forefront. The new website is intuitive and user friendly, particularly from mobile devices that are often used by trail users.

Ms. Bobrin voiced her support for the new website and asked how we intend to roll this out to the public. Ms. Faulkner explained that the first step is to meet with all the partner agencies to make sure that there is support for the new format. The second step is to form a community engagement task force that will help determine how the website is rolled out to the public.

Mr. Marans noted that he liked the new format and that it would be appreciated by trail users. He asked if there would be any information regarding the degree of difficulty for specific segments of the trail. Ms. Warzyniec responded that there would be.

C. Sharon Mills Livery Design

Ms. Macyda introduced Neal Billetdeaux of the Smith Group and explained that a planning study had been completed by the consultant team and a group of graduate students from the University of Michigan for a proposed canoe/kayak livery operation at Sharon Mills Park. She explained that the work was being done in coordination with Village of Manchester who recently hired the same consultant to design and construct the river take out point in downtown Manchester. Ms. Macyda noted that there had been a previous livery operation at the property adjacent to Sharon Mills park on Bethel Church Road and that WCPARC acquired the property in 2009 (the Malley addition).

Mr. Billetdeaux presented the livery operation plans that included a new launch area on the River Raisin and a boardwalk to improve pedestrian circulation on site. He also provided an overview of how the livery operation would work in coordination with the Village of Manchester where a point of sale would be established and patrons would park in town and be transported by van to the launch point at Sharon Mills.

Mr. Platt commented that the livery plans were exciting, and he was looking forward to the new livery operation. Mr. Marans concurred and asked when the livery improvements are anticipated to be complete and ready to open. Mr. Vaughn explained that this project would be considered in context with other capital projects at all WCPARC facilities, but as of now it is anticipated to be a 2023 project.

D. B2B Award of Dexter-Chelsea Segment.

Mr. Sanderson presented plans for a 1.53-mile segment of the B2B between Chelsea and Dexter. He explained that the Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI) purchased an 80-acre property on the northeast corner of Dancer and Dexter Chelsea Roads to help facilitate the proposed trail alignment. At the December 8th, 2020 regular meeting, the Commission accepted a gift of a 60-foot wide easement from HWPI to construct a portion of the Border to Border Trail (B2B Trail) across that parcel. Additionally, the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) has authorized a long-term occupancy permit to construct and maintain the B2B Trail within a portion of the former Boland Railroad on the north side of Dexter Chelsea Road that extends to Wylie Road.

Mr. Sanderson explained that staff recently issued RFP 8109 to solicit bids to construct the Dancer Road to Wylie Road B2B Trail segment. Five bids were received with Erie Construction being the lowest qualified bid at \$995,722. HWPI has paid for the engineering of this project and will reimburse the Commission for \$400,000 as its contribution towards construction. Additionally, HWPI will contribute \$30,600 (1.53 miles x \$20,000/mile), which will be matched by the Commission, to the B2B Trail Special Revenue Fund upon completion of the project. The remainder of the construction funding is planned to be drawn from the Commission's portion of the road and trails millage.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Mr. Pratt to award the contract for RFP 8109 to Erie Construction in the amount of \$995,702 and authorize a 10% contingency for the project of \$99,570. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner), the motion was approved.

E. Other Old Business

None.

9. New Business

A. Independence Lake Disc Golf Pavilion Award

Mr. Dehring reported that the popularity of disc golf continues to grow, and we have responded in recent years by the expanding the Red Hawk disc golf course at Independence Lake – it now includes two separate 18-hole courses. With all the improvements, staff has seen an increase in volume of play and tournaments being hosted here (including a woman's national event). Quite often these tournaments draw large crowds, which require the use of temporary shelters such as pop-up canopy tents for participant registration/logistics, event support sponsors, and player meetings. Mr. Dehring noted that, in addition to the disc golf activities, a pavilion would also be utilized for other programming needs. Staff anticipates using the pavilion as a starting point for some of our night hikes and various nature programs.

Mr. Dehring explained that staff had engaged our architectural consultant, JFR Architects, to design and provide architectural drawings for the new pavilion. A request for proposal (RFP #8089) was prepared by staff for soliciting bids for the project. This documentation was assembled in accordance with the County's standard procurement protocol and was advertised by the Purchasing Department. Nine companies attended a pre-bid meeting held on April 8th and four submitted proposals on May 4. The lowest qualified bid was \$244,642 by Brock & Associates, Inc of Novi, MI.

Mr. Marans noted his support for the new pavilion and asked when we anticipate construction to begin. Mr. Dehring responded that construction will start immediately upon award of the bid and it is anticipated to be completed by this fall.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum to award a Service Contract in the amount of \$244,642.00 to Brock & Associates, Inc. for this project (RFP #8089) and include an additional 15% (\$37,700) contingency for potential change orders. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner), the motion was approved.

B. NAPP – McCullough Partnership

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson presented a proposal from the Legacy Land Conservancy to place conservation easements on the 90-acre McCullough property in Sharon Township. Legacy forwarded the property's information to NAPP in 2017 for review in anticipation of requesting a contribution. NATAC included the property in their 2017 annual review of nominations. She noted that the six McCullough parcels shelter a significant stretch of the River Raisin just south of Sharon Valley Road, only 0.3 miles upstream of WCPARC's Leonard Preserve and just down the street from WCPARC's River Raisin Preserve. NATAC included the property in its Round 17 Tier 1 category, and the Assessment and Prioritization Mapping assessed the land as high-quality and prioritized it for stream protection, patch expansion, and new patch establishment. The Commission's scoring system yielded 69 points.

Legacy Land Conservancy is working with a confidently estimated fair market value of \$315,000 total for the 3 easements covering 90 acres. They are requesting a \$79,000 (25.1%) contribution from WCPARC towards the purchase price. Legacy's 319 grant will fund the remaining value. Legacy will be responsible for monitoring and enforcing the conservation easements. After review of the nomination, NATAC recommended to partner with the Legacy Land Conservancy and contribute the requested \$79,000 toward the easement purchases.

Ms. McCollum asked how wide and deep the Raisin River is in this area. Ms. Pahl-Donaldson responded that the river varies, and she is not certain but does know that the river is navigable in this stretch. Mr. Vaughn added that this segment of river was similar to the images that were presented earlier for the Sharon Mills livery proposal.

It was moved by Ms. McKinney and seconded by Mr. Marans to authorize a partnership with the Legacy Land Conservancy for the purchase of three conservation easements on the McCullough properties in Sharon Township, as identified in the attached map and contribute 25.1% of the total purchase price, not to exceed \$79,000, and a contribution of \$7,500 to the stewardship special revenue fund to cover potential future costs associated with monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement, contingent upon completion of all three easements, attorney review of documents, and execution of participation agreement. 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Scribner), the motion was approved.

C. Other New Business

None.

10. Commissioners/Directors Comments

None.

11. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.