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## GENESEE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES

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The semi-monthly meeting of the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission was held on Thursday, May 14, 2009 in the Conference Room of the Genesee County Parks Administration Building, 5045 Stanley Rd., Flint, 48506.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joe Krapohl, Archie Bailey, Jeff Wright, Billy Bradshaw, Bob Ranger, Mike Keeler Ted Henry.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** James Washington, Bill Lucas, Patrick Gleason

**STAFF PRESENT:** Amy McMillan, Director; Ron Walker, Deputy Director; Deborah Wilkes, Secretary; Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist, Nancy Edwards, Program Coordinator; Leisa Gagne, Finance Officer; Brian Barkey, Legal Counsel.

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

President Krapohl called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**(2) OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION**

No one from the public addressed the commission.

**(3) CONSENT AGENDA**

**Discussion:** There were no items removed for discussion from the consent agenda.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Henry  
Supported by Commissioner Bradshaw

**Motion and support for approval of consent agenda items.**

**Roll Call:**

Yeas: Bailey, Bradshaw, Henry, Keeler, Krapohl, Ranger, Wright  
Nays: None  
Absent: Washington, Lucas, Gleason

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0**

**(4) REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL**

There is nothing to report from Legal Counsel

**(5) DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**A. Genesee County Fair Board Request for Beer Sales:**

**Discussion:** The Genesee County Fair Board has requested the commission grant permission to the Fraternal Order of Eagles sell beer at the Fair this year. They have done this in the past, the same group will be handling the sales and we have not had any issues. This must be brought before the commission because, as you know, there is a rule against alcoholic beverages on Park property. The Director requests that the commission approve the request.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Wright  
Supported by Commissioner Keeler

**Motion and support for approval for the Fraternal Order of Eagles to sell beer at the County Fair in August, 2009, subject to all rules and regulations.**

Yeas: All Ayes  
Nays: None  
Absent: Washington, Lucas, Gleason

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0**

**B. Partnership Review:** We wanted to share this information with you about our partnership agreements. Like every other organization we are working hard to secure outside funding to support our budget in the next three years. We have applied for a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation and, during the process of preparing the grant, have prepared a list of all the partnerships the Genesee County Parks have with various non-profits, both public and private. If anyone asks you what we do to stretch our budget you can provide them with a copy of this document. The value of the partnerships to our Parks totals over \$470,000.00.

**C. Reminder:** Wildlife Management Public Information meeting is tonight in the Harris Auditorium at 7:00 pm. We have received several phone calls including the Humane Society of the United States. We have received multiple emails from the same person. No calls or emails were confrontational. One gentleman expressed concern if our proposal is a violation of the Merkley trust. We have reviewed the trust and talked to the trustee. The trustee has gone on record that there is no conflict and there is no violation of the trust with the proposed plan. Mr. Walker can tell you best, but Ms. Merkley had very strong opinions but her trust does not express those opinions directly. Without direct input from her it is impossible for any one of us to say "this is what Martha would have wanted" During the first 10 years the trust was in effect the full proceeds were assigned to the arboretum not the preserve. Mrs. Merkley loved her trees and particularly roses. We look at the trust language and gave authority to interpret the trust to the trustee. We have all come to the perspective that something has to be done to preserve the *entire* environment. We want it to be done in the most efficient and humane way possible. There are no objections from the members of the Friends of For-Mar. We will do our best to provide the information from our studies over the last couple years to the public and we will do our best to listen to their comments and address their questions. There are some callers that say shoot the deer anyplace except For-Mar.

On another note, enclosed is a copy of the article from the Flint Journal. The commissioners were nice enough to provide their comments about their favorite places and memories of the parks for this article. We hear often from staff and others talk about using the parks as a great place to relax, unwind and escape from all the difficult things life puts in our pathways during these difficult times.

**(6) OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Goose Round-Up:**

**Discussion:** Ms McMillan: We have prepared a resolution for a goose round up for the last several years for the area from Stepping Stone Falls to Bluebell Beach to the Cummings Center. Staff are requesting approval of the resolution as a means of controlling the wildfowl population so it doesn't have an adverse impact on the water quality of Mott Lake. This is just one means to control the wildfowl, with the other being the managed hunt during the appropriate seasons. The results vary from year to year. The geese are relocated to areas with deficient numbers or donated to various food pantries and service organizations for meals.

Commission Henry asked if the eggs are collected or painted? Ms. McMillan said that enclosures are created to bait and trap the geese while they are molting and do not fly. We set up three different enclosure areas. Some are transported outside the state since we have a more than sufficient amount of these animals. Geese have naturalized to the area and don't necessarily fly south for the winter. Some areas in Michigan are allowed to paint the eggs or shake the eggs. Permits must be filed for this activity.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Wright  
Supported by Commissioner Ranger

**Motion and support for a resolution approving submittal of an application for a permit from the Department of Natural Resources for a Goose Round-up.**

Yeas: All Ayes  
Nays: None  
Absent: Washington, Lucas, Gleason

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 7-0**

**B. Budget Sub-Committee meeting.** President Krapohl asked that the Budget Sub-Committee meet on June 11, 2009 immediately following the regular commission meeting. Commissioners Washington, Lucas, Wright and Krapohl currently are serving on the committee and one more commissioner is needed on this committee due to Rose Bogardus' departure from the commission. If someone would like to think about serving on this committee they can let him know otherwise we will draft someone from the commission. Ms. McMillan said the staff has already begun working on the budget since last November. Commissioner Ranger asked if it had to be a county commissioner? President Krapohl stated it doesn't necessarily have to be a commissioner.

**(7) OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Wright said the calls he has received calls about the damage the deer have caused to the environment and the neighborhood. Having said that, since we have begun public meetings he has not seen many deer in the neighborhood lately, but perhaps there is enough regrowth of vegetation this spring that is available elsewhere. He said the tadpoles are about 4 inches long in Timberwolf.

Commissioner Ranger said that when the Merkley trust was started there were places to hunt, and the comment was made by a lady (at the last meeting) that she (Mrs. Merkley) didn't want any hunting, but things have changed in that area and there was hunting in other areas that probably kept the deer in check.

Commissioner Keeler said the subdivision, south of Davison Road may have impacted the deer population and pushed them into the protected area of For-Mar. The deer have moved to an area that is less irritating to them.

Commissioner Wright said that For-Mar gets used a lot more than it ever did before. The use by people pushes the deer in and out of the Park. If it weren't used as much by people the deer would not move out of the Park. So it's a good thing we are using the park, but it pushes the deer outside into the neighborhoods.

Ms. McMillan spoke to Commissioner Curtis and he feels he has been kept well informed on the subject and can pass along information to his constituents.

Commissioner Wright said the comments he has received from people living around the area (Genesee, Potter and Belsay Road areas) seems to be a consensus that something needs to be done. He thinks that perhaps those that are speaking against it may not be from the generalized area but from other areas of the county.

Commissioner Keeler said some people used to feed the deer. He would see the bait piles while cross-country skiing through there. One gentleman was putting bait over the fence. It is illegal to feed deer. He said the Sierra Club discussed the issue of the DNR cutting trees and replanting aspen trees, which are a favorite food of deer.

Commissioner Bailey asked if we had seen the deer crash map put out by the Planning Commission. He said insurance companies are approaching the county commission about the deer problem because of the amount of damages. Ms. McMillan said it is part of the presentation that she makes to the audience during the public information meeting.

Commissioner Ranger said we have to keep in mind that this is a test program and there is no way we would be wiping out the entire deer population in For-Mar, we'd be lucky to meet the quota. It is just a test program to keep everything in check. Commissioner Wright said they are hiding already.

Commissioner Henry asked if we have turkeys in For-Mar. Ms. McMillan said there are plenty of turkeys in the area. Commissioner Wright said there were 21 turkeys roosting on his neighbor's roof last month. Lately, due to the spring growth, he hasn't seen as many. Ms. McMillan said the re-population in Genesee County has been very successful. We have a flock near the office that takes flight over the lake and the turkeys are very graceful for as large as they are. We've also had a call about a turkey going through his front glass window and caused a lot of damage, although the bird was uninjured. Commissioner Ranger said up north there are flocks of 50 or more.

Commissioner Wright said there was an article in the Flint Journal that said that the turkey population statewide is double what it was and repopulation was an overly successful program that may need to be addressed in the future. On another note he said that pheasants have been spotted in For-Mar which is something he hasn't heard of in years.

Commissioner Henry said he got a call that the State is cutting off funding for State Fairs. Commissioner Wright confirmed that fact and there are no plans yet of how to replace those funds. There is a meeting of the Fair Board on Tuesday and they will probably discuss that issue. Commissioner Bailey said the Fair Board has requested \$15,000 from the County Commissioners. He will be meeting with Chris from the Fair Board and the Friends of the Fair to seek funding sources and fundraising events. There are some foundation applications and the county commissioners will do everything they can to keep them operating. Commissioner Wright said that weather is a big factor in the success of the fair and people staying close to home.

Commissioner Wright said he has never seen so many cars and people at Timberwolf fishing and disc golf area. He thinks this may be the way it is going to be all summer. Commissioner Henry said its ironic because the weather isn't that warm yet, although Commissioner Wright added that it has been a long cold winter.

Commissioner Ranger asked if there would be enough fishing poles to distribute at the Free Fishing Derby. Ms. McMillan said there will be no funding from the Steelheaders group to buy new poles. A press release went out for new and gently used poles to be donated to the Parks. Ms. Edwards said we will not be able to provide any equipment without donations. We still have bait donations. Fishing Tackle Grab Bag usually sells them to use for \$5-\$7 for rod/reel combinations. Commissioner Ranger said he would try to get some donations from the Building Trades to purchase some poles. Ms. Edwards said we used to by 350 poles each year with the donations. This year, if we have any, it will be first-come, first-served. It has been advertised for people to bring their own fishing equipment. We will still have boats and bait. They have always been able to keep the poles that were provided. Commissioner Bailey asked about the proportion between kids showing up with poles and without poles. Can we assume that those not showing up with poles cannot afford them? He's seen kids show up without shoes on, let alone with a fishing pole. Ms. Edwards said we do not have information because we don't ask questions. There were people who didn't bring equipment every year because it has been provided. Ms. McMillan said that she figures it is 3 out of 4 don't have the ability to pay for poles. The boat ride is equally important to these kids too. Commissioner Ranger said if you've seen the first catch by these kids is great to see.

Commissioner Henry asked about the Home Depot grant. Ms. McMillan said benches, picnic tables and a small rest area were built (and purchased) and they did a tremendous amount of work and a tremendous job in Linden County Park on a miserable rainy day. We hope to invite the store manager to our commission meeting to thank them. About 75 volunteers from their store showed up to help. Four to six neighbors came out to help as well.

**(8) OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION**

No one from the public addressed the commission.

**(9) ADJOURNMENT**

With no objections made, President Krapohl adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.