

MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Draft

October 7, 2024
6:15 P.M.

Manistee County Planning Department Conference Room
and via Zoom

MINUTES

Member Present: Wayne Beldo, Chair; Margaret Batzer, Vice Chair; Gary Schwaiger, Secretary; Linda Cudney; Eleanor DeYoung; Robert Schulke; Devin Wegner; Jeff Lawrence

Members Absent: Tom Williams; Bob DeYoung

Others Present: Katie Mehl, Manistee County Planning Director and Recoding Secretary; David Jarvi, Manistee County Planner; Sally Trisch, Dickson Township; Ric Alameddine; Onekama Trails Project; Claire Richards; SMARTrails; Mark Coe; Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds

Mr. Beldo called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM, roll call was taken.

Approval of the October 7, 2024, meeting agenda.

Mr. Jarvi asked to move Mr. Szokola up in the agenda, as Mr. Szokola had another meeting later in the evening.

There was a motion by Mr. Lawrence, supported by Ms. Batzer to approve the October 7, 2024, meeting agenda. All in Favor, motion carried.

Approval of the August 5, 2024, meeting minutes.

There was a motion by Ms. Cudney, supported by Mr. Lawrence to approve the August 5, 2024, meeting minutes as amended. All In Favor, motion Carried.

Robert Schulke enters at 6:18.

Public Comment: No Public Comment.

New Business:

Mike Szokola – Lifejacket Stations:

- Mr. Szokola gave a brief background of the Lifejacket Station project that his leadership group completed two years ago.
- Original order to buy lifejackets in bulk did not work out.
- Mr. Szokola wants to have the recreation commission apply for a community foundation grant that would allow the 7 lifejacket stations to be stocked for 10 years.
- A lot of details still need to be ironed out, rec commission staff would handle administrative work.
- Discussion ensued about the theft problems at the Lifejacket Stations.
- Recreation Commission generally supported pursuing this project. There was a consensus to support project.
- Lifejacket Grant would have a deadline of April 2024.

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- Mr. Szokola has had conversations with the Community foundation and Chamber of Commerce regarding the project.

Benzie – Manistee Snowbirds Update: Mr. Coe Gave an update on behalf of the Benzie – Manistee Snowbirds.

- The Snowbirds had their first meeting of the season in September. Meetings are first Wednesday of every month.
- Lots of trail maintenance is happening now, the group maintains around 160 miles of trail, around 500-man hours' worth of maintenance so far.
- Landowner appreciation meeting is coming up on October 26, a meal will be made for the Snowbirds for the valued private landowners.
- Mr. Coe attended a board of directors meeting for the Michigan Snowmobile Association.
- Meeting at Snowbirds Clubhouse for county entities is on October 10.
- Chief Day events are Saturday October 12.

Benzie/Manistee County Dirt Birds Update: Mr. Coe gave an update on behalf of the Benzie/Manistee County Dirt Birds.

- Have accomplished everything they can now regarding an ORV route in Manistee County. There are 95 miles of trail laid down on a map, and the Dirt Birds have met with all communities, townships, and villages in the county. They have approvals and letters of support from many communities and businesses.
- There has been a DNR trail proposal for each township, in hopes to get a DNR approved route.
- Route has opportunities to join with Wexford and Benzie counties.
- DNR approval would mean signage and maintenance funding from ORV programs. If that doesn't work out, a scenic ORV ride like in Wexford County would be an alternative.

Friends of SMARTrails Update: Ms. Cudney gave an update on behalf of the Friends of SMARTrails.

- They are currently working out issues with website domain.
- Ms. Richards attended and represented SMARTrails at the Onekama Trail Open House.
- DNR is moving through process with EDA grant, State of Michigan doesn't have enough manpower now.
- Mr. Carson wrote a letter of support for Kaleva Trailhead Facility.
- Mr. Carson and Ms. Cudney are aware of a pedestrian focus project along M-115 in Cleon TWP/Copemish. A complete streets resolution has been completed for Copemish and has been sent to MDOT. This might lead to a trail or another development along M-115.

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Onekama Trails Project: Ric Alameddine gave an update on behalf of the Onekama Trails Project.

- Recently received a Michigan Health Endowment grant for \$100,800. Grant will help with development work which will go toward February 2025 TAP Grant application.
- They had great attendance for their open house, close to 200 people showed up. 2 representatives from MDOT were present.
- Very enthusiastic, with emotions going one way or another.
- Parking and business development are 2 of the biggest issues.
- Have gone to open meeting format, all meetings are open to the public, with the next meeting being on October 23rd at 6pm. The projects engineering firm will present 4 alternatives. Feedback will be gathered from the community.
- Mr. Alameddine asked for another document to be prepared by Recreation Commission Staff.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Mr. Schuelke to direct the Planning Staff to create a 2nd brochure with graphics which talks about the benefits of trails for small towns and communities.

All in favor, motion Carried

Ms. Gruenberg and Mr. Jarvi proceeded with giving an update on behalf of the Planning Department.

- Mr. Jarvi explained how the MCCF wants more explanation regarding the gap in funding for the Kaleva Trailhead Facility.
- Bill Kennis is starting on the grant application for the DNR Trust Fund Grant.
- In the process of getting more estimates and drawings for the Trailhead Facility.
- Conversation followed about gap in funding and construction costs for facility.
- Hoping to get a more detailed estimate that will be cheaper.
- Ms. Gruenberg stated that an RFP will go out once we have enough info to put out to contractors.

Old Business:

Parking/Street Design Document:

- Mr. Jarvi passed out model brochure of said document.
- Discussion was had regarding who would distribute the document. The Recreation Commission will share with local units of Government, who can print it themselves.

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- Discussion of applying for a mini grant from the MCCF for printing of the document was discussed.
- The Recreation Commission will review the first document for next meeting, and the 2nd document whenever it is ready.
- Mr. Alameddine asked if a draft copy could be used at one of his meetings. It was agreed that a version could be used that includes a draft watermark.
- Further discussion took place between Mr. Alameddine and the Recreation Commission regarding accessing county/other grant writers.

Other Items Before the Board:

M-55 Shoulder Widening Project:

- Mr. Schuelke gave background about bike route and state of road shoulders along M-55
- MDOT is proposing to add bike paths alongside of M-55.
- Mr. Schuelke asked for Letter of Support from the Commission supporting the proposed project.
- Discussion ensued about who letter should be addressed to.

There was a motion by Mr. Lawrence, supported by Ms. Batzer, to direct the Planning Staff to create a letter of support for the proposed M-55 Shoulder Widening Project.

All in favor, motion Carried

Mr. Beldo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 P.M.

Next meeting will be on November 4, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Schwaiger, Recreation Commission

Date