

Mecosta County Park Commission
October 8, 2009

The October 8, 2009 meeting was called to order by the Chairman at the Administrative Office in Paris, MI at 7:00 pm. Members Present: Mr. Cookingham, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Howard (arrived late), Mr. Jefts, Mr. Nichols, Mr. Peek, Mr. Stout, Mr. Todd and Mr. Wayer. Members absent: Mrs. Strong. Also present: Gary Brown, Erin Bean and Karen Morningstar.

MINUTES:

September 10, 2009 Board Meeting: Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Todd to accept the September 10, 2008 board meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

September 18, 2009 Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting: Mr. Stout moved, seconded by Mr. Wayer to accept the minutes of the September 18, 2009 Rules and Regulations Committee meeting as presented. Motion carried.

September 21, 2009 Finance Committee Meeting: Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Nichols to accept the minutes of the September 21, 2009 Finance Committee Meeting with correction. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Frank Spica was present to learn the Boards decision on adding seasonal sites at Brower. Mr. Spica also would like the Park Commission to supply soap in the bathrooms.

REPORTS AND UPDATES:

End of Season Closings: Superintendent stated the end of season closing report will be in packet form at next months meeting.

The Brower Lottery went well and was again faster than years past. Mr. Stout reported the event had a good turnout and a few negative comments were heard. Superintendent stated 61 season sites were sold (a record number – only 52 sites were sold last year). Mr. Cookingham stated we try to make it better every year.

Brower Seasonal Sites: A map was distributed. Superintendent is requesting to increase the number of sites to be occupied by seasonals from 8 to 14. Total current sites are 79 and Consumers allows up to 83. This would give us 4 more sites to open up on the Point. Superintendent also would like to decrease the number of sites in the Pines area by 2, and with the previous 4 sites, this would give us the total of 6 sites needed in this area. The Point is popular for transient campers. Three individuals who attended the Lottery, chose not to take a site due to the lack of available sites on the point and one other attendee chose a site in the Pines, but would much rather have a site on the Point. Superintendent explained the map and reminded the Board in the past, we chose the sites for the lottery, in 2010, “pods” were chosen to give the guests choices of sites within the “pods”. Mr. Nichols asked to have the letters of correspondence regarding the lottery incorporated with the discussion. Asst. Superintendent explained most of the email were from upset guests over the “pod” choice by the playground.

Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Stout to increase the number of seasonal sites allowed to 83, reduce the number by 2 in the Pines area and increase the Point area by 6 as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion carried (Jefts nay). Mr. Cookingham predicted a complaint next year about opening up these sites on the Point. Superintendent stated these sites will be made available first to the four individuals who attended the lottery (3 who did not choose a site and the 1 that is a current seasonal in the Pines). Mr. Wayer asked why Mr. Jefts was against this vote, Mr. Jefts stated he felt this was preferential treatment. Mr. Wayer wants to make these minutes and all board meeting minutes available on the website once they are approved.

Primitive Seasonal Sites - Merrill: Superintendent reviewed the revenue for the primitive sites with the Board. Superintendent proposed setting the rate at \$650.00 for the season to keep in line with the current seasonal rates. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Jefts to allow up to six sites (guest chosen) for seasonal camping on Primitive Sites at Merrill for the 2010 season. Motion carried. Mr. Jefts suggested offering the remaining sites for storage.

Merrill Memorial Dock: Asst. Superintendent reported a permit is needed for this project as we are a commercial operation.

Campfire in a Bag: Superintendent reminded the Board, guests brining in firewood for the 2010 season remains undetermined and he does not recommend this idea. When we cut the firewood, it is our profit. Theft of wood is also an issue. Mr. Cookingham stated cedar burns very fast. Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to send a letter, stating we will not take advantage of this offer at this time. Motion carried.

Museum Materials: Mr. Cookingham has obtained a different phone number to call and has again left a message with no returned phone call. He will continue with this effort.

Incident/Accident Reports: four were reviewed.

CORRESPONDENCE: was discussed earlier in the meeting.

FINANCIAL:

Revenue v. expenses were reviewed by the Superintendent.

Adjustments: Executive Secretary reviewed requested to transfer \$2797.46 from contingency to the following line items: 727 \$39.00, 730 \$132.00, 747 \$850.00, 748 \$646.40, 780 \$338.85, 801 \$590.00, 957 \$2021.21, 958 \$519.50. Mr. Nichols moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to allow the transfer of \$2797.46 from contingency to the listed account numbers to balance the line items as identified by the Executive Secretary. Motion carried.

Executive Secretary also asked to transfer funds from the Capital Accounts:

Account # 103: \$15,257.93 for the purchase of the boats and campground master program and Account # 111: \$20,711.83 for the Merrill Restroom project, tree trimming and Pond/Dam repair. Mr. Jefts moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to allow the transfer from the Capital Accounts as requested by the Executive Secretary. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills: Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham for the transfer of funds (to cover Accounts Payable from the 508 account at the County to our 110 account at Chemical Bank) and for the approval of the bills including customary and ordinary. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Financial Report: The Executive Secretary gave the financial report.

Set Asides: The Superintendent reviewed the set asides.

2010 Rates and Fees: Mr. Cookingham reviewed the rates and fees spreadsheet with the Board. Note: nightly camping rates, seasonal camping, Family Group Camp and picnic rates were previously approved. Most of the rates from 2009 were unchanged to 2010. The following is a list of proposed increased rates for the 2010 season: Merrill – Primitive camping increase \$2 (\$12 to \$14), Paris – group camping increase \$1 (\$4 to \$5) Full Hook Up Nightly increase \$2 (\$18 to \$20). Superintendent reported the County of Mecosta is proposing a 2.5% increase in Fulltime Salaries for 2010. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Jeffs to accept the rates as proposed and include a primitive seasonal camping rate for Merrill. Motion carried. Mr. Cookingham thanked the Executive Secretary for the preparation and detail of the spreadsheet.

2009 Pond Revenue: Superintendent was excited to report the 2009 pond revenue of \$5295.75 - a new record (previous record: \$3974.50). Paris Park is the only “free use park”. Visitors can walk in; enjoy the ponds which are what they were designed to do. The ponds area looks the best it has in years thanks to Mr. Stout. Mr. Stout asked about the railings around the ponds. Superintendent explained he has been in contact with FSU welding and this project will be a goal for the spring class.

Paris “Theme” Ideas: Chairman stated the School Section Lake Park Manager was hired to put together 2-3 events for Paris Park next summer and he wore his “antique shirt” to this meeting. Music events were also discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Spica stated everything is new and happy campers do not complain. Prime Seasonal Campers do not like the shortened season and higher rate and acknowledged the Board does. Communication of the changes in seasonal lottery information should have arrived at the park weeks prior. Superintendent stated a parks newsletter is being discussed. Mr. Spica appreciates the Board opening up lots in the Point area.

Dave Versluys: suggested the park lost money in 2009 due to reservations and basically eliminating the Brower Shuffle. Chairman stated we actually gained from reservations knowing guests had a guaranteed campsite, yes, we did loose revenue mid week and we were aware of the possible financial impact. The total financial picture of Brower Park cannot be determined until the end of the season. Mr. Versluys also stated Brower Park used to be full from the end of June through the end of August. Chairman stated the Board appreciates the comments and the public coming to the meeting. Our goal is to improve and rectify and decisions made sometimes are cut short due to finances. The bathhouse was a good improvement for Brower Park. The Prime seasonal sites were presented to accommodate shufflers. These campers would put their unit in storage before Memorial Day and after Labor Day, camp the heart of the season and then leave the park. The prime seasonal lots were extended for the 2010 season by one week pre and

one week post. The discussion of the period of time for the Prime Seasonal Campsites at Brower was referred to the Rules and Regulations Committee. Mr. Wayer asked how many weeks shorter the Prime Seasonal Sites were vs. Seasonal Camping – 15 weeks.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Finance Committee Meeting: was scheduled for November 10, 2009 @ 3:00 p.m. to wrap up the Budget. Executive Secretary will do a call around to ensure this date and time is agreeable to all members.

Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting Date and Time: was tentatively set for October 27, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. Executive Secretary will contact Mrs. Strong to inform her of the meeting.

Mrs. Howard asked how the School Section tree cutting project was coming. Mr. Todd commented the prices for trees have fallen. Superintendent has not been in contact with Mr. Ken Ford. Mr. Stout stated he did speak with Mr. Ford and the project is still a go for this fall. Trucks will use the South entrance.

Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to adjourn at 8:15 pm. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Fitzgerald
Secretary