

**ISABELLA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 5, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Vasold at 6:00 pm.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Willoughby, Craig Clingan, Frank Engler, Jeremy Murphy, John Dinse, Jordan Bruursema, Randy Vasold and Ruth Barrett

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Bob Busch and Tim O’Neil

OTHERS PRESENT

Interim Director Miranda Walker, Parks Supervisor Kurt Burnia, Administrative Assistant Nichole Manley, Alternate County Commissioner Terry Hutchinson, Parks Staff Member Kathy Vanderkolk

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Agenda was accepted as presented (Murphy/Clingan).

INTRODUCTIONS

New Isabella County Parks Commissioner Ruth Barrett was introduced.

MINUTES

The March 1, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed. **It was moved (Murphy/Willoughby) to approve the March 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Dinse noted that Hannah’s Bark Park is looking for a culvert to install.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Interim Director presented the bills for March 2023. **It was moved (Clingan/Dinse) to approve the Financial Summary Report for March 2023. Motion carried unanimously.**

CAMPGROUND SUMMARY REPORT

Interim Director Miranda Walker gave an update on the Campground Summary Report for January, February and March 2023.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Parks

The Interim Director stated that the hiring process for seasonal staff is ongoing and Indeed has been utilized for advertising of positions.

Projects/Capital

On Saturday, April 8, 2023, the Central Michigan University ROTC will be going out to Deerfield

Nature Park to finalize the Land Navigation Course. Park Staff will meet with Trent from CMU ROTC to go over the course and how to utilize it.

Isabella County Parks and Recreation will reapply this Summer for the second round of the DNR Spark Grant for the Herrick Recreation Area Development Project which includes improvements to the bathhouse, playground and pit toilet on the south side of Herrick Recreation Area. The parks were not approved for funding for the first round.

Park Staff met with Sinclair last week to put together ideas for the updating of the playground on the North Side of Herrick Recreation Area. Discussion is taking place among park staff regarding waiting until Fall to do this project which could provide opportunities for cost savings on the playground equipment and will not interfere with updating the equipment during the camping season.

Accident/Incident

In January, a park employee was injured while using a wood splitter at Herrick Recreation Area that resulted in amputation of two finger tips. MIOSHA visited Isabella County Parks in March and issued 4 citations. Park Staff is working with the County Administration Office to correct these mistakes moving forward.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Coldwater Lake/Beal City Public Sewage Improvements

The Interim Director did receive an update on this project from Project Engineer, Pete Lorenz. 400 property easements need to be confirmed before they are able to go out to bid for this project. Once all easements are confirmed, they are hoping to go out to bid in November or December of this year and construction will begin in 2024.

Meridian Park – Acquisition Project

Isabella County Parks and Recreation is working with their DNR Grant Coordinator, Samantha, to approve the revised appraisal as it had discrepancies. The appraisal still had information that referred to the 11 acres, which is now 4.01 acres. The appraisal was corrected and re-submitted on the DNR website. It could take up to 90 days for approval.

Deerfield Nature Park Turn Lane

The Interim Director spoke with Brian Atkinson for an update. Brian noted that he has reviewed vehicle crashes that have occurred in front of Deerfield Nature Park over the last 5 years. In that time span, five vehicle crashes occurred in front of the park. Of the 5 crashes, 3 had no injuries and 2 had minor injuries. There were not enough crashes to secure Federal Safety Funding which would leave the cost of the turn lane up to the State of Michigan. Currently there are not enough funds through the State of Michigan to cover this project. The other option instead of the turn lane is a “flare,” which would have a cost of around \$300,000. Brian noted he would make a site visit next week to see if Deerfield Nature Park could benefit from improved signage and pavement markers.

Erosion Project Interpretive Signs

Two interpretive signs that will be placed at Deerfield Nature Park have been received and must be placed before the project can be completed. These interpretive signs will be placed soon. The

wayfinding signs that will mark the trails have also been received. On May 6th, the Eagle Scouts and the Rotary Club will work with Park Staff to place them within the park.

NEW BUSINESS

N/A

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Willoughby noted the Drain Commission has a few projects that are set for late summer, currently work on maintenance now.

Commissioner Engler stated the Sheriff's Office received a 4.8 million grant for the Public Safety Communication Grid. The Sheriff's Office purchased a shed from Consumer's Energy for \$1 that fit the qualifications to house the electronic components for the new system. It will cost \$20,000 - \$30,000 to move the shed from Houghton Lake to EMS location.

Commissioner Hutchinson gave kudos to the Sherriff's Department for finding the building as it could have cost up to \$450,000 to build a building that met the specifications required to house the electronic components needed for the new Public Safety Communication equipment. He also stated that they started to move ground for the new jail project.

The next Parks and Recreation Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at Coldwater Lake Family Park – Lakeview Pavilion.

ADJOURNMENT: It was moved to adjourn (Willoughby/Murphy) at 6:38 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Craig Clingan, Secretary