

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, May 4, 2022, 3:00 p.m.

Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2331>

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
Don Frerichs
Charles Godbout
Melinda Lautner
Casey Noonan, *Chairman*
John Popa
Rick Robbins
Michael Smith
F. Jon Walter

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

Public Comment:
None.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Motion by Popa to approve the agenda, as presented. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Action Items –

Cedar Area Fire & Rescue Request, Potential Property Acquisition:

Chairman Noonan introduced Cleveland Township Supervisor Tim Stein and Kasson Township Supervisor Greg Julian, who previously met with County Administrator Chet Janik to discuss interest by the two townships in purchasing (a portion of) the Myles Kimmerly Park parcel (approximately five acres) adjacent to the Poor Farm Barn to build a fire station. They attended today’s meeting as advised by Janik to discuss the proposal with the Parks and Recreation Commission. Lautner noted and Popa agreed that the parcel of interest may not have been placed in perpetuity (must remain park land forever) like the rest of the County’s parkland. Noonan said the perpetuity issue would need to be researched. Julian stated he had not researched the deed prior to expressing interest in the parcel.

Frerichs said he did not support the proposal and encouraged the supervisors to seek other options. Robbins had mixed feelings. From a public safety perspective, he thought the fire station made sense. He thought the Poor Farm could benefit by sharing parking and said the township offices could consolidate and be built there as well, but he wondered who would own the property. He wanted to look at the big picture, “not just today.” Popa said he was not against the proposal and inquired about the timeline.

Stein said the objective for today’s discussion was to determine if there was “tacit interest” by the Commission before they pursued other private sector options. He said a 36-month option for the purchase of five acres or more would be ideal. He said their current agreement did not expire until 2025.

Robbins inquired how much the townships would pay for the property. Stein responded \$50,000.00. Robbins said another thing that has not been considered is that the property could be used as a substation for the Leelanau County Sheriff’s Office. Lautner said she did not have a strong opinion either way, but shared that years ago, another landowner adjacent to the property inquired about purchasing the parcel and the County refused to sell. Noonan added that there has been lots of interest over the years because it is a prime piece of real estate. He thought (the County) should keep their options open. Godbout said that, based on discussions about a new fire station in Empire, an ideal fire station location is six to eight minutes from areas it would serve, which, he said, makes the Myles Kimmerly parcel a perfect location.

Christensen suggested running the topic through the Myles Kimmerly Committee and then back to the Commission for questions. Noonan concurred. After looking at a map, Lautner agreed with Frerichs that she would like to see other options explored by the townships. Robbins suggested areas north of Maple City along Co. Rd. 616 because that road is kept clear in the winter. Noonan agreed that the Myles Kimmerly parcel was a perfect location for the proposed fire station. He said he does not like to let park property go, but that there was benefit to the community to have the fire station at that location so, he said, at this point it was “not yea or nay” for him. He first wanted the Myles Kimmerly Park Committee to talk over the proposal, then put the topic back on the Commission agenda for the next Regular Session. He added that the perpetuity issue needed to be resolved first because “that could shut the whole thing down.” Lautner said someone from the Commission will have the deed researched.

Julian added that the Cedar Area Fire and Rescue serves beyond Cedar and Maple City and responds to calls throughout the nation which gives the station great visibility within the community. He felt the new facility would have a similar exposure. Robbins inquired if the new substation would lower insurance premiums for nearby property owners. Julian responded that it could, but that “it would have yet to be seen.”

Lautner inquired if the pursuit of property was premature because she thought the townships were about five years out from building a new fire station. Stein responded they were right on target, timewise. Noonan mentioned that at the prior discussion with the County Administrator, there was talk about leasing the proposed site, but it was determined a fire

station could not be located on leased property. Noonan wrapped the discussion with a commitment to add the topic to the June (2022) Parks and Recreation Regular Session agenda and invited both Stein and Julian to return at that time for further discussion.

Chairman Noonan moved Laurel Voran up the agenda so she would not have to wait to present her Monkey Flower topic (Pgs. 15 and 16 of the packet). Voran provided an update on the current plantings of Monkey Flower at Old Settlers Park as well as the proposed maintenance and nurturing of the new colony established in 2021, and the identification and preparation of additional transplant sites along the shoreline at Old Settlers Park. She also discussed proposed funding for 2022: \$1,440.00 from neighbors and Laurel Voran, LLC; \$1,000.00 from the Glen Lake Association; and \$960.00 from Leelanau County. Voran added that much of the work performed involves managing competing plants. She announced a video that is now available online for a more comprehensive look at Monkey Flower status in the region. [Link to video – <https://naturechange.org/2021/12/15/hope-for-michigans-most-endangered-flower/>]

Motion by Smith to approve continued monetary support of Monkey Flower cultivation at Old Settlers Park in the amount of \$960.00. Seconded by Popa.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Christensen to approve the Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Session meeting minutes of April 6, 2022. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Approval of Financials:

- Transaction History Listing Report April 1-30, 2022
- Revenue and Expense Report Period Ending April 30, 2022

Motion by Godbout to approve the financials as presented. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – Bradley explained there was a \$10,000.00 charge to the Parks and Recreation budget for a tractor, which will be reversed.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Committee Reports and Recommendations –

Myles Kimmerly Park Committee:

Frerichs reported that the grub shack has not yet been removed. Chairman Noonan said he reminded Tim Newman (Kasson Contracting) about removing the shack and the project is moving up on Tim’s list of things to do. Frerichs suggested getting the concrete slab installed (\$3,000.00 - \$4,000.00) for the kiosk and purchasing the bottle filling station (\$3,500.00) if there was money left in the 2022 budget. Frerichs said he would follow-up on the letter from the people interested in donating funds for a dog park at Myles Kimmerly Park. Smith reported that he and Walter walked the trail at the park and considered modest changes to accommodate wheelchair access.

Barn Use Committee Update:

Chairman Noonan reported that the first meeting of the Barn Use Committee was conducted “last week.” First order of business was discussion about what liability is tied to having public enter the barn and what insurance is needed. The group consensus was to keep things simple and to use the site for public education about the historic value of the barn and poor farms and how they operated and to continue the partnership with Glen Lakes Community Schools with education about gardening and agriculture. Another idea discussed was to use the barn as a museum for antique farm equipment. Lautner mentioned she ran into John Kasben (Maple Valley Nursing Home) and he asked her if the County might consider an extension on his lease of the drainfield property. She thought someone should follow-up with Kasben to advise there is no intention by the County to extend the lease. (The lease expires in April 2023.) Evans said she will talk with the County Administrator about having a formal letter sent to Kasben.

Old Settlers Park Committee:

Motion by Lautner for the Parks and Recreation Commission to approve the request from Glen Lake Community Reformed Church to use the park for a concert on Saturday, July 9, 2022, with same rules that previously applied. Seconded by Christensen.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Motion by Lautner for the Parks and Recreation Commission to recommend to the County Board of Commissioners to approve hiring Playground Boss and accept their quote of \$8,410.00 to install the playground equipment at Old Settlers Park and to request the County Board of Commissioners to waive the bid requirement. Seconded by Christensen.

Discussion – Frerichs asked about the purchase price of the playground equipment. Lautner responded that it was approximately \$13,000.00.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Motion by Lautner for the Parks and Recreation Commission to recommend to the County Board of Commissioners to purchase 60 yards engineered wood chips from Deering Tree Service, at a cost not to exceed \$2,160.00, including delivery. Seconded by Christensen.

Discussion – It was not clear if this motion should be a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners. Bradley said three quotes have been obtained. Evans will check with County Administrator.

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Regarding the annual picnic at Old Settlers Park, Chairman Noonan inquired if portable toilets would be placed at the park for this event. Bradley affirmed. Noonan also inquired if power to the gazebo had been fixed. Bradley responded that it had not been fixed. Noonan said, depending on if the Masons provide the food for the picnic, power may be necessary. Bradley said to just let him know. Lautner will check with Cherryland Electric for a donation of electrical service.

Veronica Valley Park Committee:

Motion by Barrons for the Parks and Recreation Commission to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to support the application for tribal two percent monies as developed by Bill Watson and YouthWorks for invasive species control/removal at Veronica Valley Park. Seconded by Christensen.

Discussion – Frerichs inquired about the dollar amount. Evans directed the group to Page 20 of the packet where the fiscal data is outlined. Barrons responded that the amount is a little less than 50 percent of the total budget of \$50,200.00 (\$22,000.00).

Ayes – 10 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Godbout, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 0

Motion Passes.

Barrons said he is still working on getting the signage printed for both Myles Kimmerly and Veronica Valley Parks. Barrons also reported that the Veronica Valley Park Committee will be taking steps to perform an aquatic plant assessment in the ponds at Veronica Valley in preparation for the ponds, or a pond, to be used to test mitigation methods for Eurasia Milfoil by biologist Brian Price of Lake Leelanau Lake Association. Barrons reported that Kids' Fishing Day is June 26, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. and, as the event nears, if necessary, members of the Association's Fishing Committee will assist in raking the ponds for fishing access. Christensen mentioned that as a result of the milfoil discussion, signage will be placed at Veronica Valley Park to make the public aware of cross contamination in the lakes and ponds and how to mitigate it.

Public Comment:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

Frerichs asked that the grub shack be removed and noted that there needs to be a “Plan B” for water at Myles Kimmerly Park. Lautner mentioned that Solon Township is housing the long boats for the rowing club. She also mentioned park cleanup from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on May 14, 2022, at the Cedar Town Hall in Cedar.

Chairperson Comments:

None.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned to the call of Chairman Noonan at 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Lori Eubanks, Recording Secretary