

JACKSON COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION
Jackson County Tower Building 17th Floor
120 W. Michigan Ave
Jackson, MI 49201



June 5, 2019

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present: Cmr. **Edgar, Lloyd, Price, Seitz, Shotwell, Snyder, Videto, Walz and Way**
Excused: Cmr. **Beaman and Lloyd**
Absent: Cmr. **Mahoney**
Ex-Officio: **Jeff Hovarter**, Parks Director
Staff: **Becky Humphrey, Kyle Lewis, Jack McCloughan, Denise Owens, Mark Schopmeyer, Stacy Curtis and Emily Thomas**
Visitors: **Mike Overton**, County Administrator, **Lucie Fortin**, Mannik Smith Group, **Carmen Burgess**

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Price, supported by Seitz to approve the June 5, 2019 Agenda as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PUBLIC HEARING: Mike-Levine – Lakeland Trails Extension

Moved by Price, supported by Edgar to open the Public Hearing at 8:04 a.m. Motion carried.

Kyle and Lucie from Mannik Smith Group explained the Mike-Levine-Lakeland Trail Extension potential route. Discussion.

They also explained that there are 2 Public Hearings; the one today and the other at Blackman Township at their June meeting.

Public Hearing Closed by the Call of the Chair at 8:11 a.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

May 2019 Minutes
Communications
Monthly Staff Report for June 2019
Receive April 2019 Financial Report
Receive April 2019 Financial Summary Report
Approval of April 2019 Claims Report

Moved by Price, supported by Shotwell to approve the June 2019 Consent Agenda as Amended. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Cascades Park Foundation** – April 16, 2019 meeting minutes.
2. **Jackson County Parks Association** – April 16, 2019 meeting minutes.

MONTHLY STAFF REPORT

- ✓ **Canada Goose Management at Sparks Foundation County Park:** At the February board meeting, staff were authorized to apply for a Canada Goose Management permit for Sparks Foundation County Park and implement a goose relocation plan. This program is through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and has been developed to give landowners options to address their goose-human conflicts on their sites. The program involves relocating the geese to site at least 50 miles away (usually to Saginaw or Monroe). Studies show that up to 80% of the adult geese will return to the capture site, but 0% of the babies and juveniles will return. An alternative, more impactful method of egg and nest destruction provides better results in lowering the population, but we are first required to participate in the relocation program for three years. The roundup for Sparks Foundation County Park is slated for the second week of June, with an additional roundup (if needed) 10-15 days later. DNR permits are approved and in hand.
- ✓ **Swains Lake and Pleasant Lake Campgrounds Opening:** Both campgrounds opened on May 24. Our seasonal staff began working last week and will once again be assisted by our volunteer campground hosts, who receive free camping in trade for overnight oversight and cleaning/maintenance help. Each campground has a host scheduled for the entire season. We are also once again partnering with the County Sheriff Department on dedicated patrols for peak times at each campground. New this year, the campgrounds will be using a program called RecPro to keep track of sales and reservations. RecPro replaces our old method of hand-written receipts and reservation binders. There will be a learning curve at first, but RecPro is going to make campground operations much more efficient and greatly improves our cash-handling procedures.
- ✓ **Cascades Fireworks show and opening weekend:** The Cascades also opened for the season on May 24. The following day was the first of three firework shows for the year. The Swift Brothers, a new band to our line-up, kicked off the season's entertainment with a show beginning at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, June 1 is our first of three PALOOZA's at the Falls. Entertainment includes a Beatle Tribute Band, SHOUT, on June 1st; a dueling piano show on July 6, and a highly south after Detroit cover band, The Phoenix Theory, on August 3rd. The complete entertainment schedule for The Cascades, Palooza at the Falls, and the Bandshell can all be found at <https://www.co.jackson.mi.us/628/Cascades-Park-Special-Events>.

The splash pad will also open on Memorial Day weekend (weekends only until school is out). The complete schedule for the splash pad can be found at:

<https://www.co.jackson.mi.us/DocumentCenter/View/7285/2019-Splash-Pad-Rates>

RecPro will also be used at The Cascades this season, also improving our cash-handling procedures and allowing us to operate more efficiently.

- ✓ **Parks Millage/Community Engagement Meetings:** Parks staff have reached out to Henrietta, Columbia and Napoleon Townships to schedule the community engagement meetings for park improvement projects at Pleasant Lake County Park, Clark Lake County Park, and Little Wolf Lake County Park. The format includes a 2-3 meeting process for each of these three townships. Beckett & Raeder, one of the three firms that were selected from our Landscape Architecture Request for Qualifications earlier this year, will develop a curriculum for Input Meeting No. 1 that allows participants to dream and brainstorm possibilities for development of the respective County Park. Beckett and Raeder will facilitate Input Meeting No. 1, in which participants will be guided through a series of exercises to develop a vision for the County Park. Dot exercises will be utilized to solicit collective priorities from the participants. A written summary of meeting will be used to establish budgetary costs associated with elements prioritized in meeting 1. Meeting two will include reviewing the options, including pictures and cost ranges, with the community, in order to align the scope with a budget. The public will be invited to provide written input either in the form of sticky-notes or comment cards. A third and final open-house style meeting will be used to present the results.

- Meeting 1 for Henrietta Township/Pleasant Lake County Park occurred on Tuesday, May 28 at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Henrietta Township Planning Commission meeting. There were 20 participants and it was a productive session.
- Meeting 1 for Columbia Township is scheduled for June 10 at 7 p.m. at the Clark Lake Community Center.
- Meeting 1 for Napoleon Township is scheduled for Tuesday, July 30 at 5:30.

Beyond the three townships listed above, we are also setting up meetings with leadership at Summit Township and Hanover Township. On May 21, Park Staff met at Grass Lake County Park with the Township Supervisor and the Village Manager to discuss potential improvements to the tennis courts and other park improvements.

Potential Pickle ball courts at Sparks Foundation County Park: Park staff, along with the Park Board Chair, met this week with representatives from the local pickle ball community to further the discussion of potential courts at Sparks Foundation County Park – the desired location is the existing and outdated tennis courts north of Cascades Ice Cream. Staff let the group know that we have hired the Smith Group to complete a Vision Plan for the southwest corner of Spark Foundation County Park. The Smith Group will look at potential improvements that may include pickle ball, a dog park, and improvements to play equipment and pavilions, and help us to develop a better understanding and direction for planning/budgeting/ and getting Commission approval to make improvements in the specified areas of Sparks County Park.

- ✓ **Driving Range Netting:** Staff are currently putting a cost and timeline together to replace the netting at the Cascades Golf Course Driving Range. The project will entail trimming/removing trees, which have entangled in the netting. The process will be to remove the old netting as much as possible from the ground. The fence will be altered at the top to prevent it from entangling the net. Staff will prepare the netting to be hung and then bring in lifts to move it in to place.

- ✓ **Event Center Construction:** Construction this week included joist installation and precast panel grouting. Next week includes installation of roof decking.

Here is a link to the latest drone video footage:

Vimeo Link: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/335494033>

- ✓ **American 1 Credit Union Event Center Catering:** A request for proposals was issued to select a catering company to provide services for the American 1 Credit Union Event Center beginning in 2020. We received three proposals (Paula Tucker Catering, LLC out of Marshall, Michigan; Kosch Dining Solutions out of Rochester, Michigan; and, Grady's Catering out of Brooklyn, Michigan). We interviewed each company and staff will be recommending Kosch Dining Solutions in the July cycle.
- ✓ **Event Center/Keeley Park Improvement Funding:** There is still some confusion in the community regarding the funding for the Event Center project and the improvements to Keeley Park. Park Millage funds are not being used on either of these projects. Improvements to Keeley Park and the Event Center project were in the works prior to the millage passing, and prior to the millage being placed on the ballot. The funding for these projects is a combination of a generous 4-million-dollar donation from American 1 Credit Union, another 4 million dollars in bonds issued by the County, and 1.5 million dollars from the general fund capital improvement budget.

There will be approximately 1 million dollars invested in park projects in 2019, and those projects are funded from four different sources 1) Park Millage, 2) State Grants, 3) Private Foundations, 4) Private Individuals.

- ✓ **Blackman Township Trail Project:** In February, the County Board approved a contract to hire the Mannik Smith Group to complete design engineering on a new trail from Monroe St. to Parnell, ending at the prison site. Part of the scope of this project includes applying to MDOT for a federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant, which has four application deadlines each year. We are working toward the next deadline, which is June 26. The applicant must be an Act 51 agency, so Parks will be partnering with JDOT. Our plan is to bring a request to the Parks Board for a resolution of support for the June cycle. JCDOT, as the applicant, will be bringing a request for a resolution of support to the June Transportation Committee meeting.
- ✓ **5-Year Recreation Plan:** We are working with Region 2 Planning (Grant Bauman) on updating our 5-year master plan, which expires at the end of this year. The plan makes us eligible for DNR grants and Grant Bauman wrote our last 5-year plan as well. Grant is early in the process, but one of the first steps is sending out a survey for citizen input. The survey is the same as last time and basically measures which parks people use, and how they use them. The survey is now available until May 18. It's an online survey and the link is available at JacksonCountyParks.org. We are distributing the survey through Facebook, the County website, and a write-up in the announcements in the Citizen Patriot.
- ✓ **DNR Iron Belle Trail Grant Application:** Recently we were notified that the County Parks was awarded a \$35,000 grant to fund a feasibility study to examine the possible routes to extend the Falling Waters Trail to the west, connecting to the Calhoun County line. The grant was awarded from the Iron Belle Trail Fund, a private 501c3 fundraising group for the Iron Belle Trail. The Iron Belle Trail is Michigan's showcase trail that touches hundreds of municipalities and crosses through 48 different Michigan

counties. Using existing trails, networks and new connections, the trail extends more than 2,000 miles from the far western tip of the Upper Peninsula to Belle Isle in Detroit, with a route of bicycling, and a route of hiking. The biking route utilizes many of the state's existing bike paths, bike lanes, and signed, designated biking routes as it travels up the east side of the state and across the southern edge of the Upper Peninsula. The hiking route utilizes sidewalks, trails, and more than 1,000 miles of the 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail, the longest federally designated hiking trail in the nation. The hiking portion includes the Falling Waters Trail and connecting trails in Jackson County.

- ✓ **Cascades Projects:** Two projects were recently wrapped up at The Cascades: 1) the roofs have been replaced on the two buildings located at the Cascades that are used for admissions/gift shop area, museum, concessions, restroom and operational controls for the Falls. The former roofs of the buildings had significant leaking the past few winters, and the flat roofs had reached their useful life. The replacement roofs have a pitched roof/truss system and a standing seam metal roof covering. 2) The pumps that operate the vertical fountain sprays (there are six total; upper, middle, and lower), have also been replaced.
- ✓ **New restroom:** A new, year-round restroom was added near the playground/Cascades Ice Cream at Sparks Foundation County Park. This CXT vault toilet unit has solar lighting and an exhaust fan. We have two of the exact units on the Falling Waters Trail and they have been a nice solution to permanent restrooms that can be used throughout the winter months as well. Other than a concrete approach that will be poured next week, this project is complete.
- ✓ **Lakelands Trail project:** Staff met recently with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources regarding a trail project that they have under construction in Henrietta Township beginning at Hawkins Road/Portage River. The project is an extension of the Lakelands Trail, and part of two state-wide trail efforts (the Iron Belle Trail and the Great Lake to Lake Trail). This 10-mile trail section is scheduled to be completed and opened to the public this fall. The DNR is interested in forming a partnership with the County for maintenance and operations of the trail – similar to our lease arrangement for the Falling Waters Trail, which is owned by the DNR. Staff is currently doing a cost analysis and will recommend next steps in the next month or two.
- ✓ **BCycle bike rental:** The BCycle bike rental program is up and running for the 2019 season. This will be the third year of the program, which includes six bikes at the Weatherwax Trailhead of the Falling Waters Trail, and each of the first two years surpassed 900 rentals. A sponsorship opportunity has been developed to cover the operating costs of the BCycle bike share program. The opportunity includes six different decals on each of the bikes. Sponsors are currently being recruited with a goal to place the decals before the summer.
- ✓ **Swains Lake County Park fire:** On Wednesday evening, May 15, a small storage shed caught on fire at Swains Lake County Park. The building was older and not in good condition, and not essential to the campground operations. The Pulaski Township Fire Department quickly extinguished the fire and there were no injuries.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Jackson County – Calhoun County Trail Feasibility Study

Moved by Shotwell, supported by Seitz to accept the proposal from Spicer Group to complete a feasibility

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study for a trail connection from the Village of Concord to the Calhoun County Line. Motion carried.

Keeley Park Liquor License Purchase

Moved by Snyder, supported by Seitz to approve the purchase of a liquor license for Keeley Park in the amount of \$28,000. Motion carried.

Mike Levine-Lakelands Trail Extension – Resolution of Support

Moved by Snyder, supported by Shotwell to Approve a Resolution of Support to support the construction of the Mike Levine – Lakelands Trail Extension; approves submission of a Transportation Alternatives Program funding application; commits to owning, operating and maintaining the trail. – Roll Call - **Yay:** Walz, Videto, Snyder, Shotwell, Edgar, Price, Seitz and Way; **Nay: 0, Excused:** Beaman and Lloyd **Absent:** Mahoney. Motion carried.

Monthly Staff Report for June 2019 – American 1 Credit Union Event Center Catering

Moved by Price, supported by Edgar to approve the staff recommendation for Kosch Dining Solutions as the catering company for the American 1 Credit Union Event Center. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Carmen Burgess - Her and her mother, Ruth Burgess have donated funds to the Jackson County Parks Association to put towards Portage Lake County Park playground equipment. They were wondering if there was a possibility to get matching funds for the same park?

DIRECTOR COMMENTS – Kyle is sitting at the head table and will be for the next 12 months as I am mentoring Kyle and will then be stepping down. When I hired in I promised that when I leave it would be with a strong foundation of staff. I am just the front person; my staff have been and is doing all the work behind the scenes and I present it to you. My staff is like a family; each person is important and they all do a great job!

Kyle Lewis, Mark Schopmeyer, Beckett/Raeder and I met with Henrietta Township folks. There were a lot of positive comments, the meeting went very well. It was a very successful meeting and we will get a report to the Parks Board soon.

Columbia and Horton Townships are next on the list and we will get the Parks Board the information of dates and times for the upcoming meetings.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Cmr. Walz – I would like to see the fee waived for the Grass Lake Sportsman Club that host the Take-A-Kid Fishing day, this Saturday at Grass Lake County Park from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Cmr. Videto – Jeff, I very much appreciate your comments. A lot! I have really enjoyed the time you have been here and all that you have accomplished and am anxious to see what will be done with the time you have left with Jackson County Parks. I really appreciate your leadership.

I would also like to see a specific summary sheet of millage money projects and those projects with matching funds.

Cmr. Seitz – Another Top of the Falls event. Good time to have? Wants to get with Emily. Would like to see a summary as to what has happened since last year.

Cmr. Shotwell – Would like it if this board to considered approving for 2019, a picture of The Cascades along with a Resolution/Letter from Cmr. Mike Way, Board Chair to continue to recognize the donors to The Cascades project.

Cmr. Price – Are we going to try to do a Top of the Falls event this year?

With the money left over from last year's event can we; give to groups or organizations, thru DHS - foster parents, passes into The Cascades? Can the Parks Administration handle donating 10 tickets?

Is the Civil War Muster going to happen this year? If we held the On Top of The Falls event; would it be that same weekend?

Cmr. Way- Would like to say a big Thank you to Denise Owens! Denise was at the Breakfast Rotary Club meeting and showed the fly over of the Fairgrounds projects and dispelled some of the rumors. Great job Denise!

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned to the call of the Chair at 9:09 a.m.

Mike Way, Chairman

Jackson County Parks Commission