

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded

Via Zoom and at the Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2156>

The Regular Session of the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission (Parks & Rec Commission) was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Commission Chairman Casey Noonan.

Chairman Noonan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:	Dave Barrons, <i>Vice-Chairman</i>	John Popa
	Steve Christensen, <i>Secretary</i>	Rick Robbins
	Don Frerichs	Michael Smith
	Melinda Lautner	F. Jon Walter
	Casey Noonan, <i>Chairman</i>	Todd Yeomans

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

Public Comment:

Call-in Number: 231-256-8109.

- Steve Stier, President, Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society (LCHPS), announced that the LCHPS, as Lessee for the Leelanau County Poor Farm Barn in Maple City, applied for and received a state historic marker. A dedication of the marker will be held on July 10, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. Stier extended an invitation for all to attend.

Stier explained that the Poor Farm Barn lease with Leelanau County includes involvement from the Leelanau County Parks & Rec Commission. He read the following clause from the lease – “A six-person committee will be created to determine the specific usage of the barn and any related activities. Membership of this committee will be composed of the Chairman of the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission, two members of the Myles Kimmerly Park subcommittee – with one of the members being a county commissioner, and two members of the board of LCHPS.”

Stier said in accordance with the lease agreement, Stier asked Chairman Noonan to seek volunteers or appoint members to the Poor Farm Barn Committee. Stier said that although there is no formal timeline outlined in the lease agreement, he would like to move forward with the formation of the Poor Farm Barn Committee this summer.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Lautner requested adding a one-time approval of food trucks at Old Settlers Park, to be added under Old Settlers Park; Chairman Noonan added the appointment of committee members to the LCHPS Poor Farm Barn Committee, to be added under Myles Kimmerly Park.

Motion by Popa to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Christensen.

Discussion – none.

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

No – 0

Motion Passes.

Action Items –

Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2021 Regular Session:

Motion by Smith to approve the May 19, 2021, Regular Session meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Lautner and Barrons.

Discussion – none.

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

No – 0

Motion Passes.

Financial Reports:

Maintenance Worker W. Scott Bradley provided a brief update and responded to questions regarding the Commission’s financial reports. He reported that the Commission is at 11.13% of its budget with no outstanding issues. A discussion followed on signage, and reports and payments to the Wildlife and Wetlands Solutions company for trail debris cleanup at Myles Kimmerly Park (MKP).

Motion by Popa to approve the financial reports as submitted. Seconded by Barrons and Smith.

Discussion – none.

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

No – 0

Motion Passes.

Parks Property Discussion:

• **Maple Valley Nursing Home Lease.** Christensen noted with the location of the nursing home’s septic fields on park land, this might be a good time to entertain the idea of relocating the fields onto the nursing home land. Chairman Noonan asked and Lautner responded, providing background on the history of the drain field property lease with the Maple Valley Nursing Home. She said the County owned the nursing home (located at 1086 West Burdickville Road in Maple City) and when the nursing home was sold (to current operate John Kasben), the County signed a lease agreement to allow the nursing home to use the drain field located across the street. Executive Assistant Laurel Evans provided additional information, stating that the lease term is for 15 years and was signed on April 29, 2008. According to the lease document, the lease is irrevocable for 15 years from the date of execution but may be revoked after expiration of the 15-year period (year 2023) with a written, 30-day notice. (A copy of the lease document was provided as a handout to the commissioners; on file.) Evans noted the drain field could impact the siting of the paved loop trail system. Discussion followed on the lease and the drain

field site. Evans suggested having legal counsel draft a notification letter to mail to Kasben well in advance of the impending lease expiration.

Popa said he was not a fan of making Kasben put in a new drain field. Popa asked and Bradley clarified there are two drain fields, with Kasben maintaining one of the sites. Discussion followed on future park plans. Lautner said her concern is if Kasben installs a new drain field, it could tie up the property another 20 to 40 years. Popa suggested inviting Kasben to a future meeting for further discussion.

Christensen stated the decision was already made (not to renew the lease) when the County Board of Commissioners sold the nursing home and did not include the drain field property in the sale. Christensen said the drain field lease was created for specific reasons and Kasben was aware of those reasons. It is time to get out of the septic business.

Chairman Noonan said they could invite Kasben to a meeting, but he did not think it would change the outcome. He added it was his understanding that Kasben was well aware when he signed the lease that it would not be renewed at expiration. Noonan said the lease was set for 15 years because the life expectancy of the drain field was 15 years; therefore, Kasben did not have to install a new drain field at that time. Noonan said he could call Kasben ahead of the letter to let him know of the Commission's intent, but Noonan reiterated that Kasben is well aware of the lease expiration timeline and it is not a surprise to him. Frerichs said he needs to know we have a lot of plans for that property.

- Old Settlers Park, Triangular Parcel. Christensen stated there is a piece of ground across the road from the Old Settlers Park owned by the County, being used by three or four private individuals as driveway access. He said since the Parks & Rec Commission is considering cleaning things up, this parcel might be one to consider towards that effort. Lautner said the County had set up a 100-year easement in the 1980s for use of the parcel as a driveway access by the property owners, because the parcel is the only access the property owners have to their property. We are good for a number of years with the current easements, unless we were to sell the property to them. Discussion followed on the adjacent property owners. Christensen suggested having counsel weigh in on what should be done. Evans said she provided a handout of a survey that was conducted showing the exact dimensions of the property, which, she added, is so small it would not be conducive to park use. She added she had also stopped into the Register of Deeds office to check if there were restrictions for use of the park property. Discussion ensued regarding the donation of the parkland and the County Board's Parks perpetuity resolution. ***Consensus of the Commission to seek an opinion from counsel; Evans to follow up.***

Barrons inquired if the small parcel across the road from Veronica Valley Park should also be considered for "clean up." Popa said there were no easements issues on the parcel, so there was no need to pursue that effort.

Committee Reports and Recommendations:

- **Myles Kimmerly Park Committee.** Frerichs reported that the Wildlife and Wetlands Solutions crew recently began cleanup at Myles Kimmerly Park (MKP). Bradley said that the crews are at a standstill due to an equipment failure. He said the cleanup is about 20 percent done. The emergency “E” trail has been excavated and crews will return to smooth it out. He said work began on the disc golf course, but chippers and other equipment are needed for that area. Frerichs remarked the plan was to use a forestry mulcher on the “E” trail, but there were so many rocks and logs that they ended up using an excavator, which dug up the turf. A bulldozer will be used to smooth out the turf prior to chipping. Frerichs added that the park looks rough now, but will look fine when completed.

Frerichs turned over the floor to Smith for an update on the Grub Shack. Smith reported that he asked the Building Safety Department for assistance related to the shack’s renovation. A site visit was performed with Bradley; County Administrator Chet Janik; Inspector Jon Hedgcock; and Maintenance Director Jerry Culman II. Hedgcock’s finding consisted of a litany of major failures pertaining to the structural integrity of the building, but not including electrical. The foundation is inadequate – it is on blocks and has been that way since 1972. The structure is falling off the foundation; the roof joist appears to be rotten and is not made from treated material; there is a broken pane; the roof is completely worn out; the ceiling is falling; and the roof eaves are rotten. Hedgcock said it would be better to tear down and remove the structure. He added that an RFP would not be pursued until there is further discussion. He referenced a letter issued by Interim Building Official Amber Weber (letter is available at the following link - https://www.leelanau.gov/downloads/notice_no_e21_0085_mkp_grubshack_06162021.pdf).

County Administrator Chet Janik said the MKP Grub Shack has been an issue for the nine years he has been with the County, and Culman had said it has been an issue for much longer. Janik said after last month’s discussion, he had asked Hedgcock to prepare a summary of repairs that are needed. Janik said that because the shack has significant structural issues, it is probably not worth saving and, from a cost perspective, it would be better to tear down and rebuild something that better suits the needs of the park. He was surprised at the amount of decay. Janik noted a memo from then-Building Official Glenn Dempsey, that had echoed many of the concerns (on file).

Frerichs said he thought that the County should tear down the shack immediately with no further pursuit of a bid for renovation, but he said the Parks & Rec Commission does not have the funds to tear down the structure. Janik said it would be up to this Commission to make a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners.

Frerichs said he plans to have signage updated for all three parks by the end of the summer pending receipt of the new aerial photos, also due by the end of summer. He said he hopes to get these items paid out of this year’s budget.

Frerichs also reported that as part of the 2022 budget, he had submitted two items for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for MKP; the dog park at (an estimated) \$40,000.00; and a paved loop trail at \$200,000.00 to \$400,000.00 – these two items the Committee feels strongly

about. In addition, he said the ballfields at the park need refurbishing. He said he would add this project to next year's budget if it cannot be done this year.

Smith asked if they needed to make a decision today regarding the Grub Shack. Frerichs responded that the Committee would meet later to discuss this further.

Per the request by Stier (under public comment), Chairman Noonan appointed Frerichs to the Poor Farm Barn Committee and solicited for another volunteer from the Committee. Lautner volunteered to serve on the new committee; Noonan or Christensen to follow up.

- Old Settlers Park Committee. Lautner reported that since its creation in 1892, the Old Settlers Picnic Association (OSPA) has held "the County picnic" every year on the first Sunday in August at the park. The Association sells tickets and organizes a community picnic and the Masonic Lodge comes in and cooks the meal for the event. Last year, there was no picnic due to the pandemic. This year's picnic is scheduled for August 1, 2021. This year, the Masons are not willing to provide the meal due to the risk of a shutdown and being stuck with food they are unable to use; therefore, the OSPA is asking permission to have a one-time allowance for food trucks to come into the park and sell food for the event. The public can either purchase food from the food trucks or provide their own meals. The OSPA asked permission of the County Board via a Late Addition, and it was unanimously approved at last night's Regular Session.

Motion by Lautner that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve a one-time allowance for food truck services at the August 1, 2021, Old Settlers Park picnic. Seconded by Smith and Popa.

Discussion – Barrons asked how many trucks were approved for the event, and Lautner responded that a maximum of four trucks were approved. The OSPA will select which food trucks will participate. Lautner added that the food truck operators must work with the County to ensure their licensing and liability insurance is in order.

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

No – 0

Motion Passes.

- Veronica Valley Park Committee. Barrons reported that he met with the couple who operate the City Girls Farm to discuss using goats for invasive weed eradication at Veronica Valley Park (VVP). Barrons explained the process, adding he does not have a firm schedule at this time and is waiting to see if the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians two percent allocation request is approved by the Tribe for use on this project.

Barrons also reported that the Savin Lake Services crew arrived on June 3, 2021, and determined weed spraying was unnecessary at the park ponds as there was no evidence of milfoil in the fishing pond. The techs will be back in three weeks to inspect the pond again to determine if treatment is necessary. The Savin contract is good for one year, but does not include spraying in the two back ponds. Barrons said that because it would take so little

herbicide to spray in the two back ponds, the techs would spray at no additional charge. He added that all three ponds have numerous fish and there is evidence of over-wintering.

Barrons continued, saying the principal weed is Chara, which is nonnative. There may be some manual pond clearing done from shore. He said Savin carries weed cutting and removal tools and that he will be following up with the Lake Leelanau Lake Association for volunteers for pond cleanup using these tools. More comments followed. Christensen cautioned that the tools should be thoroughly cleaned between each pond clearing to avoid cross-contamination.

2022 Budget Discussion:

- **Veronica Valley Park.** Barrons reported he had submitted the parking lot upgrade to the CIP. The first “big ticket” project he would like included in next year’s budget is the parking lot upgrade, which includes narrowing the entrance to make the parking lot smaller to reduce maintenance, and upgrading the Porta-potty service; estimated cost is \$80,000.00 above what is budgeted.

Barrons added that a Request for Proposals (RFP) would soon be published to have the fishing access safety pathway enhanced around the old putting green on the main pond; estimated verbal quote is \$15,000.00. Discussion followed. Barrons said that is a project they would like to move on this year. Chairman Noonan advised to add this project to the budget for next year as well, so if it is not completed this year, it will be slated for 2022. ***Barrons to add this project to the County CIP soon.***

Lautner remarked on the proposed fishing platform, will increase usage of the park and she does support that. We have talked a trail for years at Myles Kimmerly Park, and she would love to see that get off the ground and hopefully it will be paved. She questioned the expense of the parking lot upgrade towards increasing park usage. We will be putting the culvert in this year (at VVP), which will naturally narrow the parking lot. Lautner asked if improvements could be done in-house, with hedge plantings and other GreenScaping. Barrons justified that the upgrade in that it would improve the quality of park experience as well as park aesthetics. Discussion ensued on current parking lot dimensions, maintenance, quality of experience, and curb appeal. Christensen provided an opinion on GreenScaping and the need to enhance and not obscure the view of the park.

Robbins commented that it is important to consider future growth of the County before downsizing the parking lot. He said the burden of snowplowing the existing lot size could be managed by plowing a smaller area that is consistent with less park usage in the winter. Barrons responded the decision to move for a smaller lot came from personal observations from Committee members. Outside of Kids’ Fishing Day, the most vehicles he has ever seen is eight at one time. Popa referenced a handout (not provided), and outlined the reasons for the revamped parking lot configuration and the stages the Committee had approved. He

Popa responded that reducing the parking lot size would not only reduce maintenance, but it would make the parking lot safer with improved traffic flow. He provided justification for the proposed plan, and added that there is ample space for expansion of the parking lot should

future growth necessitate the need. Discussion ensued. Barrons asked and Robbins responded we have other things to do before paving this parking lot. Frerichs added paving isn't as environmentally friendly as gravel. More comments followed; discussion ensued.

Lautner said she did not support an \$80,000.00 expense for the parking lot upgrade; she thought that there were less expensive options to explore. Robbins inquired about the number of designated ADA parking spaces in the parking lot. Popa responded that accessible parking will be determined at the time of striping. Walter discussed code specifications. Barrons asked and Walter affirmed those spaces do not need to be paved.

- Myles Kimmerly Park. Frerichs stated that he submitted the dog park to the CIP; the estimated cost is \$40,000.00.

Frerichs also added that the proposed paved loop trail along the recreational area was designed to accommodate seniors, joggers, tykes on bikes, wheelchairs, and baby carriages. He said this project is in the five-year plan and is of significant interest to the community. Frerichs said these are the two projects he would like added to the 2022 budget. More comments followed. Smith commented on the existing grub shack issue. Discussion followed on the proposed dog park.

- Old Settlers Park. Lautner commented on an upcoming flag-raising at Old Settlers, though she was uncertain of the date.

Chairman Noonan said he would like to add projects to Capital Outlay for each of the parks, but he has nothing for Old Settlers Park. Lautner said the park is overdue for playground equipment. Christensen suggested adding irrigation at that park. Lautner suggested bringing in the goats to eat the poison ivy on the hillside and around the Binsfeld bench.

Public Comment:

None.

Board Member Comment:

None.

Adjournment:

Motion by Lautner to adjourn. by Commissioner Christensen.

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

No – 0

Motion Passes.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Lori D. Eubanks, Recording Secretary