



# GENESEE COUNTY PARKS

Get away. Right away.

COMMISSION MINUTES: October 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON:

President Joe Krapohl  
Vice President James Washington  
Secretary Anne Figueroa  
Commissioner James Avery  
Commissioner Michael J. Keeler  
Commissioner Cathy Lane  
Commissioner Gloria Nealy  
Commissioner Kevin Sylvester

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioner Domonique Clemons, Commissioner Michelle Davis

STAFF PRESENT IN-PERSON:

Patrick Linihan, Parks Director; Cassie Voelker, Director of Finance and Park Operations; Nancy Edwards, Recreation Programs and Grants Officer; Rick Witham, Chief Park Ranger; Beth Schrader, CRV Event Coordinator; Allyson Voelker, Marketing Assistant; Kassie Hyde, Marketing Assistant; Darrin Raupp, Parks Superintendent; Kari Koske, Administrative Assistant.

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Kehoe, Genesee Twp, MI; Tom Saxton & Eric Szczepanski (FRWC); Mary, Elias, Noel, Ethan, Cilo (Oak 4, AmeriCorps)

1. CALL TO ORDER. President Joe Krapohl presided and called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT. Anyone wishing to address the commission must state their name and address and they have 3 minutes to speak.

Public comment received.

3. CONSENT AGENDA. President Joe Krapohl asked Commissioners if there were any items they wish to remove from the consent agenda for discussion. No items were removed.



GENESEE COUNTY  
PARKS AND RECREATION  
COMMISSION

ACTION TAKEN:

Motion by Commissioner Keeler  
Supported by Commissioner Washington

MOTION AND SUPPORT TO APPROVE ITEMS A-C AS LISTED IN PACKET.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Avery, Figueroa, Keeler, Lane, Krapohl, Nealy, Sylvester, Washington

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Clemons, Davis.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0-2

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- For-Mar Partnered with Atlas/Goodrich Silver Foxes for an accessible tour of Atlas Count Park.
- Halloween opener at Crossroads: Great weather, strong numbers.
- Wolverine Camptober: both weekends sold out. Campers welcomed to dress up their camp sites and had a contest for that. Staff made a haunted trail in the woods. Reviewer online stayed in new campsites and called us a 'Premier Campground'.
  - Figueroa: The magic show was fabulous. People were laughing and talking. A lot of fun. It was well organized, well communicated, safety first.
- Chili Nights & Village Lights sold out twice. Great event, great music thanks to FIM, food was great. No complaints. Going to put out a survey to get criticism on how to make the event better.
- Branch Road Fishing Site Project is 90% complete and open to the public today. Still need to get the accessible picnic area and the solar lighting done. That's expected later this fall, so probably doing ribbon cutting in the spring. Reminder: that is a natural resource fund trust project.
- Christmas Set-up: Ahead of schedule.
- Putting parks to bed for the season: turning off water, getting facilities buttoned up
- Riverfront Restoration Project/Hamilton Dam: about 80% done.
- New ADA doors installed at front entrance to Parks Administration.
- Rangers New Patrol E-bike: First of two. One will be stationed around the State Park/Downtown, the other generally throughout the parks.

A. PRESENTATION: MARY & ELIAS, AMERICORPS (STATE PARK/CITY PARK)

- Roles: Mary, Community Relations Representative & Service Learning Initiator; Elias, Team Leader ; Noel, Project Outreach Liaison & Vehicle Safety and Tools Officer ; Ethan, Project Outreach Liaison & Vehicle Safety and Tools Officer; Cilo, Community Relations Representative & Service Learning Initiator.
- Q&A
  - Lane: Do you come back every year?
    - Elias: We won't be sent back. NCCC sends teams here quite often; not necessarily with this same organization.
    - Linihan: It's a competitive process. It's something the United Way applies for. We met as partners about a year ago to talk about different opportunities here in Genesee County. Nancy, working with the United Way put together a package that was accepted. It is pretty competitive. Will we get another one in the future? Who knows. We can always try.
  - Lane: Do we apply year to year?
    - Linihan: This was the first year. If United Way wants to partner again, we will certainly.
    - Nancy Edwards: United Way serves as the hub accelerator here for Genesee County. They are the conduit for lots of AmeriCorps teams, not just NCCC. We have a very good relationship with them and if we have the opportunity to get an NCCC again, you know I will be on it and make that happen. I'm also working with them. There's a new Climate Corps that is a new opportunity, so we are already working with United Way on

a potential for Climate Corps members to be a part of that. AmeriCorps members are serving all over Genesee County.

- Krapohl: On behalf of the commission, we thank you for your work here. We really hope you enjoyed your time here and look forward to having you come back. It's a good partnership.

- APPROVE AGREEMENT – FLINT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION

Genesee County Parks and Recreation staff requests the approval of a Supporting Organization (SOA) with Flint River Watershed Coalition, assigning and transferring all rights, operation, and programs of the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) to Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission. This program is 100% funded by grants and donations. NO USE OF THE PARKS FUND. NO USE OF COUNTY GENERAL FUND.

Linihan:: Nancy, can you talk a little bit about the process and why this is needed?

Edwards: Essentially what we're asking for is that the Flint River Watershed Coalition to become a program of the Genesee County Parks. Much like Keep Genesee County Beautiful did back in 2015/16; that had been operating separately and it became a program of the County Parks so it was housed within the County Parks System and had access to some of the in-kind resources that are availed of that organization because it is a program of. What we're asking is for the Flint River Watershed Coalition to do the same thing.

The committee has been working on what happens to the 501c3 that has been the Flint River Watershed Coalition? What they've decided to do is become a Friends group, much like the Friends of For-Mar—it's a supporting organization, set up to support the program of the Flint River Watershed Coalition.

It offers greater flexibility in regard to funding. There's a thing called Tipping—tipping means you can only get 1/3 of your income from private foundations. When you have a small budget, 1/3 of your income is very small, so that limits your ability to find funding. By bringing it in-house as a program of the County Parks, that removes that tipping rule because it is now based on the County Parks and the County Budget, not on the organization. It affords the director of the program more flexibility in terms of funding, which is absolutely necessary.

You guys know I'm on loan to them on a grant by CS Mott that came here to the County Parks, because it couldn't go to the Watershed Coalition, otherwise they would have been in the Tipping situation. The whole premise is to keep the programs going—they're valuable. This is a necessary program. We have to protect what we have right outside this building, which is part of the Flint River Watershed. Getting people to understand that is critical to what we're doing and is critical to the County Parks—the watershed flows right through us. We're trying to keep this going as best we can. This felt like the best way to make that happen and to set up the organization and the work to continue in the long term.

Linihan:: I think that the Watershed Coalition is a good complement to the things we do at For-Mar, in fact they're a great partner, especially with the water testing and that sort of thing. Those are programs that we partner on currently that enhance what we're doing.

Edwards: That's a good point. We are not asking for 'new'. The Watershed Coalition has already been working with For-Mar. The For-Mar staff serve as mentors for teachers who are doing water testing through the Green Program. The Watershed Coalition staff has always been part of BioBlitz, which is on Friday at For-Mar. Kayak programs that the Watershed Coalition does have always taken place at Blue Gill and within the County Parks. This is nothing new, it's just moving and reaffirming partnerships and collaborations we've had in place for a very long time. Darrin sits on the board of directors—We've always had a representative from the County Parks on the board of directors for the Flint River Watershed Coalition as well.

Keeler: Who is funding the 3 employees?

Edwards: Currently, I am being paid out of the CS Mott grant that is here at the County Parks. The other two employees are being funded out of various pots of money that we have from different grants. Our Education Manager is working on a Forest to My Faucet grant. Just so you know, we are planting a couple thousand trees out at Wolverine Campground this fall out of that grant. There's a grant from GM—GM Community Impact grant which will then pay part of the Education Manager's salary to work on the Green Program. We have nothing right now other than what we have in the bank that is paying for our Paddle Manager.

Keeler: Basically, you guys are going to be funded from grants.

Edwards: Yes, grants. Again, like Keep Genesee County Beautiful, which is completely grant funded, the point is to be able to do that with the Watershed Coalition as well. It is a match up of a lot of a lot of different funding. We have a contract with the Drain Commission, which we just submitted invoices for around \$30,000 every year that we do work for the Drain Commission in Phase Two communities. We do presentations, we do storm drain stenciling, we do education—through that contract, that is what funds the organization as well.

Saxon: One of the things that I learned about the funding things and explained the tipping issue—some of the problems that the organization was getting into previously were a result of that tipping issue. Ideally, we would like to have the grants there to fund our staff and our operations—we have a pretty significant grant giver in CS Mott—so that they can keep the employees consistent and there. Then, to go and seek out partnerships and grants for here that can allow us to do different things. We have our staff in place, and don't have to worry about paying them every month, because we didn't get a grant for a particular cycle. It is better to have a staff intact—it's a small and hard working staff—and then seek out different opportunities to create different programs and missions, like the stenciling of the drains. We've been worried over the last couple of years—if this doesn't come through, how are we going to keep our employees. Really, it's just a way for us to solidify the mission and just keep doing good things.

ACTION TAKEN:

Motion by Commissioner Washington  
Supported by Commissioner Lane

MOTION AND SUPPORT TO APPROVE AGREEMENT TO TRANSFER ALL RIGHTS OF THE FRWC TO THE GCPRC AND REFER TO THE BOC APPROVAL PROCESS.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Avery, Figueroa, Keeler, Lane, Krapohl, Nealy, Sylvester, Washington

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Clemons, Davis.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0-2

Linihan: Just for the record, for budgeting requirements and that sort of thing, this agreement will also go through the Board of Commissioners for their approval process.

B. APPROVE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT—SLOAN AUTO FAIR.

Request approval of a Partnership Agreement with the Friends of Sloan Longway- Sloan Museum Auto Fair (SMAF). Revenue sharing of each admission ticket sold—GCPRC (\$3), SMAF (\$7). GCPRC Family Pass Holders will have free admittance to the event. A 5% processing fee will be retained by the GCPRC for credit card transactions. This fee will be in addition to the admission ticket split. NO USE OF COUNTY GENERAL FUND.

ACTION TAKEN:

Motion by Commissioner Washington  
Supported by Commissioner Lane

APPROVE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR THE SLOAN MUSEUM AUTO FAIR AND OBTAIN SIGNATURES FROM PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Avery, Figueroa, Keeler, Lane, Krapohl, Nealy, Sylvester, Washington

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Clemons, Davis.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0-2

C. DISCUSSION: MICHIGAN STATE POLICE GRANT AWARD

Linihan: We got an award letter from the Michigan State Police for a new pontoon board for \$39,985.00. This one will replace the one we currently have on Mott Lake. This is earmarked funding from the Federal government.

D. DISCUSSION: DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT GRANT AWARD

Linihan: We received a pass-through grant from HUD where we are helping with accessibility projects in other Parks systems in Genesee County. We're working with the City of Swartz Creek, Mundy Township and Grand Blanc Township. They'll each get \$283,333.33 as part of this. In Mundy Township, that's going to go towards the Miricle Park; Swartz Creek, it's going to go to Otterburn Park; Grand Blanc Township will go to Bi-Centennial Park. After this we will have a sub-grantee agreement that each municipality will have to do. If they can't fulfill the grant, they will be responsible for making sure that we the money to pay the Federal government back.

Keeler: I went through that Mundy Township area—is this money going to the Senior Building?

Linihan: No, this is going for accessibility for the playground, parking lot and the ballfield.

Keeler: They have a ballfield for handicap accessible people?

Linihan: Miricle Field—there's some throughout the whole state of Michigan and they have teams that participate with people at different levels that can participate in that.

E. DISCUSSION: GREAT LAKES FISH AND WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT GRANT AWARD

Linihan: Next up was a grant that we got from the US Fish and Wildlife for \$150,000 and that is to support the in-river work that we are currently doing for the Flint River Waterfront Restoration Project.

Keeler: What will that consist of?

Linihan: That's just funding that is completely dedicated to the in-river riffle work and the removal of the Hamilton Dam. That will free \$150,000 of unrestricted funds that we can use elsewhere for the improvements.

F. DISCUSSION: WILKINSON SOLUTIONS, LLC AMENDMENT

Linihan: Wilkinson Solutions—that is just our one year add-on to the contract for chloride services in the Parks.

G. DISCUSSION: MOVE LOCATION OF 10/24/2024 MEETING TO FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE.

Request move the next (10/24/2024) meeting of the Genesee County Parks Commission to For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum for a special event, same time—10 AM.

Lane: Do we need to bring anything special?

Krapohl: Just yourself, your ideas, and your enthusiasm.

ACTION TAKEN:

Motion by Commissioner Washington  
Supported by Commissioner Lane

MOTION AND SUPPORT TO MOVE MEETING LOCATION TO FOR-MAR NATURE PRESERVE.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Avery, Figueroa, Keeler, Lane, Krapohl, Nealy, Sylvester, Washington

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Clemons, Davis.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0-2

5. OLD/NEW BUSINESS—

Krapohl: In reference to the Open Meetings Act Violation—I took responsibility for that. It was a responsibility that technically the meetings did not get posted on our window in time. It's been corrected. It will be taken care of in the future. There will be no fines or any other remedies because there was no written complaint written in the appropriate time period. We have that taken care of.

Flint River Watershed Coalition—we welcome you our umbrella. We look forward to the partnership. We have had good collaboration all of the organizations that we work with and we look forward to working with you.

To the Commissioners: Don't forget that we have holiday coming up—opening ceremonies for Christmas at Crossroads. I suggest that if you want to ride the train, you get your tickets early. That's the day after Thanksgiving, 7 PM. Fantastic night if you can make it.

6. OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMISSIONERS TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION

Washington: It's a great organization here, the Genesee County Parks, to work with. Most, if not some of you know I eat, sleep and drink Leadership. I contemplated earlier on stepping away from the Commission. Joe and I had some conversation and because this is one of the few commissions that operate with integrity, character, honesty, humility and compassion—that's what altered my decision to stay here. This is an organization, regardless of what is said, that is well oiled—because we have been through a number of hellacious situations with people coming on, wanting to be a part of the Commission that had their own hidden agenda. But this is an organization that I value. It's well respected, this is a tremendous staff, we're transparent, you're transparent, and I enjoy it. The only other organization that far exceeds this one, of course, I am chairman of the board of that one—is Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Genesee County. We have prided ourselves on making sure we're transparent to the public. With that being said, that is one of the major reasons why I decided to stay. So you're going to have me a little bit longer.

Keeler: I took a ride on my bike up Branch Road and found some work being done there. There was a permanent pit toilet put in. I think this is a super idea, because for you guys who don't know Branch Road, it actually sunk and it was closed. We used to drive around it before the bike trail was there. Now, there's still that maintained road there, and people were fishing back there—so what is this new site going to be?

Linihan: This was the trust fund grant that you guys approved two years ago. It was mainly an accessibility project. The dock used to be down by the causeway—that was put in, and then about 6 months later, the Road Commission came in and put up a guard rail right in front of there, and it hasn't been accessible since. We were looking at how could we improve this site and make it more accessible. Now, we have the pit toilet, the paved concrete parking lot that our staff did in-house. It tapers down, with the right slope, down to the fishing pier that we moved—we floated that last week down from its previous location and attached it there. We'll be putting in an accessible picnic area right there so anyone who is in a wheelchair can easily have a place to go. We still have to do that and the solar lighting. The parking lot is going to be on solar lights.

Keeler: There's a slab there—is that going to be for a pavilion?

Linihan: No, that slab is where the accessible picnic area is. There will be an accessible bench, and accessible grill—it seems big, but that is because of the radiuses you have to have to meet ADA.

Keeler: From that point, there's actually a curve in there and it's probably a quarter mile before you get to the part that's sunk in that's probably off limits. Is there any future plans, because there's access to Mott Lake all around there.

Linihan: That property is still owned by the road commission.

Avery: I don't remember Mr. Washington asking my opinion about him staying, but—I'm just kidding, he's a wonderful person.

Krapohl: You're looking for candy for Berston Field House?

Avery: Sure, sure.

Lane: I think the only adjective I would add to Mr. Washington is voluptuous list was enthusiastic. The entire staff keeps getting more and more enthusiastic and the smiles get bigger and bigger, so congratulations to each and every one of you.

Figureoa: We all know it's a beautiful time of year and just how much beauty is around us, and we are extremely lucky to be here. I think I know personally, and from what I see of the Commission, we take that stewardship very seriously. We do appreciate the travelling team over there and all your hard efforts and what you give up to come to us to make this a more beautiful place. All the staff, what they do for the County. Keep America Beautiful and the Flint Watershed Coalition is a beautiful addition to our mission and I am just so proud of this organization. I agree—it's transparent, it's single minded mission. We have different opinions, but a single minded mission. I appreciate being part of this organization.

Linihan: I just noticed at you place that everybody got a charm. These are used during our geocache event. These are some of the charms that you can find during that event that For-Mar partners with.

Figureoa: When are the mugs coming back? I was going to stop by and they're gone! Those are fabulous!

Linihan: They sold out by 5 o'clock that day.

Figureoa: When are they coming back, that's the question—

Linihan: As soon as the potter can make them.

Krapohl: I want to touch with the AmeriCorps group-- Jim and I, and Mike, are probably the longest tenured people here. We've been here 20+ years. When we were first started, we were very small and condensed. You can see now that because of the teamwork of everybody involved and the collaboration, we've expanded in what we do. We take care of the City of Flint Parks, we have Keep Genesee County Beautiful, now we have the Flint River Watershed Coalition, we have a For-Mar group, we have a Holloway lake association that we work with, I probably could go on for a while with the partnerships that we have. It's everyone working together for a common cause. Again, thank you for you work and what you've done in the County, because we consider Flint part of the County too. We're all one in this battle to make it better in our area. Again, thank you.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT. Hearing no objections to adjournment, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

I, Kari Koske, Administrative Assistant, certify that the above is a true and correct transcript from the October 10, 2024, Parks and Recreation Commission meeting that was duly called and held in all respects in accordance with the laws of the State of MI and the by-laws of the company and that a quorum was present.

I further certify that the votes and resolutions of the commissioners of Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission at the meeting are operative and in full force and effect and have not been annulled or modified by any vote or resolution passed or adopted by the board since that meeting.

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