

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission
Public Input Session – Wednesday, April 19, 2017, 5:00 p.m.
Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

Members of the public were present, including some Parks Commission members.

The public input session began with Steve Christensen explaining the history of how we got here after the storm in August 2014 took out so many trees. He then introduced Laurel Voran, who worked with Lori Lyman on the conceptual plan for park.

Voran pointed out changes:

- A path connecting the entrance and exit roads creating a 1/3-mile walking loop.
- Plantings made larger.
- Add a meadow and a few flowering trees.
- A new picnic pavilion with a grub shack on one end with changing stalls attached.
- Designated parking spaces.
- Center road is removed, creating a larger area for new playground equipment, and also more demonstration area for tractors, handicap parking, and parking for antique cars during the during the Old Settlers picnic.
- Better sloped seating around the gazebo for better viewing.
- Irrigation to help new grass and meadow grow.

Public Comment:

Sue Flerlage voiced concern that grass will make it too “park like”; she is also concerned about county maintenance. She wants picnic tables scattered throughout park; doesn’t want fertilizer in lake. She suggested slowing down process to allow summer residents the opportunity to weigh in.

Casey Noonan said he does not want to add a paved trail through park. People can go up onto the wide paved shoulder of the County road to make a loop. They need a plan for tree replacement and a way for kayaks and canoes to launch at park. Right now the launch is chained. They need the “feel” of the park to remain.

Susan Yamasaki said she doesn’t want the feel of the park to change.

Roger Noonan said some upgrades are needed, but he wants the character and feel of park to remain. Do not remove the center road.

Tom VanZoeren asked to keep the historical character, fix up the Grub shack or build a new one in similar style.

Fred Lanham said he hates to see the center road go; the park doesn't need a walking path, would like an Old Settlers sign in honor of his father; likes bench seats like they are. A new grub shack is needed, but it doesn't need tables under it.

Mary Newman noted a time capsule is buried under the big rock. Current playground equipment is fine; she doesn't want a walking path. Keep the center road.

David Noonan (dad) keep as much as possible. People love the benches. Scatter tables. Keep ambience.

Commission Chairman Melinda Lautner further explained the purpose of taking out the center road. This would create the opportunity for one entrance, one exit for safety. The playground area would be larger and safer for children; there would be a larger/safer demonstration area for tractors, handicap parking and a paved trail to get there, and a designated parking area for the antique cars so they would not be parked out on the road. Also makes more picnic area.

Further Comments:

Don't take out road.

Don't need a lot of playground equipment.

Fred Noonan said people go there for what it is; you don't need a lot of play equipment. Keep the swing set, keep what is there – it is valuable and sentimental. Who would maintain the trail through the woods?

Feels like an "agenda", not a plan.

This isn't an agenda, this was just citizens who saw a need to freshen up park after the storm damage. Have no problem pushing husband's wheelchair over the ground, don't need a paved trail to do that.

Carol Roach, concerned as to how large the flower garden will be. Too large do not give them that much space – takes away from the picnic area. Think of the storm and now how to stabilize it. Think of tree replacement – healthier ecosystem. Enhance and protect; if it's not broke, don't fix it. Still beautiful but don't fix it. Don't mess with it.

Wants even more playground equipment especially for smaller children; anything to make park safer for everyone. Especially likes the idea of taking out center road to make more space for the events at the Old Settlers picnic.

Take out center road – do not irrigate park.

Melinda C. Lautner, Commission Chairman