

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

July 20, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: Mike Way, Chairman at 8:00 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present: Cmrs. Alexander, DuBois, Lloyd, Polaczyk, Price, Snyder, Torres, and Way

Excused: Cmrs. Beaman and Seitz

Director: Jeff Hovarter, County Parks Director

Staff: Becky Humphrey

Visitors: Mary Covill, Jackson; Roger Gaede, Brooklyn; Regina Fowler, Grass Lake; Albert McGilvra, Jackson; Tim Stone, Rives Junction; Jim Stormont, Grass Lake; Dan Wymer, Napoleon Twp.; Peter Bormuth, Jackson; Kevin Cotter, Grass Lake; John Tallis, Hanover Twp.; Bruce A. Maxson, Grass Lake; Todd Britain, Leoni Twp.; Eric Rought, Jackson; John Hummer, Exponet; Terry Orban, Jackson; Glenn Brooker, Jackson; Charles Trombley, Jackson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Price, supported by Polaczyk to approve the July 20, 2016 agenda. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Torres, supported by Lloyd to approve the June 2016 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Tallis, Hanover Township Supervisor – Someone is cutting trees, camping out and having fires in Horton Park. An update on the lighting project for Horton County Park – Consumers is finishing up their work, so there should be lights soon.

Albert McGilvra, Friend of Camp Teetonkah and Boy Scout Group – There is a petition that has 500+ signatures to have the ownership of Camp Teetonkah go the Friends of Camp Teetonkah.

Mary Covill, Grass Lake – Resident on Highland Drive, which borders Camp Teetonkah. I am also a lakefront owner on Big Wolf Lake. I have read the County Parks proposal to the BSA and have to admit it wow'd me. The recreational activities and opportunities for a park in close proximity to my home would be nice.

That being said, I have concerns for a Jackson County Park in my backyard. I have seen many of the areas county parks, with and without campgrounds and boat launches, and the maintenance of the facilities leaves a lot to be desired. I am concerned if a campground is opened, what effect it would have on our already aging sewer system, our under maintained roads, and our understaffed police and EMT services in Grass Lake and Leoni Townships. I am very concerned about a public boat launch to

this chain of lakes that would overcrowd our lakes not to mention the manpower from the DNR and Sheriff departments needed to police the increased traffic.

It is my hope that you hear our concerns about what this large piece of property being developed into a campground and a marina would do to our quiet lake and small town atmosphere in addition to our decrease in property values and increase in taxes to pay for the county park. The environmental effects to our lakes and the fallout from a huge influx of visitors could be devastating.

The saddest part of this whole decision facing the BSA is that they will probably accept the County Park proposal because they can walk away with the million and a half endowment. Your proposal to purchase the property after two years of leasing at the market value would put another million in the BSA pockets. It is my hope that the BSA has a moral conscience and makes the right choice to keep Camp Teetonkah the way the original land donors intended it to be used - for youth to enjoy nature in its pristine state and not developed by a county government agency. Thank you.

Anna Fowler, Boy Scout Troop #312 – Strongly opposes Camp Teetonkah becoming a county park. It is rotten and not right to be the only park to be a pay-for-use park. Currently the Boy Scouts can use the camp for free. The proposal has outpriced our youth and it is just wrong!

Dan Wymer, Napoleon Township Supervisor – Oppose if Camp Teetonkah were to become a county park. This is in direct competition with other local businesses.

Kevin Cotter –

- Turning Camp Teetonkah in to another county park presents an additional tax load
- The liability will be excessive
- The county will want an additional millage
- Disagrees with increasing the tax load
- This board should consider politically and morally to support the Friends of Camp Teetonkah and support the youth. The youth are the ones who should benefit.

Terry Orban, adjacent landowner, Friend of Camp Teetonkah – Family has owned their farm for over 100 years. The honorable thing for the county to do is to pull out and make an honorable offer to the Friends of Camp Teetonkah for our youth. How is the county going to take care of this additional park when they can't take care of what they have; other parks are a mess! We do not want the County at Camp Teetonkah.

Roger Gaede, Brooklyn – The longest garage sale in the world is coming up along M-50. Gave out a few brochures for the Irish Hills area.

Peter Bormuth, Jackson Resident –

- Would like to speak for all of the rest of Jackson citizens.
- This is a beautiful opportunity for all the citizens of Jackson and not just a few
- It would be a disaster if the property was given to the Friends of Camp Teetonkah and in a few years they could not support it and it fell into the hands of developers.
- Fully supports the Jackson County Board to acquire the property if the county can afford to maintain it.

Jim Stormont, Grass Lake Supervisor – Supports the Friends of Camp Teetonkah & Spring Arbor University. Wants to keep the park for the youth. The Friends group and Spring Arbor University have great plans for this property and the youth as it was intended.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Email from Margaret Myers/Mike Ager, All Directions Band
Re: Jerry Klima
2. Email from Center Stage Jackson, Denise Weber
Re: 1776 Musical at The Cascades
3. Email from Don Bustamante, Jackson Community IT Director
Re: July 3rd Fireworks at The Cascades
4. **Cascades Park Foundation** minutes of June 21, 2016
5. **Jackson County Parks Association** minutes of June 28, 2016

Moved by Polaczyk, supported by DuBois to receive the communications. Motion Carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. I will be interviewing three candidates for the new Parks Planning & Operations Supervisor position on July 19, 20 & 21, 2016. If that process goes as expected, I would expect to make an offer early the week of July 25, 2016
2. I met with ASTI Environment, the engineering firm doing the design for the Lime Lake Wetland Restoration Project. We should be moving forward with issuing bid documents within the next month. It would be ideal if we could get a construction contract approved at the September County Commission meeting cycle.
3. The fundraising for Cascades Phase II Project Development seems to be picking up momentum with the planned additional of the Splash Pad/ Aquatic Center concept. We have now raised a little over \$400,000 (confirm). The budget for the project is \$675,000. I will be making a presentation to the Kiwanis Club next Friday at Noon along with Commission Chair Shotwell.
4. I have had two conference calls in the past week with folks from both MDOT and MDNR Trails Division regarding doing a Feasibility Study to determine the safest and most cost effective route to construct a connector trail from the City's trail going under I94 and through Blackman Township to connect up with the second phase plan Lakelands Trail System. There have been several people from various divisions of both agencies included in the conference call. This is an impressive group of folks who have the funds designated already to do this study and the budget to construct the trail as early as 2019. They are asking the County to act as the administrator of the grant funds on this project and work with them to coordinate the completion of the feasibility study. I have indicated to them that the County would be open to playing this role. I would like to piggy back the feasibility study on to the already existing contract we have with the Spicer Group to design the Inter-city Trail Connector Project. That

design project was approved last month by the County Commission and is under way. We would need to do a change order to the contract at the August County Commission meeting.

5. The Inter-city Trail Connector Project Agreement with MDNR has now been signed. The Spicer Group will be starting soil testing, survey work, and wetland delineation/ DEQ permitting in the next couple of weeks. We again, hope to begin construction yet this fall.
6. The Fairgrounds Large Animal Wash Area Project is out for bid and a contractor should be ready to begin work by the end of the week of July 18, 2016. We have met with a MDEQ representative and they are onboard with the design plans.
7. The B-Cycles Station installation has now been put on hold until next spring. The timing of acquiring the FCC license to transmit wireless financial data securely along with the required training needed to be able to upload user information (again a security issue), met that we would not have been able to put the station on line for use until early October, 2016. Given the weather likely would have us shutdown the system two weeks or so later lead me to decide to wait until spring when we can make a large splash PR wise with the new bicycle station system.
8. Family Night numbers have been “through the roof” the first three weeks. This concept has really taken off and staff is doing a tremendous job of managing the program. This program is a road map to how we can/ should be attracting people to all Jackson County Park. Programming, programming, and more programming.
9. The Camp Teetonkah Acquisition & Operations Proposal was submitted to the Michigan Crossroads Council on July 14, 2016. We do not have a timeline yet for when the MCC will respond to our proposal.

Moved by Price, supported by DuBois to receive the Directors Report. Motion Carried.

OLD BUSINESS –

Camp Teetonkah

Moved by Polaczyk, supported by Lloyd to postpone any action by the Parks Commission to the August 2016 meeting. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS - None

June 2016 FINANCIALS

Moved by Lloyd, supported by Polaczyk to receive the June 2016 Financial Reports. Motion carried.

Moved by Torres, supported by DuBois to receive the June Financial Summaries. Motion carried.

Moved by Price, supported by Lloyd to approve the June 2016 Claims Report. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Tallis, Hanover Township Supervisor – I am giving you 2 letters from residents that reside on the Horton Mill Pond.

Terry Orban, adjacent landowner, Friend of Camp Teetonkah –

- Confused, exactly who will make the decision?
- Who are the faces?
- Who is actually making the decisions for this whole transaction?
- His family donated 130 acres in the 1950's and he is going to pursue getting the property back! There is legal precedence. The property was donated with the intension that it was going to be used for the youth of the community.
- Looked over the proposal, it is well prepared and looks good, but does not see it happening.
- People have no boundaries, they will be all partying!
- Had to triple his insurance, he is liable.
- The debris left in his fields because of the camp costs him thousands of dollars in repair to his farm equipment.
- Does not see anything in the proposal about fencing the boundaries.

Tim Stone, Rives Junction –

- The parks need to get more engaged with the Friends of Camp Teetonkah.
- Together you need to come up with the best idea to protect the camp into the future.
- Working with the Friends, the parks would better understand their thoughts and ideas.

Glenn Brooker, Jackson – The county parks look like shit! How are they going to take care of Camp Teetonkah, they can't take care of what they have!

Albert McGilvra, Friend of Camp Teetonkah and Boy Scout Group –

- There are 2 proposals that were submitted; Jackson County and Spring Arbor University with others.
- The issue of the Friends of Camp Teetonkah being financially viable does not have near the concerns as people believe.
- There is no charge to Boy Scouts.
- It is the 2nd oldest camp in the county and to change any of the grounds would be a historical disaster.
- The endowment was given and now they want to take it away.
- This is about a strong moral principal.
- The fee structure is quite high.

Kevin Cotter –

- Proposal to the Parks Board
 - Clarify how the camp will be kept in perpetuity.
 - Is it possible to sell of the camp land in the future? It does not say in the proposal.
 - Please explain if you can, how does the acquisition work?
 - If the Friends of Camp Teetonkah is successful, would like to see the County Parks commit to providing their expertise to the Friends group on camp management?

Charlie Trombley, Friend of Camp Teetonkah and Eagle Scout –

- Has a deep feeling about Camp Teetonkah.

- That camp has helped mold him into what he is today.
- The amount of people that use the parks is incredible.
- Why try to get a usage fee out of the largest park? Why use this park as a test? Why not test other county parks as usage fee parks? Why start out with this one? There are other awesome parks that this fee could be used as a test parks.

Eric Rought, Jackson –

- How much more will this add to taxes?
- The county is already running current parks in the hole.
- Where is all the money coming from to run Camp Teetonkah?
- How can you do winter activities when the camp would be closed from November to March?
- Look at how many concerned citizens are here – you have to take note and consideration of that.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Cmr. Alexander – Impressive Packet. How many tillable acres at Camp Teetonkah?

Cmr. Polaczyk – Decking on some of the boardwalks need to be tended to. Was wondering how the 1776 Musical did. Discussion.

Cmr. Alexander – Were there any issues of anyone about the admissions for the 1776 Musical? Discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to the call of the Chair at 9:34 a.m.

Mike Way, Chairman

Jackson County Parks & Recreation Commission