

## Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Thursday, March 17, 2021

**Tentative Minutes – meeting recorded**

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2073>

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chairman Casey Noonan at 3:02 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was led by Chairman Noonan.

### Roll Call:

Dave Barrons, *Vice Chairman, via Zoom, Elmwood Township*  
Steve Christensen  
Don Frerichs  
Melinda Lautner  
Casey Noonan, *Chairman, via Zoom, Empire Township*  
John Popa  
Rick Robbins  
Michael Smith  
F. Jon Walter, *absent*  
Todd Yeomans

Guests present.

### Public Comment:

The Clerk announced the number to call in for public comment, 231-256-8109; none received.

### Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Popa asked that due to personal time constraints, he is requesting to move up the Veronica Valley Park Committee Report; set as Action Item #3a.

**Motion by Popa to approve the agenda, as amended. Seconded by Barrons.**

Discussion – none.

**Ayes – 9 (Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner)**

**No – 0          Absent – 1 (Walter)**

**Motion Carried.**

### Action Items –

Approval of Minutes – February 17, 2021, Regular Session Minutes:

**Motion by Christensen to accept the February 17, 2021, Regular Session Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Lautner.**

Discussion – none.

**Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter, Yeomans, Barrons)**

**No – 0          Absent – 1 (Walter)**

**Motion Carried.**

Financial Reports:

Maintenance Worker W. Scott Bradley reviewed Parks budget figures. He noted the cost of repair to the groomer.

**Motion by Christensen to accept the Financial Reports, as presented. Seconded by Yeomans.**

Discussion – none.

**Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter, Yeomans, Barrons)**

**No – 0**

**Absent – 1 (Walter)**

**Motion Passes.**

Alzheimer’s Event Request:

Christensen said he had talked with Dana Roman (Cowell); the Old Settlers Park has been added as a (potential) stop for a car cruise around Leelanau. They would be there on June 19 at 7:00 a.m., expect 50 vintage cars to arrive around 12:00 Noon, there would be snacks, they would display some banners and balloons, and then they would leave. The group does a fundraiser based in Traverse City; this is a place to park the cars, rest, and then move on. Barrons asked and Christensen responded they will have balloons and then remove them. Barrons remarked, as long as they remove them. Christensen said (Cowell’s) comment is they will clean up and be gone by 3:00 p.m. Discussion ensued. Chairman Noonan asked, do they understand it is first-come, first served? Barrons concurred, as long as they understand (use of the parks) is first-come, first-served. Yeomans asked about the 50 cars, are they parking in the roadway, and not the grass? Christensen responded that (Cowell) did not say, but he can direct them to keep the parking within the loop. Discussion ensued. Yeomans remarked as long as they are not parking on grass or flowers. Lautner commented it is pretty neat the group wants to stop at our park. Hopefully they will advertise so people can do a “drive-through”. Christensen added it is a bunch of cars out from the Hagerty Group. Minor discussion ensued.

Committee Reports and Recommendations –

Veronica Valley Park Committee:

• Park Bench Donation Recommendation. Barrons said the Kids Fishing Committee of the Lake Leelanau Lake Association wants to pay for and place a bench in memoriam of Pete Taylor. Barrons stated the recommendation passed by the Committee: “To recommend to the Parks and Recreation Commission to accept the donation of a bench at Veronica Valley Park.” Barrons said for backstory, the Lake Leelanau Lake Association wants to donate a bench (at Veronica Valley) in commemoration of Pete Taylor’s work in the first 15 years of this event. Barrons said he thinks we have already voted on this issue as a Commission; however, the County Board has a different donation process, which is on a case-by-case basis. When this comes to be, and we get the bench, and places a plaque on it, we will take this motion for acceptance to the full Commission. It doesn’t require any action right now by this group.

• GTB 2% Allocation Request Update, Invasive Species Eradication, YouthWork. Barrons said the Committee passed a motion to allow the YouthWork organization, under the direction of Bill Watson, prepare a Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians 2% allocation application (administered through the Parks Commission) for invasive species removal work at Veronica Valley Park. Barrons said he doesn’t think action is needed right now. Watson will

have the details for the April 21 meeting; however, Watson is looking at a program that includes managed goats to remove invasive species, with an estimated cost in a range of \$12,000.00 to \$15,000.00. Again, it doesn't require action right now.

• Park Driveway Entrance/Parking Lot Update. Barrons continued; the Committee had recommended to move forward to enter into an agreement with the County Road Commission to replace the culvert at the entrance to Veronica Valley Park, at a cost not to exceed (to be determined). There were still some details to work out with that. The Committee is working on a priority plan for both fishing safety and access around the old putting green; they are still moving forward with that and there is nothing to report at this time. They are also working on a plan to upgrade the whole parking lot. In breaking down the project into steps, replacing the culvert is a good first step to potentially do this year. They passed a recommendation to this group to approve moving forward with an effort to enter into an agreement with the County Road Commission to replace the main entrance culvert.

Popa said he has prepared an EDS (Executive Document Summary), and obtained an estimated cost at around \$50.00/foot, or \$5,000.00. He said depending on the time involved, it could be less expensive. Popa noted he did draw something up. He would like this Commission to vote on it, and he is waiting on a letter from the Road Commission. Popa reviewed the EDS language with Commission members, which addressed the concerns with the existing culvert, which is in disrepair. Popa then read his suggested recommendation – “motion to...enter into an agreement with the County Road Commission to replace that County Road 641 driveway entrance to Veronica Valley for a cost not to exceed five thousand” dollars. If we make the motion here, we should have a comma, pending a letter from the Road Commission. More comments followed. Popa remarked there is \$45,000.00 in (the Parks) capital outlay. Some members have mentioned that (may be used) for the Myles Kimmerly Park (debris removal project). He didn't think (the culvert replacement) would cost \$5,000.00. He would like a motion to carry this on to the next step; a letter from the Road Commission would satisfy the County Commissioners. Popa distributed a document (not provided to Clerk). Barrons asked Popa, you are asking us to make a recommendation now, pending a final dollar figure from the Road Commission, so we can get it to County Commissioners in April and the Road Commission could get it scheduled (pending approval)? Popa said if the Road Commission could get us a letter next week, we could attach it to the EDS.

Chairman Noonan said he likes this, and the initiative behind it to move the project forward and follow all the right steps. Lautner remarked, you say it is better to replace the culvert ahead of the improvements to the parking lot. We do not know when we will approve redoing that parking lot, whether it is this year, next year, or later. How long do we think that culvert will last? Popa responded 80 years. Lautner said, so the new one will; what about the one that is there now? Discussion ensued. Popa said if this is approved in April, (the Road Commission) won't be paving until the middle of May. The Road Commission Superintendent can schedule this project in between other tasks. He continued to outline the process for the culvert replacement.

Clerk Evans said something came up during last night’s Regular Session of the County Board of Commissioners. As a result of that discussion, she had forwarded to all Parks members a copy of the emails between Administration and Counsel regarding a matter at Veronica Valley, and whether that park allowed hunting ([https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/hunting\\_in\\_vvp\\_opn\\_03172021.pdf](https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/hunting_in_vvp_opn_03172021.pdf)). She directed members to the “management plan”, which was part of that document. (What is relative to this discussion), culvert replacement was listed as needed, and that document was drafted 11 years ago. Having the culvert replaced has been on the Parks radar for some time.

Chairman Noonan said Popa made a good point on the culvert; let’s say we don’t complete the project right now. Any private (vendor) will charge us nearly \$20,000.00 to replace the culvert. Smith added Bradley, too, made a good point; the culvert is small and plugs easily.

Frerichs asked for clarification, there is a County Road out front. When does the road become a park road and why isn’t that road taken care of by the Road Commission? Why is the park paying for the culvert; is it part of the road? Is there a shared cost? Popa stated the Road Commission owns the right-of-way. If someone wants to do something within that right-of-way, they need to get a permit through the Road Commission, and it is always at the expense of the owner. More comments followed. The Road Commission does not take care of culverts; however, they will look at drainage concerns. More comments followed. Frerichs asked is the culvert there because of the road, so the drainage doesn’t affect the road? Popa clarified if the culvert is under the road, then yes, the Road Commission will take care of it; however, this is located under the driveway. Discussion ensued. Lautner said this type of project would usually have to go out for bids. Barrons said the Committee had passed two recommendations; one to be allowed to forego the bid policy and then a recommendation to accept this procedure. His question, can we pass a motion now, so that Popa can proceed in order to pull figures together prior to the County Board’s April Executive Board session? Popa commented on timetables, and Road Commission policy.

**Motion by Christensen to recommend to the County Board of Commissioners to waive its policy on bid requirements and enter into an agreement with the Leelanau County Road Commission for replacement of the culvert at Veronica Valley Park, at a cost not to exceed \$5,000.00; pending Counsel review and approval. Seconded by Frerichs.**

Minor discussion on the language ensued and the request to waive bids.

**Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter, Yeomans, Barrons)**

**No – 0**

**Absent – 1 (Walter)**

**Recommendation Passes.**

Popa then handed out a draft rendering of the parking lot (copy not provided to clerk). Barrons stressed the Committee is still in the process of detailing the plan and is not ready to present to the full Commission. Popa asked to speak to the plan. He said we currently have too large a parking lot. He worked with Bradley and Walter to come up with sketches for a scaled down parking lot. He continued to review the handout. Popa said the Committee is asking the Commission to consider this project for next year during the 2022 budget preparation meeting (in June). Popa continued to review the draft rendering with Commission members. He said if

the Commission feels we can request so much funding for 2022, the culvert project could be done this year, and if the County Board doesn't want to spend that much money, the entrance could be completed with the first coat of asphalt, which could potentially be done for approximately \$15,000.00 (to include curbs a big entryway).

Popa said he is distributing this now, because (the Committee) will be bringing this up as they refine numbers and meet with contractors. This was information only and not ready for presenting to the County Board. Popa continued his review, with thoughts on the 25-car lot project. Barrons said as we have not been successful in obtaining a DNR grant to do a large development in that park, we are moving ahead with the planning that had been involved, utilizing funding in the budget process. We had determined at the Committee level that fishing safety and access at the main pond is the priority and they haven't presented any figures, which are still forthcoming. They have identified the parking lot improvements as another priority, which they want to break down into steps as much as possible. The culvert replacement is a first step, and does look like something we might be able to afford this year. All of the rest of this is yet to be detailed and determining the costs is still in process. Chairman Noonan said he appreciates we are forward thinking in this.

Christensen then relayed a situation that had occurred at Veronica Valley Park. The County Animal Control (AC) Officer, Wayne Kalchik, had contacted him about 90 days ago. People had complained about a visitor with a dog running around off-leash. Kalchik spoke with the person about putting his dog on a leash, and the person said they didn't have to, because they were "hunting." Kalchik then asked to see his license; the person had no license, no orange, and no weapon. Kalchik then wrote the person a ticket. However, that person challenged the ticket in 86<sup>th</sup> District Court. Kalchik had been confident he would win the case. Before that, Kalchik did some research on the issue, speaking with the DNR (Michigan Department of Natural Resources) and the National Park Service (NPS). He realized that he was probably not going to have any standing, and ended up pulling the ticket.

Christensen continued; the State of Michigan declared if you state "you are hunting" (on property that is open to hunting), you do not have to have a license, or wear orange, or declare a season, and you can let your dog run (off leash). The person wasn't hunting; he was letting his dog run. That is the situation we are in. Lautner said this is new to her; how can you say you are hunting, and not have a license? Bradley said the person was training. Christensen said you don't even have to state you are training; all you have to do is state you are hunting. Christensen said the state is allowing so much freedom, that the rule we have stating dogs have to be on leash does not mean a thing. Chairman Noonan said he would like Deputy Kalchik to attend the next meeting, explain the situation, report on the rules and what had happened so we are on the same page. Barrons concurred, as did Lautner. Noonan said we will spend a lot of time discussing this topic without hearing it from "the dog's mouth." Discussion ensued.

Barrons said we don't know what kind of pickle this puts our AC officer in relative to the public safety issue. We have some time, and we certainly need to hear from Deputy Kalchik. We will have a DNR fishing report for the next meeting. Chairman Noonan said this issue is unexpected,

and we will need to complete our due-diligence, and get on the same page by hearing from Kalchik in order to come to a decision.

Popa said he thought it is best to bring this to the full Commission next month. More comments followed on hunting protocol.

Myles Kimmerly Park Committee:

• Glen Lake Students Volunteering Request. Frerichs said the Committee had met today prior to the Regular Session and looked at seven projects, which they are trying to prioritize. With regard to the student volunteering request, the consensus is to defer on the cleanup of logs and branches. It isn't appropriate for eighth graders to do logging clean-up. We do not have anything definite for them to do. Christensen will be following up on contacting Hobbins. Yeomans said the student clean-up request is probably for the soccer fields. Those are the kids that use the park that most. He doesn't think the request is to help move trees. Discussion ensued.

Old Settlers Park Committee:

• Laurel Voran, Monkeyflower Upkeep. Voran said this is the time of year she plans for the season. Everything is doing really well, as they are able to continue to care and manage that site. Her hope is that the County will again support their work there; it will continue to be a collaboration with a few close neighbors, who are pledging to help with the care. As a business, she will be donating her time, as well as the Glen Lake Association contributing funding. She is asking (for the same amount from last year), which is \$960.00. They cleaned out an additional site – which is located fairly close to the steps that come down from the bank. There is a seep there overgrown with watercress and other plants. They are excited to transplant some Monkeyflower in June. She is hoping the County will again be supportive.

Yeomans remarked to Voran, we do have a number of new people here; can you give a brief overview? Voran responded the Monkeyflower is an endangered species grown only in Michigan, endemic to this loam. There are only 17 known populations, including the Straits of Mackinac, and this upper northwest corner of Michigan. Specific conditions include very cool, alkaline, flowing freshwater. There is a very specific environment for this plant in order to live. The seeps leaving the hillside going into the lake provide a very specific environment. The Monkeyflower has been identified by various horticulturists and botanists on maps. We are fortunate enough to have it here. There is an informational sign at the top of the hill explaining to visitors. The Monkeyflower blooms June through July, wrapping up by August. Monkeyflower is a low-map, flowering plant with bright yellow flowers that resemble a snapdragon. Christensen said not many (local governments) have collaborations between a government, neighbors, etc. Yeomans remarked we are very lucky to have the plant growing here within our park.

**Motion by Christensen to accept the proposal from Laurel Voran to work with the Monkeyflower in an amount not to exceed \$960.00. Seconded by Barrons.**

A brief discussion ensued on motion language.

**Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter, Yeomans, Barrons)**

**No – 0                      Absent – 1 (Walter)**

**Motion Passes.**

• Glen Arbor Art Center, Proposed Event. Christensen said they had been contacted by the Glen Arbor Arts Center

([https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/re\\_glen\\_arbor\\_arts\\_center\\_old\\_settler\\_park\\_event\\_inquiry\\_03172021.pdf](https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/re_glen_arbor_arts_center_old_settler_park_event_inquiry_03172021.pdf)). The organization wants to hold an event at Old Settlers Park, hosting the Traverse Symphony Orchestra and the Traverse City Dance Project on August 12, 2021, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.; they would begin set up at 1:00 p.m., with clean-up done by 10:00 p.m. It sounds like a good cause. Lautner commented this is a different group (from previous years); she believes this event is to raise money for community food banks. This is what we had talked about, we could have other groups come in and use our parks. She is a bit concerned, it does open the door for other groups to use our parks. What we don't know, will they charge, will they raise money? What will the money be used for? Discussion ensued. Lautner remarked she had too many questions to approve this today; can we move this forward to April? Discussion followed. Christensen responded the group should still have time. He will follow up on obtaining more information, such as an expected crowd count.

Frerichs said we have to decide if we want to change the rules. Discussion ensued. Consensus to move the request to April; Christensen to follow up.

Public Comment:

Clerk announced the number to call; no comments received.

Commissioner Comment:

- Christensen said he didn't bring up an item for Veronica Valley; there is a teacher from Eastern Elementary of the Traverse City Area Public Schools that wants to bring kids for a science project and he will get more information from him as well.
- Popa thanked Evans for her research. Popa asked and Evans will follow up with the new OMA rules, effective April 1.

Chairperson Comment:

- Chairman Noonan commented on the meeting in person rule. He added we are getting a lot of work done; he likes how things are going.

Adjournment:

**Motion by Christensen and Lautner to adjourn. Seconded by Barrons.**

Meeting adjourned to the call of the Chairman at 4:09 p.m.

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Laurel S. Evans, Recording Secretary Pro Tem