

**JACKSON COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION
1992 WARREN AVENUE
JACKSON, MICHIGAN 49203**

January 04, 2017

CALL TO ORDER: Mike Way, Chairman at 7:58 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present: Cmr. **Beaman, DuBois, Lloyd, Price, Seitz, Shotwell, Snyder, Torres, and Way**
Excused: Cmr. **Polaczyk**
Ex-Officio: **Jeff Hovarter**, Parks Director
Staff: **Becky Humphrey, Kyle Lewis, Mark Vysoky**
Visitors: **Debra Kubitskey**, Assistant County Administrator, **Connie Poisson, Jr.** Achievement, and **Roger Gaede**

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2017

Chairman

Cmr. DuBois nominated to re-elect Cmr. Way for Chairman of the Parks Board Commission.
Moved by DuBois, supported by Price to nominate Cmr. **Way** for Chairman. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman

Cmr. Shotwell nominated Cmr. Seitz for Vice Chair of the Parks Board Commission.
Moved by Shotwell, supported by Lloyd to nominate Cmr. **Seitz** for Vice-Chair. Motion carried.

Secretary

Cmr. Shotwell nominated Cmr. Polaczyk as Secretary for the Parks Board Commission.
Moved by Shotwell, supported by Seitz to nominate Cmr. **Polaczyk** for Secretary. Motion carried.

Moved by Shotwell, supported by Torres to cast a unanimous ballot for all three officers. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Lloyd, supported by Torres to approve the January 04, 2017 agenda with the addition of Business Item h. Grand River Kayak Canoeing Donations. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Price, supported by Snyder to approve the December 2016 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

Moved by Snyder, supported by Torres to approve use of the The Cascades parking lot for the 2016 Junior Achievement Grand Prix event with the contingency of a Park Event Agreement. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Gaede – I really like: Early in the month meetings; Grants will be able to be submitted timely; would like to see a couple of appropriation requests for Vineyard Lake, one of them would be to put proper restrooms in even though the well was plugged; and Knutson wants to put in a handicap fishing pier.

Correction to the minutes: Director's Staff Report – Paragraph #1, 3rd line up, change “The” to “They”.
Correction to cover page to naming rights on Staff Report: Number IV. Recommendation – Approval of the
“Naming Rights” policy as presented . . . not “Special Events” policy.

COMMUNICATIONS – No Communications

DIRECTOR'S STAFF REPORT

1. The first phase of the Cascades Splash Pad construction has been halted for the winter. The contractor, 5Leprechauns, is on schedule and has completed the well, pump house, and site work necessary to ready the site for spring installation of the pad and spray features. In regard to the second part of the project, we received three splash pad design and installation proposals and interviewed two firms. Based on the information gathered, staff will be recommending the Vortex proposal for approval. Vortex is a national firm whose offices are located in Williamston, Michigan. They will be installing the actual play features, the pumps and surfacing for the splash pad. I would anticipate they will begin work in mid-March if weather permits. We are on schedule to open the new Family Spray Park on or near June 14, 2017.
2. With the addition of the new Splash Park at the Cascades, the south entrance to the Cascades will be closed permanently. That will leave the north entrance as the only location to access the Cascades and the new Splash Park. The current condition of the north entrance is inadequate to handle larger events such as the fireworks shows or Family Night at the Cascades. We are working on a redesign of this entrance area that will include a new box office/ ticket office, an improved entrance/ exist, and a larger gathering plaza with park benches that can handle larger crowds trying to enter or exit the facility. The new plaza area will be the first phase of a future area to be built to recognize “Lead Organizations” who have supported the Cascades Improvements.
3. The Champions Team Fundraising Project to support Cascades improvements continues to move forward. The splash pad construction budget is \$675,000. We now have total commitments nearing \$600,000 and are having very positive discussion with a couple of new prospects who have interest in supporting the project. If those discussions are successful, we should see another \$75,000 to \$100,000 by late January. We have sent out yearend letters requesting additional support of the Cascades Improvements Project to past supporter of the park. We are also delivering a framed and signed 11”x17” picture of the Cascades Fireworks Show photographed by our very own Kenny Price to past Phase I and current Phase II donors making contributions at the \$500 and above level.
4. The Annual Deer Cull to thin the heard in and around Sparks Park (Cascades) and Ella Sharp Park is scheduled for mid- January. Actual preparations will begin January 2nd. Staff will be recommending Park Board approval. This process is often unpopular with the general public but is necessary in urban environments to insure the health of the deer population and as well as the safety of the public.
5. The Brooklyn Chamber Director has made an inquiry regarding the County's willingness to sale a piece of the county owned land on Marshall Road in Columbia Township, just west of the town limits. The Town of Brooklyn is looking for approximately ten acres to build a community center (Senior Center) and Skate Park for the community. The County owns approximately 100 acres at this site. The County Administrator and I have reviewed GIS maps of the property. We have also discussed possible long term strategies for the development of the county parks system that would make this property a very attractive site for a larger regional county park. Staff will continue to work

on a park planning document that should provide the data for developing a long term county parks growth strategy. This is only mentioned as an information item for the Parks Board. There is no immediate action needed.

6. Staff will be proposing a change in the weekly Cascades operating schedule at the January Park Board meeting. The Cascades has been open/ operated seven days a week for most of the summer period Memorial Day to Labor Day over the past two decades. The Monday and Tuesday nights are so lightly attended every week that we actually lose money on these nights. We have more staff on site than visitors to the attraction. The first sixty-five years or so the Cascades did not open on Monday or Tuesday. This time was used to clean the facility. I am going to propose we go back to that five day schedule, opening Wednesday through Sunday. It should create some dialogue ☺ and we will see where it goes. Just wanted to give you a heads up. The new Splash Park would be open all seven days each week.
7. The Lime Lake Project continues to await colder weather so the ground can firm up and we can get the equipment and heavy clay materials into the site. But if the current weather pattern is sustained we should be able to begin this project sometime in January.
8. We finally have a project agreement from MDNR to start work on The Kibby Road Trail Connector Project (connect the Sparks Park trail to the City Trail and Falling Waters Trail). I expect a request for bids will go out in early January and we should have a construction contract for approval on the February Park Board agenda. This project is way behind and we will be hard pressed to meet the funding deadline set of late June 2017 for completion, established as part of the Weatherwax Foundation grant commitment. They have committed \$100,000 to the project. The remaining funds are from the MDNR grant. We will have to see how I can negotiate an acceptable result even if some of the construction details are not quite finished by June 30th.
9. We will be bringing to the Parks Board in January, a request to approve a new “County Parks and Facilities Naming Rights Policy”. In addition, we will be presenting a first draft of a new “County Parks Memorials, Monuments, and Recognitions Policy” for discussion. In September, 2016 the Parks Board placed a moratorium on memorials and recognitions requests for tree planting, benches and ground plaques in county parks.
10. The Parks Board has approved a new monthly meeting day starting January, 2017. The Parks Board meetings will now be held on the first Wednesday of each month. The first meeting will be January 4th. There will be a very short turn around between the December 21st meeting and the January 4th meeting with this transition. Given the fact that the Christmas and New Year’s Holidays occur during this short fourteen day period, there will not be much change in the status of county parks business. Therefore, the January Park Board Packet won’t contain a Director’s Report or financial information. The 2016 Year-end financials will be reviewed at the February 1, 2017 Park Board meeting. The January, 2017 meeting agenda action items will include approval of a new Cascades summer operating schedule, approval of a new Special Events Policy, and the approval of the County Parks Naming Rights Policy.

Moved by DuBois, supported by Torres to receive the Monthly Staff report. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ITEMS -

Special Event Policy

Discussion. Changes. Updates.

Moved by Shotwell, supported by Beaman to approve the Special Event Policy as corrected and upon the Administrator's office sending the policy to be reviewed by legal. Snyder – Nay, Motion carried.

Jr. Achievement Grand Prix Event

Moved by Snyder, supported by Torres to approve the Jr. Achievement Grand Prix event as submitted by Connie Poisson, President, Junior Achievement of the MI Edge. Motion carried.

Naming Rights – Update and Discussion. Tabled.

The Cascades Operating Schedule

Moved by Torres, supported by Lloyd to approve changing The Cascades operating schedule to Wednesday thru Sunday evenings and having the lights, sound and water turned on Mondays and Tuesdays while closed. Motion carried.

County Parks Memorials, Monuments, and Recognitions Policy – Discussion. Tabled until February meeting.

Grand River Kayak Canoeing Donations – Discussion.

DECEMBER 2016 FINANCIALS – At February Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Gaede – Naming examples: Rotary Bandshell, Sparks Park or Cascades Park, which is it?

The county is hiring a Grant Writer. Passport Grants are on the same schedule as other DNR grants and the deadline is April 1st.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Cmr. Price – Earth Day is coming up on April 22, 2017. G.R.E.A.T. and the Conservation District usually have kayaks on the lagoons. They need written consent from the Parks Director to be able to do this if the Parks Director is okay with this.

Cmr. Lloyd – It is with regret that he needs to submit his resignation. He is being deployed very soon and will not be back for 10 – 11 months so he could not adequately serve the Board or Community as it should be. The 2nd regret in having to resign from the Parks Commission Board is he likes the direction that Jeff Hovarter is leading the parks system. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to the call of the Chair at 9:55 a.m.

Mike Way, Chairman

Jackson County Parks Commission