

**Members Present:** President Joe Krapohl, Vice President James Washington, Commissioners: Joe Madore, Jeff Wright, Omar Sims, Mike Keeler, Cloyce Dickerson, Pegge Adams

**Members Absent:** Secretary William Lucas, Commissioners Carl Arthur

**Staff Present:** Amy McMillan, Director; Barry June, Deputy Director; Nancy Edwards, Programs and Grants Officer; Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist; Alayna Alexander, Office Aide

**Others Present:** Bryant W. Nolden, 1st District County Commissioner, Heather Brushhaver, Former Employee

**1) Call to Order.** President Krapohl presided and called meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. First meeting of the calendar year and Election of Officers for the parks commission

**2) Nomination and Election of Officers.** This is our annual organizational meeting to elect officers for the year. President Krapohl asked for nominations for the office of President of the Parks Commission.

Omar Sims nominated Joe Krapohl for the office of President of the Parks Commission. Cloyce Dickerson supported that nomination.

President Krapohl called for any other nominations three (3) times. With no other nominations, the nomination process is closed and a motion is made to close the nominations and elect the nominee by acclamation. With no further discussion, the following action is taken:

**Motion and support to close the nominations and accept the nomination of Joe Krapohl for office of President of the Parks Commission for the calendar year 2015.**

**Ayes:** All Ayes

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** William Lucas, Carl Arthur (Pegge Adams arrived late and missed this vote)

**MOTION CARRIED**

President Krapohl asked for nominations for the office of Vice-President of the Parks Commission.

Commissioner Omar Sims nominated James Washington for the office of Vice-President of the Parks Commission.

Commissioner Cloyce Dickerson supported that nomination.

President Krapohl called for any other nominations three (3) times. With no other nominations, the nomination process is closed and a motion was made to close the nominations and elect the nominee by acclamation. With no further discussion, the following action is taken:

**Motion and support to close the nominations and accept the nomination of James Washington for office of Vice-President of the Parks Commission for the calendar year 2015.**

**Ayes:** All Ayes

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** William Lucas, Carl Arthur (Pegge Adams arrived late and missed this vote)

**MOTION CARRIED**

President Krapohl asked for nominations for the office of Secretary.

Commissioner Washington nominated William Lucas for the office of Secretary of the Parks Commission.

Commissioner Dickerson supported that nomination.

President Krapohl called for any other nominations three (3) times. With no other nominations, the nomination process is closed and a motion was made to close the nominations and elect the nominee by acclamation. Jo Krapohl informed that if Bill Lucas was nominated he would accept.

**Motion and support to close the nominations and accept the nomination of Bill Lucas for the office of Secretary of the Parks Commission for the calendar year 2015.**

**Ayes:** All Ayes

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Commissioners William Lucas, Carl Arthur. (Pegge Adams arrived late and missed this vote)

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3) Opportunity for members of the public to address the commission.** According to commission rules, the public has three minutes to address the commission. Please state your name and address for the record. No one addressed the commission.

**4) Consent Agenda.** President Krapohl asked commissioners if there are any other items they wish to remove from the consent agenda for discussion. No items were removed from the consent agenda.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Mike Keeler

Supported by Commissioner Cloyce Dickerson

**Motion and support for approval of consent agenda items A through D, as listed in your information packet.**

**Roll Call**

**Yeas:** Dickerson, Keeler, Krapohl, Madore, Washington, Wright, Sims

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Secretary Bill Lucas and Commissioner Carl Arthur (Pegge Adams arrived late and missed this vote)

**MOTION CARRIED 7-0**

**4) Director's Report.**

**A. Atlas Township Request for Master Plan inclusion:**

When preparing the Parks 5-year master plan, all local units within Genesee County, cities, townships and villages were invited to opt-in to our plan. One of those local units to opt-in was Atlas Township. Since that time their township has passed a millage and their Board of Trustees have prioritized trail construction and development within Atlas Township and would like Genesee County Parks to include that updated priority within the update to the five year plan that is going to the Board of Commissioners. Staff asks that you to approve that request.

Wright: Will the trail follow the Kearsley Creek to Atlas Township?

McMillan: Barry does follow the creek?

June: No, mostly with an easement along the roads throughout the township.

McMillan: We will bring this back in more detail as we move forward, hopefully at the retreat in February. We are currently working with the Genesee County planning commission to put together a county wide trail map action plan. That is part of our plans to move forward in partnership with as many local units as are interested in partnering with us over the course of the next 5-7 years. This plan that we are putting together with the planning commission is really the action side of the plan; the plan itself was created by the planning commission in conjunction with input from local units from the entire county. It is in the process of being updated, and now that the millage has been approved and financing has been stabilized, we can take an active look at how we can partner with local communities to construct, manage and connect those trails throughout the county using a combination of state and federal funds.

Sometime within 30-60 days we will be bringing that draft plan to you so you can see how we think it is going to layout and you can expect that we will have more conversations about how those partnerships with each local unit could and would work. They will be customized based on the particular needs and opportunities that each local unit has and what each unit can bring to the table. We appreciate the work the planning commission has done to get this together.

As part of the conversation, we will also include the Governors Showcase Trail; which, in its current draft, is scheduled to come through Genesee County and includes the segment in the City of Flint, the Grand Traverse Greenway, currently under planning & development and hooking into to our existing Flint River Trail. There will be a meeting tomorrow and we will bring back those details to the Parks Commission and Board of Commissioners so that you are aware and involved in the extent that you are interested.

Adams: This sparks an idea, perhaps we can zero in on a holiday event to have a trail walk in Genesee County.

McMillan: In addition to biking, running and walking, there are also the equestrian trails, blue water trails. There is going to be a lot of focus at the state level on blue water trails. We are certainly in a good position with the Flint River being the spine of the Genesee County Parks. Expect more information as we go forward. A lot of compliments to the Planning Commission for

all the work they are doing to help us put everything together. It is a great joint effort between county departments.

Keeler: It's really nice to have these new trails coming in. It's really helpful to have the planning commission connecting the dots and it is going to be real helpful to have somebody overlook these things rather than have a trail over here, one over here and so on. When you connect them, you have a good (trail) system.

**Motion:** Cloyce Dickerson

**Support:** James Washington

**Motion and support to approve the map for proposed walking and biking trails for Atlas Township into Genesee County Parks & Recreation master plan.**

**Yeas:** All Ayes

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Bill Lucas, Carl Arthur

**Motion Carried 8-0**

**B. Mounds ORV Project** We regularly receive grants from the State of Michigan to make improvements and to do maintenance at the Mounds ORV Park. One of those grants was awarded to us last year and the proposal in front of you is based on a bid. Although the amount is under the amount that is required for the Commission to take action, we did go through the purchasing department for bids, and we are asking you to award that work to Rowe Professional Services.

**Motion:** Washington

**Support:** Keeler

**Motion and support to award the contract for engineering and planning services for the Mounds ORV Parks project to Rowe Professional Services in the amount of \$13,940.00.**

**Yeas:** Adams, Dickerson, Keeler, Krapohl, Madore, Washington, Sims

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** (Jeff Wright on phone) Secretary Bill Lucas and Commissioner Carl Arthur

**Motion Carried 7-0**

**C. 2014 Village Attendance** We had phenomenal attendance at Christmas at Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad. We've set several records. One broke a 1995 paid attendance record. There was only one night during the entire Christmas program that we did not add trains, most nights two or three trains were added. For the first time since this director has been here, dating back to the 1999 Christmas season, we added 3:00 trains. Usually we add trains up to 10pm but we added early trains because there was such a tremendous demand. Certainly the economy, low gas prices, marketing efforts, and great customer service helped. This is a great team effort by all our staff. Communication by the Village Manager, Garry Pringle on social media helped to keep people informed about train availability in advance so people were not disappointed when they arrived.

We had a huge increase in the drive thru attendance, a 77% increase. We had one night where we had over 800 cars go through the Village. Our comments overall have been outstanding.

Most common comment: "Don't change a thing, we love it just the way it is, it's our family tradition!"

Adams: What were the numbers?

McMillan: Total paid attendance for the end of year was 144,493. Christmas paid attendance was 48,093. Total attendance at Crossroads Village end of year, including opening night and other free programs (Kaleidoscope), 157,553 and total attendance at Christmas was 55,547 (which includes free admission on opening night).

Krapohl: Did you see a correlation in any of your comments of opening night being free and people coming back.

McMillan: We haven't run all the data yet. There was one complaint that the opening night was too crowded. The best comments that we can have is that it is crowded.

Krapohl: We did the free opening night because of the Genesee County residents passing the millage and also thought it would be good for people who have never been there and that they would come back. Numbers kind of show that maybe it had an impact?

McMillan: It did. Silvia Pitman, musical hostess at the program, said that the experience for her this year, looking out and seeing all the people, was the truest community moment that she had experienced all year. That all the cynicism that we all bring to the holidays, the problems and challenges that we face as a community, just felt like they were suspended for that particular moment in time. 'Out of the 16 Christmas programs that I have opened at Crossroads, I think this was the most extraordinary'. The Mott Foundation's representative was really grateful to be here and passed on her experience to the CEO of the Foundation who also expressed great satisfaction with the acknowledgment the Parks Commission always gives to the Foundation for their phenomenal support of us.

Keeler: Is there any possibility that there will be more free days in the future for people of Genesee County?

McMillan: We always have free days at the Village adopted as part of the schedule, such as Kaleidoscope. I don't think it would be a terrible thing to have a conversation about maybe making that a tradition for opening night. Although our overall number of attendance was higher with paid attendance from the year before, the revenue was almost identical to the year before. People were buying in the stores and buying train tickets. We did not lose a dime by offering free admission to Genesee County residents on opening night. We can discuss it at our retreat.

#### **D. Other Information:**

Best wishes to Debbie while she is in Florida with her family. Her father has been ill.

Full time positions have been reviewed and will go to Public Works committee next week, and if the Public Work committee approves, we will begin hiring some more full time people.

It is seasonal hiring time for us, so if you know people looking for summer job, encourage them to apply now and no later than February. If a county employee or official recommends an individual as a seasonal employee, we will guarantee that person an interview. If that person gets the job, it is because of them and what they bring to the table. Nobody gets a job at the parks commission because of who they know. Please feel free to recommend people.

Yesterday, the Fair Board not only fulfilled their requirements for 2014, they have fulfilled the first steps for their requirements for 2015, which was a condition of the contract the Parks Commission approved. Their application for alcohol sales has been approved by the chief park ranger as of yesterday.

Wright: How much are they in arrears?

McMillan: Zero dollars in arrears. And one of terms of their contract was that before their alcohol permit was approved, they must pay 50% of their user fees for the calendar year in advance. That check was in Leisa's hands yesterday. Let them know how much you appreciate their professional and business-like approach to the contract that you worked so hard to make happen for them.

Krapohl: We look forward to working with them for the next five years.

Washington: It's a great working relationship.

### **5) New Business.**

McMillan: Next parks commission meeting we will be bringing to you another new national event.

### **6) Opportunity for Commissioners to address the Commission.**

Washington: Happy New year to all. Looking forward to a great 2015. My personal motto for myself and family: A Year of Destiny.

Madore: Happy New Year.

Sims: Stay Warm.

Wright: Repeat all that, and say hi to Commissioner Nolden.

Dickerson: Hope everybody had a safe holiday. Everybody has done a real good job and it has been nice working with you last year. I enjoy this committee, thank you.

Keeler: In the letter from the State of Michigan from the Genesee County Road Commission, about the trail taking on the old road: was that something we thought of, or was that something somebody just commented on?

McMillan: No, something somebody just commented on. When we applied for our DEQ permit for the trail construction, nearby property owners must be notified. There were comments from a couple of folks to the DEQ and those folks expressed concern about the people using the trail and suggested the abandoned road be used. It is not a cost effective thing for the Parks Commission to do, the road is very unstable as we know, and would not form the direct connection to Stepping Stone Falls. We thanked them for reminding us that the option exists, but we are not interested, it is just not a good option for us.

Keeler: The road commission says their letter that the plan is to eventually take the road out. I don't know if they take the road out how quickly the trees will grow back in.

McMillan: We have found out that when an area is abandoned, it will naturalize very quickly.

Adams: I have to leave for another meeting, but I'm very excited about the direction the commission is going. It all sounds very positive.

Wright: You say that the grant money comes through the Road Commission to the Parks? Does the Road Commission take an administration fee?

McMillan: I think we settled on a fee of \$1000 on a several hundred thousand dollar project.

Wright: When you say settled, do you mean a negotiation?

McMillan: We came to a mutual agreement that nobody feels too abused by. I think that is a really generous agreement.

Wright: My office has had issues with grant dollars and other dollars that we have gotten into discussions with the road commission about who gets the administration fees. That is a good deal if you are only paying \$1000. They usually want 10-25%.

Krapohl: Thanked the commission on behalf of himself, Commissioner Lucas and Washington for your support for the election of officers this year. We will try to do the best we can as always.

Also, opening day Wolverine sales are up \$3000.

**7) Opportunity for the public to address the commission.** No one addressed the commission.

**8) Adjournment.** Hearing no objections, President Krapohl adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

