

# MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Draft

August 5, 2024  
Room  
6:15 P.M.

Manistee County Planning Department Conference  
and via Zoom

## MINUTES

Member Present: Wayne Beldo, Chair; Margaret Batzer, Vice Chair; Gary Schwaiger, Secretary; Linda Cudney; Eleanor DeYoung; Bob DeYoung; Robert Schulke; Devin Wegner

Members Absent: Tom Williams; Jeff Lawrence

Others Present: Katie Mehl, Manistee County Planning Director and Recoding Secretary; David Jarvi, Manistee County Planner; Sarah Herberger, Community Foundation; Sally Trisch, Dickson Township; Ric Alameddine; Onekama Trails Project; Claire Richards; SMARTrails

Mr. Beldo called the meeting to order at 6:16 PM, roll call was taken.

Approval of the August 5, 2024, meeting agenda.

There was a motion by Mr. Schwaiger, supported by Ms. Cudney to approve the August 5, 2024, meeting agenda. All in  
Favor, motion carried.

Approval of the June 3, 2024, meeting minutes.

There was a motion by Mr. Schwaiger, supported by Ms. DeYoung to approve the June 3, 2024, meeting minutes as amended. All In Favor,  
motion Carried.

Public Comment: No Public Comment.

Friends of SMARTrails Update: Ms. Cudney gave an update on behalf of Friends of SMARTrails, from their July 15, 2024, meeting.

- Mark Coe suggested that SMARTrails maps all the trail assets in Manistee County. Which would show the different snowmobiling, hiking, biking, and equestrian trails in the county.
- Regarding the EDA update, Ms. Cudney reported that the deed documents are still in the State of Michigan Attorney General's office waiting for the Attorney General's signature. Ms. Cudney stated that hopefully it will be signed soon, as SMARTrails does not want to file an extension for the grant money.
- Mr. Coe stated that the Snowbirds turned in their annual grant of \$675,000, and that they have 160 miles of trails.
- SMARTrails will be manning a table at the Copemish Heritage Days.
- Discussion amongst the commission was had regarding deed signing delays, and steps that could be taken to get the deed signed before an extension is needed. Including hiring an attorney to help get it signed, or by contacting local state representatives.

# MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Draft

Benzie/Manistee County Dirt Birds Update: Mr. Knoper gave an update on behalf of the Benzie/Manistee County Dirt Birds.

- In the middle of filling out trail application forms for DNR and the county, only one township meeting was left.
- Discussed directions that were given by DNR.
- Mr. Knoper stated that their membership has been increasing rapidly.
- Mr. Knoper said that the Dirt Birds worked with Manistee County and Dickson Twp. to get the High Bridge open. Now ORVs can travel across the bridge. Improving the trail connectivity of the county.

Ms. Batzer Enters at 6:32

Planning Department Staff Update: Mr. Jarvi and Ms. Mehl gave an update on behalf of the Planning Department. Ric Alameddine also presented on behalf of the Onekama Trails Project.

- Mr. Alameddine presented a PowerPoint presentation as part of his July update.
- About halfway through the feasibility study so far.
- The project has quite a few partners, which are all active participants. Recent additions are the Manistee County Library.
- Both Onekama Village and Township have officially made a resolution.
- Have applied for their first grant which is an engineering study.
- They have started their feasibility study, was to give MDOT an update on what the Trail Project has been doing. Engineering firm gave shared some standard practices, which they reviewed with MDOT.
- Safety is a main focus of the project.
- Have conducted interviews with focus groups.
- The proposed trail will start around the fairgrounds and will connect all the existing parks as it follows M-22 north to Portage Point Drive where the trail will eventually end at North Point Park.
- MDOT is interested in funding the route.
- Ric has met with road commission and is waiting for them to sign off on their portion of road.
- Challenges include power lines in the road ROW and loss of parking.
- MDOT agreed to be construction sponsor.
- Timeline has construction to start in July 2026, and construction will be completed by September 2026.
- A discussion ensued with board members talking about future trail additions, and the concern of parking in the local business district of Onekama Village.

# MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Draft

- Discussion between members if Ric could access the county grant writer, and if the Onekama Trails project would be part of the Rec Commissions vision and priority projects.
- Ric asked the commission if they could give him support with putting together a piece that shows the benefits of a trail/parking diet. Discussion followed.
- Discussion followed about planning department duties and future visions and goals for Rec Commission. Smaller projects? Larger Projects? What precedent are we setting as a Commission?
- It is settled through discussion that a general piece for parking in a community and benefit to trails. Broadly supportive, can be shared with other units of government.

There was a motion by Mr. Beldo, Supported by Mr. Schulke, to direct the planning department to create a document that touches on the benefits of crosswalks, road diets, trail systems, and parking that can be shared with other communities. All in favor, motion carried

Ms. Mehl proceeded with giving an update on behalf of the Planning Department.

- Ms. Mehl stated that the Planning Department received the preliminary design for the Kaleva trailhead bathroom and shower facility, which was estimated to be around 600,000 to 700,000 dollars.
- Discussion ensued about the cost, and if it would be possible to complete the project in phases. Ms. Mehl asked the commission how we should advance with the project and what grants we should apply for.
- Discussion about possible RFQ to find alternate contractors, possible USDA grant, future Community Foundation grant application.
- Planning staff will put out RFQ and attend the next Village of Kaleva meeting to update Village Council and see how the council wants to succeed.
- Ms. Mehl touched on the US-31 Rebuilding Project and urged members to take the survey.

Old Business: Mr. Shulke asked if the Kaleva to Chief trail had a name.

- With the DNR owning the trail, it is thought they have naming rights to the trail.
- Talked about signs that need to be placed on trails.

New Business: No new business.

# MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

Draft

Mr. Beldo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 P.M.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Ms. Wegner, to adjourn the meeting.  
All in favor, motion carried.

Next meeting will be on September 10, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gary Schwaiger, Recreation Commission

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Date