

MECOSTA COUNTY PARK COMMISSION  
January 14, 2010

The JANUARY 14, 2010 meeting was called to order by the Chairman at the Administrative office in Paris, MI, at 5:15 p.m. This meeting was scheduled for an earlier time due to the interviews of the Brower Park Manager position. MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Cookingham, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Howard (arrived late), Mr. Jefts, Mr. Nichols, Mr. Peek, Mr. Stout, Mrs. Strong, Mr. Todd and Mr. Wayer. MEMBERS ABSENT: none. Also present: Gary Brown, Erin Bean and Karen Morningstar.

**Brower Park Fulltime Park Manager Interviews:** Members reviewed Personnel Committee matters and discussed the interview process and procedures. Candidates were interviewed as follows: 5:30 – Don French, 6:15 – Loren Pickert and 7:00 – Dewayne Hetherington. Phone references for top candidates were discussed. Voting on the candidates interviewed was added to the agenda to be discussed after the minutes.

**Minutes:** December 10, 2009 Board Meeting: Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Nichols to accept the minutes of the December 10, 2009 Board Meeting as presented. Motion carried.

December 16, 2009 Personnel Committee Meeting: Mr. Stout moved, seconded by Mr. Todd to accept the minutes of the December 16, 2009 Personnel Committee meeting as presented. Motion carried.

January 4, 2010 Personnel Committee Meeting: Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Stout to accept the minutes of the January 4, 2010 Personnel Committee Meeting as presented. Motion carried. Candidate discussion followed. Chairman asked for roll call vote and for all members to name their top candidate choice. Don French received the most votes. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Wayer to have the Superintendent complete the background check and investigation and offer the position to Don French pending outcome of research. Motion carried (Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Strong opposed). Mr. Stout asked for the opinion of the Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent. Mr. Nichols asked if the position was going to be offered to Hetherington if Don French backed out. Mr. Nichols moved, seconded by Mrs. Strong to have the Superintendent/Asst. Superintendent offer position to the second candidate if Don French backs out pending valid drivers license. Discussion followed. Mr. Nichols withdrew his motion. Discussion followed on wages. Mr. Cookingham amended his motion to include starting wages of \$23,000 plus benefits, seconded by Mr. Wayer. Mrs. Fitzgerald asked why start him at \$23,000 and not offer the full \$25,000. Mr. Cookingham explained Don French does not have a degree and did not perform the duties of the manager last year. Mr. Jefts amended the original motion to set the starting wage at \$24,000, seconded by Mr. Todd. Motion carried (Mrs. Howard and Mrs. Strong opposed). Mr. Peek added it is up to the Superintendent to choose seasonal staff, however he wanted the Superintendent to hear the view of the Board.

**Election of Officers:** Superintendent opened the floor for nominations for:

**Chairperson.** Mr. Cookingham nominated Mr. Peek, Mrs. Strong seconded. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mr. Wayer to close nominations for Chairperson and cast a unanimous ballot for Mr. Peek. Motion carried. Superintendent turned the meeting over to the Chairperson, Mr. Peek. Mr. Peek thanked the Board for their confidence in him and commended this Board on how well it functions.

Chairperson opened the floor for nominations for **Vice Chairperson.** Mr. Cookingham nominated Mr. Stout, Mrs. Strong seconded. Mrs. Strong moved, seconded by Mr. Todd to close nominations for Vice Chairperson and cast a unanimous ballot for Mr. Stout. Motion carried.

Chairperson opened the floor for nominations for **Secretary.** Mr. Cookingham nominated Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mr. Jefts seconded. Mr. Jefts moved, seconded by Mr. Nichols to close nominations and to cast a unanimous ballot for Mrs. Fitzgerald for Secretary. Motion carried.

**Roberts Rules of Order:** Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to follow Roberts Rules of Order and amend these rules to allow the Chairperson to vote and take part in discussion with the Chair having the last vote. Motion carried.

**Committees for 2010:** Each Board member was asked to fill out the Committee worksheet and return the worksheet tonight to the Chairperson. Superintendent informed the Chairman appointments for Finance, Rules and Regulations and Masterplan need to be set tonight. Appointments will be discussed later in the meeting.

**Public Comment:** Mrs. Fitzgerald informed the Board the DEQ and DNR have now been combined. The new organization is DNRE – Department of Natural Resources And Environment. Copies of Frequently Asked Questions were distributed to all Board Members.

**Correspondence:** was mailed in the members packets.

**Reports and Updates:** none.

**Incident/Accident Reports:** none.

**Financial:** Revenue vs. Expenses was reviewed.

*Adjustments:* Executive Secretary requested to transfer \$4,585.51 to balance the budget. Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mrs. Fitzgerald to approve the adjustments as presented for budget purposes. 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 the customary & ordinary bills. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The Executive Secretary gave the financial report.

Set aside accounts were reviewed detailing the beginning balances for the 2010 season.

SSLVP Tree Cutting Update: Superintendent reported the trees are down and mostly gone. Brush remains and will be taken care of. VanDuined took the logs and the brush has been subcontracted. Mr. Ken Ford looked at other trees as directed by the Superintendent. Approximately 20-30 trees (mostly Beech) that were in question as being hazardous were marked and removed.

2010 Mileage Rate: Superintendent informed the Board the new mileage rate for 2010 is .50 per mile. The County has adopted this new rate and it is mandated. Mr. Jefts moved, seconded by Mr. Nichols to follow guidelines. Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** none.

**Other Business:**

Handicap Sites: Superintendent stated a complaint had recently been received regarding handicap sites. Superintendent has performed the research and found no data to support the complaint. Superintendent was directed to look into this.

Eagle Scout Project: Superintendent informed the Board of Clark Ruiz of Troop 114 wishing to perform a Eagle Scout Project in Paris Park. The project proposed is for erosion control, steps and a bridge in the trail area from the cabins to the river area. Approximate material cost is projected to be between \$533-\$821.00. Mr. Ruiz apparently has donations to cover the entire cost. Mr. Wayer moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to approve the project, to work with Mr. Ruiz and to provide materials if necessary. Motion carried.

Wood Vendors: Superintendent explained with the rule being lifted regarding guests bringing in their own firewood, the vendor contract needs to be reviewed (some of the vendors only go to one park.) Mr. Todd moved, seconded by Mr. Cookingham to allow up to 7 vendors per park. Motion carried. Superintendent asked for discussion regarding inspection of wood by a Forester and the other questions raised. Mr. Stout stated, with guests bringing in their own wood, most of the contract is a mute point and we cannot limit anything.

Rules and Regulations Committee: was announced by the Chairman. A Rules and Regulations Committee meeting was schedule for January 19, 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

Finance Committee: The Chairman nominated: Mr. Cookingham to Chair the Finance committee and also appointed: Mr. Jefts, Mr. Nichols and Mr. Todd to the Finance Committee. The Chairperson reviewed the remaining Committee vacancies and posted members and Chairpersons for each committee as he choose. A letter of the Committee appointments will be sent to each Board member.

Masterplan Committee: Chairman nominated Mrs. Fitzgerald to Chair the Masterplan Committee and appointed Mrs. Howard, Mr. Jefts and Mrs. Strong to the Masterplan Committee. A Masterplan meeting was scheduled for January 19, 2010 @ 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Mr. Cookingham moved, seconded by Mrs. Strong to adjourn at 8:57 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Fitzgerald  
Secretary