

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 3:00 p.m.

Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2325>

The meeting of the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairman Noonan at 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Noonan led the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

Roll Call:
Dave Barrons, *Vice-Chairman*
Steve Christensen, *Secretary*
Don Frerichs
Charles Godbout
Melinda Lautner
Casey Noonan, *Chairman*
John Popa
Rick Robbins
Michael Smith
F. Jon Walter (*Absent*)

Staff Present:
Laurel Evans, Executive Assistant
W. Scott Bradley, Maintenance Worker

Guests:
Alan Campbell, Co-chair, Lake Leelanau Lake Association Kids’ Fishing Day Committee
Heather Hettinger, MDNR Fisheries Biologist (*via Zoom*)

Public Comment:
None.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Chairman Noonan mentioned that he would like to add an update on the Barn Use Committee, though there was no mention of where to add this topic on the agenda. Christensen requested to add the topic of the Parks brochures. Noonan directed to add this topic to agenda as Item 1.c.

Motion by Smith to approve the agenda, as amended. Seconded by Lautner.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 9 (Smith, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Action Items –

Heather Hettinger, MDNR Fisheries Biologist – Veronica Valley Pond Report:

Hettinger referenced two documents which she provided to the Parks Commission (link to packet at top); the “Proposed 2022 Fish Stocking for Veronica Valley Park” (Pg. 2); and the

“2022 Fish Order/Invoice for Leelanau County Parks and Recreation” (Pg. 6). Hettinger reported that the fish stocking proposal for 2022 for the three ponds at Veronica Valley Park was similar to the past 15- to 16-year regimes. She said she was “pleasantly surprised” that the cost increase for 2022 was not drastic and felt it was most likely because Dan Laggis, owner, Laggis’ Fish Farm, Inc., is a strong supporter of the Kids’ Fishing Day event and because she thought he wanted to support the unique endeavor of the Recreation Commission to provide an event that is more commonly offered in metropolitan areas. She said the overall cost increase for 2022 is \$73.50, which includes a 50/50 sharing of shipping costs with Lake Leelanau Lake Association.

Christensen inquired about how the balance of bass to bluegills is decided when stocking the ponds. Hettinger explained that bass reproduction is higher because they thrive in the ponds at Veronica Valley Park. She said that bass eat bluegill, so to protect the investment made in bluegills and not allow bass to take over the ponds, bass are not part of the stocking equation. She added that bass help keep at bay other fish found in the pond, such as white suckers, black and yellow bullheads, and yellow perch. Bass also provide a fun fishing experience for the kids because they are large. She added that the bass population could decrease in future years due to age and die-off and, at that point, restocking would be considered.

Smith inquired about how the fish stocking ratio is determined for the ponds. Hettinger responded that it is difficult to determine what fish ratios are, but that an anecdotal assessment is done by netting fish, chatting with those who have caught fish and creating logs of what has been caught, and by occasionally walking the ponds and observing fish activity.

Hettinger said she would be in attendance on fish stocking day and at the the Kids’ Fishing Day event and would bring fishing equipment and bait.

Motion by Barrons to recommend to the County Board of Commissioners to approve the purchase of fish for the Veronica Valley Park Pond from Laggis Fish Farms, Inc., of Gobles, Michigan, in an amount not to exceed \$4,366.00. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 9 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Motion by Christensen to purchase fish from the Kids Fish Day Committee in the amount of \$500.00. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Barrons)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Steve Christensen will take to the April 12, 2022, Board of Commissioners’ Executive Board meeting the \$4,366.00 recommendation for the purchase of fish to stock the Veronica Valley Park Pond.

Park Brochures:

Christensen asked the group for new park photos for next year's printing (2023) of the park brochures.

Motion by Christensen to move forward with the printing of the brochures by the Enterprise, at a cost not to exceed \$289.00 for 500 brochures. Seconded by Popa.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Barrons)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Brochures – Christensen

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Barrons to approve the Regular Session minutes of March 2, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 9 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Approval of Financials:

- Revenue & Expense Report – Period Ending March 31, 2022 (Pgs. 7-8)
- Transaction History Listing Report – March 1, 2022 through March 31, 2022 (Pgs. 6-11)

Bradley reported expenditures at three percent of budget. He added that the County (Maintenance Department's) 2008 Massey Ferguson diesel tractor blew out the front end for the second time. He said the cost to repair this time is \$10,000; it was \$14,000 for the first repair. They are in the process of looking for a new one.

Motion by Smith to approve the financials, as presented. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 9 (Smith, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

St Mary's School – Request to Use Myles Kimmerly Park (Pg. 12):

Motion by Lautner to allow/approve St. Mary's School all night senior party at Myles Kimmerly Park on June 6, 2022. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – Lautner added that by moving to accept the motion the Parks Commission would be assuming the St. Mary's group would be there until 1 a.m. Evans advised a certificate of insurance would be needed from St. Mary's and that St. Mary's would be responsible for notifying the Sheriff's Office of the event. Evans estimated there could be about 10 students in attendance.

Ayes – 9 (Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Evans will advise St. Mary's that their request was approved.

Committee Reports and Recommendations –

Myles Kimmerly Park Committee:

Grub Shack Removal – Frerichs reported that the Grub Shack has not been removed. Bradley advised that there will be no water until the shack is removed. Chairman Noonan said he will follow-up with Tim Newman (Kasson Construction, Inc.) about the removal. Evans said Newman needs to file a permit with the Code Office before the shack can be removed. She said once the permit is filed, a voucher will be cut.

Paved Loop Trail – Frerichs said he plans to apply for a grant in 2023 for paving the loop trail. He added that Smith will take lead on the grant application endeavor.

Kiosk (Grub Shack Replacement) – Frerichs said the new kiosk will serve as an information center, as the location for the universal access portable toilets, and will house a bottle filling station. Frerichs referenced a hand-out of an aerial view of the park showing the proposed location of the new kiosk and where the portable toilets and bottle filling station would reside. Barrons voiced support for the bottle filling stations.

Cost Estimate – Frerichs said \$21,000 to \$27,500 was a rough estimate for the project. Godbout inquired if this was a 2022 expenditure. Frerichs responded that if 2022 money is left over, perhaps components of the plan could be purchased such as the bottle filling station. Popa recommended adding the project expenditure to the June budget presentation in the Parks and Recreation section. Frerichs said he already submitted the project to Evans for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Old Settlers Park Committee:

Lautner said she was undecided about who and how the new playground equipment should be installed. Christensen suggested contacting Playground Boss (the company where equipment was purchased) to research if they had a crew available to install the equipment. Evans suggested getting a proposal from the company. Lautner thought a special meeting at the end of the month might be necessary to get a recommendation prepared.

Christensen said he talked with Laurel Voran and she will be attending the May (2022) Parks meeting. From what she's telling me, it's a program we've been looking at from year to year. I told her fine, if she had to start part of the project, go for it and we'll see you next month.

Evans reported that she received a phone call from Marsha Rose of the Glen Lakes Woman's Club. (The club handles reservations for the chapel.) Rose requested that the chapel be pressure washed and the trim painted. Bradley said it was the first time he had received this sort of request and that he will be pursuing quotes to get the work completed.

Bradley reported that two trees were lost at Myles Kimmerly Park and that they were removed by the County Road Commission. Old Settlers Park lost one tree and Consumers Power removed it. Bradley attributed the trees' demise to old age and decay.

Christensen read a March 23, 2022, email from John and Kirstin Prebay of Maple City requesting a discussion on collaborating efforts, both financially and labor-wise, to create a dog park at Myles Kimmerly or other areas that might be options. Evans suggested if fencing is needed, to coordinate procurement for fencing material with ongoing fencing projects at County tower sites to possible achieve quantities of scale. Barrons mentioned that having separate fenced areas for big dogs and small dogs worked the best based on his observations on dog parks out west. Discussion ensued about possible locations for the dog park, including across the road near the barn.

Chairman Noonan solicited dates from the Barn Use Committee members for convening sometime near the end of the month (April 2022). Noonan said Steve Stier of the Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society indicated his group was ready to meet. April 20 or 27 were the dates suggested.

Veronica Valley Park Committee –

Parking Lot (Entrance) RFP Recommendation (Pg. 39)

Motion by Christensen to recommend to the County Board of Commissioners to accept the bid from Popp Excavating for the Parking Lot Entrance at Veronica Valley in the amount of \$28,086.50. Seconded by Popa.

Discussion – Barrons noted that the bid from Popp Excavating was \$10,000 less than the bid from Team Elmer’s. Lautner said she did not support the motion because she did not see the need for the curb and gutter project. Popa said curb and gutter is required for commercial entities. Lautner countered that Veronica Valley was a county park and not a commercial business; therefore, the work was not required or needed. Bradley said the entrance is completely washed out and that it is a constant maintenance issue that needs to be addressed. Popa said the entrance design was the best solution to control traffic flow in and out of the park. Frerichs thought the project cost was a lot of money, but added that \$8,000.00 to install the playground equipment at Old Settlers Park was also a lot of money.

Ayes – 8 (Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Barrons)

No – 1 (Lautner) Absent – 1 (Walter)

Motion Passes.

Barrons discussed a request from the St. Mary’s cross-country team which sponsors a 5K, cross-country annual run (pgs. 41-48). The request was to establish permanent signage along the 5K trail in honor of James Hearne, who passed away May 26, 2020, and was a member of the St. Mary’s cross-country team. Barrons explained that the park committee did not support permanent, memorial signage, but that it would support a tree or a bench with a memorial plaque or temporary signage posted on the day of the event and/or a small sign posted at the kiosk. Christensen added that the County has created benches in past with specific design for the bench and plaque. Evans said the County typically avoids setting a precedent and is reluctant to turn County parks into memorials.

Motion by Barrons for the Parks and Recreation Commission to deny the request from the Hearne family and St. Mary’s cross-country team as they have proposed for Veronica Valley Park. Popa seconded.

Discussion – Godbout and Popa both supported temporary markers on the day of the race. Lautner said she felt the verbiage of the motion should be softened – she thought the word “deny” was too harsh. Barrons asked about a sign posted in the kiosk. Chairman Noonan said he did not support a sign in the kiosk because it would invite future similar requests. After further discussion, it was decided that Barrons and Evans will consult with County Administrator, Chet Janik, and based on that conversation, will compose an appropriate response letter.

Motion withdrawn.

Public Comment:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

Popa stated that he did not support a dog park at Myles Kimmerly. He felt there were more people-oriented projects on the list of park enhancements. Frerichs commented that dog parks are therapeutic for people who have dogs. Smith suggested polling the community to get their thoughts about establishing a dog park at Myles Kimmerly. Godbout requested that a date be set for the walking tour at Old Settlers Park.

Chairperson Comments:

None.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned to the call of Chairman Noonan at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Eubanks, Recording Secretary