

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
GENESEE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**

The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Thursday, May 11, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission, 5045 Stanley Road, Flint, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Joe Krapohl, President
James Washington, Vice President
William Lucas, Secretary
Archie Bailey
Rose Bogardus
Raynetta Speed

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Billy Bradshaw, Genesee County Road Commission
Bob Ranger, Jr., Designee Genesee County
Metropolitan Planning Commission
Jeff Wright, Genesee County Drain Commissioner

MEMBERS ABSENT:

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Shirley Prater

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

STAFF PRESENT

Amy M. McMillan, Director
Ronald Walker, Facilities Manager
Leisa Gagne, Financial Affairs Officer
Nancy Edwards, Recreation Program Specialist
Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist
Kimberly L. Cunningham, Secretary
Stacy Hiller, Seasonal Employee

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brian Barkey, Commission Legal Counsel
Liz Shaw, *The Flint Journal*

CALL TO ORDER

President Krapohl called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 27, 2006 REGULAR MEETING

President Krapohl requested any corrections and/or additions to the minutes. There were none.

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Washington, supported by Commissioner Bradshaw, to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2006 regular meeting as submitted.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9-0.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

President Krapohl asked if there was anyone from the public wishing to address the Commission. President Krapohl stated that per Commission rules speakers have three minutes to make their comments and should state their name and address for the record.

Pauline Dargel of 6119 Hugh Street, Burton, Michigan, stated the following:

She has lived in Genesee County since 1953, her current address since 1968, and is very familiar with that particular area prior to that. She is also a citizens representative at Metro Alliance, where the last session they heard about MDOT's dollars regarding sidewalks. Currently at the juncture between Belsay and Vassar Roads, that stretch has been improved to five lanes with curbs and gutters and that reflects back to the a study which she was part of in 1980-81. When improvements were done along Davison Road, they were to have a pedestrian trail. Her purpose in speaking today is that she would like a letter of endorsement as to continuing the trail to the west of Belsay on Davison Road, which would take you along to For-Mar and then immediately north at Genesee Road and up to the entry of For-Mar. The City of Burton states they have plans for residential on the southwest corner of Genesee and Davison Roads.

Steven Davis of 5160 E. Stanley Road, Flint, Michigan, stated the following:

He has lived on Stanley Road for 28 years and has seen a lot of changes. He stated that Mott Lake Association is one of the best in Michigan. The DNR was very active in the area. About nine years ago, they did a study on Michigan lakes and noted that Mott Lake had the most perfect ph levels. The water quality and the ph factor are very good. We see eagles, swans, geese, ducks, and every order of fowl that you can imagine is here at Mott Lake. Some of the things he is concerned with are for being a very large swimming area; Bluebell Beach has very few people that actually swim there. He would like to see a water theme park in that area—something to attract the younger people to give them something to do in Genesee, as well as the surrounding areas. He stated that other parks in the area would give the Genesee County parks good ideas on how to go about placing a water theme park in the area. If we use the lake water, it may have to be filtered to do this kind of a theme park. In turn, we are putting water back into Mott Lake, cleaner than it was coming out. A picnic area in that same area would really help bring the people in. As of now, it is all to the back of the building and not much waterfront picnic area. New port-a-johns are needed in the fishing areas and more trash barrels are needed so it can be kept clean and nice.

Everett Willey of 6144 Rich St., Davison, Michigan, stated the following:

He has been a longtime resident of Genesee County and lives in Russellville. He has

been picking up trash all year while he kayaks. There are receptacles, but people don't use them. The other night while he was kayaking there was no trash in the water, but when he came back down, he picked up a gallon freezer bag half-full of water. This happens all the time. He has probably picked up a dump truck load of trash this year. He mentioned it to Ranger Parks and Ranger Parks stated that there is a river cleanup coming up soon. Mr. Willey stated that this is just one day a year that the Watershed Coalition does a cleanup. The enforcement of the rules is what he is concerned about. He asked if there are enough rangers and are enough littering tickets wrote? If you keep it cleaner, you would attract a better quality of people that don't like to see it trashed. The trash comes from everywhere. There are tires in the lake and there is a trash bin that has been at the split in the river for at least five years.

He is also a photographer and when he is taking pictures sometimes there is trash in the pictures. He also kayaks in the Hogback Hills. When you take a picture of the lake and you see a 55-gallon drum floating on one side of the shoreline that interferes with your picture. This is a beautiful place. We don't have many of them around here and we are losing them all the time. He would like to see more enforcement.

Commissioner Lucas thanked Mr. Willey for picking up the trash.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. McMillan stated that she has the usual number of thank you letters and would be happy to answer any questions regarding them. There were none.

REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL

Attorney Barkey reminded the Parks Commission that there was another tax dispute involving Marathon Township, which is a much smaller dispute. Marathon Township started assessing County land administered by the parks a year later than Oregon Township. Their legal counsel is the same. Every year, the mechanism is they assess the land as non-exempt, the parks files a protest with the Board of Review, the Board of Review decides against the parks, and the parks appeals the denial to the Tax Tribunal. There is two years worth of tax liability currently pending in front of the Tax Tribunal. Three years of tax liability with Oregon Township. A week and a half ago, he received notice of Marathon Township's decision on the protest. This year, the parks got a decision back saying it is all exempt—all zero value. Parks counsel, Dick Figura, called Marathon Township's counsel, who happens to be the same lawyer who represented Oregon Township on the tax dispute and very aware of the tax dispute. The legal principles are the same. This last week, Marathon Township decided they would agree that the property is exempt. They will agree to a consent order identical to the terms of Judge Van Covering's judgment and the parks will get a decree from them stating the property is exempt, has been exempt, and requiring a refund of the taxes with the same provisions in the previous order by Judge Van Covering. This represents a resolution completely favorable to the County of all pending tax disputes involving parkland. Commissioner Lucas asked if the parks are still dealing with the fire run issue. Attorney Barkey stated yes. President Krapohl asked if the paperwork had been filed regarding the cost recovery. Attorney Barkey stated yes the motion had been filed, but the affidavit documenting the actual amount of costs has not. The motion had not been filed at the time that Marathon Township agreed to the consent order.

DIRECTOR'S STAFF REPORT

Parks Status Report

Ms. McMillan asked Mr. Walker for his report.

Mr. Walker stated:

For-Mar Nature Preserve

The contractor that is doing the soil borings for the Drain Commission, PSI, has completed their work.

Cummings Center

Staff has met with County and State officials for some new requirements they have for that facility. It involves adding a receptacle for in the future if it is needed to have chlorination of the well.

Mounds ORV Park

On May 15th, the parks will be opening the facility to four-wheel drive trucks and the rest of the area will be open.

Crossroads Village

The Pere Marquette Caboose that is next to the Depot has a new roof.

Linden County Park

The public beach assess for the boaters is going on this week. It will then be locked until October 2006.

Ms. McMillan stated that Ms. Moreno is not here today. She took a fall at Crossroads Village last week and is recovering at home from her injuries, which thankfully were not terribly extensive, but do require considerable rest to heal. Ms. McMillan stated she would give the Park Commissioners her home address or e-mail address if they wished to send her get-well wishes.

Ms. McMillan then asked Ms. Edwards for her report.

Ms. Edwards stated:

She introduced her assistant, Stacy Hiller. This is her fourth summer working for the parks. Ms. Edwards first met Ms. Hiller at Flushing High School as part of the Flushing Mock Interview Program.

For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum

A couple of days ago staff received \$5,000 grant from the James A Welch Foundation. This means staff has one outstanding grant that they are waiting to hear from. The For-Mar On the Road program is the program that has staff going out to the Flint Schools working with 3rd and 4th graders and will also provide the For-Mar Nature program in the parks as part of the Family Fun Guide series.

Wolverine Campground

There are 128 reservations for Memorial weekend out of 194 sites. Staff expects to be completely full for the weekend. Staff will put a hold on a few sites in the back that may be flooded.

Toll Booth Operations

Toll booth operations have generated \$10,500 as of May 4th. The toll booths just opened on April 29th.

Holloway Reservoir

The City of Flint lowers the water level on the Holloway Reservoir every winter and is suppose to have the level raised by May 1st of every year. Parks staff does remind the City of Flint to do that. The level has been rising slowly. Yesterday, staff was notified that there was a problem with the dam. When the City of Flint did do what they needed to do, only half of the dam was working. The toll booths are open on the day that walleye season opens, which is the end of April, and staff tells people coming into the facility that the water level is very low and usually a sign is posted there too. Staff has had some complaints about that this year. What she has done from a customer service standpoint is that anyone who has a complaint can get a credit for the \$10 daily pass toward the purchase of an annual permit. They have been very, very happy with that. An informational handout was also prepared to give out at the toll booths. Ms. Edwards thanked Mr. Wright for his help with the City of Flint Water Department and the dam situation.

Goldenrod Disc Golf Course

Ms. Edwards visited the disc golf course the other day. The course has been open for three to four years. At the beginning, there were one or two cars in the parking lot. Now, the parking lot is consistently full with 15 to 20 cars. Goldenrod Disc Golf Course has been rated one of the highest, most challenging, coolest facilities in Michigan. There was a disc golf tournament at Goldenrod last week that had quite a number of folks participating. She has gotten a lot of calls from people wanting to start leagues. It was an excellent investment for the parks and people really enjoy it.

Genesee Belle

As of yesterday, 23% of the dinner cruises were sold. Ms. McShane and herself are working on additional advertising for the Belle.

Elba Equestrian

The total number of rentals for campsites at Elba last year was 136 for the entire year. As of two days ago, there are already 53 rentals at Elba this year, which confirms what staff already knew that the facility is extremely popular and becoming more so all the time. She also took a trip to Hadley to the state park to look at their equestrian camping facility. Genesee County's is so much nicer and much better taken care of.

Special Events

Diamond Force Engineering is going to bring out an Army vehicle to do some testing at the Mounds. When someone does commercial testing like that, the parks charges them \$125 an hour to use the facility.

The Sanilac Schools also want to bring out Baja vehicles to the Mounds. Their students in the design technology program built these and want to run them at the Mounds.

Stacy and Nancy will be at a career presentation tomorrow with the Genesee Chamber of Commerce. They have been doing a lot of career presentations with schools all over the County.

She will be working with her seasonal staff on Saturday for the campground and any remaining toll booth and Belle staff doing training on customer service.

Commissioner Washington stated that the handout for the toll booths is an excellent idea. He further stated that the more informational communication the parks have the more our stock as parks go up.

Commissioner Bradshaw asked if the disc golf course was nine or 18 holes. Ms. Edwards stated that it is 18 holes and on Irish Road. It is the former site of Goldenrod Beach.

Commissioner Wright stated that probably the biggest problem of the disc golf course is waiting in line to get on the course. There have been some people that say the parks should consider a second disc golf course. It is an interesting concept. Ms. Edwards stated that the parks are offering disc golf lessons this summer, one Saturday in June,

July, and August. The \$7.00 fee covers the purchase of the disc and a two-hour lesson.

Ms. McMillan then asked Ms. McShane for her report.

Ms. McShane stated:

Day Out With Thomas

As of today, 8,165 tickets have been sold for Day Out With Thomas. The big ads will come out later this month. In the *Parade Magazine* (an insert in *The Flint Journal*), there will be a Day Out With Thomas ad. The ad will be placed next to the Zehnder's ad. It will go out to over a million homes in the Midwest.

CRV Marketing

This summer's marketing plan is based on previous Halloween and Christmas purchases. We know where the people are coming from. They are basically coming from North Oakland, parts of the Detroit Metro area, Lapeer, and Livingston Counties. We have based all of the advertising on the information received from the surveys and ticket booths. Obviously, we cannot afford a full run in the *Detroit News/Free Press* so what we do is pick and choose particular areas based on zip codes and surveys. For 26 weeks, we will run ads in those newspapers. The ads will basically be the same—the brochure cover on the left side and the schedule of activities on the right side. Even though our season is only 16 weeks, it was cheaper to buy 26 weeks of advertising. In addition to Crossroads Village, you will see Genesee Belle advertising as well. There will also be some radio and television ads. The bulk of the advertising will be the newspaper, the brochure, and our e-mail.

Commissioner Lucas asked if there are any sold out dates. Ms. McMillan stated that on August 19 the first four trains are sold out. Ms. McShane stated that pretty much every train has tickets sold.

Senior Power Day

Ms. McMillan stated Senior Power Day is coming to Crossroads Village on May 24. Plan to spend some time there during the day. The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission is a major sponsor of Senior Power Day this year as part of our Partnership Policy. Staff will have a table in the vendor area, which will have information regarding the County parks millage renewal. There is always excellent weather on Senior Power Day and it is a great day to spend out at the Village. Usually, the early morning is when the greatest amount of people are there. Commissioner Bailey stated that this year they will have box lunches and there won't be long lines of people waiting for food. This will be a significant improvement in that process.

Staff Orientation

Ms. McMillan stated that the Commission-wide staff orientation was last week. There were 286 seasonal employees in the Mill Street Dining Room and staff shared with them all of the information regarding the Millage Renewal Information and Education Program. Administration is very clear with the staff people regarding the expectations this summer, particularly, in the areas of customer service—both external customers (people who come into our facilities) and internal customers (those people with which

we work). We are expecting a very successful summer with our seasonal workforce this year.

Website

Ms. McMillan stated that Katie McGlashen, recreation program coordinator, has been working with Bill Toll, the parks' webmaster, and over the course of the next week or so, there will be significant upgrades to the Crossroads Village section of the website. Everyone is very excited about the new look. It coordinates well with all of the promotions and should be easier to use. One of the things that are especially cool about it is that it has its own slide show now. When people are on the page, there is a rotating slide show. It is three different slots that rotate pictures of the Village the entire time that you are on the page so people get an opportunity to see the Genesee Belle, the train, the carousel, and individual houses. It better connects people to the Village. The map of the Village will also be much more interactive and give more information to people about each of the buildings onsite. We are very excited about that.

Annual Employee Awards Luncheon

On Tuesday of this week, the County recognized five of our employees at the Annual Employee Awards, which this year was held for the first time at Crossroads Village in the Mill Street Dining Room. The five employees who have five years or more of service are Mike Henry from Maintenance, Diantha Martin from For-Mar, Mark Handy from Food Service, Don Cooper from Maintenance, and Marty Knox from the Railroad Shop. We heard really good reports from the Human Resources Director about the service and about the quality of the food at the event. Parks' staff did a wonderful job in setting up and everything seemed to go really well. Administration really appreciates the effort that the County made to invest its dollars in its facilities for this program.

Millage Information and Education Program

The program is moving full steam ahead. Administration has developed an in-house information and education committee that works on getting information out through all of our sites and helps to review the print materials and has a considerable amount of input on the strategy for how we get information out to both our employees and our customers. Correct information and accurate education is vitally important and it is both within the boundaries of what we are permitted to do with staff time. It is really one of the responsibilities of the Parks Commission to inform and educate people regarding the upcoming millage renewal.

Stepping Stone Falls Trailway

Over the weekend, Rowe Engineering will be out at the trailway site staking the trail. The contractor will be onsite as early as the 15th of May to begin doing some minor tree removal and some grading of the area. That project is moving ahead beautifully. There are a lot of people excited about it. There was a wonderful editorial in *The Flint Journal* two days ago supporting trails countywide and we are very honored to be recognized as part of that. As Mrs. Dargel said earlier this morning, we are participating in a countywide trails initiative. The Genesee County Parks trailway is the premier project that is kicking that off.

Ratification of Payment of Bills – Ms. McMillan recommended approval.

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Washington, supported by Commissioner Wright to ratify payment of bills for the time period of April 17, 2006 through May 1, 2006.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Yeas: Bogardus, Krapohl, Lucas, Speed, Washington, Ranger, Bradshaw, Wright,
Bailey
Nays: None
Absent: Prater

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9-0.

Ratification of Commissioner Investments – Ms. McMillan recommended approval.

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Lucas, supported by Commissioner Washington to ratify wired payments of investments for the time period of April 18, 2006 through May 1, 2006.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. McMillan stated that she would like to select a date for the groundbreaking ceremony for the new segment of trailway. She polled the Ruth Mott Foundation's staff to see what dates would work best for them. The dates of May 31st before noon, June 1st anytime during the day, or June 2nd before 2:30 p.m. are the dates chosen. Commissioners Bradshaw, Bogardus, and Krapohl stated that the 2nd was fine with them. Commissioner Lucas stated that he wouldn't be available on the 2nd. Ms. McMillan stated she would repoll the Ruth Mott Foundation to get new dates and get back with the Park Commissioners.

Ms. McMillan stated that at the next Parks Commission meeting someone from Mr. Wright's office would be in attendance to talk about the water quality in Mott Lake and their project. Mr. Wright stated that Sue Kubic and Jim Gerth, who have been very instrumental in setting up the County Watershed Management Program, would be at the next meeting to discuss their conversations and planning about what will be done around Mott Lake in trying to locate any illicit discharges into the lake itself. This is something that they hope to complete early this summer and, hopefully, will get some valuable information that will allow us to improve the quality of the lake even further, particularly at Bluebell Beach. Ms. McMillan stated that the next Parks Commission meeting would be at Bluebell Beach.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

President Krapohl asked if any of the Parks Commissioners wanted to speak.

Commissioner Wright stated that two meetings ago the Parks Commission discussed Richfield Landfill and some of their monitoring wells. He further stated that staff was going to try to get additional information on the other well sites, etc. and would like to know if that is still in the process. Ms. McMillan stated she talked with Nancy Dillingham a little over a week ago and that information should be included in the draft of the Remedial Action Plan. The RAP will be available shortly. Commissioner Wright asked

if Richfield Landfill was preparing the remediation plan. Ms. McMillan stated Richfield Landfill's consultants are preparing it, but it also has to be approved by DEQ. She further stated there would be either a public hearing regarding the RAP or a public comment period depending on which DEQ determines is necessary. Ms. McMillan stated she would be surprised if there was not a public hearing rather than just a comment period and staff is preparing for that. Commissioner Wright asked if the staff knows if this is a new source of contamination or is it from the former problems at Richfield Landfill. Ms. McMillan stated she would have to look at her notes to answer that question and get back with him.

Commissioner Ranger asked what the procedure was for calling air conditioning and heating service contractors for emergency work. Mr. Walker stated generally the parks works with different companies depending on what the problem is. If it's at the Railroad Shop, they use Goyette Services, and if it is at the administration office, they use another company. Commissioner Ranger stated if an AC or furnace shuts down is there a procedure for that. Mr. Walker stated that the process he has been following is that he will call the companies that he has generally been doing business with and whoever can get out first and we can count on gets the project. Commissioner Ranger asked if staff might look at every couple of years checking the rates of approximately ten contractors. Ms. McMillan stated staff would be happy to do that. Commissioner Ranger stated that the reason he brought this up is that he noticed the parks uses one in particular quite often and he knows one of the gentleman that worked on some of the equipment only has about six months experience and it was a fairly big job. If the company is charging the parks for a qualified journeyman, this person doesn't have the qualifications.

Commissioner Bogardus asked about the trash barrels and if more could be placed in the parks. Ms. McMillan stated that there are less trash barrels out in the winter than in the summer. She further stated that maintenance staff puts more out, as the season gets warmer and staff increases. Ms. McMillan stated that the parks has some incredibly responsible people who fish and the parks has some who are less than responsible when they fish. The thing that is most often left at the fishing sites are those little blue tubs in which bait come. You would think that people would be able to carry those back to their vehicles along with their tackle box and fishing pole, but that is not always the case. Ms. McMillan stated that with regard to enforcement there are actually more fulltime rangers on staff now than two years ago. There is a fulltime ranger on all three shifts all year round as opposed to just during the summertime, as in previous years. Policing the parks is like policing any community. Unless you have one police officer with every single person in the parks, it is impossible to cite everyone when something like that happens. Commissioner Bogardus stated that the Parks Commission couldn't consider any projects until they know if there is going to be parks system after August 8th. She further stated that she thinks it is an interesting project combining the roadside park with For-Mar. Ms. McMillan stated that one of the new things MDOT requires is that under Act 51 local units must now spend 1% per year for the next ten years or up to 10% in ten years on projects that are not roads—projects that are enhancement projects, which includes sidewalks and scenic trail ways. Burton handles its own roads and those will be within their jurisdiction to determine how they are going to spend their 1%. The County Road Commission will be able to determine how they are going to spend that 1%. Gravel roads used to be counted in the 1%, but that is no longer allowed and will be more purely enhancement dollars that are dedicated to those funds.

Commissioner Bailey asked if the geese roundup been completed. Ms. McMillan stated

that it doesn't start until June during the flightless period.

Commissioner Lucas asked Ms. McMillan to look into getting the dumpster out of the water. Ms. McMillan stated she would.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

President Krapohl asked if there was anyone from the public wishing to address the Commission.

Mr. Willey stated he could get the dumpster out of the water with a couple other kayakers. Ms. McMillan stated that the parks would take care of it.

Ms. Davis stated that one of the things he spoke with the Commissioner in Genesee with is the fact that Old Dutch Farms used to have sewer-holding ponds in the back of their park. They discontinued those ponds and ran a 4" line just west of Bray Road and tied in to an 8" line and that was about two years ago that he spoke with the Commissioner about that. About the same time that the gopher pool from that line fed into the creek that is just north of the beach area that might be a good thing to look into because that happens during the big runoff in the spring and the big floods we might have during the summer. That line is not sufficient to carry that amount of sewage.

Mr. Davis further stated that there is a problem on Stanley Road with no speed limits. From Genesee Road to Belsay Road and around the corner, the only speed limit sign is a 15 mph slow down for curve. This is a preserve, and by regulation, he thinks the parks are supposed to have a 35 mph speed limit. He would like to have that checked into because every year there is an abundance of dead animals on Stanley Road. If this is a preserve, as he believes, the parks are in violation. He stated that he knows For-Mar is 45 mph on a four-lane highway. He further stated that in the last 15 years that he knows of there have been several deer hit.

Mr. Davis further asked if there was a sign out in front of this building to tell the public what it is. Ms. McMillan stated yes there is an identification sign at the corner of Stanley and Genesee Roads. Mr. Davis asked what does the sign say. Ms. McMillan stated that it says administrative offices. Mr. Davis asked if this office is an information office and asked if the sign says information center. Ms. McMillan stated it does not. Mr. Davis asked if the sign should state information center. Commissioner Lucas stated that it doesn't necessarily have to say that.

Mr. Davis asked how much school activity is there with the surrounding schools that the parks promote programs. Is there something that the parks can do to get the kids involved in cleanup in the summer?

Ms. McMillan stated that this is a comment time and the Parks Commission does not generally answer questions at this time and have discussions. Ms. McMillan stated should would be happy to give him brochures that have all of the parks' programs listed. The brochures are distributed through all of the Genesee Intermediate School District schools. President Krapohl stated staff would note his ideas. The parks have excellent programming people and are sure that they will do their best to provide activities for all the citizens.

President Krapohl asked Mr. Davis if he had a list of questions he would like to submit in writing and staff would be able to get the answers to him. He further stated that

questions are not usually answered in this forum unless a very quick response can be given.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no objections, President Krapohl adjourned the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

Recorded and transcribed by:
Kimberly L. Cunningham, Secretary
Parks\M051106