

**ISABELLA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 7, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman John Dinse at 6:02 pm.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Willoughby, Bob Busch, Craig Clingan, Frank Engler, John Dinse, Jordan Bruursema, and Ruth Barrett

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT

Jeremy Murphy, Randy Vasold and Tim O’Neil

OTHERS PRESENT

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Agenda was accepted as presented (Clingan/Engler).

INTRODUCTIONS

N/A.

MINUTES

The May 3, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed. **It was moved (Busch/Barrett) to approve the May 3, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

CAMPGROUND SUMMARY REPORT

Interim Director Miranda Walker gave an update on the Campground Summary Report for May 2023.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Parks

The way finding signs and blazes have been installed at Deerfield Nature Park by the Eagle Scouts, Rotary Club volunteers and Isabella County Park Staff. The Deerfield interpretive sign has been installed at the North Swinging Bridge. There is also another new sign near the Trail-Head with information on what Deerfield Park offers.

Interim Director, Miranda Walker, noted that there have been well issues on the beach (north) side at Herrick. The well issues are not affecting campers on the south side of the park. Water to the pavilion, bathhouse and gatehouse cannot be used as the well needs to be replaced. Parks Supervisor, Kurt Burnia, has been working with the Health Department during this time. Parks Supervisor Burnia has also been requesting quotes for the new well. In the meantime, 2 porta-potties and a handwashing station have been placed on the beach side for day use customers.

Employment

Three potential candidates were chosen for further review for the Parks Director position by the Administration Office. Two interviews were set up for Monday, June 5, 2023. One candidate called to re-schedule so only one interview took place. The hiring team is discussing the next steps they want to take.

Projects/Capital

Isabella County Parks and Recreation will reapply for the second round of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Sparks 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 submission deadline for the second round is due Monday, June 26, 2023. Park staff have been working together to evaluate areas of the application that could be adjusted in the second round in hopes of receiving a higher score. Twenty-three million dollars will be awarded this round. Isabella County Parks is asking for \$319,000 in grant funding for this project.

The easement was received for the Coldwater Lake Sewer Project. The easement is needed for access to install sewer mains and grinder stations at Coldwater Lake Family Park. The easement was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, June 6, 2023. The project will bring a public sewer connection to the park. The construction costs for installing the sewer mains and grinding station are estimated at \$333,000-\$444,000 based on 103 campsites. Last year the county approved \$250,000 in ARPA Funds to be used towards this project. On Thursday, June 1, 2023 Interim Director Walker was able to request additional funds to the county ARPA Committee group and \$100,000 additional ARPA funds will go the County Board of Commissioners for approval. Once the public sewer installation is complete, the parks department will then need to hire a contractor to connect the park to this public connection and properly dispose of the septic tanks.

Accident/Incident

On May 26, 2023, there was a fire at Meridian Park. An area next to the main parking lot near the trail head were damaged, burning a decent size area of trees and brush. The Sherriff gave Park Staff a description of a vehicle that was at the park at the time of the fire but left before emergency crews arrived. They believe the fire was probably started by someone, whether it was intentional or not they do not know. Park staff have been informed to be on the lookout for this vehicle.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Meridian Park – Acquisition Project

The appraisal is still in the process of being approved by the Department of Natural Resources and is currently in the Real Estate section for approval. Once approved by the Real Estate Section, the appraisal will then move to their Unit Manager. The Interim Director has been keeping the property owner updated on this progress.

Deerfield Nature Park Passing Flare

Interim Director Walker spoke with Brian Atkinson of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Brian noted that MDOT has requested a survey to be done to make sure the area will drain properly and their concerns with the driveway across the road to the North. Once the survey is received a more detailed design will be done. If the project is approved, the project will likely be done next spring.

Deerfield Pavilion

The new pavilion at Deerfield Nature Park will be located near the disc golf parking lot. Requests for price quotes went out on the County's website and were due Friday, June 2, 2023. One company contacted the Parks Department to inquire about the project but no price quotes were received. The information has been re-submitted and the deadline for submittal has now been removed to allow more time for quotes to be submitted.

NEW BUSINESS

N/A

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Engler noted that the last two meetings have been at the new time of 5:30pm. The County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Johnson Controls where they will be looking to see where they can save on energy costs. The Board of County Commissioners gave the ADHOC Committee the approval to implement phase one of the recycling project.

Commissioner Hutchinson noted that they are still looking at different options for a millage. Commissioner Hutchinson also stated that 70% of the budget is currently allocated to wages and benefits.

Commissioner Busch stated that all township contracts are set and they are currently working on projects.

Commissioner Willoughby stated the McDonald Creek Project in the northern part of the county is still being worked on.

The next Parks and Recreation Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at Herrick Recreation Area – West Pavilion.

ADJOURNMENT: It was moved to adjourn (Willoughby/Clingan) at 7:00 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Craig Clingan, Secretary