



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: December 13, 2022

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Washtenaw County Parks Administration, 2230 Platt Rd., Ann Arbor, MI

Members Present: Patricia Scribner, WCPARC President; Dan Ezekiel, WCPARC Treasurer; Robert Joerg, JoAnn McCollum, Evan Pratt, Robert Marans, and Sue Shink

Members Absent: Ricky Jefferson, Brenda McKinney, and Janis Bobrin

Staff Present: Coy Vaughn, Director; Meghan Bonfiglio, Deputy Director; Ginny Leikam, Superintendent of Park Planning and Natural Areas; Diane Carr, Superintendent of Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center; Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration; Ann Ziolkowski, Communications Manager; Suzanne Kessler, Park/Facility Supervisor; Kira Macyda, Park Planner.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 8, 2022 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Ms. McCollum to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2022, regular meeting as presented. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Toni Spears addressed the Commission (remotely) that she was glad to see the recognition of Sylvia Taylor's service to NATAC and the NAPP program. She also mentioned her long standing work at Horner Woods and volunteer stewardship work.

Barry Lonik addressed the Commission (remotely) regarding the Monier property in Dexter Township that is on the agenda for the Commission's approval today. It is the first project led by Dexter Township after the approval of the Township's millage for farmland and open space preservation. He was also glad to see the Commission recognize the work of Sylvia Taylor.

5. Resolution of Appreciation of Service by Sylvia Taylor

Staff provided background on Sylvia Taylor's service to NATAC and shared photos. Sylvia is a founding member of NATAC and has decided to step down from service when her appointment is up at the end of the year. She has been on countless site visits traversing woods, marshes and wetlands to assess properties and that has led to 35 preserves being established under WCPARC ownership and additional preserves purchased by partners. She is well respected by her colleagues and recognized in the botany and ecology community.

It as moved by Marans and seconded by Pratt to approve the resolution recognizing Sylvia Taylor for over 20 years of volunteer service to NATAC. Roll Call vote taken. 7 ayes, 3 absent. Motion carried.

6. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the November communications which were included in the packet and provided a presentation summarizing the projects, programs, and events for the month of November and year end summary. Ms. Ziolkowski provided an overview of the 50th anniversary events and publicity planned in 2023.

Marans asked how the publicity be rolled out. Staff responded stating it will be rolled out throughout the year with various programs and events, with the majority planned for spring through fall.

Joerg asked if staff will be working with other municipalities. Staff said yes, especially in areas close to facilities, like Chelsea and PLGC and sections of the Border to Border Trail.

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

7. Financial & Recreation Reports – October 2022

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of November was \$2,066,925.94. He also provided an update on the Parks fund and Natural Areas Funds along with the fund balance status for each.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt and seconded by Mr. Marans to approve the claims for the month of November 2022 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Recreation Reports for the month of November 2022.

Commissioners noted some discrepancies in the numbers and revenue for the MLM Recreation Center. Mr. Brooks noted it was likely a problem with importing data from RecTrac and how line items are being calculated. He noted he would provide updated numbers to the commission. Mr. Brooks sent corrected numbers during the meeting and the corrected report was added to the online to the December commission packet.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McCollum to receive and file the Recreation Reports for the month of November 2022, pending the corrections from staff. All ayes, the motion was approved.

8. Old Business

A. MLM Marketing Plan

Staff provided an update on the MLM marketing plan to boost memberships. Staff conducted a SWOT analysis to inform the development of the plan to re-engage previous members and attract new members. Further analysis included surveying MLM staff, review of the feasibility study and public input completed in 2019. Marketing strategies include an array of different strategies including advertising, exterior signage, social media outreach, among others. The goal is to increase membership base from 2,183 (current) to 3,000 by December 31, 2023 (2019 membership 3,504); Increase revenue to \$541K (2019 level), an increase of \$171K. Additional goals include promoting membership to a larger audience through marketing strategies; improve internal and external communication as identified in staff survey.

B. Other Old Business

None

9. New Business

A. NATAC / ALPAC Budget Adjustment

Mr. Brooks provided an overview of the budget adjustment needed for NATAC and ALPAC funds. Since projects often take longer than one year to close, more closings have taken place this year. In short, larger contributions have been made to the fund balance due to the delayed closings. With the closings scheduled this year, there was a need to use fund balance to cover expenses.

Moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Ms. Shink moved to authorize a budget adjustment to increase the 2022 NATAC and ALPAC fund budgets in alignment as presented. All ayes, the motion was approved.

B. Adoption of 2023 Calendar

The 2023 Annual calendar was included in the packet.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Ms. Shink to adopt the 2023 calendar as presented. All ayes, motion carried.

C. NAPP – Monier Property

Ms. Leikam presented an overview of the Monier Property. The property was evaluated under Round 20 nominations and identified as a Tier 2 priority for NATAC, due to adjacency to West Lake Preserve. At the time, the nomination was for fee acquisition. Since that time, Dexter Township has allocated funding and passed a millage for farmland and open space funding. The township has received both federal and state matching grants to offset the purchase price and is requesting the remainder be split with the County. NATAC recommended a contribution and partnership with the township.

It was moved by Marans, and seconded by Pratt to partner with Dexter Township for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Monier property in Dexter Township, as identified in the attached maps, and contribute 5.4% of the final easement purchase price, not to exceed \$29,450, toward the purchase, contingent upon attorney review of documents and execution of participation agreement and to contribute \$7,500 to the stewardship special revenue fund to cover potential future costs associated with monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement. Roll call vote taken, 7 ayes, 3 absent, motion carried.

D. SPARK Grant Application and Resolution

Ms. Macyda presented an overview of the SPARK grant application and funding. The grant is being administered by MDNR but is funded from federal COVID relief funds. The State will be offering 3 grant rounds in the next 18 months. This is the first of the rounds. Grant requests can range from \$100,000 to \$1 million.

The WCPARC proposed project includes accessibility improvements at Parker Mill along the trail from the parking lot to the mill and connection to the Border to Border trail. Other improvements included in the grant also include expanding and paving the parking lot and adding a nature-based playground area.

Commissioner Joerg asked staff to expand on the scope of the project as there is a high estimated cost. He also asked how the project was determined to be the best fit for the grant. Staff explained that a number of staff evaluated the potential projects for the grant, including the Staebler Farm farmhouse renovations. Once the scoring for the grant was released, it was determined that this project was the best fit. It has also been on the CIP for a number of years, but given the complexity of the project has not been implemented. The remainder of the paved trails at Parker Mill were repaved 2 years ago. Furthermore, while the trail adjustments seem minimal in nature they are in fact very complex. There are multiple constraints with the site including underground water and sewer lines, electrical lines, ROW that abuts the historic mill building, Geddes Road and steep natural topography.

Moved by Ms. McCollum, seconded by Mr. Marans to approve the resolution as presented in packet and authorizes submission of a Spark Application for \$740,000 (53%) and further resolves to make available its financial obligation amount of \$660,000 (47%) of the total estimate of \$1,400,000 project cost, during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

E. Other Old Business

None

10. Commissioners/Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn provided an update presentation on the Eastern County Recreation Center project for the Commission.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Joerg to adjourn the meeting. All ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.