

MECOSTA COUNTY PARK COMMISSION
August 13, 2009

The August 13, 2009 meeting was called to order by the Chairman at the Merrill Lake Shelter in Sears, MI at 7:00 p.m. MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Cookingham, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Howard, Mr. Nichols, Mr. Peek, Mr. Stout, Mr. Todd and Mr. Wayer. MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Jeffs and Mrs. Strong. Also present: Gary Brown, Erin Bean, Karen Morningstar, Dede Myers (new Merrill Lake Park Manger), Kelly Rodgers (Brower Park Manager) and Dr. Perialas.

Minutes of the July 9, 2009 Board Meeting: Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Nichols to accept the minutes of the July 9, 2009 Board meeting as presented excluding correspondence. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Jack Proctor – asked for the Boards blessing and support to install a fishing dock (T form 15' X 6') at Merrill Lake Park (where the boats are moored) in memory of Kent, who was a friend and quite a fisherman. Seasonals, guests, family and the church have donated \$600 to date for the project, in which, materials are estimated to cost \$775.00. The proposed dock plans allow for the dock to be installed in the Spring and removed in the fall. Chairman felt this would be an issue to be discussed in Masterplan. Mr. Wayer asked if the DNR had been contacted – Superintendent affirmed and explained we are waiting on a response. Superintendent has met with Mr. Proctor and Mr. Pitylak (project coordinators) and knows what they have in mind.

Jackie Sowle – stated the dock @ Gorrel was damaged earlier in the year and roped off. Temporary repairs have been completed and she wants someone to make sure it is safe. Superintendent stated he was not informed of this damage and will look into the matter.

Terry Pontz – noticed survey markers in the beach area of Gorrel. Chairman stated this information will be discussed later on the agenda. Terry also informed the Board that Gorrel Lake had “turned over”. Slime has washed up on the beach, which stinks and looks like dryer lint and is unsafe for swimming. Superintendent stated is hasn't been a nice beach for a long time.

Randy Barnes – has his grandchildren visit often. The lake is brown and the swim lines seem to have trapped the gross looking goo.

Bill Pitylak - stated 10 years ago, Gorrel was the beach to go to. Every 10 years or so this problem seems to switch between Merrill & Gorrel lakes. He has been coming to Merrill for over 32 years and has never seen it this bad.

Virgil Sowle – said the basketball hoop was taken down over a month ago and questioned why another one has not been put back up. Superintendent stated he is working on it, with the new purchasing policy, nothing happens overnight. He is working with the Asst. Superintendent to put bids together for a steel backboard and rim as a replacement as this item costs over \$500. Chairman stated he has a backboard and rim he would donate.

Al Bromley – requested the installation of a “slow – children at play” sign on both lakes due to people driving fast. Chairman stated this is an internal control and requested residents help in slowing traffic down. Signs alone will not do, it will take a cooperative effort between the guests and management.

Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to refer two representatives from the lake to Masterplan Committee to discuss the Dock request. Motion carried.

Reports and Updates:

08 – 09 Campsite Occupied Report: An occupancy comparison spreadsheet of 08/09 was distributed. Superintendent noted Paris Park is doing outstanding. Mr. Wayer questioned if the new program will provide monthly/annual totals. Asst. Superintendent stated yes. Mr. Wayer would like to see these reports monthly. Mr. Cookingham witnessed the theft of a fish on Sunday in the ponds by the Osprey and commented Paris Park looked very good.

Rules and Regulations published on the website: Superintendent informed the Board, the guests cannot abide by rules they are unaware of and has heard comments of guests not returning to our parks due to the number of rules. Chairman stated most people want rules for safety and these rules should be made available and on the website also. Nothing about our rules is considered a secret and the board was not aware rules were not being made available to guests. Asst. Superintendent stated the rules are posted in small font on every bulletin board; however, guests do not want to stand in front of these boards and take the time to read all of the rules and explained the difference between a rule and a policy to the guests present. Superintendent was directed to make the rules available to all guests that want to see them and to post the rules on the website.

2010 Brower Seasonal Sites: Superintendent reported positive feed back on the Prime Seasonal Sites – guests are stating this is not so bad after all and requested no change. Sunny Acres seems to be the place to camp seasonally. Very few seasonal guests want to come in and camp alone – they camp in groups. Two color coded maps were distributed detailing last years site choices and the proposed new site choice areas. These site choice areas will allow groups to camp together as seasonals and alleviate the #1 complaint of not being able to choose their site. Mr. Stout asked if this plan was put together with input from guests. Superintendent stated the Asst. Superintendent and himself picked the pods with verbal input from guests. Mr. Wayer questioned why this information was not included in their mailed packets, as the Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent have taken a lot of time to review and present this information and stressed the Board needs time for review also. Superintendent apologized and stated he intended to present this information and have it go to Committee for further study. The Lottery date is scheduled for September 26th. Chairman stated no system will please everyone. Mr. Cookingham stated this looks good and it will help accommodate the guests. This design allows for 79 total seasonals-we can have up to 83. Mr. Cookingham still wants to see a one (1) ticket drawing. Chairman asked the Board their opinion on which committee to send this package to? Mr. Nichols stated he was ready to vote now on the proposed plan. Mr. Nichols moved, seconded by Mrs. Howard, to accept the new Brower Seasonal site map as presented for the 2010 season. Mrs. Fitzgerald asked of any future problem projection. Asst. Superintendent explained the biggest complaint is not being able to camp together, some areas

in Sunny Acres was taken away to help with this issue. Mr. Stout asked if any of the guests had seen this map? Superintendent stated no – last year yielded huge issues with the information that was leaked. Mr. Stout asked if this map was made up from the advice given by guests. Superintendent stated yes. Brower Manager stated this new map lets the campers have options and they'll be happier with choices. Motion carried.

Incident/Accident: 19 reports were reviewed. The report involving marijuana was discussed. Superintendent distributed a copy of the letter presented to Mr. Brian Klein requesting eviction. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Todd to evict all guests involved with this incident for the remainder of the 2009 camping season. Motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence: from: Bakhuyzen, Mastenbrook (2), Phyllis, VanDuine, Veltman, Sedlarik and Morgan were reviewed.

Riding in the Back of Pickup Policy: was investigated and reviewed by Judge Nichols. Board stated no reason to change current policy.

Financial:

Superintendent reviewed the revenue vs. expenses report.

Adjustments: Executive Secretary requested to transfer \$3557.86 from contingency to cover line items 727, 730, 747, 748, 780 and 958. After review, Mr. Nichols moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to transfer \$3557.86 from contingency to cover the amounts as requested. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills: Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Todd 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 bills. Motion carried by roll call vote.

The Executive Secretary gave the financial report. Set aside accounts were reviewed.

Flower fund: Superintendent expressed the sincere gratitude of Mr. Bill Dobson and his family for the flowers sent to his brothers funeral. The gesture meant a lot and the thank you card was reviewed.

Public Comment: none.

Other Business:

Guests Not Vacating Lots by 3:00 p.m.: This issue is currently taking place at Brower Park. Superintendent stated MCPC has no policy to deal with this issue. A motor home is on a site, which should have been moved over a week ago to another reserved site. Superintendent has tried to contact the owner of the motor home by phone and received no response. The other site the guest has reserved cannot be rented and the current site she is on has been reserved by another party also. This is the second occurrence by this same individual this year. Chairman

stated this is an issue for the Rules and Regulations Committee. Having Bud's towing service remove the motor home was suggested. Mrs. Fitzgerald asked if we had a storage area? Brower Manger suggested Speeds, which is just outside of Brower Park. Mr. Todd asked if a Certified Mailing had taken place. Superintendent stated he has not tried to send a Certified Letter, the guest is technically paid through the end of this week on her other site. Chairman asked the Board if we should wait until the end of the week to move the unit. Superintendent stated this guest is involving us in a FERC violation. Mr. Stout stated we need a policy in place. Chairman asked the Board if we should give the Superintendent authorization to move the unit immediately or wait until the end of the week? Rules and Regulations Committee needs to review this issue. Mr. Cookingham doesn't see the difference on the unit – it's abandoned, move it. Superintendent asked what if the unit has slide outs? Discipline of the guest was discussed. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mrs. Fitzgerald to tow the camping unit out at the end of the week when the campsite expires, impound the unit and obtain payment on both sites (abandoned site and reserved site) from the guest. Motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Howard suggested to keep trying to contact this guest, make it documentable and notify her of the pending action and asked if the hospital, jail and police have been checked. Superintendent stated he did check and nothing has shown up, he even requested the State Police to do a wellness check on her in Cedar Springs and they declined due to the civil matter.

Mutual Benefit Easement Exchange – Gorrel Lake and Steve Perialas: lot lines cross the road, extend into the beach area and into the lake. The old Estes property was purchased by Dr. Perialas in 1992 and is now known as the Cards Nest. Dr. Perialas is selling the property and the proposed easement will grant access to the new owners. After the Park Commission reviews this information, it needs to go before the County Board for action. Mr. Nichols stated an attorney would have to draft the easement. Discussion followed on which attorney to hire. Chairman suggested to have a couple of the Board members review the document before it goes to the County for approval. Superintendent requested to ensure the document meets all of the park rules. Dr. Perialas stated the easement should follow the same language as the current license explaining park damage holding the property owner responsible. Mr. Nichols asked who Dr. Perialas's attorney was. Dr. Perialas responded Jankowski & Casey in Grayling. Mr. Nichols suggested to have them draw up the easement. Dr. Perialas stated they'd be happy to do so. Further action will be taken after the document is reviewed.

River Days 4th Annual Yard Sale: Superintendent stated fliers were delivered to the park and asked if the Board would like them distributed. Board said not to distribute these fliers as we are not going to allow everyone to advertise in the parks. A flier can be posted in the park office.

2010 Seasonal Site Rates: Superintendent requested a Finance Committee meeting to begin the Budget process and determine 2010 rates. Finance Meeting was set for Thursday, August 20th @ 3:00 p.m.

Next Meeting Date & Time: due to a booking at the Family Group Camp – the next meeting will be held at SSLVP at the Picnic Grove Shelter on September 10th.

Year End Dinner: Board was reminded that the Year End Dinner was scheduled for September 16th @ 6:00 p.m. Dinner menu choices were submitted. Mr. Peek volunteered to cook and requested to not marinate the steaks.

New Merrill Lake Park Manager: Asst. Superintendent introduced Dede Myers as the new Merrill Lake Park Manager.

Brower Seasonal Lottery: will take place at Brower Park on September 26th @ 9:00 a.m. Mr. Stout, Mr. Cookingham and Mr. Peek will be helping.

Masterplan Meeting: was scheduled for August 26th @ 3:00 p.m. Jack Proctor and Bill Pitylak will be attending as representatives of Merrill Lake seasonal campers.

Adjournment: Mrs. Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Mr. Nichols, to adjourn at 8:36 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Fitzgerald
Secretary