
GENESEE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

The semi-monthly meeting of the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Thursday, April 10, 2008 in the Harris Auditorium, Genesee County Administration Building, 1101 Beach Street, Flint, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Krapohl, President
James Washington, Vice President
Raynetta Speed
Ted Henry
Mike Keeler
Rose Bogardus
William Lucas, Secretary
Jeff Wright, Ex-Officio
Bob Ranger, Ex-Officio
James Pomeroy, Ex-Officio

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Amy M. McMillan, Director
Ron Walker, Deputy Director
Barry June, Director, Facilities Management
Matt Armentrout, Maintenance Supervisor
Deborah Wilkes, Secretary
Leisa Gagne, Finance Officer
Nancy Edwards, Recreation Program Specialist
Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist

OTHERS PRESENT: Brian Barkey, Commission Legal Counsel
Larry Stricker, Public
Douglas Olson, Public

(1) CALL TO ORDER

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

(2) Bow/Spear Fishing Recommendation

Discussion: President Krapohl asked if there were any objections to presenting this issue out of order from the agenda. Commissioner Bogardus must leave the meeting early and would like to vote on this issue. He further stated that if anyone from the public would like to address the Commission on this subject he would allow the opportunity at this time. There were no members of the public that wished to address the commission regarding bow/spear fishing.

Ms. McMillan stated that the staff has completed research on the issue and is recommending that the Commissioner permit, for the course of this calendar year, a pilot program to allow bow fishing east of the Genesee Road bridge, to the end of the waterfowl hunting area. Permits will be issued at a cost of \$10 for local residents and \$20 for non-residents of Genesee County. Local residents get a break because they already support the parks through their tax dollars. A valid fishing license is necessary and they must comply with all other park rules and State of Michigan fishing rules.

Motion of support for establishing the pilot program for bow/spear fishing as presented by staff.

Action Taken: Motion by Commission Bogardus
Supported by Commissioner Washington

Ayes: All ayes
Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 10-0

Commissioner Bogardus left at 10:20 a.m.

(3) INTRODUCTION OF STAFF

Mr. Walker introduced our new facilities director, Barry June, who started Monday. Mr. June told the commission that he is a resident of Goodrich, Atlas Township. He has a lot of experience in facilities and things that are done in the Parks and has seen a lot of things he can do to help the park system and help promote the park system. He is glad to be here. President Krapohl said that he has some big shoes to fill in Ron's previous position but he also has an excellent teacher in Ron Walker.

(4) OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Doug Olson of 1348 W Genesee Ave, Mt. Morris Township, a member of the Flint Town Flyers Disc Golf Club, explained the technique used by disc golfers off the tees. The sudden stop of the "plant" foot upon release of the disc makes traction of critical importance. Some of the current rubbers tees are slippery, worn and torn. Many players won't use them because they have slipped too many times. Limestone would be better than what is at Goldenrod now, but better, stronger players throw much farther off concrete with fewer slips. Limestone would be an excellent footing material if concrete would not be available until a later date. Several tee areas are prone to flooding and some are not level. If there could be some additional materials added to bring the grade up a little bit whether there would be concrete this year or not, it would be a good idea.

If the Commission chooses the nine-pad option, it would preferable to do the problem areas first. Mr. Olson said that there are volunteers within the disc golf community and asked if they could spread some wood chips under the baskets and muddy areas and traffic areas.

(5) CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Discussion: There are no items to be removed from the consent agenda.

Motion to approve the items on the consent agenda.

Action Taken: Motion by Commission Lucas
Supported by Commissioner Washington

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9-0

(6) REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL

There is no report from Legal Counsel and no questions directed to counsel.

(7) **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Note that bow fishing was addressed earlier in the Commission meeting Item #2.

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(8) **OTHER BUSINESS**

a. Options and Costs for Goldenrod Disc Golf Course Tee Improvements

Discussion: Ms. McMillan stated that the Commission asked staff to provide at least three quotes for concrete pads at the Disc Golf Course. As you will recall from the County Parks User Survey, this was the highest priority for the course. In response to Mr. Olson's comments regarding some improvements at the disc golf course; there are some items, such as evening out some low areas and adding wood chips, that are what we consider maintenance items and our maintenance crews will be doing that work. We do like to know the source of our wood chips.

Staff is asking the Commission to review the quotes that have been provided and take action to approve concrete pads for either 9 holes, 18 holes, or no holes. If the option is no concrete pads then we will bring back a second recommendation to the Commission for those funds, previously designated for the disc golf course, to be used for another purpose, most likely swing sets in other areas.

Commissioner Henry asked Mr. Olson if the choice was 1) to add another disc golf course somewhere else in the county, without concrete pads, 2) no concrete pads at the present location, OR 3) put concrete pads at the present location, which would be preferable? Mr. Olson said the group would opt for the additional course. He stated that the current location at Goldenrod is getting quite crowded. The east side of the State is lacking in disc golf courses so an additional course within the county would be great. He would like to see the concrete come eventually and is willing to be patient. A second course would be a great trade-off to getting concrete tees this year.

Commissioner Speed asked what material is used in most disc golf courses? Ms. McMillan said that, like regular golf, there is a wide degree of skill, difficulty and amenities that are offered based on the rating of the course. Her understanding from the user survey and disc golf community is that they like to have concrete tees because it provides a certain level of play. If we do not make cement tees this year, some of the original rubber mats would need to be replaced or our maintenance could build boxes and add crushed limestone, which will form a hard surface and although it would not provide the same level of play as concrete pads, it would be a much higher level of play than the rubber mats.

Ms McMillan further stated that we are happy that people have to wait to use the course because it shows that there is a need for the facility. We also know that it is a growing sport. One of the good things about disc golf courses is they are very low impact on the environment. If a course is abandoned we have not invested a lot into the construction, it is easy to remove the baskets, pads could be removed and the land reverts to its former natural state.

Commissioner Speed asked if the survey showed that this was a priority. Ms McMillan said that the focus groups at Goldenrod indicated that their highest priorities were for concrete tees, restroom facilities and running water. We have also consistently heard that people who play disc golf would like more opportunities to play disc golf. If we are talking specifically about Goldenrod, and we want to make an improvement there, the first thing we should do there, according to the Park User Survey is improve the tees. If we want to expand the opportunities elsewhere we should look for an appropriate environment in which to do that and communicate clearly to the disc golf community that this was the choice made - to expand the opportunity rather than increase the level of play. There will be some people who are happy about that decision and others that will not.

Commissioner Keeler asked what the cost of developing a new course. Ms. McMillan said that we spent approximately \$18,000 on Goldenrod about four years ago. There is a special machine that goes into an area and munches everything in its pathway and it is not an inexpensive machine. We

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have a lot of wooded areas in Flushing County Park, Linden County Park, Buell Lake, and not so much Richfield because of the lack of connectivity. The price tag would be somewhere in the range of \$15,000 - \$24,000 depending on how much work needs to be done in a particular area, if the machinery is available, the cost of transporting the machinery, etc.

Commissioner Wright said the current course is definitely getting used. He has also heard from people that they would like a second course in the County. Unless we have money for both, (improvements to Goldenrod and construction of a new course) we should try to get some input from the users, on what they would prefer to be done.

Ms McMillan said that we still have some discretionary issues to address and she didn't think we had the money to do both. She would not recommend that we do both. There are higher priorities system-wide than doing improvements and construction of a new course. There are higher needs for bike paths, lifeguards on beaches, etc. Keeping the needs of the entire park system in mind, not just disc golfers, she would say that it should be one or the other: concrete pads or a second location, not both.

She said it is a Commission decision. At some point in time we should have a second location, at some point in time, one of the courses should have concrete pads, or maybe neither location would. Do you want to look at the geographic diversity of providing that service? Or, do you want to look at improving the level of play at the present location. Are you targeting a more casual use of the facility or a more professional use of the facility? She doesn't think the Commission can make a wrong decision.

Commissioner Ranger said that if we are looking at the possibility of putting in a second location for the price of a little over \$20,000, with the price of gas at \$3.50 and going higher, there will be more people using this disc golf course and probably more people starting to play who have never played, just for the fact that they are not going to be able to go to other places around the state. He would go on the record of being in favor of putting in a second course.

Commissioner Henry asked if it would be out of the question to ask the staff to provide an assessment of the cost of adding a course to the Flushing County Park or Linden County Park and bring it back to the next meeting.

Ms McMillan said we could ask Tom Enright, who is a disc golfer that helped us design and make connections for the Goldenrod Disc Course to offer his assistance. We can get the cost of baskets. This (a new course) is not something we could have ready at the beginning of season, but certainly if the weather cooperates it could be ready by fall.

President Krapohl said approximately \$12,000 was designated for concrete pads in the capital improvement funds. He asked if there would be additional monies available to put toward a new course - something in the area of 10-15 thousand additional dollars.

Ms McMillan said perhaps \$10,000 could be made available, \$15,000 would be a bit tough, but we could also do a 9-hole course. There could be some different options.

Commissioner Keeler asked if any volunteers could be used to lower the construction costs. Ms McMillan stated that we currently utilize volunteers in an appropriate way. She would not have confidence in utilizing them in more skilled work. By using a contractor, we can hold someone responsible. Although volunteers may have great skills and intentions, if something doesn't work out, we are stuck with it and we have to fix it. She would not seek to expand the role of volunteers in the construction of another course or the concrete tee pads at Goldenrod.

Commissioner Lucas asked if perhaps they, the disc golfers, could do some fundraising to help defray the cost of concrete pads. Ms McMillan said that the disc golfers have done some small fundraising initiatives for us, providing a couple hundred dollars here and there.

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Commissioner Pomeroy asked about raising user fees. Ms. McMillan stated that there are no user fees in effect now. Ms. McMillan said that charging and enforcing user fees would require us to staff the course, which would require us to charge quite a hefty fee just to break even. Boat launches for example, which we have a very high volume of users, are charged \$35 for a season pass and we have thousands of boats that come through every year, plus we have daily passes that are \$10. We wouldn't generate that kind of volume at the disc golf course. We do have user fees and costs associated with tournaments and leagues which have caused us a considerable amount of distress in managing and enforcing. We could study what the return on investment would be and the break even point would be, but she is not confident it would yield the results we are looking for.

There is not a lot of maintenance cost associated with the facility because we are already mowing and maintaining the park, picking up trash, etc. Disc golf people are very good at picking up after themselves.

Commissioner Henry made a motion that we conduct a study of the estimated cost involved with adding a course at Flushing County Park and Linden County Park.

President Krapohl asked if a report could be brought back to the next meeting. Ms. McMillan stated that she would aim for the next meeting or if not (the April 24th meeting), then the next meeting following (May 8th).

Motion of support to have a study on developing another disc golf course at either Linden, Flushing or Buell County Park.

Action Taken: Motion by Commission Henry
Supported by Commissioner Ranger

Ayes: All Ayes
Nays: None
Absent: Bogardus

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 9-0

- b. Reminder: Genesee County Agriculture Society Meeting** - Our sub-committee members will meet with the Fair Board representatives on April 15, 2008 at 1 pm in the conference room of the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission offices.
- c. Reminder: Volunteer Dinner** - April 29th is the Volunteer Award Dinner, please RSVP if you plan to attend. It means a lot to the volunteers to see the Commissioners at the dinner honoring their efforts.
- d. Pure Michigan Campaign** - You are all invited to attend the press conference on April 17 at 10:00 a.m. at the FIA theater in the Flint Cultural Center in which the Flint Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the Flint Cultural Center Corp will preview the Pure Michigan commercial which features Tim Allen. The County Parks system is mentioned by name in the commercial and we are the only county parks system in the State of Michigan that is! This will be a great event and if you are unable to attend we can email you the commercial after the event. President Krapohl said that the commercial is outstanding and the enthusiasm level is very high that it will change the perception of the County. When you hear it you will be extremely pleased with it. It will be an exciting day, April 17.
- e. Veteran's Fundraiser** - On Friday evening from 7 pm-10:30 pm at IMA Brookwood, there will be a fundraiser for the Moving Vietnam Memorial Wall that will be coming to Bluebell Beach

this summer. There will be raffle tickets, silent auctions, blind auctions, live auctions and many opportunities to spend your money to support the efforts to bring the wall to Bluebell

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Beach. This is a great bunch of people who are promoting this fundraiser and they would be pleased to have you come out and support their efforts.

(9) OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Commissioner Keeler stated that if you come to ride the path, you come to the parking lot at Bray Rd, you go over the new bridge and trail, and you ride out to get to Branch Rd and the gates at Stepping Stone Falls are closed this time of year and this causes a problem for bikers. They

want to get out on Bray and eventually get onto the Bluebell trail but have to go around to get to Genesee. Most people are handing their bikes over the fence and jumping the fence, which is not a good idea because their cleats can grip the chain link fence. He would like to see a pedestrian cut in the fence, large enough to get a bike or individual through.

Ms. McMillan said that we generally try to open Stepping Stone Falls earlier than our official May 1 opening date. The parking lot is often unstable making this difficult. We don't like to open the park to one group of users if we can't open it to all users. If there are going to be people in the park we would rather have the gates open so that the rangers could get into the park to patrol. We could post signs stating that the gate is closed at Stepping Stone so riders will be aware that they must turn around. Ms McMillan said that we do have gravel estimates available to firm up the parking lot.

Commission Keeler said his intention is not to get the gate closed off, his intention is to get it open because eventually there will be a bike trail that runs either along the road or through the park and there has to be an access provided because the trail has to link.

Ms McMillan said that until that point in time when the trail is completed, we should notify people that the gate is closed and there is not immediate access out at certain times of the year.

President Krapohl asked if Barry (June) could stick around in case any of the commissioners would like to talk to him informally after the meeting.

(10) OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

No members of the public addressed the commission.

(11) ADJOURNMENT

With no objections made, President Krapohl adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

