

**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, January 25, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in the Harris Auditorium of the County Administration Building, 1101 Beach St., Flint, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Joe Krapohl, President
James Washington, Vice President
William Lucas, Secretary
Rose Bogardus
Ted Henry
Shirley Prater
Raynetta Speed

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Billy Bradshaw, Genesee County Road Commission
Bob Ranger, Jr., Designee
Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission

MEMBERS ABSENT:

APPOINTED MEMBERS

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Jeff Wright, Genesee County Drain Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT

Amy M. McMillan, Director
Ronald Walker, Facilities Director
Leisa Gagne, Financial Affairs Officer
Roxy Moreno, Planning and Development Director
Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist
Nancy Edwards, Recreation Program Specialist
Kimberly L. Cunningham, Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brian Barkey, Commission Legal Counsel
Elizabeth Shaw, *The Flint Journal*
Kaye Kreutzfeldt, Citizen
Rich Richardson, Citizen
Larry Stricker, Citizen

CALL TO ORDER

President Krapohl called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

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

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Lucas, supported by Commissioner Washington, to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2007 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.

Larry Stricker of 3547 North Gale, Davison, stated the following:

There is a concern that affects hunters and there is a concern that affects fishermen in Michigan that is the very real fear that fishing grounds, hunting grounds are disappearing and disappearing fast. Lake Louise and Pub Lake are located just beyond Ortonville. You can see Pub Lake from the roadway. He had taken his youngest daughter and a friend to Pub Lake. They moved into the _____ patch and could see cars coming behind them about 200 feet. The kids had their cane poles. They caught 75 fish per kid for catch and release. They do not keep them. They totaled about 200 fish that day. This is a beautiful place to take kids. Unfortunately, the lake association didn't like the idea of fishermen there. Their first strategy was to use jet skiers to harass the boaters. Mr. Stricker even took down licenses, but that didn't work. The next thing is the lake association took the livery owner to court and that didn't work. Finally, they bought the livery out, shut down the livery, and the lake is available only to association members. Drive-by almost any time and you will seldom see a boat on the lake. To Mr. Sticker, that is a story of greed.

Right on the heels of that, our own Parks Board shut down a beautiful treasure of ponds for kids. He knows that wasn't the intention, but that's they way it was interpreted. His attitude is this is a treasure for children and it shouldn't be locked up. Thank you.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. McMillan stated that there are a number of communications and a few that she would like to bring directly to the Parks Commission's attention. There are the usually thank you letters from groups that the Parks has helped support their fundraising efforts by donating family fun passes of four tickets to Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad. Also included is a letter from Dan Gosnell's sister that she received earlier this week and that she wanted to share with the Parks Commission. Also included is a copy of the annual trust statement from the Martha K. Merkley Trust. The Martha K. Merkley Trust provides the income from the trust that is designated to the Parks Commission helps to underwrite the cost of operating For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum. This annual income generally is about 30% of the necessary costs of the Arboretum and the Nature Preserve. If you ever have any questions regarding the trust, she will do her best to answer them for the Parks Commission, and if she is not able to do that, she will ask Dawn Bentley from Citizens Bank, who manages the Merkley Trust, to come and answer any questions that you may have at any point in the future.

If anyone has any questions regarding any of the correspondence, she would be happy to answer them.

REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL

Attorney Barkey stated that at the last meeting he made a presentation about an estimate from Insight with respect to some soil borings at the Cummings Center that was tabled until today. Attorney Barkey has reviewed it more closely and has given a copy to Mr. Wright for review. As you will recall, there was a 400-gallon, aboveground, diesel fuel oil tank on the grounds of the Cummings Center used by the Fair Board in connection with their Fair. The Parks did some very cursory testing just a few inches into the ground and discovered some evidence of diesel fuel. With that information, the Parks is obliged to take some further steps. These are the further steps he believes they are obliged to take. The Parks has gotten an estimate from Insight Environmental Services to do some soil borings, three of them in the area right around the tank approximately 12' in depth to determine if there's any evidence of diesel fuel at all. Hopefully, that will work out and that they will run into no evidence of any impacts in that soil at all. If that happens, Insight would draw the borings, send us a report to that affect, and send us a bill. By this estimate, the bill would be approximately \$5,000. Once you do borings though, you don't know what you are going to find, and if they run into groundwater, it will require a different form of testing. Insight will have to test the groundwater. If Insight runs into any evidence of any impacts from the diesel fuel tank that has been above-ground, it will require that the approximately 40 cubic yards of soil be removed and properly disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner and replaced with uncontaminated soil. If that happens, the bill will be an additional \$6,050 or so from Insight and that's for all of the work, including the report, an additional \$3,130 for disposal, excavation, removal, and disposal of the soil. Best-case scenario is that the Parks will be presented with a clean bill of health and a report for about \$5,000. Worst-case scenario by this estimate will be an additional \$9,100. The best would be \$5,000 and the worst would be a total from all parties of about \$14,000. Attorney Barkey stated he wanted to apprise the Parks Commission of that and ask them to approve this expenditure.

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Lucas, supported by Commissioner Prater, to contract with Insight Environmental for remediation of a fuel oil spill at the Cummings Center.

Commissioner Bradshaw asked in a worst-case scenario what approximately the bill would be. Attorney Barkey stated \$14,130.

Commissioner Ranger stated if they only put in the diesel fuel a couple of inches what does that partake? Do they just leave it or do they just remove a few inches? He further stated 40 cubic feet of

dirt is a lot of dirt. He figured if that is for if they have to go down the whole 12'. Attorney Barkey stated if Insight finds some evidence of some impacts in the very spot that they drill they presume that there may be other spots that it might be present. Attorney Barkey further stated that the DEQ standard is this kind of excavation. It will be required to have 40 yards of dirt removed. Commissioner Ranger asked even if there are only a few inches. Attorney Barkey stated even if there is only a few inches. That's what he understands the standard is. Commissioner Ranger asked if there were any other estimates from any other contractors or is this the only one. Attorney Barkey stated this is the only one that he is aware of that the Parks has gotten.

Commissioner Lucas asked if this is mandated once they do the borings. Attorney Barkey stated yes. The DEQ mandates this kind of excavation if any evidence of impacts is found.

Commissioner Henry stated that they have to be licensed anyway so you are restricted to the bids you can get on it. Is that correct? Attorney Barkey stated that is true.

President Krapohl stated that the Parks contractual agreement with the Agricultural Fair Board states that this is some costs that the Parks could have the option of passing on to them because they were responsible for it. Attorney Barkey stated that the Parks contract with the Fair Board makes them responsible for this expense and the Fair Board has been apprised as the Parks was doing the testing, as the Parks got the results, and as they have gotten this estimate, the Fair Board has been kept apprised of this process.

Commissioner Ranger stated that it is great that the Parks can pass this on, but wouldn't it be best if the Parks tried—he's guessing right now that there's got to be one other environmental company out there or maybe two or three. Why didn't we contract or seek bids from them to try to get the lowest bid. Attorney Barkey stated he can't answer why the Parks didn't in this case, but he can tell the Commission that the Parks has contracted with this environmental firm before. This environmental firm contracts with Young Environmental, who does most of the remediation in this area. They both have to be licensed through the DEQ and they both have to be approved contractors with the DEQ. Attorney Barkey stated he doesn't know what kind of pool that leaves the Parks. He doesn't know how many there are available to do it. He knows the Parks does have some experience with this environmental group and it has been a good experience. Commissioner Ranger stated that he's not saying that they are not—he was just wondering why we didn't. He further stated maybe there isn't another one out there. In construction, he doesn't deal with them that much. He further stated that personally he doesn't like no-bid contracts or only one if the Parks can seek more.

Commissioner Bogardus stated that since the Fair Board may end up being responsible for this, did Attorney Barkey send them a letter saying the Parks is doing the testing? Attorney Barkey stated he did—when the Parks staff saw the tank there, the Fair Board was told that the Parks was going to test the tank and test the ground surrounding the tank. That was done and when the results came back from Young about the results, he sent the Fair Board that and told them he was going to be asking for an estimate from Insight, and when he got the estimate from Insight, he sent the estimate off to the Fair Board. Commissioner Bogardus stated that she doesn't want to blindside the Fair Board with a \$14,000 bill, which she thinks would be a significant bill. She further stated she doesn't know what the Fair Board's budget is, but she thinks that a significant amount of money and wants to be sure that they know and if they have any questions about who the Parks is contacting so they have a chance to investigate.

Commissioner Lucas asked why this wasn't put out for a bid. Attorney Barkey stated the Parks isn't obliged to.

Ms. McMillan stated that the Parks attorney and Corporation Counsel generally handle environmental matters for the Parks because there is a huge amount of exposure to both the Parks Commission

and the County associated with environmental issues. Over the course of the period of time that she has been here, particularly if you remember when the Parks had concerns about Mott Farm and the manner in which it was being managed contributing to e. coli problems in the lake and also some other environmental issues on that site, which site is owned by the Parks Commission and was leased by the school board. She stated that she knows that Corporation Counsel's office has often solicited quotes from other companies and she knows that they have often come back at extremely high costs as compared to Insight. In particular, she thinks the Parks' most lengthy experience (and Ron Walker would be the best historian) is a bill that occurred at the railroad yard approximately 10-12 years ago and she knows that as the County was managing that process they went through several contractors before they go to Insight at which point they felt that they received the best service and the best price. Typically, when the Parks has needed a go-to person or go-to company, that's where they have gone.

Commissioner Ranger stated that this is good and that they probably are the cheapest one, but if it was something that happened 12 years ago there could be more companies out there now. Commissioner Ranger further stated that he thinks the Parks should investigate since they have had a couple of these in the last couple of years. If there are any more, especially if they are local and again, there might not be any, just to seek bids for future problems. He further stated that the Parks has been pretty good on getting bids on everything. This was is just kind of—especially if we are just going to pass it off—like Commissioner Bogardus said this could be devastating to them and if there was possibly a way for the Parks to cut down on the price to get the same kind of job done, we should have tried to do that.

Ms. McMillan stated that the County has worked with Insight over the course of that entire 12-year period, not just once 12 years ago. What the Parks could do that might be helpful and we'll hopefully will never have to have a conversation again about environmental contamination, but just on the wild chance that it could occur is perhaps rather than doing an RFP process to startup they could do an RFQ process, which would request qualifications from contractors and then that would give the Parks sort of a file to determine within a scope of a certain radius, perhaps how many contractors are available that provide that service, what their general hourly billing costs are, and have that on file should in the unlikely event that that ever occurs again. Parks staff would be happy to work with the Purchasing Department to do that.

Commissioner Ranger stated that in this day and age the Parks should probably have that just in our own files for safety reasons. Ms. McMillan stated staff would move forward with that.

Commissioner Henry stated that the DEQ should have an updated list the contractors.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Yeas: Krapohl, Lucas, Prater, Speed, Washington,
Nays: Ranger, Bradshaw, Henry, Bogardus
Absent: Wright

MOTION CARRIED 5-4.

DIRECTOR'S STAFF REPORT

Parks Status Report

Ms. McMillan asked Ron Walker for his report.

Mr. Ron Walker stated:

Winter Activities – He told the Parks Commission at the last meeting that it looked like winter was coming and the Parks could open Toboggan Hill and the snowmobile areas soon and now we have. Toboggan Hill is open along with cross-country skiing at the parks.

Huckleberry Railroad – The railroad shop supervisor, Marty Knox, will be retiring soon. Administration is in the process right now of interviewing a person to replace the railroad shop supervisor. It is out to Local 916 right now.

Christmas Program – Staff met to review the lighting program for 2007.

MCOLES – Staff also had a meeting in Lansing on the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards that will affect the parks. The changes will affect part-time law enforcement officers. We will be getting some reports back on that soon.

Canadian National Trail – The Canadian National Trail that goes from I-75 to Linden Road has been approved for acquisition. They will be having a meeting this afternoon at 1:00 pm to discuss moving forward with that project for a new trail.

Commissioner Ranger stated that the thought the trail started at Ballenger Highway. Ms. McMillan stated that it starts earlier than that. Mr. Walker stated that it does, but they have to get across I-75. Right at the moment, there is no way to get across I-75 because there is a railroad bridge that is there right now, which MDOT wants to take out. There's kind of a small strip right there. In the future, they are looking at putting the trail on Corunna Road.

Commissioner Ranger asked which county parks allow cross-country skiing. Mr. Walker stated that it is allowed in For-Mar, and Flushing County Park. There is no snowmobiling where there is cross-country skiing because the two don't mix together too well. Ms. McMillan stated that you can snowmobile in the Cummings Center, but not cross-country ski.

Commissioner Speed asked how many applicants there were for the railroad shop supervisor position. Mr. Walker stated just one. There are not many that are working for the County right now. It does go the County employees first before it would go to the general public. Mr. Walker stated that he thinks the Parks has a pretty good person applying for that position.

Commissioner Henry asked where Toboggan Hill is. Ms. McMillan stated that it is at the end of Washburn Road just north of Carpenter Road, on the westside of the Hogbacks area. Toboggan Hill is usually open only Thursday through Sunday. This year though the Parks have begun to staff Toboggan Hill each day as long it is open and available for use. Toboggan Hill is considered to be an expert sledding hill. It is a very sheer drop, and depending on the amount of speed that you have and what you are traveling on, it will take you a very long way into the woods. There are often injuries at Toboggan Hill and that is why the Parks staffs Toboggan Hill. The other sledding hills are generally not staffed because sledding is not considered to be too dangerous a sport. The intermediate hill at Linden County Park on the Clover Beach side of the Park is a very popular spot for sledding. Parks hours are always 8:00 am until dusk. Dusk at this time of the year is 6:30 pm, however, most people get out of school, eat their dinner, and then go out sledding and it is often later

than 6:30 pm. When there is a lot of sledding use at Linden County Park, staff leaves the parking lot on the Clover Beach side open later and sometimes all evening because people who go there to sled will otherwise park generally on Linden Road on the Clover Beach side of the park. It is posted no parking and is very dangerous to do that. There is a very good chance that you could be hit by a car parking along Linden Road so the Parks maintains a considerable amount of flexibility with park hours and park functions to meet park user needs.

Ms. Moreno stated the following:

Dates to Remember – The brown bag lunch cruises will be on Thursdays from June 21 – August 30 from noon to 12:45 pm. Lunch cruises will be on Wednesdays from June 20 – August 29. Dinner cruises will be on Fridays and Saturdays this year. According to the survey conducted, our customers would really like to have it on Fridays and Saturdays. Fall color cruises will be on October 3 – 31. Crossroads Village events coming up: Spring school days will be May 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, and 25; Memorial Day weekend we will open for the summer season on May 26; Senior Power Day is May 23 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm; the volunteer appreciation dinner will be Tuesday, April 17 in the Mill Street Dining Room starting at 6:00 pm; and Day Out With Thomas will be here August 17-19 and 24-26.

President Krapohl encouraged all Parks Commissioners to attend the volunteer appreciation dinner to express their gratitude to the volunteers for the year that we had last year. This is the perfect time for the Parks Commission to do that.

Commissioner Bogardus asked if someone could check the noise from the motor that is heard on the lower part of the Belle. Ms. Moreno stated that Mr. Walker would be looking into that.

Ms. McMillan stated that this is the year for the Genesee Belle's complete inspection, which means it will be coming out of the water onto massive cranes. It is quite a site to see. The DNR performs a hull inspection, which they must do aboveground. It would be so much nicer and so much less expensive if they could simply go in the water and take a look, but they don't do that. It is relatively expensive, but then it will certify the Belle to be back on the water. The schedule this year with the boat is going to start a little bit later in the season than it often does because of this inspection. The reason the inspection delays that is because the frost laws dictate when the cranes that are required to lift the boat from the water can be transported to the site. The boat probably won't be available for school days. Commissioner Ranger asked how long does the inspection take. Ms. McMillan stated about a couple of hours. They have a very succinct checklist that they use. It takes very little time for the amount of time and resources it takes to get the boat out of the water. The crane rental is what drives the cost of the inspection up. Staff also has their own inspection checklist for the boat. Commissioner Lucas asked if the inspection is because of the first boat. Ms. McMillan stated no that the DNR has requirements for all water-going vessels regarding inspections and those are dictated by the amount of water they displace, the boat's weight, the amount of passengers they have on them, etc.

Ms. McMillan then asked Nancy Edwards for her report.

Ms. Edwards stated as follows:

For-Mar Programming Flyer for February and March 2007 – These are currently being counted and will be distributed to every single kid in the GISD schools and all over the place.

For-Mar On the Road Program – Staff has submitted their request for funding for this program and was awarded \$8,000. This program has a couple different components. The first is the in-school part where we offer the opportunity for our staff to go into the schools and do a free program for

elementary school teachers. The second component is the spring break programs that they do during spring break. The third component is what we do in the parks during the entire summer.

Programs - There will be in excess of 300 programs this summer. One of the things that they are increasing this year is the programming for folks with special needs. For-Mar staff and Ms. Edwards went to a workshop last week for people with special needs

Ms. McMillan stated that last year For-Mar staff started working with people with physical disabilities particularly people who are in wheelchairs and who have developmentally disabilities accompanying their physical disability. This year the layer that staff is adding to the programming plan is children with autism. There is a very high rate of children who have been diagnosed with autism in Genesee County. Those parents have told staff that they have very specific needs for their children, both in terms of their ability to participate in For-Mar's everyday programs and in terms of special programs for children with autism. Staff is working to be able to balance those programs out and also to improve our everyday ability to work with people who come to park facilities because if you have a child with autism you shouldn't be limited to participating just when there is a program. The more aware our staff is about dealing with people's differences the better we are able to serve people.

Special Events – It is that time of the year. She's getting all kinds of requests for special events.

Ms. McMillan then asked Hilda McShane for her report.

Ms. McShane stated as follows:

The parks are doing a lot of promotional activities in regards to all of the Parks' programs. Genesee County Parks programs are promoted a minimum of three times (press releases, website, distribution to the schools), but what staff also does is have huge databases. For example, Ms. Edwards' For-Mar calendar was sent to school secretaries and to For-Mar users. Staff posts a lot of Parks' information on the State's website and we are now seeing the fruits of our labor. In regards to Crossroads Village, we have already implemented a portion of the marketing plan. In regards to For-Mar, the calendar was inserted in the 4-Cs (day care network) newsletter, which reaches Genesee, Sanilac, Lapeer, and the Port Huron area. We are using our partnerships to promote Genesee County Parks. Another way in which we promote Genesee County Parks is through the exhibits that staff does. For example, staff is doing exhibits at the Convention and Visitor's Bureau and at camper shows. All of this is a means by which we promote Genesee County Parks.

Commissioner Bogardus asked about the bus tours. She stated that from information that she received from Ms. McMillan the Convention and Visitors Bureau is supposed to do the bus tour promotion. She talked to Mr. Preston about that and he said that that was an agreement that was made when they got the extra money and it didn't work out so they dropped that agreement. She asked about that in the past and wanted to know if they have been able to find the information as to how many they have now as compared to ten years ago. Ms. McMillan stated that they have group tour information, but they don't keep specific track of bus tour information. Staff can provide numbers of groups and numbers of groups who come. In terms of the CVB's role in motor coach promotions, the Parks Commission's philosophy over the course of the last several years has been that their goal is to get as many people through the gates of the Village as possible without regard to whether they come on a bus or in a car or however else people get there. Staff has focused their efforts on increasing attendance, which from 2005 we were up about 8%. In terms of whether staff should be doing group tours or not or bus tour information, that is something that the Commission really needs to address from a policy perspective rather than an operational perspective. Commissioner Bogardus suggested that the Parks Commission address that as a policy. President Krapohl stated that the Convention and Visitors Bureau has two people that are strictly for group tour managers. They are going to American Bus Association and Hartland Travel Showcase. He further stated that

he has seen a lot of reference as where they are working on bus tours. The CVB does have people that are working on bus tours and they have brought some to the Village in the past. Commissioner Bogardus stated that her concern is that this is a very large group of people and she doesn't see why Parks staff would ignore that area. The agreement for the CVB to concentrate on the Parks is not being done anymore and she thinks that the Parks needs to explore every avenue to get people into Crossroads Village.

Commissioner Ranger asked about the park brochures that are at his office. Ms. McMillan stated that they have a huge distribution network. He further stated that he stopped a couple days ago on 75 northbound before the Clio exit to check on a map for a function this year in Frankenmuth and there wasn't anything on the parks in there every spot there was on Frankenmuth. He further stated that they are also using the parks for functions, but this event is being held in Frankenmuth. Ms. McMillan stated that the Parks contracts with a company that distributes the Parks' brochures all over the State and a couple of other areas outside the State of Michigan as well. There are areas in which we are permitted to do that at no cost, other than distribution and there are other areas that require us to pay to do that which were available to us previously at no costs as part of our association with the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Staff has not elected to pay to put the brochures in some places based on the data that staff gets from people. Also, if you go out right now, you will not see 2007 Crossroads Village information out in any of the places yet. That will not be distributed until staff can print Day Out With Thomas information and the ticket sale information. Staff is hopeful that this will be soon. Mr. Barkey is working with TicketWeb to address the minor contractual questions and issues, and as soon as that is done, the brochures will go to print and then can be distributed. Typically, market data shows that people are making their decisions about using their time one to three months in advance. Staff would like to have the 2007 brochures out January 1st of each year, but for a practical matter as long as it is out by February or early-March that corresponds with a time in which people are making their decisions for the upcoming programming season. Commissioner Ranger asked if the exit rest areas are a pay area to put the promotional materials out there. Ms. McMillan stated that some are and some are not. Commissioner Ranger stated that if it is possible to get a single location, i.e. the two closest ones to the Village, staff should look into it. Ms. McMillan stated the purchasing and distribution network is based on the market data that staff gets from the customers. Some of it does seem counter-intuitive. The Parks does have a very heavy presence in the Dundee rest area so if people are coming outside of the State and into the State of Michigan then they receive that information. The Dodge Road site has been a subject of great debate and concern over the course of the last few years from the perspective of the Parks Commission.

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

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Washington, supported by Commissioner Bradshaw to ratify payment of bills for the time period of December 21, 2006 through January 16, 2007.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Yeas: Lucas, Prater, Washington, Ranger, Bradshaw, Henry, Bogardus, Krapohl

Nays: None

Absent: Wright, Speed

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8-0.

Ratification of Commissioner Investments – Ms. McMillan recommended approval.

Action Taken – Motion by Commissioner Washington, supported by Commissioner Prater, to ratify wired payments of investments for the time period of December 28, 2006 through January 12, 2007.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

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

Commissioner Lucas stated that he thinks the Fair Board needs to be brought up-to-date on what is happening at the Cummings Center. He doesn't know what their bank account looks like, but he knows it hasn't been that great. Ms. McMillan stated that essentially it is not that bad and that she has seen it. Ms. McMillan stated that Attorney Barkey has very consistently communicated with the Fair Board, but she didn't know if their director had communicated with their Board. Commissioner Lucas further stated that communicating with the Fair Board needs to happen so that the Parks can have a good report with them and we don't want to blindside them.

Commissioner Bogardus stated that she would like to see the hunting committee instituted and wondered if President Krapohl could put someone in there as his substitute because of his family situation. President Krapohl stated that what he is waiting for right now is some information from staff. Ms. McMillan stated that she indicated to the committee that staff will be working with Oakland County Parks to do a headcount/census of deer in several areas of the county park system, For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum, the Cummings Center, and the Hogbacks and then sort of spilling over from the Cummings Center in the general Timberwolf/Richfield County Park area. The census will be done from the air because that seems to be the most accurate means of doing a headcount. In order to do that, there has to be consistent snow cover so that staff can count deer and not rocks. Mr. Walker is in consistent communication with the Oakland County folks. Staff's preference is just to hire Oakland County Parks to do it for us. Staff doesn't want to have anybody influenced by someone's perception. Oakland County may or may not be able to do that. They have agreed at a minimum to train staff people. This is going to require a four-person helicopter (the pilot, the Oakland County staff person, and two of our staff people). Mr. Walker will be one of those staff people, and depending on which park ranger we can talk into the helicopter, a park ranger will be the other because neither of those people in those divisions are directly connected to the daily programming operations, particularly at For-Mar, which will be the area of greatest concern, and by virtue of their positions, they are the most objective place to do that. Ultimately, Ms. McMillan's office will be bringing some recommendations to the Commission so it is not appropriate, in her opinion, for her to participate in the headcount. Sometime over the course of the next several weeks if the weather cooperates and now that staff has located a four-person helicopter, staff will be conducting that census and will find out what the results are. Staff will at least be able to say for sure approximately how many deer there are within a square mile area and it is counted within the square mile area.

The other thing is that staff has contacted the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, which is a standalone non-profit organization that is affiliated with Michigan State University and does a lot of work for the University and for the State. They have agreed to do a preliminary natural features inventory for the parks. This will only be a first step because there are two sides of the issue that the committee has identified: (1) there is a recreational issue of hunting, which the Safari Club and others have asked the Commission to address, and (2) there is the environmental impact of the wildlife on the facilities and that is also one of those things everybody has a strong opinion about, but none of us have hard data about. The Natural Features Inventory folks will do a quick and dirty study for the parks this year. Staff is hopeful that that will go into a more detailed process because they schedule their work in advance. When staff contacted them back in November 2006, they already

had all of their major contracts in place. Then the Commission and the committee can start looking at the issue from both sides. Staff is also in the process of gathering data on motor vehicle accidents involving deer in the general area of the Parks Commission to determine if there has been a rise in that sort of activity that would correspond with the population and if it's greater in those areas than it is in other areas. That is the information that the committee is waiting for from staff, the timeline along which it will proceed, and the direction that the committee as a whole has determined they wanted to gather data and make their decision based on data. They have also done some preliminary review of public land that's available for hunting in the Genesee/Lapeer area. Staff included Lapeer because the biggest chunk of the Hogbacks and the area most people seem interested in hunting tends to be on the Lapeer County side.

The State has a program by which they permit private landowners to essentially open their property to hunting. There are different means by which this occurs—some of them you have to register directly with the person each day, some of them you just drop something in their mailbox. There is only one of those areas in Genesee County that is registered under the State's structured program that permits public hunting on private property. This doesn't include, for example, if a citizen owns 100 acres and they just told their buddies that they could hunt there. Staff is trying to take a really global perspective about what's best from a recreational perspective because whether you're a hunter or not hunting is a legitimate recreational activity and the Parks Commission has supported that through waterfowl hunting on both Mott Lake and the Holloway Reservoir and staff wants to take those people who do hunt concerns very seriously about providing that opportunity. It is an issue of wildlife management. It's an issue of environmental management in terms of the plant life and then it's the whole human/wildlife interaction component. This is the process the committee has identified and is working its way through. As the weather permits and those sorts of things, staff will be moving ahead in that direction.

Commissioner Ranger stated that there has been a change in Michigan hunting to where you now have to have 40 acres, where you used to be able to do it with five acres. So everyone in Genesee County has kind of been cut down on that. Commissioner Ranger asked if staff could get a count on licensed deer hunters from Genesee County.

Commissioner Bogardus asked if staff could get an estimate on how much it would take to just open a small portion of the Timberwolf road so that it is reasonably passable. Ms. McMillan stated that staff could identify three different options and get estimates based on each of those options associated with that so staff could say this is what it costs if we are going to just grade it and when the road's passable you can go or when it's too muddy you can't. Other options are putting down a base of a certain amount that would do that and then a more deluxe option. Commissioner Bogardus stated not as far back as the drop off. Ms. McMillan stated that staff could get some estimates and would bring them back to the Commission in about 30 days. Commissioner Henry stated he thinks they need to keep the open drainage ditch out of there because that looks like it could be a danger spot. Ms. McMillan stated that staff will get out an aerial map and measure that out and will have something at the next Commission meeting in terms of the area that staff is looking at and if everyone is on the same page with that then staff can progress from there to seeking estimates.

President Krapohl stated that he is on the Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors and he gets a packet at every meeting. There have been some comments about Crossroads he would like to share. One lady was talking about her experience and said "but boy you sure do have a fast merry-go-round. Wow." Another gentleman turned 80 years old and the lady in the print shop made his day. When he got ready to leave, she came out and gave him a hug and wished him happy birthday. The CVB has what they call an Overnight FunPak, which is a one-stop shopping for attractions in the County and motels. A question was asked about how they found out about the Overnight FunPak and stated it was on the Crossroads Village Holiday website so our links to the CVB are valuable to people coming into the area.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

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

Rich Richardson of 2226 Ridgemoor Court, Burton, Michigan stated the following:

If Ms. McMillan does do the deer census, just don't look at the county park property adjoining property. Last Saturday about 5:00 in the afternoon, just south of McDowell Road in about an 80-acre cornfield there were about 60 deer standing just 600 yards from Genesee County Parks property. He further stated that he is actually involved in two boards that he sits on.

The issue that he would really like to address is the way that you folks handled the diesel spill problem at Crossroads (sic). He would encourage you people to get involved with issues that come before this Board; you talked about it last week. You asked the same questions again this week, and you passed it. He personally wonders how many people actually went out there and looked at the site so you can sit here and intelligently make decisions. You made a decision, but he doesn't know if it is the right one or the wrong one, but inactivity as a board member is not good. He doesn't expect it from the people that he associates with and he doesn't think he expects it from you folks. He will address this when he has more people here, but that's just the thing that he doesn't like. He wants you as a commissioner to get a little more involved with the issues and he doesn't want them sitting here flipping their hand, voting on issues that they don't know nothing about and then criticizing Amy for the things that she's done. The issue that gets him most is the bid process. He's sure that there are requirements in this County that requires that you have more than one bid. You guys passed it with one bid. He doesn't like that. You sit here and ask the same questions last week and nobody did any research as a member that he's sees. You need to get your feet on the ground and do some footwork if you're going to be part of this Board. Thank you.

Larry Stricker of 3547 North Gale stated the following:

Regarding his proposal, he is suggesting that only a third of the area be opened up to fishermen. Iron posts should be placed along the floodplain. We keep vehicles out of the floodplain. If they choose to walk through, the mushers through on dogsleds, the horses, that they can do, but vehicles absolutely not. That means a certain portion of the roadway would be maintained. It is already a good road. If fishermen choose to go further, obviously they could walk through. They could take their boats, but they couldn't take their vehicles. Easy patrol and a certain portion would be kept up.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Recorded and transcribed by:
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