

## MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Monday, September 13, 2022  
6:15 P.M.

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

### MINUTES

Members Present: Wayne Beldo, Chair; Margaret Batzer; Erin Secord; Linda Cudney; Eleanor DeYoung; Devin Wagner via Zoom; Gary Schwaiger; Robert Schulke; Bryan Dunlop  
Members Absent:

Others Present: Kristyn Malkowski, Recording Secretary; Lisa Sagala, County Administrator/Controller; Bill Kennis, County Grant Writer; Mike Szokola, Manistee County Planning Director; Jodi Lynch, Manistee County Planner/Zoning Administrator

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

Approval of the September 13, 2022, meeting agenda.

**There was a motion by Mr. Beldo, supported by Ms. Batzer, to approve the September 13, 2022, agenda. All in favor, motion carried.**

Approval of the August 1, 2022, Minutes.

**There was a motion by Mr. Dunlop, supported by Ms. Cudney, to approve the August 1, 2022, Minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**

Approval of the August 15, 2022, Special Meeting Minutes.

**There was a motion by Mr. Dunlop, supported by Ms. Cudney, to approve the August 15, 2022, Minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**

No public comment.

Trail Champions: Nothing Reported

Staff Reports. Mr. Szokola stated that he spoke with DTE about potential trails onto their service roads, he is still waiting for a response back. He also met with Bill Gambill, City Manager, & Ms. Sagala regarding the possibility of a partnership with the potential Recreation Manager position. Mr. Gambill stated he will have a discussion with the City Parks & Recreation Committee. More discussions will take place regarding the Recreation Manager at the meeting on September 28, 2022, at 9:00 with Lisa Sagala, Bill Kennis, Mike Szokola, Laura Heintzeman and Sarah

Herberger regarding the Recreation Manager position.

As for the Railroad Relocation plan, Mr. Szokola and Mr. Kennis has been in contact with EGLE to work on Environmental Impact Agreements, although the main focus is updating the 2008 plan. The goal is to apply for a grant on October 4, 2022, for the development plan to implement the railroad relocation. Mr. Szokola requested that the Commission conduct a recommendation letter in support of the railroad relocation plan. Mr. Kennis stated that the current Recreation Plan that was adopted, shows that the board is already in support of the railroad relocation so that can be used instead of an action or a recommendation letter. Ms. Sagala stated that once the grant is obtained for the planning portion, that is when input from the Recreation Commission is needed most. This stage is where the Commission will lay out the route to move forward. For instance, building a new bridge is probably not financially feasible so the Commission will have to seek alternate ideas from the 2008 study. The Commission will need to find what will be least impactful to the homeowners. Mr. Kennis & Mr. Szokola met with a representative from Fishbeck Engineering and spoke about the Recreation Commission possibly working with Network Northwest, on how to engage with the public and find what the impact might be on those specific properties. Mr. Szokola stated that he has already reached out to Network Northwest for a quote, and he is waiting to hear back. Mr. Beldo requested to have updates brought to the Recreation Commission regarding the progress of the railroad relocation, to ensure they can assist in a timely manner.

Friends of Smart Trails Report: Ms. Cudney stated the Friends of Smart Trails had a meeting September 12, 2022. Tamara Buswinka went over their strategic plan to find items of concern. Laura Heintzelman, from the Community Foundation, introduced Sarah Herberger who will be administering the Minger grant. Rob Carson missed the Smart Trails meeting, but he sent an email stating that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant was formally awarded. He is currently working through the grant process (Email is included with these minutes). The grant will cover the completion of a crushed limestone trail from Thompsonville to Copemish (which connects to the Betsie Valley trail) and the creation of a bridge over Bear Creek in Springdale Township. This was a \$1.4 million grant with about \$378,000 matching funds from the Community Foundation.

The volunteer committee ordered volunteer shirts and are waiting for hats. Shirts were made to bring attention to the volunteers during events. Zach Pawlowski is working on a fall newsletter and is looking to receive Smart Trails input as to what they would like covered. He would like the information by November 1, 2022. Mr. Beldo requested that an article be placed in the fall newsletter about the purpose of the Recreation Commission, Ms. Cudney said she will work on it. Ms. Sagala suggested a good way to promote the Recreation Commission and Smart Trails, is through our local radio station. Every Tuesday they have been choosing different topics to discuss from City or County officials/departments. Ms. Sagala stated September is booked but if they are still doing the interview in October, she will reach out to Ms. Cudney as she will be the point person.

Ms. Cudney stated that all the festivals went well, a lot of people signed up, although Manistee County Fair had the least amount. The Rusty Fish is the last event of the year and will take place on October 8, 2022. Ms. Secord mentioned that she followed the link on the website as a family supporter and wondered if there was success in that type of fundraising. Ms. Cudney mentioned there were a couple PayPal donations.

Mr. Beldo stated he and Mark Coe will be attending the Village of Kaleva meeting on September 19, 2022, to discuss the concerns of motorized traffic tearing up existing trails within the Village of Kaleva. To keep trails from destruction, gates must be placed at road crossings and signs must be installed, that state there are no motorized vehicles allowed on said trails. By doing so, this

lets EGLE know that trails are being properly maintained and keeps the Commission eligible for future grant consideration. The Recreation Commission is requesting that one gate be placed at Healy Lake Rd, North of Kaleva; two gates at Industrial Park Rd; two gates at Industrial Drive, West of the Kaleva Village Park and one gate at 9 Mile Rd. There are other areas of concern, but Mr. Beldo feels gating off main road access is the best start. The gates can be opened for snowmobile traffic when appropriate. Mr. Beldo requested a motion from the Recreation Commission and Smart Trails to draft letters of support for gates and signs to present at the Village of Kaleva meeting. Ms. Cudney will draft the Smart Trails letter and Mr. Beldo; Ms. Secord and Ms. Malkowski will work on the letter from the Commission.

Approval to send a letter in support of gates and sign installation wherever the trails intercept roadways within the Village of Kaleva.

**There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Mr. Dunlop, to approve letters of recommendation to install gates and signs at the intersections of the trail and roads throughout the Village of Kaleva. All in favor, motion carried.**

Old Business:

Recreation Manager position: Ms. Batzer received an email from Ed Hoogterp, the chair of Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission. They are still looking for a budget and scope of services for the feasibility study for the Recreation Manager position. They are estimating the total project cost to be \$17,300 which they are requesting from the county board. Ms. Batzer asked for Ms. Sagala and Mr. Szokola's advice as to how to move forward with the position request. Ms. Sagala feels it is best to establish the position in the planning department. Hopefully more ideas of funding will be discussed, there is a chance the County can have enough revenue to have sustainability for a long-term position.

ARPA: Ms. Sagala requested that the Commission make a motion today, to send to the County Board to change the intentions of the original ARPA request. It is already known that the position is needed. Instead of the funds being used for a feasibility study, the funds will be directly put towards the position.

Approval to change the intentions of the original ARPA funds request. Funds will go towards the new Recreation Manager position, instead of the feasibility study.

**There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Mr. Schwaiger, to change the intentions of the original ARPA funds request. Funds will go towards the new Recreation Manager position, instead of feasibility study. All in favor, motion carried**

The request change will be presented to the County Board at the September 27, 2022, meeting. Ms. Sagala suggested that the Commission create a separate fund for the ARPA money coming in. She will get with Susan Zielinski, Finance Officer, to ensure proper procedures are followed regarding tracking of the ARPA funds.

New Business:

Bill Kennis, the new County Grant writer, introduced himself to the Planning Commission. He feels that the Commission is doing a great job and is in a great position to keep moving forward. Mr. Kennis suggested that the Commission work together and prioritize what projects they would to push for grant opportunity. Find the direction they would like him to work towards. Grant applications are in the first quarter of next year, so it is a great idea to start now. Mr. Szokola states that the next step for the Commission is to review the planning and goals section of the

Recreation Plan and prioritize projects. The Commission will brainstorm at October recreation meeting.

Jodi Lynch, the Planning/Zoning Administrator, introduced herself. She is taking on Arcadia Township, Bear Lake Township and Onekama Township. Mr. Szokola will handle the Villages for now, but she has been spending time in the field with him, to get to know the area.

Other Items from Committee Members: The Commission would like to see a trail map that can give the visualization of all the completed, pending, and future trails. Mr. Szokola stated the Commission can make a recommendation to the Planning Department to create said maps and when the time develops, maps can be created. Mr. Szokola also stated that he has an ORV trail map, but it is outdated. There are new trails that opened for ORV use so having proper signs to extinguish which trails can be used is necessary. The Planning Commission can submit grant requests or collaborate with Townships on sign designs or grant applications. By working with the Township/Villages, it can bring more funding opportunities and create good working relationships between all entities.

Ms. Secord wanted to bring up the equestrian trail use concerns again. Currently there are amendments being made in legislation in terms of non-motorized trails on DNR owned land to make it difficult to restrict equestrian use. There is also language of banning bicycles from multi-use trails that are open to equestrian use by law. Ms. Secord feels that Manistee County should work with the equestrian trail users and work together on finding what is best for the trails in our County and respect every trail user.

Mr. Schulke and Mr. Beldo stated there will be meetings October 4 and 5, 2022 with Consumers Energy and Government officials regarding the removal of hydroelectric dams and possibly turning them into trails. Ms. Batzer suggested anyone who is able, should attend any meetings regarding trail use.

Mr. Beldo adjourned the meeting at 7:09 PM. Next meeting will be changed from Monday October 3 to Tuesday October 4, 2022, at 6:15 pm, in the County Board of Commissioner's room.

Respectfully submitted,

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Erin Secord, Recreation Commission Secretary

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Date