



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: February 13, 2024

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; Dan Ezekiel, WCPARC Secretary; Robert Joerg, JoAnn McCollum, Yousef Rabhi (2:10 p.m.), and Katie Scott

Members Absent: Janis Bobrin WCPARC Vice President, Robert Marans, Brenda McKinney and Evan Pratt

Staff Present: Coy Vaughn, Director; Meghan Bonfiglio, Deputy Director; Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration; Ginny Leikam, Superintendent of Planning and NAPP, Karen Harris, Parks Admin Analyst, Allison Krueger, Jason Gold, Ashley Wilson, Jeff Miller, Rhonda Bouma, Julie Shoner, Julie Sigda, Brian Klender, Wes Keister, Ann Ziolkowski and Peter Sanderson.

Others Present: Mary Robinson, Lisa Langley, Susan Faulkner, Jeff Hardcastle and Ronnie Peterson.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Scribner called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

There was no quorum present at the call to order, so it was recommended that the awards presentation item on the agenda be moved up. There were no objections.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Employee/Public Awards

Mr. Vaughn provided an overview of the awards process and presented three external awards. The first award was for Volunteer of the Year which went to Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission (WCPARC) volunteer Lisa Langley. Ms. Langley has contributed 148 volunteer hours in the past year. Mr. Vaughn then presented the Advocacy Award to Ronnie Peterson for his contribution to community projects which included securing \$3.5M in funding for the 1-94 pedestrian crossing and Grove Road B2B improvements. Mr. Vaughn added that Mr. Peterson was instrumental in obtaining a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant for Frog Island Park. The final award was presented for Partner of the Year which went to Jeff Hardcastle. Mr. Hardcastle has helped to secure millions of dollars for construction of the Border to Border (B2B) Trail and has been instrumental in the coordination of several other parks and recreation initiatives in the community on behalf of WCPARC.

Ms. Bonfiglio presented employee awards. The first award was a Rising Star award, presented to Ashley Wilson, Park & Facility Supervisor, Independence Lake County Park. The second award for Rising Star was presented to Wes Keister, Greens Manager, Pierce Lake Golf course. The Innovation Award was presented to Rhonda Bouma, Park Superintendent, Rolling Hills County Park. Finally, the Employee of the Year award was presented to Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration.

5. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 9, 2024 regular meeting were included with the packet material.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. McCollum, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2024 regular meeting, as presented. All ayes, the motion was approved.

6. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn provided an overview of the communications for the month of January.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Mr. Rabhi, to receive and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of January 2024, as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

7. Financial Reports – January 2024

A. Claims Report

Mr. Brooks reported on the financials and stated that the total for the claims for the month of January 2024 was \$612,330.39. He highlighted the expenditure for turf equipment at Pierce Lake Golf Course for turf equipment and noted that it may be prudent to return to the Commission around mid-year to adjust the Machinery line in the Pierce Lake budget since that line was reduced in 2023 due to supply chain delays in taking delivery of large equipment.

It was moved by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Joerg, to approve the claims for the month of January 2024 as submitted. Roll call vote, 6 ayes, 0 nays, 4 absent (Bobrin, Marans, McKinney and Pratt), the motion was approved.

B. Fund Balance Reports

Mr. Brooks provided an update on the fund balance reports through January and noted that data contained in these reports is very preliminary because we are only through one month of the year.

It was moved by Ms. Scott, seconded by Mr. Joerg, to receive and file the financial reports for January 2024 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

C. Revenue Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Revenue Reports for the month of January 2024, highlighting the Meri Lou Murray report which showed increasing revenues in January 2024 as compared to January 2023.

It was moved by Ms. McCollum, seconded by Ms. Scott, to receive and file the Recreation Reports for the month of January. All ayes, the motion was approved.

8. Old Business

A. Director's Comments

Mr. Vaughn discussed recent work of a subcommittee that WCPARC established for the purpose of developing a methodology for setting fees. This subcommittee is made up of Commissioners Ezekiel, Joerg, and McKinney. Mr. Vaughn reported that in November 2023, an initial meeting took place on the process of establishing fees at WCPARC facilities. He added that staff had been tasked with developing recommendations in collaboration with the new subcommittee and that a report would be prepared for the full Commission by June.

Mr. Vaughn reported that the process of acquiring a new digital sign continues for Meri Lou Murray Recreation Center. He added that staff is working with the City of Ann Arbor to ensure that the new sign meets the City requirements and has their approval.

Ms. Bonfiglio provided an update on the Title IX Plaza project. She announced that a ribbon cutting ceremony is currently being planned for June, 12, 2024 at 1 p.m. at Dexter-Huron Metropark. Mr. Rabhi asked about vegetation/tree removal for construction of the project. Mr. Sanderson responded that there was minimal impact to vegetation due to the site location.

Ms. Bonfiglio also briefed WCPARC on the Comprehensive Master Plan. She reported that surveys have been mailed out for the purpose of developing a statistically valid survey of community needs. She added that focus group meetings are also continuing.

B. Other Old Business

None.

9. New Business

A. Highland Boardwalk and Trail Contract

Ms. Krueger and Mr. Sanderson provided information on the proposed Highland Preserve Boardwalk. Ms. Krueger reported that the project includes constructing a boardwalk along with a 1600' ADA Accessible gravel pathway.

Mr. Sanderson stated that a County RFP was released in December and that four bids were received. He stated that the recommendation to select LJ Construction of Clifford, MI was due to experience of this firm with similar projects, qualifications of the firm and the competitive price. Mr. Sanderson noted that the request includes a budget adjustment to the NATAC fund totaling \$400,000.

Mr. Joerg asked if the bid complied with the Washtenaw County Responsible Contractor policy and if a scoring mechanism had been used. Mr. Sanderson reported that the RFP was in compliance and that Responsible Contractor questions were included in the RFP. He added that there was no scoring metric established at this time. Mr. Joerg stated that he is still recommending that a numeric scoring system be used when making decisions on award recommendations.

Mr. Rabhi asked if there will be winter maintenance along this trail. Ms. Krueger stated that we typically do not provide winter maintenance of preserve trails.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Ms. McCollum to award the construction contract for RFP 8549 to LJ Construction of Clifford, MI in the amount of \$687,330, authorize an additional 10% construction contingency in the amount of \$68,733 and authorize staff to amend the NATAC Acquisition Budget (fund 2090) as recommended. Roll call vote, 6 ayes, 0 nays, 4 absent (Bobrin, Marans,

McKinney, Pratt), the motion was approved.

B. NAPP – Heller Partnership

Ms. Leikam reported that the 70-acre Heller property in Webster Township was initially nominated to the Webster Township Land Preservation Program and that the application was shared with NATAC for consideration in 2022. She added that the total purchase price for the Heller Conservation Easement is \$392,000, to be funded by a USDA ACEP grant in the amount of \$192,080, a contribution from the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt program in the amount of \$78,400, a NATAC fund contribution in the amount of \$78,400 and a \$43,120 contribution from Webster Township. Ms. Leikam stated that Webster Township would hold the easement, be responsible for monitoring, and would provide annual reports to WCPARC staff.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. Scott to partner with Webster Township and the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Heller property in Webster Township, to contribute \$78,400 (20%) of the purchase price of the conservation easement 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, 6 ayes, 0 nays, 4 absent (Bobrin, Marans, McKinney, Pratt), the motion was approved.

C. NAPP – Heydon Partnership

Ms. Krueger stated that the 30-acre Heydon property in Webster Township was initially nominated to the Webster Township Purchase of Development Rights Program and added that the purchase price of the easement is \$285,000, to be funded by the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt in the amount of \$128,250, a NATAC fund contribution in the amount of \$128,250, and a \$28,500 contribution from Webster Township.

Mr. Rabhi stated that he is not comfortable with contributing such a large percentage of the cost of a conservation easement without WCPARC holding the easement. Ms. Leikam stated that arrangements like this are not uncommon and pointed out that the conservation program in Webster Township has a smaller budget. Mr. Rabhi replied that would like more of an evaluation of which organization holds the easement when WCPARC is deciding whether to contribute such a large funding percentage toward the acquisition of an easement.

Mr. Ezekiel asked if County staff is notified when the managing agency discovers an easement violation. Ms. Leikam reported that monitoring reports are provided to staff annually and that staff is notified of potential violations. Mr. Ezekiel stated that he is comforted by that and added that these types of funding arrangements have come to the Commission in the past.

It was moved by Mr. Joerg, seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to partner with Webster Township and the City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt for the purchase of a conservation easement on the Heydon property in Webster Township, to contribute \$128,250 (45%) of the purchase price of the conservation easement 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, 6 ayes, 0 nays, 4 absent (Bobrin, Marans, McKinney, Pratt), the motion was approved.

D. Other New Business

None.

10. Commissioners Comments

Ms. Scribner thanked staff for presenting at the meeting today.

11. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.