

MANISTEE BOARD OF

COMMISSIONER'S 6:00 p.m., Monday 415 Third St. October 4, 2021 Manistee, Michigan

RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

The Recreation Commission is operating remotely and electronically by Zoom under PA 254 of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

❖ Call to Order and Roll Call.

❖ Mr. Wayne Beldo, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

Recreation Commission Members Present: Wayne Beldo, Margaret Batzer, Erin Secord, Devin Wegner, Sharon Goble, Gary Schwaiger, Robert Schulke, Bryan Dunlop, and Linda Cudney

Recreation Commission Members Absent: None.

Others: Douglas Barry Michigan DNR, Mark Coe Benzie/Manistee Snowbirds

❖ Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Dunlop moved, seconded by Ms. Cudney to approve the October 4, 2021 Agenda as presented.

Voting yes: Mr. Beldo, Ms. Batzer, Ms. Secord, Ms. Wegner, Ms. Goble, Mr. Schwaiger, Mr. Schulke, Mr. Dunlop, and Ms. Cudney

❖ Approval of the Minutes

Ms. Cudney moved, seconded by Mr. Dunlop to approve the September 7, 2021 Minutes as presented.

Voting yes: Mr. Beldo, Ms. Batzer, Ms. Secord, Ms. Wegner, Ms. Goble, Mr. Schwaiger, Mr. Schulke, Mr. Dunlop, and Ms. Cudney

❖ Public Comment

● Doug Barry provided multiple updates: He shared that the DNR recently purchased 3.4 miles of trail from Kaleva to Chief Rd. They will have a 90-day

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timeframe in which they are required to cap it with a foot of material. Doug is working with Mark on a grant in order to accomplish this in the 90-day time frame.

- Doug Barry also shared that Crystal Mountain would like to tie into the Betsie Valley trail and speculated that they may want to work with the Manistee County Parks and Recreation Commission in the future.
- Doug Barry informed the commission that the Thompsonville Area Revitalization Project wants to develop some DNR property and offer both a paved trail and snowmobile trail along the same corridor (specific section not identified).
- Doug Barry informed the group the Betsie Valley Trail hosted the Iron Man and reported that it went very well. The group is happy to continue hosting this event in the future.
- Ms. Batzer had a question regarding the trail cap needed on the recently purchased section from Kaleva to Chief Rd. She asked who would be doing the work. Doug Barry replied that the DNR is writing a grant to the Snowbirds to get the section completed.
- Mark Coe added that the work is being contracted out. The brushing will be completed first. Then a bid was received from Elmer's to lay down a 1 foot high, 10 foot wide capping surface. He added that once it has been ridden on, it will end up being a 12 foot wide trail. They want to keep erosion and washing out to a minimum. Mark added that this section will be a huge first step in connecting the Betsie Valley Trail to Kaleva. Once the capping is complete, we will have a something physical to show the rest of the county and help pursue the route to the casino.
- Gary Schwaiger had a question. He asked where the Chief Rd. location of trail was. Mr. Beldo clarified that it is right in Chief, Michigan. He also asked what type of trail cap would cover this section. Doug Barry replied that it will be a 23A gravel surface. Mr. Beldo added that the capping has to take place with any DNR purchased property to mitigate any potential contamination from the railroad.
- Doug Barry asked Mark Coe about a bridge that is currently out of service over Bear Creek coming down from Thompsonville to Kaleva. He said the foundation currently has a match to be rebuilt and asked if Mark would be applying for another grant to aid in the project. Mark said that the DNR now owns the properw and the bridge and that they will discuss these efforts with them. Mr. Beldo added that the Friends of SMART Trails are in the process of applying for a grant that may or may not cover the bridge.
- Mr. Schulke identified another bridge out over Bear Creek off of McLellan Rd. Mark explained that we don't have this particular segment and will re-route around that bridge.

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- Mark Coe added that he is the newest member of the Convention & Visitors Bureau and offered to relay information as a way of supporting the Recreation Commission.

❖ Staff Updates ●  
 None.

❖ Old Business

● Friends of SMART Trails

Linda Cudney shared the minutes from the last three meetings and provided a meeting update. The Friends group talked with Tamara Budzwinka about completing a strategic plan, this will go forward. The group also worked with the Community Foundation to set up a fund for operating money. Friends of SMART Trails received a startup grant from the community foundation with the community foundation acting as fiduciary with this being in place for 6 month periods. The group does intend to

apply for a grant to fund the construction of trail from Thompsonville to Copemish and then Copemish to Kaleva. Rob Carson thinks we have a good chance of receiving this grant due to the stipulation that funds are awarded to lower income communities. The deadline to apply is January 2022 and Rob Carson is working on the application.

+ New Business

- Ms. Batzer began a discussion regarding the direction of the Recreation Commission from the perspective of the County. The County budget currently has \$50,000 allocated for a grant writer. The Board passed a resolution stating that they want this person on staff. Ms. Batzer added that there has been lengthy discussion, with support from the current chair on making this person a contract-basis. The discussion is ongoing. Ms. Batzer added that since the budget year begins October 1<sup>st</sup>, she does not think it likely that the position will be filled soon, or within the first three months of 2022. Ms. Batzer did add that once the position is filled, she has it having a significant impact on trail development and the goals of the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Ms. Batzer also expressed concern that the Parks and Recreation Commission does not have staff support from the County. She added that she would be having a discussion with the County Chair and Administration regarding this.
- Mr. Beldo asked if meetings should be moved to the Planning Department. Ms. Batzer replied that the reason the Commission meets in the board room is due to ease of allowing a Zoom option.
- Mr. Schwaiger asked about using the fire exit which used to be an entrance to the conference room. He wondered if it could be used as an entrance again. Ms.



Batzer replied that the fire exit can't be used because it is considered a security issue. All agreed that the Commission needs to determine the best place to meet going forward.

❖ Other Business

- Doug Barry added for informational purposes that the Betsie Valley Trail system plans to pave the section from Beulah to Thompsonville and is currently seeking \$3,000,000 in grant funding for the project. This equates to \$250,000 per mile for paved surfaces. It was noted that the Parks and Recreation Commission will primarily be looking at gravel surfaces.

❖ Adjourn

Mr. Schulke moved, seconded by Mr. Dunlop to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Voting yes: Mr. Beldo, Ms. Batzer, Ms. Secord, Ms. Wegner, Ms. Goble, Mr. Schwaiger, Mr. Schulke, Mr. Dunlop, and Ms. Cudney

The next meeting will be held November 1, 2021 in the County Commissioner's room at 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Erin Secord, Recreation Commission Secretary

Date: October 4, 2021