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MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

March 3, 2025
6:15 P.M.

Manistee County Planning Department Conference Room
and via Zoom

MINUTES

Members Present: Wayne Beldo, Chair; Margaret Batzer, Vice Chair; Gary Schwaiger, Secretary; Eleanor DeYoung; Bob DeYoung; Robert Schuelke; Devin Wegner; Paul Petrovich; Shayne Machen

Members Absent: Linda Cudney

Others Present: Katie Gruenberg, Manistee County Planning Director; David Jarvi, Manistee County Planner; Sara Herberger, Manistee County Community Foundation; Sally Trisch, Dickson Township Claire Richards, SMARTrails; Tim Knoper, Benzie-Manistee Dirt birds President; Bob Myers, Benzie-Manistee Dirt Birds Member, MTAG Committee member; Mark Coe, Benzie-Manistee Snowbirds President (via zoom); Ronald Stoneman, MAPs Superintendent

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

Approval of the March 3, 2025, meeting agenda.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer supported by Mr. Schwaiger to approve the March 3, 2025, meeting agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

Election of Officers: Mr. Beldo opened the nominations for the election of officers of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Ms. DeYoung to nominate Mr. Beldo as Chair. There were no further nominations. All in favor, motion carried.

There was a motion by Ms. DeYoung, supported by Ms. Wegner to nominate Ms. Batzer as Vice Chair. There were no further nominations. All in favor, motion carried.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Mr. Schuelke by to nominate Mr. Schwaiger as Secretary. There were no further nominations. All in favor, motion carried.

There was a motion by Mr. Schwaiger, supported by Mr. Beldo to appoint Mr. Jarvi as Recording Secretary. All in favor, motion carried.

Approval of the January 6, 2025, meeting minutes.

- Ms. Batzer pointed out that Ms. Wegner was included both in the members present and members absent. Mr. Jarvi will edit the minutes to correct the issue.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer supported by Mr. Petrovich to approve January 6, 2025, meeting minutes as amended. All In favor, motion carried.

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Public Comment:

No public comment.

Friends of SMARTrails Update: Ms. Richards gave an update on behalf of Friends of SMARTrails.

- The group has been focused on marketing and media. Focused on making a marketing and media plan for when the EDA grant goes into construction. Hoping to have the plan put together in the next month.
- Drafting next steps of where to focus efforts once EDA grant is complete. SMARTrails is looking to have discussions with the County Recreation Commission and want to get on a Recreation Commission agenda in the coming months once their plan is complete.
- Mr. Carson has an update on EDA Grant. Ms. Richards believes they are working on putting out bids.
- Discussion ensued about proposed trail routes of the Casino to Chief, and Casino to Manistee.

Manistee County Snowbirds Update: Mr. Coe gave an update on behalf of the Snowbirds.

- Awesome season, traffic counts have been phenomenal throughout the county.
- Trails are still open for now.
- Benzie, Leelanau County trails are in excellent condition. Manistee's are good.
- Just completed round of grooming for whole trail system.
- Looking at partnering with casino to expand trails north and east of M-22.

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

- The first meeting of the season will be March 15th. No group ride as snowmobile trails are officially still open.

Municipality Update:

- No one was present to give an update.

Planning Department Staff Update:

- Mr. Jarvi completed and turned in the Lifejacket grant application on Friday. We will wait and see if we are awarded the grant.
- Ms. Trisch was generous enough to drop off the plans and drawings for Dickson Townships bathroom facility. Mr. Jarvi asked Commission members to look over the plans. Hopefully reviewing the documents will give us some ideas in how we can lower the price of the Kaleva Trailhead and Bathroom Facility.
- Mr. Jarvi did the annual Recreation Commission presentation at the February County Board of Commissioners meeting.

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- Mr. Beldo let the Commission know that the Village of Kaleva is seeking letters of Support for appropriation funding from representatives Roth and Molenaar. To fund campground and trailhead facility projects.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Ms. Wegner to approve a letter of support for the Village of Kaleva's attempt at securing appropriation funding from their local representatives.

All in favor, motion carried.

Discussion ensued about trailhead and bathroom facility costs, amount of Recreation Commission involvement in future projects and grant applications.

Old Business:

Economic Development Document:

- Mr. Jarvi received edit requests from Ms. Herberger, which he liked and will incorporate.
- Discussion ensued about the content of the brochure.
- Instead of using state statistics, Mr. Jarvi will use stats in the Recreation plan and from more local sources.
- Mr. Jarvi will bring back an updated brochure to the next meeting for approval.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer, supported by Mr. Schuelke to accept Rethinking Parking & Street Design in Rural Towns Document.

All in favor, motion Carried

New Business:

Recreational Asset Optimization, Sands Park and Jefferson School:

- Ms. Gruenberg and Mr. Stoneman presented.
- Ms. Gruenberg explained the purpose of the project, stating that it is a collaborative plan, allowing MAPs and the City (Manistee) to optimize landholdings that align with the needs of the students and community.
- MAPs are planning on relinquishing Jefferson School property to the county land bank, who becomes responsible for the demolition of school, and then will split portion of property to the city. The land bank will hold on to a piece of the property, which will yield 6-10 buildable lots.
- MAPs in turn will take ownership and responsibility for Sands Park.
- Ms. Gruenberg detailed aspects of the proposed site plan for both locations. Discussion ensued about the site plan.
- No demolition estimates yet for Jefferson School.
- The plan as of now is for the Land Bank to use ARPA dollars, need to make sure that the land bank can recoup costs. 550 tax capture may also be an option.
- Still in initial phases of discussion.
- Discussion about housing stock on the new lots.

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Possible County-Wide ORV Ordinance:

- Planning staff wanted to gauge the Commission's thoughts on pursuing a county-wide ORV Ordinance.
- Local Units still control what roads are open/closed in their communities. Local Units can opt out by resolution.
- Allows for the County Sheriff's Office to have one concise ordinance to enforce when needed on ORV users.
- Currently ORV enforcement is hard, as many townships have separate ordinances or none.
- It makes it hard to enforce for the sheriff's office.
- Having an ORV Ordinance could open up funding sources to assist with enforcement.
- Mr. Myers explained an ORV Ordinance, Using Lake County's as an example.
- Simplicity and conciseness are important for both riders and enforcement.
- In Lake County, fines collected after court fees go to the Sheriff's Office and Road Commission.
- Lake County has gotten to a point where the funds can support a part-time enforcement officer.
- There can be special rules by township, although that is not advised.
- Since Lake County implemented their ORV Ordinance in 2009, there have been 11 or 12 accidents involving an ORV and Motor Vehicle, 0 fatalities.
- Discussion ensued about aspects of an ORV Ordinance, state law.

There was a motion by Mr. Schuelke, supported by Mr. Beldo to approve planning staff to further investigate feasibility of proposed county-wide ORV Ordinance.

All in favor, motion carried.

Future Work Session Brainstorming:

- Mr. Jarvi went over 2 brainstorming questions which he included in the February update email.
- Ms. Gruenberg asked if we should have a policy/ procedure when Local Units of Government reach out to us for projects. Annual goals? She also assured that trails are still a big priority.
- Discussion ensued.
- Will chip away on this issue during meetings. Will have a study session or special meeting if meeting agendas are still full.

Other Items Before the Board:

None.

Mr. Beldo requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 P.M.

There was a motion by Mr. Beldo, supported by Mr. Schuelke to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor, motion carried

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Next meeting will be on April 7, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Schwaiger, Recreation Commission

Date