



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: September 12, 2023

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Staebler Farm County Park, Blackbird Lodge, 7734 Plymouth Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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

Members Absent: Robert Joerg

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; David Ries, Project Manager; Kira Macyda, Park Planner; Jason Gold, Park Manager; Wade Buck, Park Coordinator.

Others Present: David Staebler and Jack Smiley

1. Call to Order

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the August 8, 2023 regular meeting were included with the agenda material.

It was moved by Ms. McKinney seconded by Mr. Pratt, to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2023; regular meeting as amended. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

David Staebler commented on what an honor it was to be present and see this new building today. He thanked staff, particularly Kira Macyda for all of her outreach to the Staebler family over the years.

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn reported on the communications, projects, and activities for the month of August 2023. Ms. Bonfiglio provided an update on day camps which took place over the summer.

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

6. Financial & Recreation Reports – August 2023

A. Claims Report

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of August 2023 was \$1,288,883.45.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin, seconded by Mr. Rabhi, to approve the claims for the month of August 2023 as submitted. Roll call vote, 9 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent (Joerg). Motion carried.

B. Fund Balance Reports

Mr. Brooks provided an update on the Parks fund and Natural Areas Funds along with the fund balance status for each through August 31, 2023.

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

C. Recreation Reports

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

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

7. Old Business

A. Other Old Business

None.

8. New Business

A. Michigan Folk School 2024

Mr. Gold provided a presentation on the Michigan Folk School (MFS). He noted that folk schools are in place to focus not only on manual abilities, but on connection to community and appreciation for traditional know-how in a multi-cultural society. Mr. Gold added that learning occurs for the sake of learning and that classes are intentionally kept small so that people learn together. He included statistics which indicated growth in the number of classes taught at MFS from 201 classes in 2022 to 419 classes proposed in 2024. Mr. Gold listed the seven categories for proposed classes which include: blacksmithing, stained glass, leather craft, food craft, community classes, woodworking, and carry-over classes.

Mr. Marans asked if baking would be an offering at MFS. Mr. Gold responded that an instructor specializing in piemaking would be teaching a course.

Mr. Rabhi asked how MFS works financially and added that at some point it would be helpful to see a budget for the facility. Mr. Gold responded that it would be great to do a financial dive in with the Commission soon. Mr. Vaughn added that we were looking to give an update at the end of this year and then follow up in 2024 as we developed a feel for how quickly classes filled and that once we had more hard data regarding demand. Mr. Rabhi stated that he also felt it would be important that out of county activities were not being subsidized with Washtenaw County taxpayer dollars.

B. Other New Business

None.

9. Commissioners / Directors Comments

Mr. Vaughn reported that coming out of the August Commission meeting that he had a discussion with staff at Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (HWPI) to ensure that Washtenaw County taxpayers are prominently featured at the top of the Border-to-Border (B2B) trail website donor page.

Ms. Bobrin asked about a capital campaign she had heard possibly was being done by HWPI for trail development. Mr. Vaughn replied that we traditionally leverage tax dollars for development of the B2B Trail and added that this is the continuation of the campaign to generate private dollars. Mr. Vaughn stated that the river portion of the B2B trail will be the most expensive section to develop. He reported that private funding may represent over a third of the funding.

Ms. McCollum reported that she had a group meeting yesterday at Independence Lake County Park and complimented staff at the park on their fantastic customer service.

Mr. Marans asked if the fencing being proposed along the railroad tracks along the B2B was related to the B2B or whether that was a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) or Amtrak safety measure. Mr. Vaughn responded that it was an MDOT safety feature but added that long term, we would prefer to see moved as close to the railroad track as they can possibly arrange.

10. Adjournment

It was moved by Ms. McKinney, seconded by Ms. Scott, to adjourn. All ayes, the motion was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 PM.