

6:00 p.m., Monday
February 7, 2022

MANISTEE BOARD OF COMMISSIONER'S
415 Third St.
Manistee, Michigan

RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

The Recreation Commission is operating remotely and electronically by Zoom under PA 254 of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

❖ Call to Order and Roll Call.

❖ Mr. Wayne Beldo, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Recreation Commission Members Present: Wayne Beldo, Margaret Batzer, Erin Secord, Linda Cudney, Devin Wegner, Gary Schwaiger, and Eleanor DeYoung

Recreation Commission Members Absent: Robert Schulke, Bryan Dunlop

Others: Douglas Barry - Michigan DNR, Katie Mehl - Manistee County Planning Department, and Mike Szokola – Manistee County Planning Department

❖ Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Cudney moved, seconded by Ms. Batzer to approve the February 7, 2022 agenda as amended.

Voting yes: Mr. Beldo, Ms. Batzer, Ms. Secord, Ms. Cudney, Ms. Wegner, and Mr. Schwaiger

❖ Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Schwaiger moved, seconded by Ms. Cudney to approve the January 2, 2021 minutes as presented.

Voting yes: Mr. Beldo, Ms. Batzer, Ms. Secord, Ms. Cudney, Ms. Wegner, and Mr. Schwaiger

❖ Public Comment

- Doug Barry commented that he met with a consultant who reported that the Manistee County Recreation plan is the best they have ever seen. The DNR has received some follow up questions on the grant application which means it has moved through the first step to a second review.
- Doug also mentioned that Mark Coe was holding a meeting at the Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds. Mr. Beldo and Ms. Cudney confirmed they were invited to the meeting. Doug clarified that this meeting stemmed from a discussion at the most recent meeting of the Friends of SMART Trails group while working on the strategic plan. Doug stated that the first step in developing a trail system is to gain ownership of the



land. Requests to private owners should not come from the DNR or government agencies, rather it is best for the request to come from a group of civilians. Once a group of landowners is on board for selling a corridor, then you can begin the process of a trust fund grant. Doug listed several options, TAP, RIF, etc. Once you have buy-in and a group of people, there are many ways to purchase the property. Mark Coe has indicated to Doug Barry that he has spoken with people and has a tentative plan on where the route can go and is on his way to writing a trust fund grant. Applications are due April 1, so this cycle is not an option due to time constraints. But the process is underway, and the goal of this meeting will organize and coordinate the effort so it can move forward. The meeting is to take place at 6:00pm on Wednesday, February 9 at the Benzie Manistee Snowbirds. Doug added that the trust has plenty of funds for purchasing land, but there is more demand for development projects rather than land purchase projects and Doug sees an opportunity for the SMART Trails effort. He added that The DNR is limited in that they cannot pay any more than appraised value for a piece of land. The snowbirds have funds set aside for purchasing trail corridors.

- Ms. Batzer had a few questions including who would attend this meeting, reminding the group that the Parks and Recreation Commission must avoid having a quorum present. Also, Will this meeting cover the entirety of the county? Or just a specific region? Doug Barry replied that he was not sure who all Mark has spoken with regarding what segments at this point.
- Mr. Beldo asked if the Village of Kaleva was invited and added that he would attend on its behalf.
- Meg asked if the DNR can purchase easements or only property? Doug Barry replied both are options.
- Meg referred to her prior question about if a specific corridor was being considered right now. The recreation plan lays out a priority list, but it sounds like this effort by Mark Co will consider all routes described in the recreation plan. Doug Barry then added that there is a whole other slate of grants for trail development efforts through or headed to Federal land. Corridors connecting communities are prioritized and these typically do not go through Federal land. There also can be conflicts with ORV trails in Federal land.
- The priority list for trail development from the recreation plan was outlined by Wayne Beldo for the group's knowledge.
- Mr. Schwaiger identified an area of land in the Cleon/Springdale area as being state owned. Doug Barry confirmed that the DNR owned that. Mr. Schwaiger asked if he foresaw any issues getting trails through that area. Doug Barry replied he did not see any issue, though it is not currently designated as a state trail. Doug then shared again that the entire corridor from Thompsonville to Chief is already owned by the DNR for trail purposes.
- Discussion regarding the Bear Creek bridge began, and Doug Barry shared that he found out that the estimate to build the bridge is 58% higher than it was a year ago due to the cost of steel.
- Ms. Secord recalled a discussion from the last meeting where there was confusion on



whether or not the bridge over Bear Creek was included in the EDA grant application and asked Doug to clarify once and for all. Doug Barry replied that the bridge was included. But added that the trust fund would still be an option for the bridge if the EDA grant was unsuccessful in any way. The trust fund grant is maxed at \$300,000. Doug shared a link to the trust fund workshop. [DNR Recreation Grant Programs Workshop Webinar 2022 - YouTube](#)

- Ms. Cudney asked if Springdale Township applied for a trust fund grant to fix the bridge. Doug Barry stated that Cleon Township had discussions and they can make a resolution to apply at their March meeting. A 26% match is required.

- ❖ Staff Updates
 - Katie Mehl provided a staff update on behalf of the Manistee County Planning department. She stated that all townships and government units submit minutes and resolutions to Networks Northwest.
 - Ms. Secord asked when the newly approved Recreation Plan would be available on the county website. Katie replied that she would work on making that available to the public.

- ❖ Old Business
 - Friends of SMART Trails: Linda Cudney provided a summary of recent activities of the group which included the following:
 - Jim Gribble currently manages the marketing and social media for the Betsie Valley Trail. He has attended the most recent meeting and the strategic meeting by phone. The Friends group is considering contracting him.
 - The group recovered use of the Facebook page.
 - The group has officially signed a contract with Tamara Buswinka and the strategic planning has begun. The strategic planning will be done in 4 phases and the group has had one meeting thus far.

- ❖ New Business
 - None

- ❖ Old Business
 - Ms. Secord pointed out that the Recreation Commission has not yet held an election of Officers for the 2022 calendar year and that the formal election should be conducted.
 - Chair: Wayne Beldo was nominated by Ms. Secord, motion seconded by Linda Cudney. Motion carried.
 - Vice Chair: Margaret Batzer was nominated by Ms. Cudney, motion seconded by Mr. Schwaiger. Motion carried.
 - Secretary: Erin Secord was nominated by Ms. Batzer, motion seconded by Mr. Beldo. Motion carried.
 - Ms. Secord shared with the group that NoMI Racing would be holding a check presentation and photo opportunity for the \$1,000 donation they made to the Friends

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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of SMART Trails group the following Wednesday and asked who could attend. It was established that Ms. Secord and Ms. Cudney would attend.

- Ms. Cudney inquired about the progress on the county hiring a Grant Writer. Mike Szokola replied that the county was still debating hiring an employee or contracting the position out.

❖ Adjourn

Mr. Schwaiger moved, seconded by Ms. Wegner to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Voting yes: Mr. Beldo, Ms. Batzer, Ms. Secord, Ms. Cudney, Ms. Wegner, and Mr. Schwaiger

The next meeting will be held March 7, 2022, in the County Commissioner's room at 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin Secord". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Erin Secord, Recreation Commission Secretary

Date: February 7, 2022