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July 7, 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; Paul Petrovich; Shayne Machen; Linda Cudney; Devin Wegner; Bill Shryer

Members Absent: Robert Schuelke (Via Zoom)

Others Present: Katie Gruenberg, Manistee County Planning Director; Jodie Lynch, Manistee County Planner; David Jarvi, Manistee County Planner; Sara Herberger, Manistee County Community Foundation; Sally Trisch, Dickson Township; Claire Richards, SMARTrails; Ric Alameddine, Onkama Parks & Rec; Tim Knoper, Benzie - Manistee Dirt Birds

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

Approval of the July 7, 2025, meeting agenda.

There was a motion by Ms. Cudney supported by Ms. Batzer to approve the July 7, 2025, meeting agenda as amended. All in favor, motion carried.

Approval of the June 2, 2025, meeting minutes.

There was a motion by Ms. Batzer supported by Mr. Petrovich to approve the June 2, 2025, meeting minutes as amended. All In favor, motion carried.

Public Comment:

Ms. Herberger, Manistee County Community Foundation:

Ms. Herberger asked about Amish Horse and Buggies, and how they would be handled in the ORV ordinance.

Emphasized that the ORV Ordinance should be easy to read for a layperson, checked in about age limits in ORV Ordinance.

Ms. Herberger said that the MCCF Board would be open to consider a grant application to lead or coordinate a workplan for recreation Commission Staff and recreation stakeholders.

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

Reviewing Mr. Coe's bullet point list.

Mr. Carson reported that the EDA approved the contract for Thompsonville-Copemish, contract was sent to AJ's Excavating. Waiting for signature.

Mr. Coe and Ms. Cudney attended Trailsday at Ironfish. Gave overview on group and goals.

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SMARTrails table was set up at Thompsonville Summerfest, which was a success.

Mr. Coe, Ms. Richards, and Mr. Myers did some trail maintenance and clean up.

Will meet at Snowbirds HQ for next meeting, group photo.

Manistee County Snowbirds Update: No update.

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

Not much new to report, lots of people are engaging with group.

Mr. Knoper talked about Horse and Buggies/ horseback riders and relation to ORV Ordinance. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Batzer said there should be a policy about ROW written out in case there is an incident.

Discussion ensued about E-bikes and regulations.

County-Wide Recreation Plan Update: Ms. Gruenberg gave an update.

Kicking off the process, sent correspondence out to LuGs.

Survey has not gone out yet.

Discussion about resolutions of support, local unit monetary contributions, what communities not contributing would miss out on.

Planning Department Staff is hoping to get the survey out before August, want to catch the summertime population also.

Communities who opt out won't get community specific parts of plan written, making them not eligible for DNR grants.

Work Session Follow-Up & Next Steps:

Mr. Beldo inquired about planning and engineering for whole trail segment vs portions like Chief to Kaleva.

Ms. Gruenberg and Mr. Jarvi met with Manistee County Road Commission Manager Brad Kluczynski. There are a number of challenges, and options that can be done in regard to the portion of trail along county roads. The road can be shifted to create more right of way on one side, pedestrian addition can be added to bridge, alternative shoulder options needed for paved portions of road stretch. Very productive meeting.

Ms. Gruenberg threw the idea out that a feasibility study or engineered plans could be done for just the portion of proposed trail that will have to run along county road. Possibly could have alternate options/routes engineered.

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Will start work on Forest Roads and establish contact with USFS soon. Discussion ensued about forest roads.

Water trails were brought up.

Ms. Gruenberg asked commission for feedback on recommended next steps in memo. Discussion ensued.

The commission asked staff to start working on priorities/policy document.

Mr. Schwaiger talked about demographics of county, wants to get bulk of population in the city out to eastern trails via trails. Wants a way where people in the urban core of county can bike/hike to proposed trails and not have to drive.

Ms. Batzer voiced her support for a potential trails map (of county).

Ms. Batzer wanted the creation of a smaller potential projects list added to the memo. Emphasized land owned by county on 11-mile rd. Possible loop trail.

Ms. Machen expressed her support for easily digestible handbooks, maps, apps or QR code to look at maps.

Municipality Update:

Ric Alameddine gave an update on the Onekama Trails Project.

MDOT visited two weeks ago to do a site visit and review entire project.

The trail is split up between south, central, north sections.

Have gotten MDOT to reduce lanes in reconstruction by 1 foot. Parking Lanes will be 7ft. Will allow for bike lanes on both sides of road. Which makes project eligible for TAP Grant.

Team is looking at connectivity of trail.

Just released RFP to 3 organizations.

Introduced proposed idea for Recreation Commission to take on proposed trail route which will go from casino out via M-22/US-31. Trail path would be entirely on ROW.

Talk ensued about Recreation Commission goals, where local units fit in, priorities and procedures document development, master map.

Discussion was had between the Recreation Commission and Mr. Alameddine and Ms. Trisch, over goals, and how to get projects in front of recreation Commission.

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Planning Department Staff Update:

Mr. Jarvi informed the commission that the lifejackets from the grant award have been delivered to the Planning Department. Will be delivered in the coming days to the communities.

Mr. Jarvi attended the June Friends of Orchard beach State Park meeting, to give an informational presentation on the Recreation Commission.

Old Business:

Draft ORV Ordinance Review

Discussion over removed section with immunity clause, Prima Facie Clause.

Will get correspondence out to LuG's as we get closer to finalizing ORV Ordinance.

New Business:

Rec Plan Survey

Discussion amongst members on questions which need to be added/edited.

Want to get survey out to public by August.

Other Items Before the Board:

Mr. Shryer informed the Commission of a running event taking place at Orchard Beach State Park on August 14th. Being ran by Friends of Orchard Beach State Park.

Mr. Shryer said that running events would be a money-making event.

Mr. Beldo requested a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 P.M.

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

Next meeting will be on August 4, 2025.

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Respectfully submitted,

Gary Schwaiger, Recreation Commission

Date