

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission
Veronica Valley Park Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 15, 2021 – 2:00 p.m.
Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan
Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded
<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2195>

The Veronica Valley Park Committee meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by Committee Chairman, Dave Barrons.

Committee Chairman Barrons waived the reciting of the “Pledge of Allegiance” due to time constraints.

Roll Call: Dave Barrons, *Committee Chairman*
Steve Christensen
John Popa
F. Jon Walter

Staff Present: Jerry Culman, Maintenance Director
Laurel Evans, Executive Assistant

Guests Present:
None.

Public Comment:
None.

Approval of Agenda and Late Additions/Deletions:

Motion by Christensen to accept the agenda as presented. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 4 (Christensen, Popa, Walter, Barrons)

No – 0

Motion Passes.

Public Comment:
None.

Action/Update/Discussion Items –

Approval of Minutes from August 4, 2021, Committee Meeting:

Motion by Walter to approve the August 4, 2021, meeting minutes as submitted. Seconded by Barrons.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 3 (Walter, Barrons, Christensen)

No – 0 Abstain – 1 (Popa)

Motion Passes.

Culvert Replacement:

Popa reported that work had not yet begun on the culvert, adding “maybe in October.” He noted the park entryway would require curbing, but that it would not be completed this year. He said that curbing would include reflectors as a safety measure.

Fishing Access Safety Walkway RFP:

Christensen reported that he was working on the soil erosion permit. Popa said he would provide a sketch to submit with the permit. Committee Chairman Barrons inquired about the start date for Elmer’s work on the fishing walkway. Christensen responded that they would be set to go in about two weeks. Walters inquired about the timing of seeding the walkway after excavation was completed. He was concerned if there would be enough time before winter for the grass to take. Christensen said that annual rye grass, which grows quickly, is typically used in the grass seed mix so he said he was hopeful there would be grass before winter. Barrons asked if the timbers from the County Road Commission had been moved to the park. Popa responded that they were already at the park, but not installed.

Barrons mentioned that Commissioner Smith told him a box spring and mattress set had been dumped along Maple Valley Road near the entrance to Veronica Valley Park. Culman said he already picked it up and took care of it. Evans suggested considering cameras at the parks to monitor illegal dumping. Christensen said this topic has been discussed many times before. He said the concern is who is responsible for reviewing the recording and how often is it done and who maintains the cameras. Barrons said Scott Bradley, Maintenance Worker, talked about creating a frame for dumpsters that would allow the lids to open just wide enough for trash disposal by hand, thereby preventing disposal of large items in the dumpsters. Culman said he would confer with Bradley for further details.

Committee Chairman Barrons asked if waste disposal bins are needed at the parks. Culman said the bins were removed at Old Settlers Park with the exception of when the park hosts special events, at which time disposal bins are brought in. Barrons said that many national parks are removing waste disposal bins or, at least, reducing them, because they create a maintenance issue. Christensen said there is definitely a need for waste containers at the parks. He said because dog waste bags are provided, it creates a need for disposal of them. Walters suggested smaller, plastic receptacles rather than dumpsters. Popa said he did not see the need to take care of other people’s trash. He said the dumpsters are abused, and the public should carry out their own trash. He suggested signage and cameras (working or nonworking), mostly for effect. Evans inquired if there are fines for improper trash disposal. Popa responded there were not. Barrons said he would research the cost for purchasing cameras. Christensen requested that Barrons also research usage, maintenance, video retrieval, and how it is used. Culman suggested looking into solar cameras with a red light to indicate the camera is live. He thought it might improve deterrence.

Evans brought to the attention of the committee an email from Nick Papes representing St. Mary’s cross-country team. The email was sent to Evans on August 25, 2021, and requested the

use of Veronica Valley Park for a St. Mary’s cross-country meet on October 16, 2021, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Motion by Christensen to recommend to the Parks and Rec Commission to approve the October 16, 2021, St. Mary’s cross country meet event at Veronica Valley from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Seconded by Popa.

Ayes – 4 (Christensen, Popa, Walter, Barrons)

No – 0

Motion Passes.

Evans opened a discussion regarding the potential for receipt by the County of \$8.4 million because the state is potentially matching the \$4.2 million the County will receive from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). She said she was not sure if the Parks and Rec Commission would be eligible for some funding, but she thought it was worth a shot based on requests from other government entities. Committee Chairman Barrons asked if the Parks and Rec Commission was behind the curve since others have already submitted requests. Evans thought not. Popa suggested composing a list of projects for potential funding at today’s Parks and Rec Commission meeting (September 15, 2021). Barrons thought the “big-ticket item” for Veronica Valley Park was paving the parking lot. Popa added that the entryway to the park should also be considered along with playground equipment for Old Settlers Park and the soccer pavilion and pickle ball courts at Myles Kimmerly Park.

Evans said as part of the selection process, a public input meeting would be conducted in October (date yet to be determined) and then the Board of Commissioners would determine from there who would receive funding.

Christensen suggested considering a learning center/pavilion at Veronica Valley Park for submission for ARPA funding since it has been “in the mix for some time.” Culman added that a septic field has already been installed at the park.

Committee Chairman Barrons asked what the priority should be; another pavilion or paving the parking lot. He questioned if the County needed another pavilion and asked who would create the educational panels for the learning center and do all the related work. Evans suggested approaching partnerships with groups who could provide expertise. She also suggested conducting surveys using Survey Monkey to gather input from the public about what enhancements or improvements they would like to see in the County’s parks. She said a scan code specific to each park could be placed on a document on signboards at the parks to collect input.

Committee Chairman Barrons asked where the paved trail at Myles Kimmerly Park falls in priority compared to other priorities mentioned. Popa said the paved trail would be a “huge cost.” He estimated a quarter of a million dollars. Popa added he liked the idea of using gravel versus paving the parking lot at Veronica Valley Park. He estimated the cost would be \$4,000.00 - \$5,000.00 for gravel.

Committee Chairman Barrons said he was unclear where the committee stood on projects for submission for ARPA funding versus items for the current budget. Christensen said they could clarify projects and funding at the Parks and Rec Commission meeting.

Committee Chairman Barrons wrapped up the meeting by recounting the follow-up he needed to do; research cameras for the waste disposal areas at the parks including cost and maintenance; check on the status of the new ortho photos so the committee can move forward with signage at the parks; and look into Survey Monkey for public input on park improvements. (Barrons and Evans to discuss off-line.)

Public Comment:

None.

Board Member Comments:

None.

Adjournment:

Motion by Christensen to adjourn. Seconded by Walter.

Ayes – 3 (Christensen, Popa, Walter, Barrons)

No – 0

Motion Passes.

The meeting adjourned to the call of Chairman Barrons at 2:53 p.m.

Lori Eubanks, Recording Secretary