

Friends of the Muskegon County Parks Advisory Committee
Mats Administration Building
2624 Sixth Street
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

Minutes
January 23, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by County Administrator Bonnie Hammersley. Introductions were made, everyone went around the table and introduced themselves.

ROLL:

Present: Vicki Broge, Joe Doyle, Ken Hulka, Erin Kuhn, Pamela Lynk, Jerry Sanders, Kimberly Sims, and Rachel Star.

Excused: Susan Cloutier-Meyers

Absent: Amber Mae Petersen and Veronica West

Staff and others: Bob Chaplo, Sara Damm, Bonnie Hammersley, Judy Kell, Carly Hines, Bob Lukens, Mary Mack, Kenneth Mahoney, Terry Sabo, Heidi Systema, John Warner and Jim Woods.

PAC – 14-001 OPENING REMARKS

Mrs. Hammersley spoke on the grants recently received for playground equipment for Pioneer and Meinert Parks. She also spoke on the new on-line reservation system that will be going into our parks that is really important to bring the parks up to date. Thus allowing customers to stay home and make their reservation and not having to make the drive to the camp site to reserve a spot.

Mrs. Hammersley said “everything is on the table” we have a lot of staff here to listen to the ideas that you may have, but this is your committee we are open to all of your ideas and suggestions. The committee has the charge from the Commissioners to advise us on what we could do at the park to improve our parks. She is the liaison to the Board. She introduced Mr. Kenneth Mahoney, Chairman of the Board Commissioners.

Board Commissioner Ken Mahoney welcomed everyone here stating “Dare to Dream a little bit”. Our parks are your parks. He really appreciates everyone here willing to take their time to come up with good ideas to improve our parks.

Mrs. Hammersley assured everyone that all ideas will be accepted, “we will not say no to your ideas everything will be researched”. She also informed that Bob Lukens our Community Development Director will be a person to help with the committee as we go forward.

PAC-14-002 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mrs. Hammersley opened nominations for a Chair of this committee. She asked if anyone was interested in being a chair. No one spoke.

Ken Hulka nominated Vicki Broge for Chair of the Friends of the County Parks Committee. Supported by Erin Kuhn.

Voice Vote.

Motion Carried.

Vicki Broge accepted the position of Chair of the Friends of the County Parks Committee.

Vicki opened the nominations for Vice Chair of Friends of the County Parks Committee.

Pamela Lynk nominated Ken Hulka Vice Chair of the County of the Parks Committee, supported by Joe Doyle.

Voice Vote.

Motion Carried.

Ken Hulka accepted the position of Vice Chair of the County of the Parks Committee.

PAC-14-003 ACCEPTANCE OF BY-LAWS

Ken Hulka moved to accept the by-laws as they are, supported by Erin Kuhn

Voice Voice

Motion Carried

PAC-14-004 PRESENTATION BY SARA DAMM, SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR

Sara Damm gave a slide presentation that included all of the parks with the playground equipment , campgrounds and an overview of the purpose of the committee, what the committee consists of and where everyone fits in.

PAC-14-005 PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMITTEE'S COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Judy Kell spoke on the recreation plan which is a document that is required by the Department of Natural Resources that has to be amended to include water trails because two county parks are on a water trail that we have been unable to get funding for in the past.

Judy said she would hope that this committee would be willing to get on the trolley or a bus to go around and visit all of the parks. Within the next year we would like to view update all of the new rules and regulations of the park and start from scratch and have a nice new document with all of our dreams and wishes. Everyone's support is needed to go forward. The current plan without the 2013 is on-line under Parks. The Department of Natural Resources funding requires that you have an approved recreational plan.

Rotary Park will also be completed under Heritage Landing

Ken Hulka asked "what is the county's general funds appropriation part"?

Bonnie Hammersley answered " zero, we do not appropriate funds for the parks, the revenue from the parks pay for the operation of the parks, we have a low reserve. We hope that our efforts with the electronic reservation pays off.

Jim Woods spoke on the opening dates of the parks and camps.

Ken Hulka asked where the on-line reservation would be located? Jim Woods replied that it would be handled in-house and that staff would follow-up with receipts or confirmations.

Vicki Broge asked if it would be linked to the other systems like the State Park? The answer was no, the on-line reservation would be just for the County's Parks.

Bonnie replied "that would be a good idea".

Joe Doyle wanted to know if the committee would have an opportunity to review the park improvement plans, playground equipment and physical improvement for the park before they are submitted.

Judy Kell answered yes.

Bob Chaplo spoke on the behalf of Community Foundation, they had prior conversation with Leslie, Bob and Sara. The Foundation sees this as a great idea, they are seeing more of this around the county - funds like this being created. They are calling it "Citizens Partnership", allowing citizens to support things that they believe are important to them.

Heritage Landing is managed by the Convention & Visitors Bureau and is not called a park, because of the alcohol usage.

There was brief discussion regarding admission to the parks. Because of low usage and no money to staff the parks there currently is no charge at Blue Lake, Patterson and Moore Park. Twin Lake, Pioneer and Meinert Park have an admission fee. They have looked into the honor system and it just would not work, you have to go after the people in the park for the money.

It was questioned whether there was a master plan for Rotary Park – Mrs. Hammersley answered “yes” and all members could have a copy.

Vickie Broge said once the weather permits, we can ride the trolley to the parks.

It was suggested that we get together to map it out before actually going.

Jim Woods spoke on the parks very limited budget stating, “we live on what we make”. The playground equipment is old and outdated, the restrooms need to be updated, the system is very old we need donations to come in the county does a lot of the repairs in-kind.

Question was raised on whether or not a strategic plan had ever been laid out.

Yes, it has been done by staff but never as a group.

Kim Sims would like to see historical data numbers on usage, when was the last time the parks had been renovated a breakdown on all of the parks.

Jim Woods said he already has this information on the year-end report.

Vicki Broge stated “we have beautiful parks that we should be thankful on how we can build on them”.

Bob Lukens said with the Board’s approval he would like to do a press release asking for donations.

Pamela Lynk made the motion to approve that Bob Lykens do a press release asking for donations, supported by Ken Hulka.

Voice Vote

Motion Carried.

Bob Chaplo stated that people do have a lot of passion for this place.

PAC-14-006 Next Meeting

How often do we want to meet? It was unanimously voted that the Committee will meet monthly
2:00 p.m. is ok, how about Convention Visitors Bureau?

Ken Hulka suggested that in the warm months to meet in the Parks.

Next month we can meet here at MAT'S Administration Building, same time and will go month to month
on locations. Next month's meeting February 27, 2014 at 2:00 p.m.

Everyone should bring ideas and come prepared for next month's meeting to be held here at 2:00 p.m.

PAC-14-007 CLOSING REMARKS

Mrs. Hammersley said that the parks are doing a great job, but this is a new day, as it was said earlier,
"Dare to Dream" with this committee we can make the parks better. Strategic planning is needed and
we need to know how we can do things different, that's why we need you "the users" your input counts.

Commissioner Sabo said that the County's Board of Commissioners is behind this effort 100%, not
looking at what's wrong with it, but what can be done to make it better?"

Commissioner Mahoney wished the committee well and thanked everyone for coming out.

PAC-14-008 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.