Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: March 11, 2025

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Independence Lake County Park, Beach Center, 3200 Jennings Rd., Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

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

Members Absent: Robert Marans

Staff Present: Coy Vaughn, Director; Meghan Bonfiglio, Deputy Director; Rhonda Bouma, Deputy Director of Operations; Ginny Leikam, Superintendent of Planning and NAPP; Jason Brooks, Manager of Finance and Administration; Julie Sigda, Superintendent of Independence Lake County Park; Michael Kettler, Pierce Lake Golf Course Superintendent; Ann Ziolkowski, Communications Manager; Jeff Miller, Rolling Hills Park Manager; Julie Shoner, Independence Lake Park Manager; Ashley Wilson, Park Supervisor; Kevin Butler, Natural Areas Supervisor; Allison Krueger, Stewardship Planner; Travis Wilcox, Natural Areas Stewardship Technician; and Kyle Jasper, Communications Specialist

Others Present: Jayne Miller, PROS Consulting, Inc.

1. Call to Order

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of the Minutes

A. February 11, 2025 Minutes

The minutes of the February 11, 2025 regular meeting were included with the packet materials.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. Scott, to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2025 regular meeting, as attached. All ayes, the motion was approved.

4. Public Comment

None

5. Communications, Projects & Activities

Mr. Vaughn introduced the new Deputy Director of Operations, Rhonda Bouma, and then provided an update on news items, projects and activities in February.

Ms. Ziolkowski reported that WCPARC won a building award from mParks for Blackbird Lodge and a design award for the Title IX Plaza. She also provided an update on Monthly eNews clicks which had a 43% open rate last month.

It was moved by Mr. Ezekiel, seconded by Ms. McKinney, to receive and file the Communications, Projects & Activities for the month of February 2025, as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

6. Financial Reports – February 2025

A. Claims Report

Mr. Brooks reported that claims for the month of February 2025 totaled $303,500.46.

It was moved by Ms. McCollum, seconded by, Ms. McKinney to approve the claims for the month of February 2025 as submitted. Roll call vote, 9 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent (Marans), the motion was approved.

B. Fund Balance Reports

Mr. Brooks provided an update on the fund balance reports from February. He also provided a fund balance update for the special revenue fund.

Mr. Rabhi noted that it might be worth having a future working session on determining how much should be kept in reserve in the special revenue fund.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Mr. Scott; to receive and file the fund balance reports for the month of February 2025 as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

C. Revenue Reports

Mr. Brooks presented the Revenue Reports for the month of February 2025. In addition, he provided a summary of surpluses and subsidies at fee generating facilities for 2024.

It was moved by Mr. Joerg, seconded by Ms. McKinney, to receive and file the Revenue Reports for the month of February 2025. All ayes, the motion was approved.

7. *Old Business*

A. Stewardship: Oak Wilt Management

Mr. Wilcox provided a presentation on oak wilt, which impacts red oak trees, usually within one season. He noted that sap feeding beetles and root grafts spread the disease. He also discussed treatments commonly pursued by staff on our properties. Mr. Wilcox recommended pruning trees November through February, and to let the responsible agency know if you observe trees dying in wooded areas.

B. Strategic Plan

Mr. Vaughn introduced Jayne Miller, Pros Consulting, Inc. for a presentation on the strategic plan. Ms. Miller stated that the strategic plan is the compliment to the master plan as the implementation tool for the master plan. She added that the strategic plan focuses on the internal organization and looks at industry best practices. Ms. Miller discussed recommendations included within the strategic plan which are based on industry benchmarking. The recommendations presented were in the areas of: Organizational structure; Diversity; Equity and Inclusion (DEI); Operations; Plans, Policies, Standards & Procedures; Funding and Revenue; and finally, pursuit of Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Mr. Ezekiel recommended adding the goal of being carbon neutral by 2030. Ms. Miller indicated that the goal probably should be added. Mr. Rabhi stated that while he potentially supports the idea of renting space to a company for food service, he feels that we should be looking for ways to improve existing concessions opportunities. He also offered any assistance WCPARC may need surrounding volunteer operations. Ms. Bobrin stated that she admired the leadership for opening the organization to this type of analysis.

C. Michigan Trust Fund Grant – Parker Mill County Park

Ms. Leikam reported that this is our third grant being presented for this project. She added that the purpose of the project is to increase accessibility at Parker Mill County Park and added that the total anticipated project cost is $825,000.

It was moved by Ms. Bobrin, seconded by Mr. Joerg to authorize staff to submit a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant application in the amount of $400,000. Roll call vote, 9 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent (Marans), the motion was approved.

D. Parks Acquisition – Ellis Property

Ms. Krueger noted that the Ellis property is a parks acquisition. She stated that it is adjacent to the historic mill adjacent to Sharon Mill County Park.

Mr. Joerg asked whether the strategic plan discussion would play a role in future recommendations to acquire property. Ms. Bonfiglio stated that there is not a concrete answer today but that the Acquisition millage does lay out a mandate.

Mr. Rabhi suggested that it might make sense to do a dollar per square foot per year analysis to put funds away moving forward. Ms. Leikam reported that some of that work is underway, but that discussions are ongoing. Mr. Rabhi stated that he supports the continued acquisition of high-quality land and suggested the creation of a wish list. Mr. Ezekiel stated that the chances are that acquisitions are likely to become more expensive in the coming years and added that the stewardship fund is growing but is not being spent on maintenance now.

Ms. Scribner excused herself at 4:08 p.m. Ms. Bobrin chaired the meeting through remaining items.

It was moved by Ms. Scott, seconded by Ms. Bobrin to approve the fee simple purchase of the Ellis property in the amount of $170,000. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent (Marans and Scribner), the motion was approved.

E. NAPP – Squiers Sales Contract

Ms. Krueger provided a brief presentation on the recommended acquisition of the Squires property in Sylvan Township. Included with the presentation on the split of the property by Sylvan Township.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. McCollum to authorize the purchase of the Squiers property in Sylvan Township at a purchase price of $218,000, contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence investigation, parcel split approval by Sylvan Township, and final approval by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent (Marans and Scribner), the motion was approved.

F. *Other Old Business*

8. New Business

A. Director's Comments

Mr. Vaughn provided an update on Janice Kessler's public comment last month and reported that he was following up with her on opportunities in the southwest part of the County. He added that there is a meeting tomorrow with Gro Development which will include Parks staff, County Admin, and the subcommittee of Parks Commissioners. He added that he will also be meeting with the YMCA board in later April to encourage them to continue to be part of the project. He reported that the Director position has been advertised and that the plan is currently to go into closed session at the April meeting to discuss the applicants.

Ms. Leikam reported that the RCPP grant is on pause and added that three properties have been submitted to the ACEP program through USDA and she has told that those are on hold. She stated that the good news is that the DeForest reimbursement is on the way in the coming days.

Mr. Joerg asked if there is any sense of timeline for when the ERC project may get going. Mr. Vaughn reported that if it decided that the concept plan is right, then Gro is set to move this through schematics and the project would move to an architect.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Ms. Scott, to receive and file the Commission Report as part of Director's Comments for the month of February 2025, as submitted. All ayes, the motion was approved.

B. Amended 2025 Calendar

It was moved by Mr. Joerg, seconded by Ms. Scott, to adopt the amended 2025 meeting calendar. All ayes, the motion was approved.

C. NAPP – Zeller Sales Contract

Ms. Krueger provided a presentation on the Zeller property.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi, seconded by Mr. Joerg to authorize a sales contract for the purchase of the Zellner property in the amount of $112,000, contingent upon completion of all necessary due diligence investigation and final approval of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent (Marans and Scribner), the motion was approved.

D. Rolling Hills Waterpark Fees

Ms. Bouma and Mr. Brooks presented a proposal on a fee modification for Rolling Hills Waterpark admission. Staff noted that cost recovery for the waterpark is currently about 82%, and anticipated to drop to 74% in 2025 without modification of fees.

Mr. Rabhi inquired about the allowable adult to child ratio at the waterpark. Ms. Bouma stated that a 10:1 ratio is enforced for group visits. Ms. Bobrin noted that children under 36" are always free.

Mr. Joerg thanked staff and indicated that this information is exactly what he was looking for with requested fee modifications and provides justification for him to be able to explain fee modifications to members of the community.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi seconded by Mr. Joerg to amend the fee proposal and set fees at $12 for residents and $16 for non-residents for Rolling Hills Waterpark admission. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent (Marans and Scribner), the motion was approved.

It was moved by Mr. Rabhi seconded by Mr. Joerg to amend the fee proposal and set fees at $6 for resident group visits and $7 for non-resident group visits for Rolling Hills Waterpark admission. Roll call vote, 7 ayes, 1 nay (Driskell), 2 absent (Marans and Scribner), the motion was approved.

It was moved by Ms. Driskell, seconded by Mr. Ezekiel to increase water park entrance fees to $12 for residents, $16 for non-residents and $6 for resident group visits, $7 for non-resident group visits beginning in the 2025 season and to authorize a budget adjustment to increase Rolling Hills Fee Revenue by $100,000 and the Rolling Hills Part-Time Temporary staff expenditure line by $100,000. Roll call vote, 8 ayes, 0 nays, 2 absent (Marans and Scribner), the motion was approved.

E. Other New Business

9. Commissioners Comments

None

10. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 p.m.