

MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Monday, June 6, 2022
6:00 P.M.

Manistee County Courthouse & Government Center
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room and via Zoom

MINUTES

Members Present: Margaret Batzer; Erin Secord; Linda Cudney; Gary Schwaiger; Devin Wagner
Eleanor DeYoung

Members Absent: Wayne Beldo, Chair; Robert Schulke; Bryan Dunlop;

Others Present: Kristyn Malkowski, Recording Secretary; Doug Barry, Michigan DNR; Katie Mehl;
County Zoning Administrator/Planner

Ms. Batzer called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, roll call was taken.

Approval of the June 6, 2022, Agenda.

There was a motion by Ms. Cudney, supported by Ms. Secord, to approve the June 6, 2022, Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

Approval of the May 2, 2022, Minutes.

Mr. Schwaiger stated a correction should be made regarding the next meeting date. Instead of June 6, 2022, at 6:30 PM, the meeting should be June 6, 2022, at 6:00 PM.

There was a motion by Ms. Wegner, supported by Mr. Schwaiger, to approve the May 2, 2022, Minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

No public comment.

Trail Champions: Mr. Barry informed the board that the trail gates are in the process of being constructed by students at West Shore Community College. Once they are complete, Mr. Barry will send staff out for installation. Gates will be wide enough to fit bicycles but not wide enough to fit an ORV or horse cart or carriage. The gates will be locked open during the winter months and locked closed in the summer months. Ms. Secord questioned the status of equestrian use on the trails. Mr. Barry stated the trails are currently a state owned, non-motorized use trail. The use of equestrian riders is something that needs to be designated or allowed by the DNR. Discussions and recommendations can be brought to the attention of the DNR trail specialist, where they can implement the trail designation process. Ms. Batzer believes conversations regarding equestrian

use are good to have while still in the planning process. The board agreed to form a sub-committee with members that are experienced in equestrian trail use. Ms. Batzer feels it is good to have different types of trail users as members to get all sides of the conversation. Mr. Barry is more than happy to help through the process. Ms. Batzer feels that the Friends of Smart Trail is a great place to start because the group is most involved of the current planning. Ms. Cudney will bring volunteer request to the Friends of Smart Trail group meeting in July.

Mr. Barry informed the commission that there was a fire at the Mesick bridge. This is the bridge that overlooks the Manistee River that the DNR recently received grant money to update. They are still evaluating the damage and he will update accordingly.

No Staff Reports. Ms. Mehl asked the commission if they had any questions regarding the memo that Mike Szokola, Planning Director, provided to the Recreation Commission mid-April. The memo lays out the potential routes and roll of the Recreation Commission. Along with what it will look like in relation to grants and possibilities of a grant writer. There were no questions asked. A few members had not received the memo so Ms. Mehl stated she will ensure each member will receive it.

Friends of Smart Trails Report: Ms. Cudney stated that the Friends Group received the final draft of the Strategic Plan. After meeting, Ms. Cudney will ensure the draft is sent to all members. It is a 2-year focus with 6-month increments.

A Marketing committee was formed. The committee created a recreation card, along with a website, smartrail.org. The Friends Group and Northern Naturals had an event to celebrate National Trails Day on June 4, 2022. Bicyclist and walkers took the trail from Chief to Kaleva, and it was nice turnout. A Fundraising Committee was also formed but has not meet yet. The next Friends group will not meet in June due to the committee meetings but will meet again in July. Ms. Cudney also stated there is now a Trail status update with goals and has an explanation regarding the Betsie Valley trail to Copemish, the trail from Thompsonville to Kaleva, then the long-range plan which will be trails from park to park. Ms. Cudney will ensure the status update is sent to all members.

Ms. Cudney would like to state her appreciation towards Kyle Kotecki, from the Manistee News Advocate, for posting the hiking and biking event for the National Trails Day. Along with Arielle Breen, for publishing her interview with Zachary Pawlowski and Jacque Erdman. This is great for community education and awareness.

Old Business:

New Business:

Other Items from Committee Members: Mr. Schwaiger asked if there was a preliminary trail layout, other than the trails that have been set, he is on the Orchard Friends Group and he would like to see trails connect to Orchard Beach State Park. Ms. Cudney mentioned that the Friends of Smart Trails has a trail status update from park to park and Orchard Beach is one of them along with Interlochen State Park, so eventually that is hope.

Ms. Malkowski asked the board if they would like an opportunity to present at this year's Annual Regional Summit on September 29, 2022, at the Wagoner Center. The Regional Summit Committee feels that the Recreation Commission will be a great asset during the morning panel discussions regarding economic development. Ms. Cudney thought it was a great idea and hopes that the EDA grant for the Thompsonville to Copemish trail will be granted by then. The board will work on nominating presenter(s) and topic(s).

There were questions regarding the open grant writer position. Ms. Batzer stated she was unable

to attend the previous Board of Commissioners meeting and did not have an update and will get more information and update the board accordingly.

Ms. Secord asked what the next date for an update on the EDA Federal Grant would be. Ms. Cudney and Mr. Barry states they are working through the process and is hoping for communication possibly in August or September of 2022.

Ms. Batzer adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM. Next meeting will be held on July 11, 2022, at 6:30 pm, in the County Board of Commissioner's room.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Secord, Recreation Commission Secretary

Date