

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 3:00 p.m.

Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2419>

The meeting of the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairman Casey Noonan at 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Noonan led the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

Roll Call:
John Arens, *absent*
Dave Barrons, *Vice-Chairman*
Steve Christensen
Don Frerichs
Charles Godbout
Melinda Lautner (*Arrived at 3:20 p.m.*)
Casey Noonan, *Chairman*
John Popa
Rick Robbins, *absent*
F. Jon Walter, *absent*

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

Public Comment:
None.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Motion by Godbout to approve the agenda, as presented. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 6 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Noonan, Popa)

No – 0 Absent – 4 (Arens, Lautner, Robbins, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Action Items –

Approval of Minutes – November 2, 2022, Regular Session:

Motion by Godbout to approve the November 2, 2022, Regular Session Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – Barrons inquired about delivery of the two percent allocation application to the Grand Traverse Board of Ottawa and Chippawa Indians to fund invasive species eradication. Evans confirmed the application was delivered to the Tribe at the end of November (2022).

Ayes – 6 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Noonan, Popa)

No – 0 Absent – 4 (Arens, Lautner, Robbins, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Approval of Financials:

- Transaction History Listing Report – November 1-30, 2022
- Revenue & Expense Report – Period Ending November 30, 2022

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

Discussion – Bradley reported expenditures were at 100.66 percent, with an outstanding \$4,500.00 expenditure for Repair and Maintenance. Evans added that the Administrative Assistant stipend was also outstanding. Barrons inquired about the accounting process for overages. Evans explained that Accounting performs yearend budget amendments to adjust for the overages which the Board of Commissioners needs to approve. Frerichs mentioned the Capital Outlay overage of \$26,000.00 (per Bradley, it was for a new tractor.) Godbout inquired if the budget was increased to accommodate this expenditure. Bradley confirmed that it was.

Ayes – 6 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Noonan, Popa)

No – 0 Absent – 4 (Arens, Lautner, Robbins, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Poor Farm Barn:

Report by Steve Stier, President, Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society (LCHPS), which leases the Poor Farm Barn and the surrounding two acres. Stier said the lease states that LCHPS “shall maintain and rehabilitate the structure on the premises and shall collaborate with the Parks and Recreation Commission to insure the same is incorporated into the Leelanau County parks system.” In addition, the lease specifies that a six-person committee shall be formed, comprised of the Chairman of Parks and Recreation Commission, two members of the Myles Kimmerly Park Committee, and three board members from LCHPS. This committee recently met and by consensus determined that public use is the best direction for the Poor Farm Barn. Public use requires a change in use via a special use permit. Stier stated that an architect needs to be retained to facilitate the permit application. Christensen inquired about who will pay for the architect. Noonan explained Stier was simply providing an update and that he was not ready to discuss funding for engagement of the architect. Evans encouraged Stier to include the County Administrator in discussions about the Poor Farm Barn, since it is county property. Both Stier and Noonan were unclear about whose purview the Poor Farm was under; the County Board of Commissioners or the Parks and Recreation Commission; however, Noonan suggested that LCHPS first work with the Parks and Recreation Commission and then the Parks Commission would make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on behalf of the LCHPS.

Godbout asked for an explanation for the change of use for the Poor Farm Barn. Noonan explained the barn has been an agricultural barn and opening it to the public for educational use, for example, requires identification of safety hazards, among other things, which would be addressed through the change of use process. Popa said he highly supported the preservation of the Poor Farm Barn and confirmed the Parks Commission had not been involved in the project in the past five years; he said county commissioners were the involved party. He advised a refinement of the mission statement to include mention of public use. Popa said there would be a lot of bureaucracy, but he thought LCHPS could successfully navigate the process. Frerichs commented that the intention for use of the barn was educational and not for

use as a wedding venue or for a “barn dance.” Barrons advised that if LCHPS secured their own financial support for the Poor Farm Barn, it would mitigate County Board bureaucracy. Stier responded that since the Poor Farm Barn was County property, he was willing to work through the bureaucracy. He added that it was his understanding that the Poor Farm Barn Committee would be in charge of programming and determining use and that the County would assist in “what happens there.” Popa explained that about June of 2023 is when solicitation for items for the budget would begin, adding that this timeline gives LCHPS six months to decide what direction to take regarding funding.

Bingham Township Letter of Support Request:

(Lautner arrived here.)

Christensen stated he had received an email from Bingham Township Trustee Todd Stone dated December 5, 2022, as a follow-up to his conversation with Stone regarding a request for a letter of support from the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission. The support letter is a DNR Sparks Grant requirement. Bingham Township is pursuing the Sparks Grant to facilitate construction of a permanent parking lot for Boughey Park, which would help to alleviate dangerous public parking along M-22.

Motion by Christensen for Evans to draft a letter of support for Bingham Township for the full Parks Commission’s approval so Noonan could “send it out.” Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – Popa inquired if approval of the letter would take place at the January (2023) Parks Commission meeting since no definitive timeline was included in the motion. Christensen explained that Evans would send the letter for review by the Parks group via email and would revise the letter based on comments received back from the group. Evans would then finalize the letter for Noonan’s signature.

Ayes – 7 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa)

No – 0 Absent – 3 (Arens, Robbins, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Committee Reports and Recommendations –

Myles Kimmerly Park Committee

Frerichs reported that the September 7, 2022, recommendation prepared by the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding their nonsupport for the sale of park properties has yet to hit the County Board agenda. Evans “heard” the topic would be on the January (2023) County Board meeting agenda. Frerichs said he was unsure of the status of the Parks Commission’s request for a bump of \$190,000.00 in Capital Outlay for paving the loop trail at Myles Kimmerly Park. Evans said she had an informal discussion with the Finance Director, who did not recall an increase in Capital Outlay; however, Evans said the item is included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Regarding the Myles Kimmerly master plan, Christensen said he felt with so many visions by the Myles Kimmerly Park Committee and so much work invested to make things happen and with outside interests competing for uses for the park (ball fields, fire station, dog park, etc.) he was passionate that without a plan, they have no direction for the future of the park. He said, “All these people want to do stuff with our park, and we don’t have on the master plan what we’re going to do with it.” He added, “It’s like trying to sail a boat without a

rudder.” Without a master plan, pursuing a grant would be futile. He felt \$4,700.00 was money well spent to get a new master plan. Noonan supported pursuit of a new master plan, but encouraged the Myles Kimmerly Park Committee to meet and review the topic with their new committee members (Arens and whomever replaces Robbins who lost his seat on the county board in the November mid-terms), then come back to the Parks Commission with a recommendation. Frerichs noted accomplishments at Myles Kimmerly Park in 2023, which included the removal of the grub shack and installation of new trail signage.

Maple Valley Nursing Home Easement Update:

Evans reported on the upcoming termination in April 2023 of the lease agreement with Maple Valley Nursing Home for Myles Kimmerly Park property which accommodates the nursing home’s septic field. Evans said she had talked with County Administrator Chet Janik for guidance on termination of the lease (before Janik retires at the end of the year). Janik recently received a letter from John Kasben Jr. (son of the owner of Maple Valley Nursing Home) stating they are “doing something different” and though unsure, Evans thought possibly Kasben may be requesting an extension of the lease. Evans said she will forward a copy of the purchase and lease agreements to counsel to get an opinion on how to proceed. Once she hears back, she will put it on Parks agenda, hopefully by January (2023). Frerichs commented that this issue needs to get resolved before the Myles Kimmerly Park Committee can proceed with creation of a new master plan.

Old Settlers Park Committee:

Lautner said she was unsure about how the budget request was made for the replacement of dock sections at Old Settlers Park, but she thought that the dock sections were recently replaced. Bradley confirmed that there was no need to replace them. Noonan said he added the request during the budget process because he thought they might be something that needed attention. Bradley and Godbout both agreed that the bottom of the dock stairs and the shoreline coming into the dock were what needed maintenance. Lautner reported that she is still researching options for the playground “jumpers” for the Nancy Lanham memorial. She wants to find an animal jumper that is a good fit for the park and, so far, found a lady bug. Lautner said she thought she could buy two jumpers and is also looking for a bunny, which is an animal that Lanham was particularly fond of.

Veronica Valley Park Committee

Barrons reported that “Trapper Ron” Baker has removed one beaver and four or five muskrats from the upper ponds. Baker thinks there is still another beaver, but Baker dislocated his shoulder and cannot pursue the hunt until he recovers. Once Baker resumes, he will continue until the end of trapping season.

(Lauter left the meeting here at 3:35 p.m.)

Christensen asked Bradley if he had all the equipment needed to groom at both Myles Kimmerly and Veronica Valley Parks. Bradley responded he had sufficient equipment.

Public Comment:

Steve Stier commented that it would be helpful if name plates were displayed at the Parks Commission meetings so the public could get to know their Park representatives.

Commissioner Comments:

Popa commented regarding the letter of support for Bingham Township. He said the township has met many times with the County Road Commission and the County deemed roadside parking unsafe along M-22 at Boughey Park, especially near the entrance where safe exiting is impeded due to the parked cars blocking the view of oncoming traffic. He thought this information should be noted in the support letter from the Parks Commission. Evans asked Popa if Bingham Township had approached the Road Commission for a support letter. Popa was unsure, but committed to following up.

Chairperson Comments:

Noonan wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned to the call of Chairman Noonan at 3:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Lori D. Eubanks, Recording Secretary