COUNTY OF manistee MICHIGAN

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
(231) 723-6041
Fax (231) 398-3526
planning@manisteecountymi.gov

Manistee County Planning Building • 395 Third Street • Manistee, Michigan 49660

DRAFT
Tuesday, September 8, 2026
6:15PM

Manistee Planning Conference Room
395 Third Street,
Manistee, MI 49660
and via Zoom

MANISTEE COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

Call to Order & Roll Call:
The meeting was called to order by Chair Wayne Beldo at 6:15 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Beldo, Gary Schwaiger, William Shryer, Shayne Machen, Margaret Batzer, Linda Cudney, Mary Becker-Witt, Sally Trisch

MEMBERS ABSENT: Robert Schuelke, Paul Petrovich

QUORUM: Confirmed

OTHERS PRESENT: Katie Gruenberg, Planning Director; Jodie Lynch, Planner; Jessica Sorensen, Recording Secretary; Sara Herberger, Manistee County Community Foundation, Tim Knooper, Benzie Manistee County Dirt Birds

Approval of the Agenda:

Ms. Batzer motioned, supported by Mr. Schwaiger, to approve the September 8th, 2026, agenda as presented. Motion passed with a voice vote.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Cudney motioned, supported by Ms. Trisch, to approve the June 1st, 2026, meeting minutes as printed. Motion passed with a voice vote.

Conflicts of Interest: None

Public Comment: None

Updates:

Friends of SMARTrails: Repoted by Ms. Cudney

- Ribbon cutting for the trail in Thompsonville August 15th
  - Approximately 35 guests signed in, with representatives from the newspaper, Manistee County Community Foundation, County recreation Commission, DNR, Networks Northwest, AJ's Excavating, Thompsonville Area Revitalization Project, Cleon Township, Springdale Township, Village of Copemish and more were present for the event.
  - The event was viewed as a success and demonstrated continued community support for the trail system.
  - The project included resurfacing the trail from Copemish to Thompsonville and improvements to the bridge over Bear Creek. Funding was provided through the MEDC and Manistee County Community Foundation. The DNR recognized the partnerships involved in making the project possible.

Members discussed ongoing concerns regarding vehicle use on the Trail, including horse-and-buggy use.

Discussion included:

- Whether horse-drawn buggies are included under applicable restrictions for non-motorized vehicles.
- The possibility of pursuing a small grant for additional signage was discussed through the DNR.

Benzie - Manistee County Dirt Birds: Report by Tim Knooper

- Successful completion of two adopt a highway clean ups with another upcoming at the end of the month.
- Created Business Cards with QR codes to the ORV ordinance web pages with distribution to several local businesses.
  - Noted several businesses have already requested additional cards.
  - Members discussed expanding distribution to other lodging facilities, the Visitors Bureau/tourism organization, and local municipalities.
  - Staff was asked to look into additional flyers containing the QR code which could be provided to lodging facilities and visitor-oriented locations.
  - Staff was tasked with following up with Tim on whether the existing QR code can be shared digitally for use on County materials.

Ms. Cudney inquired whether the ORV Ordinance would be distributed to all of the local units. Staff noted it will be sent to the municipalities directly but is also available online on the County Web Page.

Benzie - Manistee County Snowbirds: None

Municipality Updates: None

County-Wide Recreation Plan & Planning Department Staff: Report by Ms. Jodie Lynch

County-Wide Recreation Plan Update:

Staff reported:

- The plan was sent out for preliminary comments.
- Edits have been received from several reviewers.
- The plan's next step is proceeding to formal review and public comment.

The Commission discussed the proposed locations for public hearings and whether an additional meeting should be held in the Norman/Dixon area due to the Highbridge Bridge closure. Members noted that the closure could make travel to other meeting locations more difficult for residents in that portion of the County. Staff indicated that an additional meeting could be arranged if the Commission felt it would be beneficial. The intent of the proposed locations is to provide geographic coverage throughout the County.

Preliminary feedback received from Local Units, Networks Northwest, and DNR staff has been positive.

Village of Kaleva Bathroom/Trail head Facility:

An update on the proposed restroom facilities at the Kaleva trailhead was presented to commission members. Two modular facility designs are being considered. One design includes four restrooms and two showers, while the other includes two restrooms and two showers. Preliminary estimates were discussed, with costs ranging from approximately $530,000 to $650,000. The estimates were noted to be considerably lower than earlier projections.

The Village of Kaleva is considering pursuing DNR grant funding and assistance through the Community Foundation's grant-bundling program. Staff would assist with preparation and administration of the grant application if the Village proceeds. Grant activity is anticipated in the spring.

The Commission discussed the possibility of using $15,000 of Recreation Commission ARPA funds toward the project's grant match. Members indicated that the Village should contribute toward the project before the Commission determines its own contribution. A potential Recreation Commission contribution of $10,000 to $15,000 was discussed, subject to the final project costs and funding commitments. The Commission also discussed whether County planning and grant-writing assistance could qualify as an in-kind contribution. Staff stated they will seek clarification regarding how those services could be credited.

Members review of the restroom designs brought forth discussion on concerns for the placement of showers within the restroom facilities. In particular, members questioned whether having showers and toilets within the same enclosed spaces could limit access to the restroom facilities when the showers are occupied. Separate access to the showers was discussed as a potential way to improve usability for trail users.

Other design considerations discussed included:

- Accessibility requirements and the number of accessible facilities needed.
- Snow-load and roof-design requirements.
- Construction materials and anticipated maintenance needs.
- Whether the facilities could be designed to function as storm shelters.
- The ability to modify the interior layout of the modular units before installation.
- Responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the restroom facilities.

Members noted that the Village's community building is a designated storm shelter and should the new facilities not be constructed to storm shelter standards, signage should be used to guide users to appropriate safe locations. Staff will continue to gather information regarding the proposed facility designs and funding.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Recommend Approval for Draft Park & Recreation Plan Public Comment Period:

Ms. Becker-Witt motioned, supported by Ms. Batzer, to approve the Draft Parks & Recreation Plan for Public Comment Period. Motion passed with a voice vote.

Other Items Before the Board: None

Adjourn:

Mr. Beldo requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 P.M.

Ms. Machen motioned, supported by Mr. Shryer, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed with a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

_____ _____

Gary Schwaiger, Recreation Commission Date