

Annual Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Approved Minutes

- Date:** January 7, 2009
- Time:** 4:00 p.m.
- Place:** Fillmore Complex, Conference Room D
- Present:** Paul Geerlings, Phil Kuyers, Ted Bosgraaf, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Joyce Kortman, Ray Statema, David Van Ginhoven and Jim Miedema.
- Absent:** Roger Jonas
- Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development; Sherry Costello, Administrative Clerk; Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent; and Chip Francke, Park Naturalist and Information Specialist.
- Guests:** Joyce Smith and Dennis Eade

John Scholtz called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and called for nominations for 2009 Commission officers. Geerlings, representing the Nominating Committee, nominated the following slate of officers for 2009: President – Ted Bosgraaf; Vice President – Bobbi Jones Sabine; Secretary – Phil Kuyers. Scholtz called for additional nominations three consecutive times.

Subject: Election of President

- PR 09-01 Motion: To close the nominations and elect Ted Bosgraaf to the office of President of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission for 2009.
- Moved by: Geerlings Supported by: Statema Unanimous

Subject: Election of Vice President

- PR 09-02 Motion: To close the nominations and elect Bobbi Jones Sabine to the office of Vice President of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission for 2009.
- Moved by: Geerlings Supported by: Kortman Unanimous

Subject: Election of Secretary

PR 09-03 Motion: To close the nominations and elect Phil Kuyers to the office of Secretary of the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission for 2009.
Moved by: Geerlings Supported by: Miedema Unanimous

Subject: Approval of Minutes

PR 09-04 Motion: To approve the minutes of the Commission's December 3, 2008 regular meeting.
Moved by: Geerlings Supported by: Sabine Unanimous

Subject: Timber Sale Bids

PR 09-05 Motion: To approve the timber sale bid from Biewer Sawmill Inc. for logging at VanBuren Street Dunes, Robinson Forest, Hiawatha Forest and Hemlock Crossing in the amount of \$46.00/cord and forward to the Board of Commissioners.
Moved by: Kortman Supported by: Geerlings Unanimous

Subject: 2009 Park Marina Lease Rate

PR 09-06 Motion: To approve the 2009 Parkside Marina lease rate to remain the same as the 2008 rate of \$13,500.
Moved by: Kortman Supported by: Miedema Unanimous

Subject: Go Into Closed Session

PR 09-07 Motion: To go into Closed Session to discuss property matters.
Moved by: Kuyers Supported by: Geerlings
Yeas: Bosgraaf, Sabine, Kuyers, Geerlings, Kortman, Statema, Miedema and Van Ginhoven.
Nays: None Motion passed 8 to 0.

Subject: To Rise From Closed Session

PR 09-08 Motion: To rise from Closed Session.
Moved by: Kuyers Supported by: Statema Unanimous

Other Items Discussed:

President Bosgraaf welcomed and introduced new Parks Commission member David Van Ginhoven who gave a brief summary about himself.

Commission members received the December 9, 2008 letter from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regarding the Olive Shores Design & Engineering project. Scholtz explained that Parks has been awarded a \$20,000 Coastal management grant that will fund the development of the master plan and first phase construction drawings when the Olive Shores property is purchased.

Commission members reviewed comment cards and email comments received since the previous meeting. Bosgraaf responded to a comment card that requested an annual pass for Pigeon Creek. A brief discussion occurred regarding the feasibility of offering annual passes for equipment rental and potential issues with this type of pass.

Bosgraaf called for the public to be heard and Ms. Joyce Smith, a resident of Black Lake Walk in Holland spoke. She wanted to address a recent negative article that had been published in a local paper regarding the Parks and wanted to commend the Commission and staff for all of the work they have done for Ottawa County and expressed her support for the Parks Department.

Mr. Dennis Eade, a resident of Timberlee Drive in Holland, spoke next. He explained that the organization he represents, Holland Steelheaders, has been awarded a grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) to construct a fishing station on Ottawa Beach Road at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) launch ramp. The GLFT has awarded the group \$96,000 for the project and additional funds are needed to match the grant. He requested permission to submit a proposal to the Parks Commission requesting assistance with the cost of the project. Bosgraaf noted that the Commission will look into whether the county can legally contribute funds in this situation.

Commission members reviewed the report of the Parks and Recreation Commission expenditures through November 30, 2008.

President Bosgraaf moved to the Director's report. Scholtz complimented staff on the revamping of the office's filing system and distributed an example of the North Ottawa Dunes donor wall recognition letter and post card requesting verification of donor names. He reported that due to inclement weather the planned visit to the Triick farm to review the potential location for the Musketawa Trail Extension had to be postponed. Scholtz suggested that the next planning meeting may be a good time to reschedule the visit. He recommended that all members of the Commission attend the visit as it is important that all involved have as much information as possible in order to make the best recommendation to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners. Scholtz moved on to the Wolfert property and questioned members if leasing the property for farming while restoration options are explored is a possibility. Bosgraaf observed that the land had flooded twice last year and expressed concern over water quality. He suggested planting it with a cheap cover crop. Kuyers suggested finding a farmer that would plant hay as

that would be the best type of crop to use in this area. He also stated that Parks would need to give a five year commitment in order for the farmer to recover the cost of the seed used. Sabine expressed her concern of losing any grants if the property was not farmed in the future. Scholtz will review and research the CREP program to see if the property qualifies and will bring it to the next Planning Committee meeting for further review.

Scholtz then directed Commission members to the copy of the letter to the editor that was included in the Commission packets regarding the viewpoint that Parks should not be buying park land in these difficult economic times. He reported that he had quite a number of people comment on it, although few agreed with its basic premise. Scholtz commented that the point needs to be made that Parks is planning for the long term and it is important to stay on course. Statema stated that Ottawa County is the envy of other counties with respect to its park system. However, the more land we purchase, the more we need to maintain. At some point, the scale tips and we need to know when we have reached that point. Scholtz responded that the long-range budget projection allows the Parks Commission to see the impact of maintenance costs so we avoid over extending our commitments. Statema emphasized he is supportive of our long-range goals but wants to be cautious. Bosgraaf would like to respond to the letter within the next 45 days. Sabine will collaborate with Scholtz for a response letter.

Commission member Geerlings questioned the letter to Mr. Kent Rubley of the Ottawa County Road Commission requesting the ability to put a simple pathway under the Eastmanville Bridge on the south side of the Grand River. Scholtz explained that this would allow hikers a means of traveling from one property to the other without having to cross the busy roadway. Bosgraaf questioned the liability it may present and Geerlings commented that the river flows higher now than it did several years ago. Scholtz will get feedback from the Road Commission and follow up at a future meeting.

Bosgraaf then asked Mazurek if he had anything to add to the Park Operations Report for Commission members and Mazurek asked if there were questions. Bosgraaf noted that there were several wonderful comments regarding the Santa at the Weaver House event hosted by the Friends of Ottawa County Parks.

Bosgraaf called for Old Business as there were no committee reports to review and TerHaar asked if there were any questions on the project update report that was submitted. Having no questions, Bosgraaf asked Scholtz to update Commission members on the Olive Shores Acquisition Project. Scholtz reported that he was forced to extend rather than exercise the options because DNR approval did not come by the end of the year. An Extension of Option to Purchase the property had to be sought due to the expiration of the original option. The extensions will run through the end of March, 2009. Scholtz felt that the approval to move ahead from the State could come anytime.

Bosgraaf called on Chip Francke, Parks Naturalist, to update members on the Nature Education Center. Francke reported that the contract with Jay Peters of Development Strategies has now expired but we are inching closer to our fundraising goals. He stated that Parks is receiving small donations daily in the mail. He reported that additional

logging revenues would add approximately \$70,000. The estimated cost of the project is \$1,685,000 and the balance needed to start construction is \$272,425. Francke hoped to have bid packages out by late January with a due date in February with the hopes that they would come in lower than anticipated due to the bidding environment.

Commission members received the bids for the red pine timber sales at Robinson Forest, Hiawatha Forest and VanBuren Dunes. Biewer Saw Mill was the successful bidder. Scholtz also explained that Biewer would add Hemlock Crossing to the contract at the same per cord price if desired. Commission members agreed to add Hemlock Crossing to the contract and Biewer Saw Mill was approved as the successful bidder by motion.

Bosgraaf called for review of the Park 12 Marina Lease rate for 2009. After a brief discussion of the marina area, a decision was made by motion to keep the lease rate the same as 2008 which was \$13,500.

The Parks Commission went into Closed Session to discuss property matters.

Meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.