

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



November 1, 2017

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Cmr. **Beaman, Dubois, Price, Seitz, Snyder, Torres and Way**  
Absent: Cmr. **Edgar and Shotwell**  
Ex-Officio: **Jeff Hovarter**, Parks Director  
Staff: **Becky Humphrey, Kyle Lewis, and Jack McCloughan**  
Visitors: **Roger Gaede and Mike Overton**, County Administrator

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Moved by Price, supported by Seitz**, to approve the November 1, 2017 Agenda as amended by deleting 6d. Pleasant Lake Bathhouse Renovation. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Roger Gaede** – Page 25 of Financials indicates a decrease of \$4,398.00 in the Vineyard Lake account. What was the \$4,398 use? \$60,000 was developed after the first strategic plan indicated that Vineyard Lake Park needed significant improvement. First \$50,000 was available in the County's budget and \$10,000 was derived from sale of a parcel lot.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

October 2017 Minutes  
Communications  
Monthly Staff Report for November 2017  
Receive September 2017 Financial Report  
Receive September 2017 Financial Summary Report  
Approval of September 2017 Claims Report

**Moved by Torres, supported by DuBois** to approve the November 2017 Consent Agenda. Motion carried.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Jackson B-cycle Web Page info
2. Jackson B-cycle Statistics May 2017 thru October 13, 2017
3. Picture of bridge on Sparks Park Trail Connector.
4. Friends of Falling Waters Trail Fall/Winter 2017 Newsletter
5. **Cascades Park Foundation** minutes October 17, 2017
6. **FFWT Board** minutes – No Meeting
7. **Jackson County Parks Association** minutes – No Meeting
8. **Champion Team** minutes – Next Meeting

## MONTHLY STAFF REPORT

- ✚ Pleasant Lake Bathhouse Renovation Project – We are continuing to struggle to get this project scope within budget. We have \$85,000 available to complete the work. We are attempting to remodel the shower area to improve wheel chair access as well as connect the shower area to the restroom area. Currently these two areas are separated by a block wall. In addition, we have ventilation issues and are in need of a new high capacity water heater. The project requires significant deconstruction of the concrete floor to relocate plumbing and all of the interior walls and fixtures need to be removed/ replaced. We designed and bid the project in the fall of 2016 and received bids that were more than 2 ½ times our budget. We attempted to reduce the scope of the project the second time around but the bids still came in more than double our budget. The construction market is very robust at the moment and bid prices are coming in higher than we would expect historically. We plan to negotiate with the most recent low bidder but may also attempt to alter the scope again and manage the project in house and work with subcontractors directly. We will keep you posted.
- ✚ Historically Swains Lake County Parks and Pleasant Lake County Park have been closed to the public at the end of the camping season. We operate campgrounds at both parks. Both of these parks have many day use amenities and both provide public lake access. As Director, I have made a decision to keep both parks open year around, consistent with all of our other county parks. We have had a few calls from residents living near Pleasant Lake County Park expressing their concern that the park gates are open. We will monitor the situation to see if there is any vandalism or if other negative activities develop at either of these parks during the fall/ winter season. If we see a problem, I will re-evaluate keeping the gates open.
- ✚ You probably noticed I did not put a recommendation on the November agenda to revise the “Animals in the Park” sections of the county park ordinance. It is taking us a little longer than anticipated to research best practices and draft this language. We hope to have a draft revision available for the December board meeting.
- ✚ In December we will be asking you to approve 2018 contracts for the display of fireworks/ fireworks shows at the Cascades. These contracts have been held by a third party (who also contributes the funding to support the shows). There are legal issues that have come up recently regarding liability. As a result the County will now be executing these contracts annually. Funding support for the shows will continue to be provided by the Frank & Irene Myers Foundation.
- ✚ We are continuing to work on an agreement with Summit Township in which Jackson County Parks will agree to maintain the newly constructed Summit Township sections of linear path that connect to the Falling Waters Trail. Summit Township is agreeable to pay the County for this annual maintenance but we have not yet agreed upon the scope of work or the annual cost of maintenance. We would hope to have this on the December Park Board meeting for your consideration.
- ✚ I am in need of additional input from the Park Board on how to proceed with the Burns Property and our relationship with the Michigan Nature Conservancy. The issue at hand relates to the portion of the Burns Property currently being leased for farming. If we are going to develop the Burns Property as a county park and build a partnership with the Nature Conservancy we will need to end the lease arrangement so this portion of the Burns Property can be restored to its original ecological origins. This is the business the Nature Conservancy is in. We want to open up public access to the Nature Conservancy’s three hundred acres of diverse forest and vegetation through the development of hiking trails and potentially even a canoe/ kayak access point on the Grand River. Building this partnership

means respecting their desire to see all of the Burns Property restored to a natural state. I would appreciate any input regarding how we approach the farming lease issue.

✚ The County Park Board will be working on the development of a strategic planning for the county park system during this fall quarter. You will be doing this work in a workshop format on November 8<sup>th</sup> and finish up the work on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting begins at 7:30am and the December meeting begins at 8am. Both meetings are being held at the Manor House and will be four hours in duration. The Jackson Nonprofit Network is providing the facilitator for the workshops. Our facilitator will be Katena Cain.

✚ As a follow up to the Park Board strategic planning efforts the parks staff will be organizing and holding a number of public parks planning workshops. The intent is to work with residents of the county to develop a park site master plan for each county park. By involving the residents of the county, and particularly those who live closest to the parks, we will build stakeholders who we hope will become vested in helping raise the funding support necessary to execute the improvements they desire in their parks. I will be double checking with the County Finance Director to insure the \$50,000 amount requested to support this planning process is in place for 2018. I plan to issue an RFP this fall seeking a qualified landscape architectural firm to assist us with the development of the site master planning documentation that will come out of these public workshops.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

- a. Strategic Planning Pre-Workshop Review of Existing Plans and Documents
- b. Update on Fairgrounds Events Center Development Project and Other Fairground Improvements

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Roger Gaede** – Nature Conservancy is a national organization. It is highly regarded and does allow public use such as; trails, hunting, and fishing, etc.

The Nature Conservancy work on the Burns property includes preservation of the Massasauga rattlesnake and the “Strya” butterfly.

**Mike Overton** – One of the most beautiful properties around is in Norvell Township around Watkins Lake, the 103<sup>rd</sup> State Park, which was acquired with DNR Trust Fund money.

**DIRECTOR COMMENTS – None**

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

**Cmr. Price** – Add Arnold Road to your tour to Watkins Lake

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to the call of the Chair at 8:56 a.m.

**Mike Way, Chairman**

Jackson County Parks Commission