



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: December 14, 2021

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Digital Meeting

Members Present: Patricia Scribner, WCPARC President (attending from Pittsfield Township, 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), Brenda McKinney (attending from Superior Twp, MI), Ricky Jefferson (attending from Ypsilanti, MI) Jo Ann McCollum (attending from Ypsilanti Township, MI), Sue Shink (attending from Northfield Township, MI) and Evan Pratt (attending from Scio Twp, MI)

Members Absent: Janis Bobrin

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; Diane Carr, Park Superintendent; Rhonda Bouma, Park Superintendent; Brian Klender, Golf Course Superintendent; Hannah Cooley, Management Analyst, and Rosie Pahl-Donaldson, Park Planner

1. Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with a moment of silence for all those impacted by the Oxford School shooting.

2. Roll Call and Announcement of Location

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 9, 2021 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2021 regular meeting. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (Bobrin, Jefferson), the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Jim Schultz, resident of Superior Township, spoke in favor of the Gotfredson/Raniszeski property proposal. He explained that while he supported the acquisition, that he owned the 40-acres to the east and is concerned about the proposed trail configuration and that it may encourage parking along the road to access the trail.

Communications, Projects & Activities

Ms. Vaughn reported on the November communications which were included in the packet. He also provided a year in review presentation of the 2021 highlights that included important projects, programs, and awards.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. Shink to accept and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of November 2021, as submitted. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (Bobrin, Jefferson), the motion was approved.

5. Financial & Recreation Reports – November 2021

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of November was \$2,507,508.39. Mr. Marans asked about the two B2B segments in the Chelsea area and asked that additional detail regarding B2B projects at a future meeting.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. McKinney to accept and file the Financial Reports for the month of November 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (Bobrin, Jefferson), the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on recreation reports for the month of November 2021 and highlighted the impact of the pandemic on the attendance of our park facilities.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to accept and file the Recreation Reports for the month of November 2021 as submitted. Roll call vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent (Bobrin, Jefferson), the motion was approved.

6. Old Business

A. Staebler Farm Multi-Purpose Building Award

Mr. Vaughn presented the proposal to construct a multi-purpose building at Staebler Farm County Park. He explained 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. Subsequently, TCI addressed Commissioners' concerns regarding design elements of the new building to ensure it complements the historical character of the park. After a year-long hiatus due to COVID-19, the Commission approved release of a Request for Proposal (RFP #8167) to solicit bids for Multipurpose Building construction and supporting site development in accordance with the County's standard procurement protocol and was advertised by the Purchasing Department.

Mr. Vaughn explained that TCI has provided detailed estimated costs, construction drawings, and material specifications for the multipurpose building. The cost estimated for the building is \$3.7 million. Additional site elements include installation of well and septic field for the building; pathways to allow for connectivity between parking lot, building, and existing workshop; paving and extending the existing parking lot; and construction of a left-hand turn lane required by the WCRC along Plymouth Road. There is currently \$4.4M planned in the CIP for the construction of the building and site elements.

Representatives from 31 companies (including general contractors and specialists) attended a pre-bid meeting held on October 18, 2021; eight proposals were submitted on November 16. The project base sum costs ranged from \$3,489,818 to \$4,593,000. A bid tabulation was presented that included the submitted bid sum totals, as well as a 2% reduction consideration for local vendors, per the Purchasing Department policy. The RFP was structured to allow selection of the contractor who would be the most advantageous regarding price and quality of service, as well as consideration of qualifications and capabilities to successfully complete the project, among other factors. On November 30 and December 1, TCI architects conducted Scope Reviews with the four lowest bidders, all of whom provided bids below the architect's estimated project costs. In addition, the bidders were asked specific Parks Commissioner "Responsible Contracting" questions.

Mr. Vaughn noted that after the interviews, parks staff and TCI architects discussed their findings, and it was determined that the third lowest bidder, Phoenix Contractors, Inc. of Dexter, Michigan, would provide the best service based on project understanding, completion of projects with similar scope, successful experience completing past Parks Commission projects, and being lowest Washtenaw County bidder.

Mr. Ezekiel asked if the proposed building would be all electric or if there was still a natural gas furnace. Mr. Vaughn responded that the building would be 100% electrical. Mr. Marans asked if there would be solar power for the building. Mr. Vaughn responded that it was decided that a significant amount of solar would not fit on the roof of the building and a ground array was not in keeping with the historical character of the farm. However, he explained that a solar project will be pursued off-site to help offset the energy used by the proposed building.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission award a Service Contract in the amount of \$3,797,000 to Phoenix Contractors, Inc. for this project (RFP #8167) and include an additional 20% (\$760,000) contingency for potential change orders. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

B. Other Old Business

None.

7. New Business

A. Adoption of the 2022 Annual Meeting Calendar

The proposed calendar was included in the packet.

It was moved by Ms. McKinney and seconded by Mr. Pratt to approve the 2022 Annual Meeting Calendar. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

B. 2022 Facility Rate Modifications

Ms. Bonfiglio presented proposed rate increases for several WCPARC facilities. She noted that WCPARC takes great pride in our history of providing quality recreation opportunities to County residents at the most affordable rates possible. Periodically, the Commission adjusts fees in keeping with industry trends and changes in the local market. The last fee modifications were done in 2020. Staff has researched competitor fees and proposed revisions to the current fee schedule for the Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center, Pierce Lake Golf Course and Rolling Hills County Park and determined

that our fees are lower, and in some cases significantly lower, than the market standard for all facilities.

Ms. Bonfiglio presented a detailed fee schedule proposal for each facility and recommended that fee changes would go into effect January 1st. She noted that additional rate increases are likely needed and will continue to be reviewed annually. Staff will continue to evaluate costs, compare rates of other nearby facilities, and make further recommendations as additional modifications are warranted.

Ms. McCollum asked how the monthly rate worked at the Meri Lou Murray Rec Center. Ms. Bonfiglio explained that the monthly fee is structured to be slightly more than paying for an entire year. This creates an incentive to purchase an annual membership. The monthly fee is also utilized by new patrons who are interested in trying out the facility for 30-days. Those patrons who elect to become annual members, are allowed to roll that first monthly fee into the cost for the annual pass.

Mr. Ezekiel asked if we offer a special rate for veterans. Ms. Bonfiglio explained that we offer the veterans the same discounted rate that we offer our seniors. She added that it has been coordinated with our Office of Veteran Affairs. Mr. Ezekiel asked why we are proposing to close an hour earlier at the Rolling Hills Waterpark. Ms. Bouma responded that it allows greater efficiency with our staff coverage since the open hours can be covered in one shift. It also provides simplification of our rate structure.

Ms. Shink asked if we have a scholarship at Rolling Hills or any of our facilities. Ms. Carr responded that at MLM we offer scholarships for day camps, but not for membership fees. Ms. Shink added that she would like to see more scholarship opportunities at all our facilities.

Mr. Marans asked about the elimination of the over 80 years old rate at MLM and expressed his support. He suggested that staff should get out a communication ASAP so our members are aware of the changes.

Mr. Joerg asked why staff felt it was warranted to raise the rates. He voiced his concern regarding a 15% increase and suggested that a stepped increase would be more reasonable. He also asked to understand how this new revenue would be spent. Ms. Bonfiglio responded that the 15% increase applies to the monthly and annual membership categories with a modest increase in daily entry fees for individuals and seniors. She also added that new membership categories options—teens and 6 months—have been proposed to better accommodate needs. Ms. Bonfiglio added that the rate increase will help to address the current facility budget deficit. And while a stepped fee increase could be implemented, the current increase is not enough to meet current expenses due to inflation, wage increases, and operational expenditures. Ms. Bonfiglio stated that the increase allows us to maintain, and hopefully restore our operating hours & class offerings by the end of the first quarter of 2022.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize the proposed fee modifications and other associated policy changes as presented for Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center, Pierce Lake Golf Course and Rolling Hills, effective January 1, 2022. Roll call vote: 5 Ayes, 4 Nays (Shink, Joerg, Jefferson, McKinney), 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

C. ALPAC Budget Adjustment

Mr. Brooks explained that within the last year, WCPARC has closed on two conservation easements which were eligible, in portion, for reimbursement through the United State Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). In addition, and although unlikely, the conservation easement on the Poulter Farm property may close in December 2021, necessitating additional budgeted funds. Though the Director can authorize intra-fund budget adjustments, provided there are no implications on the operating reserve, large adjustments are brought to the Commission to ensure detailed financial oversight.

Mr. Brooks presented details and noted that a reimbursement in the amount of \$364,449 is anticipated for the Karnatz Farm/Selter and Bassett & DeLoof easements. Representative totals are \$147,624 for Karnatz Farm/Selter and \$216,825 for Bassett & DeLoof, respectively. Completion of this adjustment increases the Federal Revenue line and the Land Acquisition line within the ALPAC fund. The conservation easement on the Poulter property was approved by the Commission in September 2021 for a total of \$468,222 to be paid by WCPARC and \$480,000 by the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development and WCPARC at closing. Mr. Brooks stated that staff recommends a budget adjustment to increase the 2021 ALPAC budget by a net amount of \$832,671.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Ms. Shink that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize a budget adjustment to increase the 2021 ALPAC budget by a net amount of \$832,671, in alignment with Federal Revenue received from the USDA-NRCS in 2021, reduction in the planned contribution to fund balance due to 2021 acquisitions, and the potential closing of the Poulter conservation easement. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

D. Maisel Property

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson presented the Maisel property in Northfield Township and explained that it was nominated to the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program for consideration of fee simple acquisition in late 2020. The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) designated as a Tier 1 priority for Round 21, as consideration for a new nature preserve.

The roughly 220-acre Maisel property currently under consideration is in close proximity to WCPARC's existing Northfield Woods Preserve. There is possibility of future direct connection to Northfield Woods Preserve, but the Maisel property also has a suitable site for a parking lot and is large enough to host its own trails.

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson explained that the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt has been an active partner in this project from its beginning. The Greenbelt ordered an appraisal that was completed in February 2021. The appraised value was determined to be \$1,429,000 based on 219.87 acres, or roughly \$6,499/acre. The landowner has reviewed the appraisal and is willing to move forward at that price. NATAC recommended at their October 4, 2021 meeting to move forward with a sales contract, contingent upon 75% contribution from outside funding. Ann Arbor City Council recommended at their December 6, 2021 meeting to contribute 75% of the purchase price. WCPARC will own and manage the property.

Mr. Pratt commented that this area near Horseshoe Lake is the worst area of the County for flooding. He added that there is a public benefit to limiting the amount of development and impervious surfaces in the area.

Ms. Shink noted that she lives near this parcel and that it is a popular area for bikers from the Ann Arbor area to visit. She added that this will be welcome addition to preservation efforts in Northfield Township.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Mr. Ezekiel that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize preparation of a sales contract in the amount of \$1,429,000, to be adjusted on a per-acre basis by the surveyed acreage, and contribute \$357,250 (or 25% of the purchase price) for the fee simple purchase of the Maisel property in Northfield Township, contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence investigation and final approval by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

E. Jansen Property Partnership

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson explained that in August 2021, Legacy Land Conservancy submitted the Jansen farm to the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) for consideration of partnership in a conservation easement purchase. The Bridgewater Township property was subsequently scored and included in ALPAC's 2021 annual prioritization of properties. With a score of 57, the property is eligible for ALPAC participation.

Legacy is using a confident estimate of \$475,000 for the 130 acres. Legacy applied for and was awarded a USDA-NRCS ACEP-ALE grant that covers 50% of that purchase price. Legacy is requesting 40% of the final purchase price from WCPARC, not to exceed \$190,000. The final 10% is anticipated to be a donation by the landowner. Legacy will be responsible for due diligence and monitoring and enforcing the conservation easements. After review of the nomination, ALPAC recommended to partner with the Legacy Land Conservancy and contribute the requested \$190,000 toward the easement purchases.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Ms. Shink that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission partner with the Legacy Land Conservancy for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Jansen property in Bridgewater Township and contribute 40% of the total purchase price, not to exceed \$190,000, and contribute \$7,500 to the stewardship special revenue fund to cover potential future costs associated with monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement, contingent upon an appraisal, attorney review of documents, and execution of participation agreement. Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

F. Gotfredson & Ranieszski Property

Ms. Pahl-Donaldson presented the Gotfredson and Ranieszski properties that were submitted to NAPP in Round 20 (2020), for fee simple purchase. The properties, 101-acres combined, are separated by an ITC-owned power line corridor. NATAC identified the properties together as a Tier 1 priority for acquisition and recommended to purchase the property. The Parks Commission approved a sales contract on April 13, 2021.

While there is easy public and stewardship access onto both properties from Warren Road north of the pond, accessing the forests south of the pond will be a challenge to address in the future. However, the primary goal for public access to this preserve would be to provide visitors access to the pond for bird observation, which can be done from the north side. ITC has approved staff's

request for a trail access license across the property for locations on both the north and south side of the pond, but attorneys still need to prepare and review the license.

Appraisals for the two properties were conducted by Affinity Valuation Group in November 2020. Superior Township will be making their commitment of \$250/acre to the project on December 20. Per the terms of the sales contract, due diligence for each property has been completed. A purchase of the Gotfredson and Raniszeski properties the amounts of \$603,026 and \$276,440 respectively is proposed.

Mr. Pratt asked how pedestrian access will be provided to both side of the pond. Ms. Pahl-Donaldson responded that the final trail layout is not complete, but one option is to terminate the trail with an overlook at the edge of the pond.

Ms. McCollum asked if hunting would be allowed at this property. Ms. Pahl-Donaldson responded that hunting would not be allowed and that the rules will be posted and enforced.

Mr. Ezekiel asked about the concern that was raised by the neighbor at the beginning of the meeting during public comment. Ms. Pahl-Donaldson responded that public access would not be allowed from Gotfredson Road and the easement between the two properties is intended for use by our staff and maintenance crew.

It was moved by Ms. Shink and seconded by Mr. Pratt that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission authorize the purchase of the Gotfredson and Raniszeski properties the amounts of \$603,026 and \$276,440 respectively contingent upon attorney approval of final documents. Further, a \$30,000 contribution is approved to the stewardship special revenue funds for the future maintenance and management of the property Roll call vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 Absent (Bobrin), the motion was approved.

G. Ducks Unlimited Property

Ms. Leikam presented details on a 266-acre property in Lodi Township at the corner of Zeeb and Waters Roads. She explained that the property is currently owned by Ducks Unlimited and that it has been offered to WCPARC for purchase. She added that staff will continue to investigate this opportunity and that it would be brought back to the Commission if there is interest in acquisition.

H. Other New Business

None.

8. Commissioners/Directors Comments

Mr. Marans commented about the proposes rate increases and that it received several votes of NO from his fellow commissioners. He encouraged staff to follow up on several of the concerns brought up including looking into more scholarship opportunities. Mr. Pratt concurred and added that staff should look into creative ways of administering a scholarship program that would be easy to administer and verify income levels. Mr. Pratt also noted that transportation is big obstacle for many low-income residents.

Ms. McCollum commented that she has learned so much during her first year on the Commission and that she is happy to be part of all the great work that is happening at WCPARC.

Ms. Scribner thanked all staff for their hard work and wished all a warm and happy holiday season.

9. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.