

GENESEE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

The monthly meeting of the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Thursday, December 13, 2007, in the Mill Street Dining Room, at Crossroads Village, 6140 Bray Rd., Flint, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Joe Krapohl, President
Ted Henry
James Washington, Vice President
Rose Bogardus
Raynetta Speed

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Bob Ranger, Genesee County Planning Commission
Jeff Wright, Genesee County Drain Commissioner

MEMBERS ABSENT:

James Pomeroy, Ex-Officio, Road Commission
Vacant Position, Citizen Representative

STAFF PRESENT

Amy M. McMillan, Director
Ron Walker, Deputy Director
Greg Parks, Chief Ranger
Matt Armentrout, Maintenance Supervisor
Deborah Wilkes, Secretary
Leisa Gagne, Finance Officer
Nancy Edwards, Program Specialist
Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brian Barkey, Commission Legal Counsel
Larry Stricker

(1) CALL TO ORDER

President Krapohl called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

(2) OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Larry Stricker of 3547 N Gale Rd., Davison presented his plan for hunting in the parks to cull the deer herd. He suggests taping off areas to be hunted and meat should be donated to the food banks. The hunt could benefit by reducing car/deer accidents and help the needy.

(3) CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Discussion: Commissioner Bogardus asked that three items be removed. The Ruth Mott Foundation grant denial for the pedestrian bridge at For-Mar, the Stanley Smith Horticultural trust correspondence and the park report submitted from Ron Walker regarding tree plantings at Bluebell Beach.

Motion to approve the items on the consent agenda with three items removed.

Action Taken: Motion by Commission Ranger
Support by Commissioner Henry

Roll Call: Yeas: Bogardus, Henry, Krapohl, Ranger, Speed, Washington, Wright
Nays: None
Absent: Lucas, Pomeroy

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0

(4) REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL

Richfield Landfill - Nothing has occurred since you received your information about the RAP.

Resolution for Day Out With Thomas

Discussion: The staff is interested in promoting this event as soon as the contracts are approved for signing. The commission is being asked to approve the contracts for the 2008 Day Out With Thomas event, subject to approval by counsel. A resolution is being presented to authorize the director to execute contracts, after they have been approved by legal counsel. Commissioner Bogardus asked if the contracts state the ticket price. Director McMillan stated that the contracts from Hit Entertainment will have set the prices. We do not control the ticket prices or merchandise pricing. Our rates did go up last year because they added Bob the Builder. Our prices have been set lower than Greenfield Village in the past. The \$3.00 charge by Ticket Web will still be in effect.

Motion to support the Resolution 16-07 for Day Out With Thomas and Ticketweb.

Action Taken: Motion by Commission Bogardus
Support by Commissioner Henry

Roll Call: Yeas: Wright, Washington, Speed, Ranger, Krapohl, Henry, Bogardus
Nays: None
Absent: Lucas, Pomeroy

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0

(5) DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reappointments to the Parks Commission

Director McMillan is pleased to announce that Joe Krapohl and Bill Lucas have been reappointed to the Parks & Recreation Commission and will continue to serve on this board for the next two years.

Items Removed from Consent Agenda

Ruth Mott Foundation's denial for a pedestrian bridge at For-mar. Commissioner Bogardus asked if this grant was a continuing grant that we lost or if it was a new application. Director McMillan stated that it was an application for a new grant for partial costs associated with the bridge construction. The Foundation ran out of money for this funding cycle. They didn't realize they had made several multi-year commitments to other projects so they had less money than they would typically have to spend on single projects.

The Stanley Trust grant was to supplement the evergreen collection at the arboretum. It was not a continuing grant.

Commissioner Bogardus thanked Ron for the planting of trees at Bluebell Beach. Deputy Director Walker explained that the trees were planted on and around the parking islands and by the splash pad. They have been spread around for maximum shade in the future. Commissioner Bogardus asked if we have ever contacted local nurseries or tree farms for donations. Mr. Walker stated that we have made contacts and some have expressed interest, but none have come forward with donations. He further stated that 2" trees should mature well in about 10 years, but we will have some shade immediately. Director McMillan added that the trees were purchased with funds from the Ruth Mott Foundation grant that put the shade kites at Bluebell Beach. We do typically get donations from Arbor Day at For-Mar, and the conservation office is planning on buying larger bare-root trees. This could be a source of reduced expense for this spring.

Safari Club taping of hunting areas

Commissioner Bogardus mentioned that Mr. Stricker had mentioned taping off a hunting area, she

asked how large of an area would be used. Director McMillan stated that no decision on hunting in the parks has been made. She further stated that Mr. Krapohl will have the sub-committee meet soon regarding the issue of deer population and they will discuss which direction we will take with regard to controlling the herd. The committee members consist of Bob Ranger, Jeff Wright and Rose Bogardus. Ted Henry asked to be on the committee as well. After the holidays Mr. Krapohl will pick a date for the sub-committee to meet.

Presentation of Director's Awards

Earlier in the year the Commission set a goal to develop a program to recognize employees in the areas of Customer Service, Safety, and Innovate, Initiatives & Ideas. The program was to be meaningful and manageable. Employees were nominated by co-workers and the public. They were recognized on a month basis. We reserved the right to establish another category for employees that really went above and beyond the call of duty, which in the Genesee County Parks is a very high standard because almost every day almost every park employees goes above and beyond what we would expect people to do in the course of their jobs. When we originally talked about the director's award, we thought we would be honoring individuals; that perhaps one or two people would really stand out. But what became clear to us, and what has become a reminder to us of what we already know all year long: the reason things happen, and happen so well in the Genesee County Parks, whether here at the commission level or at staff level, is that we work as a team. We are successful because we do things as a team effort. Today we are honoring three teams of employees, and we are including two members of the public involved, when we speak about employees, who really literally saved a life, restored confidence in our community and in the safety of our parks and went above and beyond our expectations of customer service.

The E. A. Cummings Center Customer Service Group: Monica Catron-Wright, Don Cooper, Anthony Day, Dennis Jones, Thomas Inman, John Lovelady, Rebecca Morgan, Christopher Patton and Joshua Ruiz, their supervisors, Ron Walker and Matt Armentrout. This team of employees worked at the Cummings Center. For those of you who do not know, horse people have very high expectations for the care they are going to receive at a facility, and the care a facility takes to insure that they and their horses and their visitors are safe at a facility. In the past we have had a lot of difficulty managing to form a positive relationship with the equestrian community in Genesee County. They have been concerned with the condition of the Cummings Center. While we have always worked together it has been a difficult relationship until this year. This year we had an outstanding season at the Cummings Center. People who were previously concerned about even coming back to the center in 2007 can't wait to come back in 2008. We have received *many* emails, letters and phone calls praising the condition of the facility and the staff. It is because of the efforts of the people standing in front of you today that this occurred. Not only do they do outstanding work on the physical facility, each was also on hand whenever somebody needed something there. If a customer needed something they would ask for help and the staff did an outstanding job. Each member of this crew is receiving a framed letter of recognition and an engraved clock to honor them.

The Flushing County Park Crew: Sue Bradford, James Davis, Mike Henry, Maurice Rice, Fred Riddle, Thomas Rose and Ryan Smith. Most of the people who work in the Flushing County Park refer to the Park as "my" park. The people who work in this park take a great deal of pride in making certain that Flushing County Park is the absolute best it can be and they treat it as if it is their own back yard. As you know, this summer there was a horrible act of vandalism that took place at Flushing County Park. Several people sprayed racist graffiti throughout the park, pavilions and trash cans. When staff was notified that morning it was a huge job to clean it up. As horrifying as this incident was to everyone, our customers, our staff and the community as a whole, the work that our staff did there: to respond immediately to this incident, to clean it up and make people feel safe and welcome, was part of making certain that something that was horrible and mean and cruel actually turned out to be something, in an odd way, something very positive that happened in the Genesee County community. It demonstrated that Flushing County Park really is OUR park and when we say OUR park, we mean *everyone* is welcome there and we take personal responsibility for making certain that occurs. Thank you again, Flushing County Park crew, you did a fabulous job.

Bluebell Beach Rescue: Mark Bolin, Jesse Gonzalez, Shari Miller, Bob Stanley, Bobby Taylor, Eric White, Jennifer Smith and Jennifer Locke. Last but not least we want to recognize employees

and private citizens today who actually were responsible for saving a life this summer. Earlier this summer we had an incident at Bluebell Beach, where a young girl, only five years old, who is autistic, wandered from her parents on the beach, and into the water. She didn't know how to swim and had no personal floatation device with her. She wandered out into the water and we had some people on the beach who were keeping an eye on her and noticed that the child was alone. Then they noticed that the child who was in the water was then under the water. They went out into the water and brought her out of the water, and it is not overstating it to say they brought a lifeless body out of the water because she was not breathing on her own when they brought her out. They began CPR until our staff could relieve them. What followed was the staff following our emergency procedures that we have established when an incident like this occurs to the letter. Nobody stood around scratching their head or twiddling their thumbs, everybody did exactly what they were supposed to do. The paramedics arrived in a timely fashion and said that if everyone who was there, the private citizens and the staff, had not done exactly what they did, in exactly the manner that they did; this young lady would not have survived. By the time she left the park, after CPR, she was breathing on her own and has made a full recovery. Today we are honoring this group of people who literally are heroes, who literally saved a life that otherwise would have been lost on Bluebell Beach that day.

All of the honorees were asked to stand and were given a round of applause.

Commissioner Krapohl told the Cummings Center crew that he has received yet another letter from the 4-H group about the Cummings Center appearance. To the Flushing County Park team, we got a lot of thanks about the way the employees responded to the Flushing County park fiasco and to the Bluebell Beach team, he can personally say that they will remember that minute for the rest of their life and know that what they did was the right thing and they can live with the fact that they had the training, they had the knowledge and that there is a little girl alive because of that.

Commissioner Krapohl also said that the teams we have in place need a good support structure. As many of you know, our numbers are up at Crossroads Village, profits, attendance and he thinks that the Commission and our employees also need to recognize the staff that supports our employees. Matt Armentrout, Greg Parks, Hilda McShane, Nancy Edwards, Ron Walker, Deb Wilkes and Amy McMillan were thanked for their direction and support to the employees. On behalf of the entire Parks Commission he thanked the group for the work they have done this year, it has been outstanding, we see nothing but positive in the future.

(6) OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Krapohl told Commissioners Ranger, Bogardus, Wright and Henry that he is looking at the 2nd week of January for a sub-committee meeting regarding hunting. Please check your schedules and he will send an email about availability within the next week.

Commissioner Krapohl showed the cover of a Bronner's Christmas Commercial Lighting catalog that features our Crossroads Village "Tree of Lights". It is another symbol of what we have to offer, that when a company as large as Bronner's Christmas store uses something we have to advertise their products.

(7) OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Bogardus reminded everybody that the Holiday Pops concert is this weekend. It is a great concert, Saturday and Sunday. It will also be televised on Channel 12. She also commented that opening night at Crossroads was very nice and the fireworks were good. It went off very well.

Commissioner Wright said that the staff honored today make the parks look great and the Commission look great and thanked them.

Commissioner Bogardus also stated that she was out of town and coming into Michigan on I-69 and there were no more brochures in the Welcome Center. She said the brochures were gone by the first week in November. Next year we should send them more.

(8) OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Larry Sticker said he would like to see a good thing even better. He would like to see the gates at Timberwolf moved further back to access an area for launching boats. He showed pictures of an area he believes is better for launching.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

President Krapohl adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m. to proceed with a luncheon for honorees.