

## Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 3:15 p.m.

### Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2603>

In Chair Noonan's absence, the meeting of the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Commissioner Dave Barrons at 3:15 p.m.

Barrons led the "Pledge of Allegiance."

Roll Call:  
John Arens (*Absent, prior notice.*)  
Dave Barrons, *Vice-Chairman*  
Steve Christensen  
Don Frerichs+  
Charles Godbout  
Melinda Lautner  
Casey Noonan, *Chairman (Absent, prior notice)*  
John Popa  
Kama Ross  
F. Jon Walter (*Absent, prior notice*)

Staff Present:  
Laurel S. Evans, Executive Assistant  
W. Scott Bradley, Maintenance Worker

Public Comment:  
Steve Stier, President, Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society (LCHPS), requested that the Park's mission statement include park benefits beyond recreation. As an example, he suggested adding that the parks are an educational resource.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:  
**Frerichs requested to add under "Action Items" the topics of risk assessment and winter activities.**

**Motion by Christensen to approve the agenda, as amended. Seconded by Ross.**

Discussion – None.

**Ayes – 7 (Barons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Popa, Ross)**

**No – 0 Absent – 3 (Arens, Noonan, Walter)**

**Motion Passes.**

### Action Items

Approval of Minutes – November 1, 2023, Regular Session:

**Motion by Lautner to approve the Regular Session minutes of November 1, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Godbout.**

**Ayes – 7 (Barons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Popa, Ross)**

**No – 0 Absent – 3 (Arens, Noonan, Walter)**

**Motion Passes.**

### Approval of Financials:

- Revenue and Expense Report - Period Ending November 30, 2023
- Transaction History Listing Report - November 1, 2023 Thru November 28, 2023

Bradley reported expenditures at 61 percent of budget. He added that there is still an outstanding expenditure of \$2,407 for the electrical work for the gazebo at Old Settlers Park as well as the final payment to Gosling Czubac Engineering for their work on the Parks Conceptual Plan. Barrons inquired and Lautner responded that the unused balance of 2023 Capital Outlay (approximately \$52,000) would be approved to be rolled over to 2024 as a “budget amendment in January.” Ross mentioned that the \$300 expenditure approved by the Parks Commission for a composting sign at Myles Kimmerly Park will not be spent in 2023 and inquired if the expenditure could be carried over to 2024. Christensen affirmed that it could.

**Motion by Godbout to approve the financials, as presented. Seconded by Ross.**

**Ayes – 7 (Barons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Popa, Ross)**

**No – 0 Absent – 3 (Arens, Noonan, Walter)**

**Motion Passes.**

### Playground Discussion

Godbout reported that all the playgrounds (Veronica Valley, Myles Kimmerly, Old Settlers Park) need “fall protection” under the playground equipment per Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority’s (MMRMA) risk assessment. Godbout handed out information to the group about engineered wood fiber which is an option for fall protection ground cover. Godbout said a decision needs to be made about either augmenting or replacing the current ground cover at all the parks. He said he plans to make a decision for Old Settlers Park at its February (2024) committee meeting. Bradley stated that the cost for 900 square yards of engineered fiber that is one foot deep would be about \$11,000, not including labor.

### MMRMA (Michigan Municipal Risk Management Authority) Risk Assessment

Barrons reported that adding a ladder at the fishing pond and additional railings on the bridge, as well as fall protection under the playground equipment are the outstanding safety risks at Veronica Valley Park. Godbout reported that the monkey flower platform (lake-facing side needs boards to replace wires), power-washing the platform stairs which are slippery due to slime buildup (using only water so monkey flower is not endangered), and trimming low hanging branches in the spring around the monkey flower platform are some of the outstanding safety risks at Old Settlers Park. Godbout added that the repair work associated with the Request for Proposal for the gazebo will resolve its safety issues and that the ground cover under the playground equipment still needs to be addressed. He said the gap between the shore and the dock access also still needs to be resolved. Frerichs reported that hot coal containers, liability release forms for soccer and baseball, and age-appropriate signage (Bradley said this has been resolved), splintered wood picnic tables, and repair of playground equipment are the outstanding safety issues for Myles Kimmerly Park. Bradley added that the climber with the slide will need to be replaced because parts to repair the structure are no longer available. Ross said she would be willing to assist if these safety issues could be addressed through grants.

Evans said she would provide the group with MMRMA’s timetable for submission of grant applications.

#### Winter Activity Guidelines

Frerichs commented that the Winter Activity Guidelines were very extensive and for Myles Kimmerly Park the sliding hill, an ice rink, and cross-country skiing were the potential areas where the guidelines would apply.

#### Parks Commission Retirement, Potential Appointment

Barrons announced that he is resigning his position on the Parks Commission effective at the end of today’s meeting (December 6, 2023). To continue to support Veronica Valley Park’s weed management issue, Barrons said in the spring that he would “run point” on this issue as a volunteer.

Evans explained that Barrons’s term expires at the end of 2024 and guided the group to review pages 40 – 53 that listed three potential candidates who could fill the vacancy created by Barron’s departure.

#### **Motion by Lautner that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend to the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners to appoint to the Parks and Recreation Commission, Keith Beduhn for the partial term expiring December 31, 2024 resulting from Barron’s resignation.**

Discussion - The group was unfamiliar with Beduhn and asked Lautner to provide more background on his experience. Lautner said Beduhn is a regular attendee at the County board meetings and expressed interest in serving on the Parks and Recreation Commission. Lautner said Behuhn has not previously served on any County boards.

Not hearing a second on the motion, Barrons inquired if the group needed more time to consider an appointee. Popa stated that he wanted to solicit for more applicants because he felt that the candidate list provided was outdated and that the opportunity needed to be made available to more potential candidates; however, Popa added that Beduhn’s references were impressive. Lautner responded that the County board has made it clear that they will take preference to an application “that’s been in on time, so if we have a vacancy, we have an obligation to appoint someone.” Godbout expressed that he had no familiarity with any of the applicants on the list provided.

For the sake of continuing the discussion, Evans advised that the motion needed to be seconded. **Barrons seconded the motion.**

Barrons said from his own experience, “if you can find an applicant with a definable skillset to bring to the group, it really helps.” Barrons then called for a vote on Lauther’s motion; however, there was dissention on the vote, but who was dissenting was unclear, and Ross inquired about calling a roll call vote. Lautner then recommended that they “move this forward to the County Board of Commissioners for Tuesday night to make an appointment to our board,” adding “the

Board of Commissioners have the final say.” With Lautner’s original motion still on the table, Barrons called for a roll call vote.

**Ayes – 4 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa)**

**No – 3 (Barrons, Godbout, Ross) Absent – 3 (Arens, Noonan, Walter) Motion Passes.**

Evans reminded the group that the appointment is only for a partial term that ends in December 2024. Lautner said they have someone who is passionate about serving on a board and that her understanding for serving on the Parks Commission in the past is that “you just have to have a passion for our parks and recreation” and she wondered if they are now straying from that and making appointments based on what talents they bring to the board. She added that they have only asked in the past that the candidate have an interest in serving on a board. She said if an applicant is already serving on another board, “the Board’s policy is that if they are already serving, they won’t be appointed because we will allow someone else who has not had an opportunity to serve, serve first, before they’ll go on a second board.”

Deb Allen, County Administrator, discussed a recommendation to move the Parks and Recreation Commission to the Planning Department and the ongoing recruitment for a new Planning Director and Executive Assistant and the transition of administrative support for the Parks Commission to the Planning Department.

Popa inquired if it is a requirement by law that a road commissioner be on the Parks and Recreation Commission. Evans said she would research and provide an answer. Christensen said he supported the move to Planning, especially with grant writing available in that department.

#### Committee Reports and Recommendations

##### **Myles Kimmerly Park Committee:**

Frerichs referenced the Master Plan document for Myles Kimmerly Park that was handed out. He said the committee will meet to refine the plan then set a date for a meeting where they will gather public input before the final plan is created.

##### **Old Settlers Park Committee:**

Godbout reported that the parking enhancements at the park have been completed as well as the electrical to the gazebo. He added that they need to get the Request for Proposals sent out for refurbishment of the gazebo. Godbout reminded the group that the current Master Plan for all parks ends in 2024, so they need to get started in setting a timeline for the 2025-2029 plan.

##### **Veronica Valley Park:**

Barrons reported that in the spring of 2024 weeds will be an issue as well as addressing MMMRA recommendations, and staying ahead of beaver removal in the ponds.

FY 2024 Meetings

Evans reminded the group that the first Wednesday of January is the Organizational Meeting where they might consider a different time and date for meetings in 2024. Ross felt a good, honest discussion was needed about what works for meeting dates and times to ensure quorums for future meetings. Christensen said that the current meeting time was set to be ahead of County Board meetings. Allen requested that, before a final meeting time is set, to keep her in the loop, so meetings do not conflict with Planning Department meetings.

Public Comment:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

Lautner thanked Barrons for serving on the Parks Commission and for committing to volunteer in support of Veronica Valley Park in the future. Christensen echoed Lautner's comment. Godbout and Barrons thanked Laurel for her assistance in support of the Parks Commission, especially with helping them to learn processes. Popa thanked Evans and Barrons for their time. Regarding Stier's comment about the mission statement of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Popa said he would like to take action on Stier's recommendation to change it. Popa also commented that the County's Requests for Proposals are too many pages and the requirements are too stringent. He said the bottom line is that the stringent requirements are costing the County money.

Chairperson Comments:

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the Parks and Recreation Commission, the meeting adjourned to the call of Commissioner Barrons at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Lori Eubanks, Recording Secretary