

Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission

Regular Session – Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Tentative Minutes – Meeting Recorded

Leelanau County Government Center, Suttons Bay, Michigan

<https://www.leelanau.gov/meetingdetails.asp?MAId=2218>

The meeting of the Leelanau County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Commission Vice-Chairman Barrons at 3:03 p.m.

Vice-Chairman Barrons led the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

Roll Call:

Dave Barrons, *Vice-Chairman*
Steve Christensen
Don Frerichs
Melinda Lautner
Casey Noonan, *Chairman (Absent)*
John Popa
Rick Robbins
Michael Smith
F. Jon Walter *(Absent/Excused)*
Todd Yeomans

Staff Present:

Laurel Evans, Executive Assistant *(Absent)*
W. Scott Bradley, Maintenance Worker

Public Comment:
None.

Agenda Additions/Deletions:

Lautner requested to add to the agenda, “Recommendation for Purchase of Playground Equipment at Old Settlers Park.” Motion by Barrons to approve the agenda, as amended. Seconded by Lautner.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 8 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Yeomans)

No – 0 Absent – 2 (Noonan, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Action Items –

Approval of Minutes – Special Session, August 18, 2021:

Barrons and Lautner said they did not read the Special Session minutes from August 18, 2021. Frerichs questioned if there was a special session on August 18, 2021, adding that he could not find the minutes. These minutes were not approved. Lautner requested to have these minutes resent to the Commissioners.

Approval of Minutes – Regular Session, September 15, 2021:

Motion by Lautner to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of September 15, 2021, as presented. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 8 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Yeomans)

No – 0 Absent – 2 (Noonan, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Financial Reports:

Bradley presented the financial reports (Revenue & Expense Report, period ending September 30, 2021, and Transaction History Listing Report, dated September 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021). He reported that expenses are at 73.04% of budget. He added a major addition not reflected in the financials was \$16,500.00 for the Veronica Valley project. Bradley confirmed the bill from Elmer's Crane and Dozer, Inc., in the amount of \$28,500.00 was paid and also not reflected in the financials. Bradley also added that the expenses from the Grub Shack removal at Myles Kimmerly Park were not reflected on the financials, and he estimated the cost for the grub shack removal to be \$2,600.00, and \$1,500.00 for electrical.

Motion by Christensen to approve the Financial Reports, as presented. Seconded by Smith.

Discussion – None.

Ayes – 8 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Yeomans)

No – 0 Absent – 2 (Noonan, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Committee Reports and Recommendations:

Myles Kimmerly Park Committee. Grub Shack Project – Frerichs reported that Bradley was doing a great job coordinating the water and electrical disconnects prior to removal of the grub shack. He added that replacement of the grub shack is pending as the cost of new building and placement of the new shack are to be determined.

Loop Trail Update – Frerichs said paving the loop trail was too expensive to do without assistance with funding. Trying to get a feel for if the locals were interested in raising funds, he unsuccessfully tried to set a meeting with the Maple City Lions Club. Lautner said she asked the County Board to consider awarding \$200,000.00 towards the trail from the \$4.2 million ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) dollars to be received by the County. She said that although the Board did not say no, she explained that there were other entities vying for the dollars that may take higher priority. Bradley said he mowed the trail and people are walking it. He noted that the loop trail is in the (approved County Parks) Five-Year Plan and has been for a long time. Christensen said when public input was solicited for park improvements, a one-mile loop at Myles Kimmerly Park was highly supported. Robbins thought the project should start with a smaller scope – get a bid for a three-quarter mile section and present that to that to the County Board. He thought once the trail had been started, the public would put pressure on the County Board to extend it. Christensen suggested calling a special meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission to construct a recommendation to present to the County Board. Frerichs said he sent an itemized list to the County Board that included all projects on the Myles Kimmerly Park list of improvements.

Pit Toilet Removal/Replacement – Frerichs said Maintenance Director Jerry Culman asked during public comment at the September 15, 2021, commission meeting that the Parks and

Recreation Commission consider doing away with the pit toilets at Myles Kimmerly because he felt they were a hazard. Frerichs said he was ambivalent and asked for input from the group. Bradley said he did not see the danger. Lautner said she felt they were a hazard and would like to see them gone. Bradley said ideally, he would like flush toilets and added that he gets asked a lot why Leelanau County does not have nice restrooms like they have in the Village of Northport and Elmwood Township. Bradley said maintenance for these restrooms is contracted out. Christensen asked if Bradley could get an estimate for the cost to contract out cleaning them so they would have that information for future discussions. More discussion to follow.

Old Settlers Park Committee.

Purchase of Playground Equipment –

Motion by Christensen to move forward with research to determine if there is money left in the 2021 budget to purchase playground equipment for Old Settlers Park. Seconded by Popa.

Discussion – Lautner said she would come back to the Parks and Recreation Commission in November with a firm price for the playground equipment. Smith suggested getting a warranty for the slides because they tend to crack. Frerichs suggested asking the playground equipment company if they would guarantee the sale price if the purchase of equipment could not be completed at the same time due to budgeting constraints.

Ayes – 8 (Barrons, Christensen, Frerichs, Lautner, Popa, Robbins, Smith, Yeomans)

No – 0 Absent – 2 (Noonan, Walter)

Motion Passes.

Lautner said at some future meeting, she would be requesting barriers be installed between the swing set and the parking lot and around the area near the Port-a-potties for safety reasons. Bradley said that he preferred boulders be used for the barriers.

Veronica Valley Park Committee. Barrons reported that the fishing walkway has been completed with an extra, unexpected addition to the walkway – a connection to the parking lot. Lautner suggested a fish food dispenser be installed at the park. There was great enthusiasm among the group for this idea. Christensen shared a photo he took of two Traverse City school busses that brought kids to the park who were swarming the fishing pond. Robbins said he would ask Executive Assistant Laurel Evans to put the pictures in the agenda packet for the next County Commission meeting. Barrons and Christensen commended Popa for overseeing the fish walkway project. The entire Commission agreed it was a project well done that the community would enjoy for years to come.

Barrons reported that the culvert at the entrance to Veronica Valley Park will be installed this year (2021) and curbing the entrance will be the next step in 2022. Planning for future enhancements to the parking lot (to pave or leave as is with gravel) will be ongoing.

Barrons also reported that U.S. Fish & Wildlife is interested in collaborating with the Parks and Recreation Commission to seed more prairie grass at Veronica Valley Park (Phase II). He explained wildflower seeding may or may not occur because the prairie grass, being the more dominant plant, overtakes the wildflowers as evidenced from Phase I seeding.

Barrons added that it is possible that weed management utilizing the goats will be an option in 2022. He said that Bill Watson of Child & Family Services wants to resubmit the application for two percent allocation funds from the Tribal Council of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to pay for this endeavor. Watson had said he thought there was a good chance of getting the award.

Public Comments:

None.

Commissioner Comments:

- Robbins suggested for submission to the County Board, a shorter, prioritized list that includes the walking trail at Myles Kimmerly Park and the playground equipment for Old Settlers Park. He thought submitting a shorter list might improve the odds of approval.
- Barrons wondered if the group should discuss changing the meeting schedule for 2022. Christensen said the topic should be added to the December (2021) agenda. Christensen also asked Lautner to coordinate with Barrons a special November Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. Barrons corrected Christensen's directive and asked that Lautner coordinate the special meeting with Noonan "who is the chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee." He added that he really does not want to be the chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission – "overall."
- Popa said regarding flush toilets, keep in mind these facilities would only be used 90 to 100 days and would require winterizing each season then reopening them in the spring around Mothers' Day. Popa also expressed his support for the purchase of the playground equipment for (Old Settlers) Park. He said it has been a long time coming and that he wanted to see it done. Lastly, Popa said "to keep your fingers crossed" that no complications are presented with the installation of the culvert at the entrance of Veronica Valley Park. He said there could be gas or utility lines discovered that might create a problem.

Adjournment:

Motion by Smith to adjourn. Seconded by Christensen.

The meeting adjourned to the call of Vice-Chair Barrons at 3:55 p.m.

Lori D. Eubanks, Recording Secretary