



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: September 13, 2022

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center, 4135 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, MI

Members Present: Patricia Scribner, WCPARC President Janis Bobrin, WCPARC Vice President; Robert Marans, JoAnn McCollum, Ricky Jefferson, Robert Joerg, Sue Shink and Evan Pratt.

Members Absent: Brenda McKinney and Dan Ezekiel

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 (attending remotely); Ann Ziolkowski, Communications Manager; and Jason Gold, Michigan Folk School.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:03p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 9, 2022 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and seconded by Mr. Joerg to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2022, regular meeting. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the August communications which were included in the packet and provided a presentation summarizing the projects, programs, and events for the month.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin and seconded by Mr. Marans to accept and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of August 2022, as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

6. Financial & Recreation Reports – August 2022

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of August was \$1,242,992.10. He also provided an update on the Parks fund and NAPP funds.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum to accept and file the Financial Reports for the month of August 2022 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Recreation Reports for the month of August 2022 for all park facilities. He pointed out that after a busy summer season Rolling Hills, Independence Lake and Pierce Lake Golf Course are all ahead of projected revenue numbers for the year.

Mr. Joerg asked why the numbers were lower for the Meri Lou Murray Rec Center. Mr. Vaughn explained that indoor facilities have been slower to recover from the COVID pandemic as patrons have let their memberships expire and are just now starting to return. Ms. Shink asked how our numbers compare to other recreation centers in the area. Ms. Leikam responded that both the Dexter and Chelsea Wellness Centers have similar numbers. Ms. Bonfiglio added that the Ann Arbor Y and the Saline Rec Center are also down in numbers.

Mr. Pratt commented that although it is good to keep an eye on our revenue, we also have experienced reduced expenses at some of our facilities during the pandemic. He added that we have a significant amount of fixed expenses too.

Mr. Vaughn explained that staff is developing a marketing plan that will help to promote the facility and classes and help MLM to finish strong in 2022. He offered to provide a detailed report on the MLM Rec Center at the December meeting.

It was moved by Ms. Shink and seconded by Mr. Pratt to accept and file the Recreation Reports for the month of August 2022 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

7. Old Business

A. NAPP – Maisel Final Approval

Ms. Leikam presented that in late 2020, the 221-acre Maisel property in Northfield Township was nominated to the Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Program for consideration of fee simple acquisition. The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) designated as a Tier 1 priority for Round 21, as consideration for a new nature preserve. The property is in close proximity to WCPARC's existing Northfield Woods Preserve and there is possibility of future direct connection.

Ms. Leikam explained that there were two additional tax parcels nominated that NATAC is not moving forward with. These are a 40-acre, industrial-zoned parcel fronting on Territorial Road that was appraised for \$2,000,000. The 50-acre farm parcel is being considered separately for a conservation easement. The City of Ann Arbor is the lead agency with the conservation easement property under their "Buy, Protect, Sell" program. Earlier this year, the Parks Commission approved a contribution to participate with the City of Ann Arbor on the 50-acre portion.

In December 2021, the Parks Commission approved sales contracts for the purchase of the property. Per the terms of the sales contracts, due diligence has been completed. The City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt has been an active partner in this project from its beginning. The City of Ann Arbor is contributing \$1,071,750 (75%) of the purchase price. This leaves \$368.038 (25%) as the proposed WCPARC contribution.

Moved by Ms. Shink, seconded by Mr. Marans to authorize the fee simple purchase of the Maisel property in the amount of \$1,439,788.00, contingent upon attorney approval of final documents and the City of Ann Arbor's contribution of \$1,071,750 (75%) toward the purchase price. It was further recommended that \$110,000 be contributed to the stewardship special revenue fund for the future maintenance and management of the land. Roll call vote, all ayes with 2 absent (McKinney & Ezekiel), the motion was approved.

B. Folk School Acquisition Update

Ms. Bonfiglio and Ms. Leikam provided a detailed presentation of the proposed acquisition of the Michigan Folk School (MFS). They provided a history of the Staebler property, now known as Staebler Farm County Park, since it was acquired in 2001 and details regarding WCPARC's current relationship with MFS to activate the park and provide programming. They included details regarding the park master plan, current MFS classes, financial projections, cost/benefit analysis, administrative structure, liabilities, and tangible and intangible property to be acquired by WCPARC. The presentation concluded with an outline of next steps that include final approval by the Commission at the October meeting. Jason Gold, Director of MFS, provided additional detail of MFS operation and passed around examples of items crafted in the many classes.

Ms. McCollum commented that the presentation was well done. She added that we need to do more marketing of the wonderful park to the Ypsilanti Community. She asked if there were more of the color brochures available that she could distribute. Ms. Bonfiglio responded that she would provide the additional brochures. She explained that the MFS marketing will increase significantly after the acquisition is completed.

Mr. Marans stated that public transportation to Staebler Farm Park is needed to better serve the community. He asked that contact be made with AAATA regarding the possibility of establishing a future bus stop. He added that staff has done a wonderful job guiding WCPARC and MFS through a complicated acquisition process.

C. Other Old Business

None

8. New Business

None

9. Commissioners/Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn provided an update regarding the proposed east side recreation center. He explained that the previous proposal to be built on a parcel owned by Ypsilanti Township on Huron Street was no longer a viable project. He stated that the focus has now turned to a site owned by Ypsilanti Community Schools that is the former site of Cheney Elementary School. The proposed 26-acre site

sits on the border between Superior Township and Ypsilanti Township. Mr. Vaughn explained the next steps and outlined a plan for funding, due diligence and public input. Mr. Joerg asked if Senator Jeff Irwin's office had been approached regarding possible funding. Mr. Vaughn replied that this had not yet happened, but he would investigate it and report back.

Mr. Marans asked if staff could provide an update at the next meeting regarding the swim program operated at Rutherford Pool.

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.