

Members Present: Vice President Jim Washington, Secretary Bill Lucas, Commissioners Keeler, Dickerson, Nolden, Madore, Wright, Nealy

Members Absent: President Joe Krapohl, Commissioner Lynch

Staff Present: Amy McMillan, Director; Leisa Gagne, Financial Officer; Nancy Edwards, Recreation Programs and Grant Officer; Deborah Wilkes, Recording Secretary; Danielle Fulcher, Marketing Specialist

Others Present: Gail Viers-Cook, Chris Miller, Genesee County Agricultural Society; David Mansfield, Davison MI; Candy Deweese (no address given)

1) Call to Order. Vice President Washington presided and called meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2) 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.

Gail Cook recently attended the Genesee County Horse Leaders meeting and they asked if there was any progress.

McMillan: We are making progress. We will let them know when we've made some more progress. Our contact is Sarah Carlyon and we've been in touch with her. The area has been cleared and we've started excavating in the new arena area.

Candy DeWeese (no address given) asked about the progress of the pipeline in Elba.

McMillan: We will be talking about that later in the meeting.

Dave Mansfield, 2172 Montague, Davison, MI inquired about why we do not groom cross country trails like they do in Huron County and those Metro Parks. Why don't we spend some money on grooming some skiing trail? Also, being a bike rider, and he is president of the Genesee Wanderers Bicycle Club; he wondered what is the next bike trail that is not fully funded? He might be able to bring that up at their next board meeting and bring some funding in for the Parks.

3) Consent Agenda. Vice President Washington 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 Wright
Supported by Commissioner Dickerson

Motion and support for approval of consent agenda items A through D, as listed.

Roll Call

Yeas: Wright, Madore, Nolden, Washington, Dickerson, Keeler, Lucas

Nays: None

Absent: President Krapohl and Commissioner Lynch are absent.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0

4) Director's Report.

a. The Red Frog folks are on the grounds of the Cumming Center and they are setting up for the Warrior Dash over the course of the next several days. The race is next weekend. We are always excited to have them in the area.

b. Last week we had our 2nd Annual Love Your Lake event with the Flint River Watershed Coalition at Flint Park Lake. We had just under 200 people, it was a really great family event. We'd like to give a special shout out to Maureek White's crew. Over the course of the last several weeks of the summer they have removed 12,000 lbs, (6 tons) of trash from the area of Winthrop Street. It is primarily building materials that have been dumped there over the course of time. They have done an extraordinary job. That high level of clean up begins in the next several days at Thread Lake, which is at the north end of McKinley Park.

The next Love Your Lake event is at McKinley Park this evening at 5:30 to 7:30. This is in partnership with the Flint River Watershed Coalition, which Amy is also the chairperson of that board.

In answer to the questions about the trails: The next segment is under construction linking Stepping Stone Falls to Bluegill Boat Launch. That work started on Monday and is scheduled to be done in October. That is fully funded, largely coming from federal TAP funds through the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission and the Road Commission.

Last week we had a visit from the DNR for our three grant applications that are currently under review. Two are at Bluebell Beach, one is to expand the play area into a truly universal play structure and the other is to provide universal access to the beach for people in wheelchairs to get to the water. And the third is the trail way in Atlas Township, which is a segment of the Iron Belle Trail. We spent time with Amy Matisoff from the DNR and they will be following up with some small requests from us, which we will provide to them.

We were also asked by Amy Matisoff to do a presentation about the project to the National Resources Trust Fund Board at their meeting in August, which will be held at the new outdoor adventure center in Detroit. This will be an opportunity to speak directly to the board about that project.

We are working on which section is going to come next. (to Mr. Mansfield) If you provide your email address before you leave we can keep you in the loop of projects in the works.

Next Monday the Parks, along with the Chamber of Commerce, will be asking the Public Works Committee for extensions of the accommodation tax contracts for both the Parks and Chamber.

5) New Business

Commissioner Wright: We are currently installing 5 different points of pipeline between here and Lake Huron.

Although the weather has not been helpful, things are moving along well. Twenty five of the last 44 days it has rained, so it has slowed progress. Of those areas currently being worked on, those contracts were bid some time ago. We talked about potentially coming through Parks property for a contract that will be let late this fall or possibly early next spring. It is the treated water pipeline that would run from the County's water treatment facility on Marathon and Stanley Road

to a connection point for our distribution system at Potter and Henderson Rds. We've looked at multiple alternatives. Based on comments from the Equestrian folks, from the parks, and his own staff, we are looking at bringing a proposal to the next parks meeting that would call for a 48-inch diameter pipe in there. Other pipes are 66 inches in diameter from here back to the lake.

Based on soil borings taken, historically back in 1999 and current ones, the potential route going through the parks from the Equestrian Center to Washburn Road is not the best way based on comments and input from the Equestrian folks. We've decided the best way to get through that area is down the old Coldwater Road. We will bring a proposal to the Parks Board to utilize the Old Coldwater Road/ right-of-way road bed from Lapeer County through to Coldwater Road where it picks back up on the west side of the Hogbacks. We'll be asking the Parks Board to approve an easement request and if the Parks Board honors us with that, then we will move that request to the County Board Of Commissioners, who must also approve it, and we'd like this process to start in 2 weeks. He believes the Coldwater Road route is the least disruptive, even on a short term basis, of any of the proposed routes. It does save the water customers of Genesee County substantial dollars. It is probably the least disruptive long term as well. He pointed out that it is a road bed, it has been used for truck and car traffic up until about 15 years ago. The Drain Commission would guarantee that whatever they do would only improve the ultimate long term environment and habitat in the area as we have done in all of our parks projects.

Keeler: Is this different than what you were talking about at the last meeting?

Wright: Yes, at the last meeting, the concerns from the equestrian folks was we had a potential route going across the equestrian center; which was actually less expensive, but it would go across about 13 different trails in the equestrian center to Washburn Road. That was the route we were talking about last time. That route, from a financial standpoint, was slightly less expensive and it was a shorter distance, but we believe the new route justifies the extra expense because it causes less disruption to the area. As soon as preliminary maps are ready it will be posted on the Drain Commission's website.

Amy McMillan added that we will post the maps on our social media sites as well.

McMillan: She stated that she didn't answer the other question Mr. Mansfield had. The differences between Huron/Clinton and Genesee County Parks is:

- their budget is 75 million dollars,
- they have a perpetual millage guaranteed to them by law from five different counties
- and they charge everybody, every time they drive through the gates.

They have a totally different business model than we do that allows them to do a lot of things that we cannot.

Oakland County Parks has 23 million dollar budget and they have half the acreage of the Genesee County Parks. Oakland also charges entrance fees to most of their parks and we do not. Our budget, in comparison is 8.4 million. In the winter we are down to a skeleton staff, and when it is snowing staff are primarily plowing roads and parking lots so people can get into the parks... including ForMar so people can cross country ski.

Mansfield: Regarding funding: some parks will charge for a ski pass. Some trails have a donation tube for skiers to donate to ski on groomed trails. If you charge people you get 100% of the people paying, but you need to have staff there to collect fees and print passes. With the tubes, you have the initial costs of installing them, and you won't get 100% of the people paying.

McMillan: The business model just isn't there to support that.

Keeler: The initial cost of grooming is to get the equipment. Once you have the equipment it is the cost of petro and staff. Last winter, on the TART trails, some of the funds to purchase equipment was provided by grants from DNR. We wouldn't need the big equipment that they need. We would just need a snowmobile and track for about \$15,000. The possibilities here would be to use our bike trails for ski tracks and ForMar could have a small track groomed.

McMillan: Amy will let Mr. Keeler know when the next Friends of FORMAR meeting is held.

6) Opportunity for Commissioners to address the Commission.

Madore: The township is helping out with the August 1 event held by the Kearsley reunion folks. The event is still going on and Township's Parks committee will help them and combine their events so there will be all day events on that day. Richfield Park is looking great, and he commended the staff that works to maintain it. He'd like the budget committee to add a couple thousand dollars for ball field fences, would be nice.

He added that he thinks Mr. Wright's Coldwater Rd. plan is a good plan.

Vice President Washington noted that the budget sub-committee that was going to meet after this meeting is postponed and will be rescheduled.

Keeler: It is a good time in Genesee County for bike trails. It really looks like some excellent progress is being made on the Stepping Stone Falls trail if they just started on Monday. Flint also is moving along on the trail from Chevy in the Hole out to Corunna Rd., which goes into the Flint Township trail. Also the Atlas trail news is good too. It is a great time to be a biker in Genesee County.

He also thinks the new route (at Elba) is an excellent idea and he appreciates that.

Washington: He has been spending some time tooling through all the parks and already has hit Flushing County Park, Richfield County Park, Bluebell, and Stepping Stone Falls introducing himself to staff and talk to the patrons using the parks, just to see how they feel about the parks. He'd like to get to every park. The key things he wanted to do was commend the folks that actually do the day-to-day work, and how much we appreciate their work. The parks are pristine, no paper, no garbage. A Ranger and he went out and rode around in the golf cart, on a busy day and a calm day and it was just as orderly and still looked great. He'll make that a priority to go through each park and see what is going on.

Folks were walking dogs on trails in Richfield County Park, and he observed quiet, peaceful areas. He is very proud of the parks system. His brother and father went to Bluebell Beach and Flushing County Park. His dad hadn't seen Bluebell in 20 years and he was amazed to see, what he remembered it as, and how it looks today. His dad came back from Atlanta and he told his dad that Atlanta doesn't hold a candle to Genesee County's Parks and they have nothing over Genesee County when it comes to some nice parks.

7) Opportunity for the public to address the commission.

Gail Cook: Good meeting!

8) Adjournment. Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.