

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Tentative Minutes – meeting recorded

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chairman Casey Noonan at 3:00 p.m.

Today's session was held via Zoom (<https://youtu.be/JPX-sPJB8IU>)

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commission Chairman Noonan.

Roll Call:

*All members (except Trevas)
present via Zoom*

Dave Barrons, *Vice Chairman*
Steve Christensen
Don Frerichs
Melinda Lautner
Casey Noonan, *Chairman*
John Popa
Kyle Trevas – *absent/excused*
Jon Walter
Ty Wessell
Todd Yeomans

Guests present via Zoom

Public Comment:

None.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Motion by Lautner to approve the agenda, as presented. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – none.

Ayes – 9 (Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

Action Items –

Monkey Flower Presentation/Annual Support Request:

Laurel Voran present. Voran noted the most noticeable difference this year is that because the winter was mild, the monkey flower is thriving. She is proposing proceeding as has been done in the past, with support from the County, local neighbors, her company, and the Glen Lake Association. She is proposing continuing with trimming back the competitive plants. (Full report available on the County website –

https://www.leelanau.cc/downloads/old_settlers_proposal_05162020.pdf) Lautner remarked on the number of colonies. Discussion ensued. Voran clarified she works with the colonies growing around Glen Lake. Barrons asked and Voran responded she has noted an increased visitor use with Old Settlers Park, with all practicing proper social distancing.

Motion by Lautner to engage the services of Laurel Voran for another year of monkey flower maintenance and protection for 2020 in an amount not to exceed \$960.00. Seconded by Yeomans and Wessell.

Discussion – none.

Ayes – 9 (Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

Veronica Valley Fish Report/Fish Purchase – Heather Hettinger:

Heather Hettinger, MDNR (Michigan Department of Natural Resources) Fisheries Biologist, was present. Hettinger noted this is the 10th year she has presented to this Board and requested a collaborative fish purchase for Veronica Valley. It is a most interesting year. She and representatives from the Lake Leelanau Lake Association (LLLA) were in discussion as to the feasibility of still holding the event this year, perhaps in August. However, this whole event is donation based and a lot of small businesses do contribute, and they didn't want to put donors (in a tough position). She has also had a conversation with the fish provider (Laggis Fish Farm, Inc.), who is willing to conduct the stocking in two parts. Because the weather has been inclement, it has stressed the fish which has caused some disease and he is unable to hold back healthy fish for that late in the year. They ultimately decided the Kids' Fishing Day event cannot be held this year.

However, they are still interested in stocking the pond, and see a lot of value in providing an outdoor recreation opportunity to County residents. The park has been getting a lot of use. The Kids Fish Day Committee

(https://www.leelanau.cc/downloads/proposed_2020_fish_stockingt6751gnpmnn2.pdf) has some funds to show their commitment to the park by purchasing fish. They are able to provide around \$500.00 towards the cost. The cost didn't go up much this year. The price is pretty much the same. We would not split shipping costs this year. Lonnie Rademacher of the Lake Leelanau Lake Association Kids Fishing Day Committee concurred the \$500.00 is what they are able to contribute towards the purchase. Barrons asked, so the \$500.00 is in addition to the proposed County purchase of \$4,553.00? Hettinger affirmed, saying it would go towards the purchase of an additional 250 fish.

Yeomans asked Hettinger, if the Commission decides to stock the pond, is there enough aeration in the pond the fish will last the winter? Hettinger affirmed. The pond is big and deep enough, and it is cold enough. They know fish are making it through the winter. They try to survey the pond every five years. People will take advantage of the stocking this year, and it will continue through next. Popa said he is in favor of this purchase. He has spoken with Rademacher and others. It will be great; once the word gets out, people will fish all summer long. More comments followed.

Motion by Popa to support the program and approve the purchase of fish for the Veronica Valley Park ponds from Laggis Fish Farm, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$4,553.00; with the Lake Leelanau Lake Association contributing an additional \$500.00. Seconded by Yeomans.

Discussion followed on motion language and billing past practice. Barrons noted Savin Lake Services will be treating the ponds on or about June 3. Hettinger said she would like at least a week. They can schedule to stock the following week, to give the treatment time to break down, and present him with both checks at that time. Christensen suggested pushing it to two weeks, rather than one week, with regard to weather and other factors. Discussion ensued on payment for and delivery of the fish.

Motion restated by Clerk.

Lautner asked for discussion on why we would still stock the pond with fish if we won't be holding Kids' Fishing Day. Her first reaction was to not stock the pond if we do not hold the event. However, the more she thought about it, our children have lost so much already this year. If we (stock the ponds) this year, maybe it is a little something we can give back, and allow them (to fish) this summer. She suggested publicizing the pond stocking – we have cancelled the event, and we still want to see children fish that pond, with the emphasis on children fishing the pond. She will be supporting the motion.

Christensen said he had been discussing the issue with Barrons, and although an advertisement would work, he thinks the word will get out. If we advertise, we may see large groups, including buses come. We could end up with something similar to a "mini kids' fishing day" for six or seven weeks. Noonan concurred, saying we do not have to worry about advertising until the fish are in the pond; this would be a good thing to add to next month's agenda. Barrons said he supports the motion. This is a valid expenditure of County tax dollars and under the circumstances, due to the shutdown due to (COVID-19), this is a fantastic offering to our County residents, and support of a fine recreation. He and his wife have hiked Veronica Valley at least five times since the beginning of the shut down and there are cars at that park every time.

Rademacher said the LLLA Fish Committee is grateful to the County for their support of this annual event. They were hoping for this outcome.

Ayes – 9 (Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Noonan)
No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas) Motion Passes.

Lautner remarked she will put something out on Facebook, so we notify as many people as we can that the pond has been restocked. Clerk noted an update can be added to the News section on the County website as well. Hettinger added she will notify members of a delivery date when it is scheduled.

Frerichs commented we should have signage at the park that supports social distancing. Chairman Noonan concurred.

DNR Grant Status, Approval of Resolution in Support of Recreation Passport Grant:

Clerk noted any recommendation will go on the June County Board agenda.

Motion by Christensen to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of County Resolution #2020-xxx, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport – Development Grant, Veronica Valley Park Universal Access Improvements. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – none.

Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

**Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
RESOLUTION #2020-_____**

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant
Veronica Valley Park Universal Access Improvements**

WHEREAS, Leelanau County has a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) approved 2020-2024 Community Parks and Recreation Plan, which provides an action program for improvements and maintenance of recreation facilities in the County during the period between 2020 and 2024, and

WHEREAS, the County has undergone a planning and design phase for possible improvements, to the park known as Veronica Valley Park, previously purchased by the County for future recreational purposes, pursuant to the Recreation Plan pages 38-45 and 71-73 and the Leelanau County General Plan, Chapter 8, and

WHEREAS, Leelanau County has developed the Veronica Valley Park Conceptual Site Plan concurrent with the needs and desires of its citizens, and conducted multiple public input and stakeholder meetings to discuss the project including this public hearing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport Grant with a \$50,000 (25%) local match leveraging a \$150,000 (75%) requested grant from the state, for the residents of Leelanau County.

Approval of Minutes – Regular Session, February 19, 2020, and Special Session, February 27, 2020:

Motion by Popa to approve the Regular Session Meeting minutes of February 19, 2020, and the Special Session Meeting Minutes of February 27, 2020, as presented. Seconded by Barrons and Wessell.

Discussion – none.

Ayes – 9 (Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Noonan)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

Approval of Financial Reports:

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

Discussion – Wessell remarked he wanted to be sure we had a plan in place to spend our capital outlay money for this year. Chairman Noonan responded \$20,000.00 has been allocated for the (Old Settlers Park) Grub Shack remodel. Maintenance Worker Scott Bradley noted funding for some snow grooming equipment has been earmarked as well. Christensen commented a lot of work still needs to be done at Myles Kimmerly Park; we need to grind stumps, along the perimeter trail. We also need to clean up quite a bit of remaining brush. Bradley commented that should fall under maintenance.

Discussion followed on an email that came from a neighboring property owner who has offered to organize a group of volunteers to clean up those trails. Bradley responded most of the work needs to be done utilizing power equipment. Chairman Noonan will follow up with property owner. Barrons remarked this brings up a good question on utilizing volunteers within the County parks. Residents had previously offered to groom cross country ski trails. There are issues we haven't sorted out.

Ayes – 9 (Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

Committee Reports and Recommendations –

Myles Kimmerly Park Committee:

Christensen asked Bradley if he was able to get some numbers on grinding stumps on the trail. (Bradley had left the meeting.) Christensen asked if this can be reviewed next month. He doesn't know what the maintenance line item is, but we need to stay on this to complete the project. Discussion ensued on the budget.

Chairman Noonan noted someone had requested setting up a small, drop box library at Myles. It is on a 4"x4" post – a small, community library. He said he would bring it up before the Commission. Discussion followed. Barrons remarked he had no idea there is a national organization on those boxes; a lot of them have been converted to food at this point. Noonan said the donor has confirmed she will take care of all of the materials. He added he was going to request the donor meet with Bradley on where to locate the drop box. Wessell said he has seen these around the County, and they are nice. He is in support of the box.

Motion by Wessell to support accepting the donation of a “Little Free Library” to be located at Myles Kimmerly County Park. Seconded by Yeomans.

Discussion – Chairman Noonan remarked the donor was going to work with someone to construct the box and also maintaining the structure.

Ayes – 9 (Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Walter)

No – 0 Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

Old Settlers Park Committee:

Meadow Garden Status Report. Voran and Barbara Lund were present for the report (Page 23 and 24 - https://www.leelanau.cc/downloads/05202020_pandr_rs_packet.pdf).

Christensen thanked Voran and Lund for all their efforts.

Special Event Request, Glen Lake Community Reformed Church. Lautner asked if the Church has moved its date. Discussion followed.

Motion by Lautner that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve a park use agreement with the suggested revisions for Old Settlers County Park with the Glen Lake Community Reformed Church for its proposed concert to be held on July 18, 2020, pending Counsel review and approval. Seconded by Barrons and Wessell.

Discussion – Chairman Noonan asked and Clerk responded (due to the current Governor Executive Orders), the church should have some sort of social distancing plan. Noonan concurred, saying he isn't sure the Church even plans on holding the event. Discussion followed on the agreement language that states that "an approved plan needs to be on file that had been vetted by Emergency Management, the Sheriff's Office, and a Parks Commission representative. Frerichs voiced concern on the parking for that park. Lautner said people will either follow the plan, or they won't; they will either self-protect or they won't. More comments followed, and she concluded we should allow them to go forward. Clerk to follow up with the County's risk management carrier, MMRMA. Frerichs said if they could show us they have a sane way to hold the event, without exposing a lot of people, including attendance from residents downstate, he would support it. Walter concurred with Frerichs.

Popa concurred with Lautner; we cannot police these things. They are in charge of their actions, they will submit their plan, even with legal review, they will still go out and do that. Just give them the authority if they submit a good plan. We do not need to add more government layers to something like that; we have too much of that now.

Christensen said he would be comfortable with the way it is put forth; they need to meet with the Emergency Manager and Sheriff. The Emergency Manager is on top of all of the procedures we do at the county level. He is comfortable with him being the interface with this potential event and actually looking at the plan. He has confidence in Ansorge and the Sheriff and who ever is representing this Commission.

Yeomans said even if the church holds this event, it won't be as big as in previous years. Next year, the church should rethink which park they use, because (the event is outgrowing) Old Settlers Park.

Ayes – 8 (Lautner, Noonan, Popa, Walter, Wessell, Yeomans, Barrons, Christensen)

No – 1 (Frerichs) Absent – 1 (Trevas)

Motion Passes.

Chairman Noonan commented that the Old Settlers Picnic Association has cancelled its annual event for this year. They made the decision, with most of the attendees being older, and all of the unknowns. They haven't even been able to meet due to (the sheltering in place orders). He added the grub shack remodel has been pushed back a bit as well due to the State restrictions. The contractor still plans on completing the project this year.

Veronica Valley Park Committee:

Invasive Species Eradication Update. Barrons said he has two things; first, the tentative date for the treatment of the pond is June 3. Savin Lakes Services provides a large range of control possibilities. They may be another source of knowledge as we go through this. The terrestrial invasive species – we are still on the list for having two crews cleaning out the autumn olive and buckthorn. More comments followed on scheduling.

Placement of Non-Government Items on County Property:

Lautner said the County Board voted to not allow nongovernment donations on the County campus. That ended up being further expanded to the parks, per our attorney's suggestion. Their concern was if (the County Board) adopted a policy on donations, we would not be able to control them, even the acceptance of them (pages 33-37 of the packet). We wouldn't be able to say no, only comment on placement. Donations would be handled on a case-by-case basis moving forward; the tree that someone wanted to place on the County campus, she thought might be better served sited one of our parks.

Christensen said we have done quite a bit of work over the years with ideas of what could get donated to our parks. We have ideas and restrictions established for each park. Where does this document leads to the work? Lautner responded she doesn't think this work is lost. More comments followed on the previously adopted donation policies. Barrons asked for clarification on why the County Board felt the tree donation wasn't appropriate for the Government Center Campus. Lautner responded one of the reasons given, we don't have a lot of areas where we can plant trees. She then gave the example of the hillside (on the east edge) of the campus, which has a drainfield. She continued to provide reasons for why there isn't room for these types of donations. (Some Commission members) did not want the campus to resemble a "memorial garden." She supports these donations coming to our parks where we do want more trees. There was discussion on erecting one wall that would list all donations in one spot, rather than putting plaques around each donation. Chairman Noonan asked and Lautner responded she doesn't know if a motion is necessary; we may need to do some research. Noonan said with the County Board approving this, it goes over the top of the Parks.

Recreation Plan Review:

Clerk noted she has included this on today's agenda as a reminder to Commission members to review it. Chairman Noonan agreed, saying especially with all the money and effort that went into revising the plan, that we take time to go through it. Christensen said our system is predicated on Committee meetings. He is a bit nervous; he doesn't want us to lose our ability and focus. Think about it for the next session.

Discussion followed on the 2021 budget process. ***Consensus to cancel the Executive Committee meeting scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, and hold a Special Session at that same time.***

1973 Leelanau County Parks Regulation Ordinance:

Popa said at the February 27, 2020, meeting, he had said he would follow up on an incident at one of the parks. He subsequently had a meeting with Prosecuting Attorney Joseph T. Hubbell, who noted there is still an active County Ordinance regulating the parks (pages 38-39 of the packet). There are penalties included within the ordinance that would address the incident. We may want (legal) review of the ordinance. Clerk to follow up with Corporate Counsel.

Review of P.A. 261 of 1965 (MCL 46.364):

Popa said there are some things we should ensure are in place. We as a Parks Commission, we should determine what to do next. Chairman Noonan said we can add these two things to next month's agenda after review from counsel.

Commissioner Comment:

Popa suggested that all refuse containers be removed from any of the parks, as many people are dumping household refuse. Discussion followed; to follow up with Maintenance Worker Bradley.

Public Comment:

None.

Chairperson Comment:

None.

Adjournment:

Motion by Christensen to adjourn. Seconded by Lautner and Wessell.

Meeting adjourned to the call of the Chairman at 4:26 p.m.

Laurel S. Evans, Secretary Pro Tem