

## Regular Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission

*Approved Minutes*

**Date:** April 1, 2009

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

**Place:** Fillmore Complex, Conference Room E

**Present:** Ted Bosgraaf, Bobbi Jones Sabine, Ray Statema, Roger Jonas, Jim Miedema, David Van Ginhoven, Paul Geerlings, Phil Kuyers and David Vander Kooi.

**Absent:** Joyce Kortman

**Staff:** John Scholtz, Director; Curt TerHaar, Coordinator of Park Planning and Development; Sherry Costello, Administrative Clerk; and Dave Mazurek, Park Operations Superintendent.

**Guests:** Joyce Smith

### **Subject: Approval of Minutes**

PR 09-23      Motion:            To approve the minutes of the Commission's March 4, 2009 regular meeting.  
Moved by:      Statema            Supported by: Kuyers            Unanimous

### **Subject: Naming of Nature Education Center**

PR 09-24      Motion:            To name the new building to be constructed at Hemlock Crossing the Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center.  
Moved by:      Statema            Supported by: Geerlings            Unanimous

### **Subject: Go Into Closed Session**

PR 09-25      Motion:            To go into Closed Session to discuss property matters.  
Moved by:      Kuyers            Supported by: Van Ginhoven  
Yeas:            Bosgraaf, Kuyers, Geerlings, Statema, Sabine, Van Ginhoven, Jonas and Miedema.  
Nays:            None                Motion passed 8 to 0.

**Subject: To Rise From Closed Session**

PR 09-26      Motion:            To rise from Closed Session.  
                 Moved by:      Geerlings            Supported by: Statema            Unanimous

**Other Items Discussed:**

Vice President Sabine called the meeting to order by roll call and asked for any additions or deletions to the agenda. Statema requested to add a brief Friends report.

Commission members received the communication dated March 24, 2009 from Chris Allen regarding ADA issues at the Mt. Pisgah dune stairs. Scholtz distributed an *Excerpt from Mt. Pisgah Dune Protection Project* that described the barrier free compliance rationale for construction of the dune stairs. TerHaar referred to a comment in the letter regarding the dune steps and explained Mr. Allen's concern in detail. He also reviewed possible solutions. Commission members discussed Mr. Allen's concern and felt staff and committees should give the matter further review.

Scholtz announced the Special Parks District Forum to take place June 9 – 12, 2009 in Lake County Forest Preserves (north of Chicago). Scholtz explained that he wasn't sure how many staff could attend as there was a 20% reduction in the Conferences and Travel Budget for 2009. Bosgraaf, Sabine and Statema expressed interest in attending. Scholtz requested Commission members let him know within the next week if they are interested in attending.

Commission members reviewed the emails received since the previous meeting and Scholtz explained that a flyer had been distributed by an unknown person to area residents by Riley Trails regarding the possible cutting of the red pines at the park. They also listed Commissioner Disselkoen and Kuyers email addresses for feedback. Scholtz responded to emails as they were forwarded to him. Van Ginhoven commended Scholtz for the responses he gave and thought they were very informative. Kuyers suggested taking pictures of the red pines showing the public what happens when they are not maintained properly. Sabine expressed concern regarding the public perception of people who are not informed of the situation and thought a letter could be sent to residents in the surrounding area. TerHaar suggested an informative sign by the trailhead. Scholtz suggested bringing it to one of the standing committees for further discussion.

Sabine moved on to Public Comment and Ms. Joyce Smith commented on the red pine topic. She expressed the importance of bringing a higher level of understanding to the public. Kuyers suggested re-running a past article that was very informative about the red pines in the newspaper. Statema expressed the importance of dispelling any preconceived ideas that may be forming. Sabine also commented that cutting red pines is part of the Parks' long-term plan to transition sites back to their natural ecosystems.

Commission members reviewed the report of the Parks and Recreation Commission expenditures through February 28, 2009.

Vice President Sabine moved on to the Director's report and Scholtz updated the Commission on the purchase of the Seidman property. He then reminded Commission

members that a name had not yet been decided upon for the Nature Education Center as the hopes of having a large donor come through did not transpire. Scholtz suggested referring the naming possibilities to the Public Relations Committee for recommendations. He also mentioned that the name of Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center had been suggested. Jonas and Sabine expressed their support for the suggested name and Bosgraaf asked if “at Hemlock Crossing” should be considered as well. Scholtz suggested that it be used along with the name but not part of the formal name. Sabine also expressed her support for using Ottawa County Parks in the name as she felt it strengthens the Parks’ identity. A motion was made and supported to name the building The Ottawa County Parks Nature Education Center.

Sabine moved on to the Parks Operations Report and asked if Mazurek had anything to add. Bosgraaf inquired as to the timing of opening the parks when warm weather comes around. Mazurek reported that they do their best to have bathroom facilities open by April 1<sup>st</sup> at Hager Park and have bathroom facilities open and available at remaining sites by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Sabine called for Old Business and TerHaar presented a plan view of the North Ottawa Dunes donor wall concept and noted a project completion date of May 22, in time for a potential May 30 dedication date. Scholtz added that a tentative morning time had been discussed with possible hikes and other activities to follow but final details had not yet been worked out. There was consensus to have the dedication on May 30.

Bosgraaf inquired about the status of adding an irrigation system at Black Lake and TerHaar updated members on the project. The planning Committee will discuss the matter in more detail and develop a recommendation.

TerHaar then updated Commission members on the Nature Education Center construction. Sabine asked if there would be the potential for a groundbreaking ceremony. Bosgraaf thought the ceremony could possibly take place at the end of the month. Jonas recommended having the ceremony on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Van Ginhoven thought it would be a nice picture opportunity. Sabine expressed her appreciation to the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners who unanimously approved the project.

Sabine than asked for an Olive Shores update and Scholtz reported that the Highley closing had taken place and the Seidman property should be complete within a few days.

Statema then updated members on the Friends report. He encouraged members to join in on the Earth Day activities that would be taking place on April 18. He also reported that the Friends are continuing to work on the Re-Use/Re-Sale at Eastmanville Farm, photo contest and the Grand Lady boat tour. Scholtz reported that he has the list of invitees for the tour and to please let staff know if you plan to attend the event on May 21.

Commission members received the proposals for consulting services for the Holland Harbor Fishing Access project. TerHaar reported that there are four consultants that staff works with regularly who have submitted proposals. Scholtz did not feel that ample time was available to review each proposal in detail to make a recommendation today and suggested delaying the decision until the May meeting. There was consensus to wait for a recommendation at the May meeting.

Commission members received the draft Requests for Proposals for the Farm Park Feasibility Study. Scholtz stated that the proposal was a preliminary one and he would be submitting it to the Farm Bureau and MSU Extension after a few more days of review.

Sabine called for discussion of the proposed Equipment and Personnel Requests for the 2010 Budget. Scholtz reviewed each item on the list. Bosgraaf questioned the proposed sign making system and its cost. After a brief discussion, members decided to review the requests at a Finance and Personnel Committee meeting and have them bring a recommendation to the Parks Commission for review at the May meeting. Scholtz and Mazurek will compile additional information needed and bring to the Committee for further discussion.

Sabine asked for Public Comment and Ms. Joyce Smith recommended that staff set up specific criteria to evaluate wave action and hydrology for the Holland Harbor Fishing Access Project to assess how the project will affect the addition and removal of current structures. She recommended several test sites that could assist in the planning.

Sabine asked for any comments from Commission members and Bosgraaf noted the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 22 at 10:00 am.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.