



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: April 11, 2023

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Parks Administration, 2230 Platt Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Members Present: Janis Bobrin, Vice President; Dan Ezekiel, WCPARC Treasurer; Robert Marans, JoAnn McCollum, Brenda McKinney, Evan Pratt, Yousef Rabhi, Robert Joerg and Katie Scott

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; and Peter Sanderson, Parks Project Manager.

Others Present: Christine Stead, Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative Chair; Kiff Hamp, Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative Executive Director

1. Call to Order

Ms. Bobrin called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 14, 2023 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2023; regular meeting as presented. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

Chet Hill stated his concerns about the re-use of the Bell Road Bridge for the future B2B segment in the City of Dexter's Mill Creek Park. He feels that using a road scale bridge will detract from the aesthetics of the park.

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the communications, projects, and activities for the month of March 2023.

Mr. Sanderson provided an overview of the Border to Border (B2B) initiative. Since 2018, WCPARC has been working with our private partner, Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI), to construct an average of three miles per year. Mr. Sanderson also highlighted the following upcoming projects:

wayfinding signage; Zeeb to Delhi Metropark connection; Barton-Bandemer Tunnel; Dexter-Chelsea connection; and the Title IX interpretive plaza in Dexter-Huron Metropark. Commissioners followed up with a variety of questions regarding trail ownership and project timeline specifics.

Mr. Vaughn introduced Christine Stead, HWPI Board Chair, and Kiff Hamp, HWPI Executive Director, and invited them to give a brief overview of their relatively new roles within the organization.

Commissioner Marans asked about sponsorship recognition along the B2B. Staff responded that they have researched best management practices from other park and trail groups and are looking at the use of way finding primary node kiosks to highlight project partners and individual donors. Commissioner Rabhi followed up with a question about corporate donors. Commissioner Joerg inquired about the minimum donation level for recognition. Ms. Stead responded that the Ralph C Wilson Jr Foundation is the largest foundation donor and that the rest are private and individual donors with a donation of at least \$7,500.

There was discussion amongst the Commission regarding the level of private and corporate donations. There were questions about how these contributions would be recognized relative to the amount of public support invested in the project from tax revenue. There was also discussion of how the partnership with HWPI was represented on the B2B website. Mr. Vaughn suggested that these issues be addressed by the B2B Committee and a recommendation would be brought back to the full Commission. Mr. Vaughn offered to reach out to the Committee members and schedule a meeting.

Mr. Vaughn introduced Rhonda Bouma, Superintendent of Rolling Hills County Park, who shared updates about summer day camp and Water Park staff recruitment and retention.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi and seconded by Mr. Joerg to receive and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of March 2023, as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

6. Financial & Recreation Reports – March 2023

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of March 2023 was \$268,345.32. 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 Ms. McKinney to approve the claims for the month of March 2023 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

Mr. Brooks provided the fund balance report.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi and seconded by Ms. McKinney to receive and file the financial reports for March 2023 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Recreation Reports for the month of March 2023. He shared information about the level of subsidization each facility receives to support operations.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi and seconded by Ms. McKinney to receive and file the Recreation Reports for the month of March 2023. All ayes, the motion was approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Ezekiel and seconded by Mr. Marans to move New Business Items 8A through 8C up on the agenda to accommodate all commissioner schedules. All ayes, the motion was approved.

8. New Business

A. B2B – North Territorial to Boyce Rd Project (CS3)

Mr. Sanderson explained that 6.3 miles of the Border to Border Trail (B2B Trail) have been completed northwest of Chelsea since 2018. Staff is proposing to extend the trail from N. Territorial Road to Boyce Road which is approximately 1.6 miles. The project, which will be constructed mostly in the MDOT Right of Way, includes constructing a boardwalk using a concrete boardwalk system to reduce long-term maintenance obligations and increase slip resistance compared to a traditional boardwalk.

Staff released RFP 8425 to solicit construction bids, and three bids were received. The lowest qualified bidder came from All Star Power Excavation who has successfully completed work for the City of Ann Arbor on a project of similar scope. The Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative will reimburse 50% of the new trail construction. The Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI) has agreed to reimburse WCPARC for 50% of the construction cost of this project.

It was moved by Mr. Marans seconded by Ms. McKinney to authorize staff to award a contract to All Star Power Excavation for the B2B Trail Segment CS3 as defined in RFP 8425 in the amount of \$2,193,997, plus an additional 5% construction contingency in the amount of \$109,700. Roll call vote taken, 6 ayes (Bobrin, Ezekiel, Marans, McCollum, McKinney, Pratt), 3 nays (Joerg, Rabhi, Scott), and 1 absent (Scribner); the motion carried.

B. B2B – Wiley to Parker Rd. Project (CD2)

Mr. Sanderson presented background information on this ½ mile segment of trail which will connect to the Miller-Smith Preserve and Parker Road. The work consists mostly of paved 10-foot wide trail and a 30-foot long bridge over a branch of Mill Creek. He added that the trail is proposed to be constructed within the Dexter-Chelsea Road Right of Way and in the old Boland Rail parcel (owned by the Road Commission). The B2B will not cut through or impact any existing trails within the Miller Smith Preserve. The construction does necessitate some vegetation impacts to the road frontage of the Miller Smith Preserve as the trail connects to the parking area, but it will not adversely impact the sensitive habitats or visitor experience of the preserve.

Mr. Sanderson shared that three bids were received for the construction work for RFP 8425. The lowest qualified bidder came from All Star Power Excavation who has successfully completed work for the City of Ann Arbor on a project of similar scope. The Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI) has agreed to reimburse WCPARC for 50% of the construction cost of this project.

There was a discussion amongst the commission regarding the Washtenaw County Responsible Contractor Policy and why it does not pertain to the Parks Commission. The outcome of the discussion was to create a working group with staff and commissioners to review the current policies and discuss bid award criteria for future projects.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Ms. McCollum to authorize staff to award a contract to All Star Power Excavation for the B2B Trail Segment CD2 as defined in RFP 8425 in the amount of \$910,282, plus an additional 5% construction contingency in the amount of \$45,500. Roll call vote taken, 6 ayes (Bobrin, Ezekiel, Marans, McCollum, McKinney, Pratt), 3 nays (Joerg, Rabhi, Scott), and 1 absent (Scribner); the motion carried.

C. 2023 Annual Calendar Amendment

An updated 2023 commission meeting calendar was included in the commission packet which reflects a permanent change in meeting location, unless otherwise stated, to the Parks Administration Office at 2230 Platt Rd, Ann Arbor.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Mr. Rabhi, to approve the revised Parks Commission Calendar. All ayes, the motion was approved.

D. Other New Business

None.

7. Old Business

A. NAPP – Highland Cemetery

Ms. Leikam explained that the Highland Cemetery nominated a 17-acre parcel of land in 2018 to the Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee (NATAC) for purchase by the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP). This City of Ypsilanti property was later expanded to include an additional 3.5 acres of unused cemetery property. NATAC evaluated and prioritized the property as a first-tier priority due to its natural features and proximity to other preserved areas. In May 2020, the Parks Commission approved the purchase of the 21.96-acre property for \$549,000, contingent upon attorney approval of final documents. The property includes a healthy stream and oak-hickory forest, as well as core fen habitat and a hillside prairie. The property will not require a parking lot and will be accessible through the Highland Preserve's parking lot.

Staff reported that due diligence was completed, including an appraisal, environmental assessments, and boundary surveys. It is recommended that \$10,000 be contributed to the stewardship special revenue fund for future maintenance and management of the land.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi seconded by Ms. Scott to authorize the fee simple purchase of the Highland Cemetery property in the amount of \$549,000 contingent upon attorney approval of final documents. I further recommend that \$10,000 be contributed to the stewardship special revenue fund for the future maintenance and management of the land. Roll call vote taken, 9 ayes (Bobrin, Ezekiel, Joerg, Marans, McCollum, McKinney, Pratt, Rabhi, Scott) and 0 nays, 1 absent (Scribner); the motion carried.

B. Other Old Business

None.

9. Commissioners / Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn shared the Eastern County Recreation Center conceptual site plan prepared by Parks staff. He explained that the public input process was well underway, and that staff would be meeting with the YMCA to review the primary data.

Mr. Rabhi inquired about County Farm Park pavilion being made a rentable space. Staff responded that portions of the playground pavilion and the Medford pavilion at County Farm Park are now available for rent. The change was in response to the many requests to reserve space for parties. Staff clarified that the portion of the pavilion nearest to the playground would remain first come, first serve.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Marans moved; seconded by Ms. Scott to adjourn. All ayes, the motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.