



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: October 12, 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), Robert Joerg (attending from Delta Township, MI), Robert Marans (attending from Ann Arbor Township, MI), Jo Ann McCollum (attending from Ypsilanti Township, MI), and Evan Pratt (attending from Grand Traverse County, MI)

Members Absent: Brenda McKinney, Ricky Jefferson, and Jason Morgan

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: None

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 September 14, 2021 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Joerg and seconded by Ms. McCollum to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Toni Spears, resident of Webster Township, complimented the Commission on a terrific update of the Independence Lake Master Plan. She noted her appreciation of the detailed history of the park all the supporting background materials. She commented that she would like to see the camping area located closer to some of the park amenities like the beach area so campers could have easier access.

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the September communications which were included in the packet. Ms. Ziolkowski gave an overview of the digital report including social media, the website, and newsletter. Mr. Joerg asked if we are comparing any of our metrics to our peer organizations. Mr. Marans commented that HMCA was also tracking similar info and encouraged staff to reach out them. Ms. Ziolkowski responded that we would be looking into HCMA and other peers.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to accept and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of September 2021, as submitted. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

6. Financial & Recreation Reports – September 2021

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported and stated that the total for the claims for the month of September was \$652,549.33.

It was moved by Mr. Joerg and seconded by Ms. Bobrin to accept and file the Financial Reports for the month of September 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on recreation reports for the month of September 2021 and highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the attendance of our Park Facilities. Mr. Joerg asked when is it suspected that our numbers return to normal. Mr. Brooks responded that there are many variables to consider and that an aggressive marketing campaign may be warranted. Mr. Joerg asked if staff could provide a presentation regarding marketing efforts at a future meeting. Mr. Vaughn affirmed that a presentation would be provided in 2022.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum to accept and file the Recreation Reports for the month of September 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

7. Old Business

A. Independence Lake Master Plan Adoption

Ms. Macyda presented the updated Independence Lake Master Plan. She explained that the last plan was drafted in 2010 by esteemed Landscape Architect, Peter Pollack, but was never adopted due to Mr. Pollack's death during the latter stages of planning. The draft plan was used as a general guide, but never broadly implemented. Since that time, the facility has increased in size and amenities, including construction of Blue Heron Bay Spray Park. As part of developing the "5-Year Recreation Master Plan," WCPARC conducted a formal Community Needs Assessment to help determine the recreation desires and needs of county residents. Survey results also provided an opportunity for staff to consider planning for individual park facilities.

Ms. Macyda explained that staff began the process of updating the Master Plan in November 2020. In preparing the plan, staff evaluated maps, site inventories, historical documents, and the Community Needs

Assessment. They also gathered input from staff, members of the public, and local officials. In June, staff presented an initial draft plan to the public at a virtual meeting. A copy of the plan was also placed at the park's headquarters. The plan and a recording of the presentation were posted on the county's website for additional comment.

Mr. Joerg asked if we were planning to expand the parking lots. Mr. Vaughn replied that the parking lots will not be expanded but we are proposing to widen the entry drive to accommodate additional queuing of automobiles at the entry gate. Mr. Joerg asked if we were considering solar covered parking. Mr. Vaughn replied that we are considering solar applications with all new construction projects.

Mr. Marans asked if we could consider an internal transportation system, including the possible use of golf carts, to help patrons move around the park. Ms. Macyda replied that we do provide some transportation for special occasions but that there are no plans to expand that right now. Mr. Ezekiel complemented staff for developing and outstanding master plan.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Mr. Joerg to adopt the 2021 Independence Lake Site Master Plan. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

B. NAPP – Rouse Final Approval

Ms. Leikam presented the 4.54-acre Rouse parcel and explained that the property is adjacent to the Kidder-McKeachie Scio Woods Preserve and was nominated to NAPP in late 2020. Expanding existing nature preserves is a general priority of the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC), and they recommended purchasing the property shortly after nomination. The Parks Commission approved a sales contract on February 9, 2021.

Ms. Leikam explained that the Scio Woods Preserve is one of the most popular nature preserves owned by Parks. The Commission's scoring system yields 55/100 points. An appraisal was received in December 2020 and the value was determined to be \$95,000.00 for approximately 4.34 acres. The surveyed acreage of 4.54 adjusts the purchase price to \$99,377.88. Since NATAC's and the Commission's approval of sales contract, the City of Ann Arbor and Scio Township have both agreed to contribute one-third of the original appraised value, equaling \$31,667.00 and \$31,666.00. The remaining \$36,044.88 will be contributed out of NATAC funds.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. Bobrin to authorize the purchase of the Rouse property for the amount of \$99,377.88, of which \$36,044.88 to be contributed from NATAC funds, contingent upon attorney approval of final documents. Further, it was authorized that \$2,270 be contributed to the stewardship special revenue funds for the future maintenance and management of the property. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

C. Other Old Business

None.

8. New Business

A. Connecting Communities Overview

Ms. Macyda presented the applications that were received for the 2021 round of Connecting Communities funding. She added that there is typically \$600,000 allocated to the program each year; \$100,000 for planning and design and \$500,000 for construction. She explained that applications were received from four communities with a total ask of \$185,000 for planning and design and \$850,000 for construction projects. The applications will be placed on the November Commission agenda for final action and allocation of the funds.

B. NAPP – Round 21 NATAC Prioritization

Ms. Leikam presented the round 21 prioritization for the Natural Area Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC). She explained that at their September meeting, NATAC evaluated all property nominations received in 2021 to determine which properties are the “highest priority” to protect. This evaluation includes site visits to each of the properties and completion of the field review worksheets.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and seconded by Ms. McCollum to adopt the 2021 NATAC prioritization. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

C. NAPP – Round 21 ALPAC Prioritization

Ms. Leikam presented the round 21 prioritization for the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee (ALPAC). She explained that at their September meeting, ALPAC evaluated all property nominations received in 2021 to determine which properties are the “highest priority” to protect. This evaluation uses an objective numeric scoring system that was adopted by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners and is intended to produce similar scores to models used at the State and Federal Level.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Mr. Marans to adopt the 2021 ALPAC prioritization. Roll call vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 Absent (Jefferson, McKinney, Morgan), the motion was approved.

D. Other Old Business

None.

9. Commissioners/Directors Comments

None.

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.