



## MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Monday, January 23, 2023  
6:15 P.M.

Manistee County Courthouse & Government Center  
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room and via Zoom

### MINUTES

Members Present: Chair Wayne Beldo, Margaret Batzer; Gary Schwaiger; Robert Schulke;  
Jeff Lawrence

Members Absent: Eleanor DeYoung; Bryan Dunlop; Devin Wegner

Others Present: Linda Cudney (Via Zoom); Mike Szokola, Manistee County Planning Director;  
Sara Herberger; Community Foundation; Nikki Koons, County Commissioner; Mark Coe,  
DNR (via zoom); Claire Richards, Friends of Smart Trails

Mr. Beldo called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM, roll call was taken.

#### 2023 Board Appointments

Mr. Beldo and Ms. Cudney stated their applications were accepted and they will remain on  
the Recreation Commission. Mr. Jeff Lawrence will now represent the Manistee County Road  
Commission.

Due to the number of members present, Mr. Beldo requested there be a motion to move officer  
appointments to the February Recreation meeting.

**There was a motion by Mr. Schwaiger supported by Ms. Batzer, to move the officer  
appointments to the February Recreation meeting. All in favor, motion carried.**

Mr. Beldo requested there be a motion to appoint a member of the commission to act as  
secretary until one is appointed. Ms. Batzer nominated Mr. Schwaiger.

**There was a motion by Ms. Batzer supported by Mr. Lawrence, to appoint Gary  
Schwaiger as the acting secretary until one is appointed.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

Approval of the January 23, 2023, meeting agenda.

**There was a motion by Ms. Batzer supported by Mr. Beldo, to approve January 23, 2023, agenda as stated. All in favor, motion carried.**

Approval of the December 5, 2022, meeting minutes.

**There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Mr. Schwaiger to approve the December 5, 2022, meeting minutes, as stated. All in favor, motion carried.**

Public Comment: No public comment.

Trail Champions: Mr. Coe stated the crew is still waiting for snow, so there is no update today.

Staff Reports: Staff Reports: Mr. Szokola stated that the Planning Commission has been doing well and working through the workload and staffing shortages.

Mr. Szokola also stated that the 2022/2023 Leadership Cohort has decided this year's project will be building and installing life vest loaner stations. Visit <https://www.manisteechamber.com/leadership-program/> to stay updated. Mr. Szokola said the idea behind it would be that the cohort, along with the help and generous offers from community members, would help raise money for the building and installations. It is expected that each station will cost around \$1,500-\$2,500. An agreement was given to the municipalities that requests permission to install the station and locks them in a long-term maintenance agreement. Currently, the City of Manistee, the Village of Bear Lake and the Village of Onekama excepted the agreement. Presentations were also introduced to Manistee Township and Arcadia. Charter Township of Filer was approved by declined to participate.

Friends of Smart Trails Report: There was no update from Ms. Cudney. Mr. Szokola wanted the Commission to know that there are some concerns regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between FBVT, TARP and SMARTrails. If there are any action items regarding this, Mr. Szokola requested the board hold a discussion, regarding the concerns, before any approvals are made. Mr. Beldo requested an update from Mr. Szokola so the board can be prepared. The January 9, 2023, Friends of SMARTrails was presented (APPENDIX A). The next meeting will be held on February 13, 2023 at 9208 Kauko Street in Kaleva at 6:00 PM.

Old Business:

Spark Grant Update: Mr. Szokola stated that after further review, it was determined to not apply for the first round of the Spark Grant. It was not the best decision to move forward in the application process for multiple reasons. An overall update regarding the Spark Grant was given to Mr. Lawrence.

Minger Grant Update: Ms. Herberger stated that the Grant inquiry Form is available online at <https://www.manisteefoundation.org/receive/apply-for-a-grant>. The 2023 grant cycles and deadlines have not been determined yet. Mr. Szokola will be collaborating with Bill Kennis, the County Grant Administrator to begin the application process.

Railroad Relocation Update: Mr. Szokola gave Mr. Lawrence an overall update regarding the proposed railroad relocation update. It was found that beginning plans date back to the 1980's

but with the costs of bridge maintenance and/or construction, there is hope for forward movement.

**Parks & Recreation Manager Update:** Mr. Szokola stated that he is waiting for upcoming meetings to receive more information.

**County ORV Map:** The Planning Commission will discuss the County ORV Map at the February meeting. Ms. Hershberger presented a Motor vehicle Use Map for the Huron/Manistee National Forest as a visual aid. Mr. Szokola is hoping for participation from all townships, so it was agreed that he will request approval from the Planning Commission, to send letters requesting township participation.

**Dam Update:** Due to endangered species using Tippy and Hodenpyl Dams as their habitat, there may be a chance the dams will stay. Hoping for more information soon.

**New Business:**

**2023 Meetings.** Meetings will be held on the first Monday of every month except for the following dates: July 11, 2023 (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday) & September 5, 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday).

**There was a motion by Mr. Schwaiger and supported by Ms. Batzer to approve the 2023 meeting minutes. All in favor. Motion carried.**

**2022-2026 County Recreation Plan - 5-Year Update –** Mr. Szokola wanted the board aware of the process and costs of a county recreation plan update. Some key concerns are including the new Recreation Manager job description, along with the lengthy process. The board agreed to begin the process at least 18 months prior to the 2026 deadline.

**Other Items from Committee Members:**

Mr. Schwaiger wanted to discuss the possibility of creating trails around the densely populated area of Manistee County. Ms. Batzer informed the board that there has been collaboration with the County Planning Department and the City of Manistee in hopes to satisfy the request of having usable trails in these areas. Mr. Szokola stated there should be collaboration with the townships when they are going through major developments to ensure every option is viewed.

Mr. Beldo adjourned the meeting at 7:28 PM. Next meeting will be on February 6, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Recreation Commission

  
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Date