



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: May 9, 2023

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Independence Lake County Park, 3200 Jennings Road, Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

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

Members Absent: Yousef Rabhi

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, Communications Manager; Julie Sigda, Park Superintendent; Julie Shoner, Park Supervisor; Ashley Wilson, Park Coordinator

Others Present: Joel Rutherford, Friends of Rutherford Pool

1. Call to Order

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the April 11, 2023 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Mr. Marans and seconded by Ms. McKinney to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2023; regular meeting as presented. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the communications, projects, and activities for the month of April 2023. He introduced Joel Rutherford from the Rutherford Pool Board. Mr. Rutherford talked about their free swim program and thanked the commission for the funding assistance to help sustain and grow this important program.

Ms. Bonfiglio presented an update regarding our seasonal hiring efforts at all our parks and facilities. Ms. Ziolkowski presented an outline of WCPARC communications and outreach.

Ms. Sigda, Independence Lake Park Superintendent, introduced her team of seasonal managers and outlined their job responsibilities. She also described the detailed staff training that was ongoing this time of year to prepare our seasonal employees for a busy summer.

It was moved by Mr. Marans 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 – April 2023

A. Financial Reports

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of April 2023 was \$658,931.05. 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. Marans and seconded by Ms. McKinney to approve the claims for the month of April 2023 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

Mr. Brooks provided the fund balance report for April 2023.

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

B. Recreation Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Recreation Reports for the month of April 2023.

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

7. Old Business

None.

8. New Business

A. MFS Advisory Committee – Establishment/Bylaws

Ms. Leikam explained that in the Commission's approval of the acquisition of the Michigan Folk School (MFS), staff was directed to recommend a process to establish an advisory committee to ensure class and program continuity and successful growth. Similar to the two advisory committees established under the Natural Area Preservation Program, staff drafted a process and bylaws for establishing an MFS Advisory Committee. The goal of the MFS Advisory Committee would be to develop informed recommendations for the strategic direction of classes, events, programs, and partnerships to provide a diverse range of educational opportunities focused on historical crafts and skills for present and future generations.

Ms. Leikam presented the details of the proposed MFS Advisory Committee bylaws. She explained that after adoption and establishment of the 7-member committee, a public announcement would be made to call for and accept applications for each of the appointments. Recommendations for appointments would be brought to the Parks Commission for approval.

Mr. Joerg asked how the term limits would work if the first appointments have staggered terms. Ms. Leikam explained that the first term would not count against the term limit and that this needs to be clarified in the bylaws.

Mr. Marans pointed out that the bylaws suggest the committee will meet a minimum of twice per year and that it seemed like more meetings would be necessary. Ms. Leikam responded that twice per year is a minimum and we would fully expect that the committee would meet more often, especially in the beginning. She expects that the committee will meet at least quarterly.

Mr. Joerg noted that the bylaws had not yet been reviewed by corporate council and that he would feel more comfortable taking action on a final draft that had corporate council approval. Ms. Bobrin agreed with the comment but believed that there was merit in reviewing a draft before corporate council review to assure that we are sending a document that the Commission is generally comfortable with. She added that the document would come back to the Commission for review if there were any substantive changes made. Mr. Pratt added that it is appropriate for the Commission to approve the bylaws for content but to defer to legal counsel as to form. Ms. Bobrin concurred and amended her original motion to include this language.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin seconded by Ms. McKinney to authorize that the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to establish the Michigan Folk School Advisory Committee and adopt the bylaws as to content, contingent upon legal review as to form. All ayes, the motion was approved.

B. NAPP – Hayes Sales Contract

Ms. Leikam explained that the roughly 11.75-acre Haynes property currently under consideration is adjacent to the existing Whitmore Lake Preserve. The landowner is retaining a portion of the property that contains an old house site and pole barn. The property contains mixed habitat for wildlife including an oak island, upland wetland complex and connection to larger wetland area. During NATAC's site visit in 2022 they noted several hickory species, white oak, sedges, swamp white oak and northern pin oak to name a few. Only isolated pockets of common invasive plants were noted on the site visit.

Ms. Leikam added that an appraisal was completed in February 2023. The appraised value was determined to be \$110,000 for an approximate 11.75 acres or roughly \$9,300 per acre. NATAC reviewed the appraisal at their May 1, 2023 meeting and recommended to move forward with the purchase, due to its adjacency to existing preserve, and quality of the land mentioned above.

Mr. Ezekiel noted that the property boundary appears to have an overlap with the existing NAPP holdings that would allow for a pedestrian connection. Ms. Leikam confirmed that it was true but added that the area at the property boundary is a wetland and that a boardwalk would likely be required.

It was moved by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to authorize the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to enter into a sales contract for the Haynes property in the amount of \$110,000, contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence investigation and final approval of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. All ayes, the motion was approved.

C. Title IX Plaza Budget Adjustment

Ms. Bonfiglio presented the details of the proposed Title IX Plaza. To ensure the successful completion, it is crucial to work collaboratively with the plaza designers, SmithGroup, and MiDeal contractor, Laux Construction, in a design-build capacity. She explained that this process allows us to navigate the specific site access limitations for constructability and fabrication, while implementing cost-controls, competitive pricing, and exceptional quality.

Ms. Bonfiglio explained that a budget increase of \$425,000 would be necessary to cover the additional, temporary expenses required to bring this initiative to fruition. WCPARC and HWPI staff have been involved in the interpretive storytelling and plaza design, but WCPARC staff will take the lead on construction oversight and final design elements. The project will be fully reimbursed by our non-profit partner, HWPI, ultimately benefiting our community at no additional cost to taxpayers.

Mr. Marans asked if the budget increase covered both construction and design. Ms. Bonfiglio confirmed that both are included.

Ms. Bobrin asked about the site constraints that make this project difficult to access. Ms. Bonfiglio responded that the site is on an oxbow of the Huron River so it is accessible only by pedestrian bridge from either side.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Mr. Marans, to authorize a budget adjustment to increase the 2023 Parks Fund Budget to allow \$425K in revenue and expense to allow the expenditure and reimbursement. All ayes, the motion was approved.

D. Other New Business

None.

9. Commissioners / Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn thanked Julie Sigda and staff at Independence Lake for hosting the meeting. He added that the seasonal staff were an impressive group and it is clear that they are well trained and prepared to represent the Commission this summer. He also thanked Ms. Leikam for all the work behind the scenes to make the acquisition of the Michigan Folk School a reality.

Mr. Ezekiel thanked Joel Rutherford for attending the meeting and presenting the details of the free swim program. He added that WCPARC was proud to be a partner on such an impactful program.

Mr. Marans thanked the staff for hosting the meeting at Independence Lake and suggested that we should do more meetings at park facilities. Ms. McCollum concurred and added that having a meeting in the park gives her the excuse she needs to step away from her desk and get outside. Ms. Scott agreed and added that the Parks Commission is her favorite committee because it always seems to be positive and happy. She explained that Independence Lake was special to her because she took her son to day camp here years ago.

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 PM.