

Mecosta County Park Commission Commission Meeting

The November 18th, 2025, Commission Meeting of the Mecosta County Park Commission was called to order at the Mecosta County Services Building at 5:00 PM by the Commission Chairman, Mr. Stanek.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Mr. Griffith, Mr. Hatkowski, Mr. Lambrix, Mr. Zimmerman, Mrs. Bradstrom, Mrs. Strong, Ms. Miller, Mr. Vogel, Mr. Stanek.

Members Absent: Mr. Johnson

Others Present: Jeff Abel – Superintendent, Taylor Jutila – Operations Director, Jaydin Johnson – HR, Marketing & Events Manager, Angelina Braley – Administrative Clerk.

2. Approval of Agenda

Two additions to the agenda were requested under Committee Actions, Masterplan, ii regarding a Resolution to Accept the School Section Trust Fund Grant and iii. – regarding School Section Bathhouse Orientation. Agenda stood approved with the requested amendments.

3. Minutes of October 21st Park Commission Meeting

Mr. Vogel motioned, Mrs. Bradstrom second, to approve the minutes of October 21st Park Commission Meeting. Motion carried.

4. Public Comment* (comments regarding current agenda items)

None

5. Event Application – Paris Christmas Lighting

Marjorie Steele with EDRA presented the Event Application for a Paris Light Festival to be held at Paris Park. The event will feature a lighting ceremony of the Eiffel Tower, holiday crafts, and donations will be accepted for Save the Ponds to take pictures with Santa. The free community event anticipates around 100 visitors for the festivities and is expected to last about 2 hours from 4PM-6PM on December 6th, 2025.

Mr. Hatkowski motioned, Mrs. Strong second to approve the Paris Light Festival on December 6th at Paris Park. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

6. Reports and Updates

a. Superintendent's Updates

- Davis Bridge Project – Paving has been completed throughout the project area. Erosion control rocks have been placed at the fishing pier and water access sites with framing of the fishing pier started. Update photos were shared during the meeting. Some areas of the park have been re-opened for public use.
- Regional Recreation Permits – Have been balanced with Newaygo County through October. To date we have sold 157 with Newaygo selling 109 during the 2025 season.
- All 2026 Vehicle Permits – Have arrived. We plan to start selling around Dec. 1st.
- Modern Cabins SS – The 2 concrete pads have been poured on campsites 78 & 79. Weather permitting, we will get the cabin moved to the pad on site 78 in December and expect the cabin to arrive for site 79 in June. We have ordered furniture, mattresses, and curtains for both new cabins.

- WPVRA Update – We are working on quotes to purchase and install 2 ADA Port-a-John toilets that we would own for this location as well as 2 permanent animal proof waste bins. We have verified with a service provider that they would be willing to service the units on call for \$100 per visit, which would include both units and the chemicals needed to reset the tanks. The toilets would be upgraded with 68 Gallon tanks to hold a larger quantity of waste. We plan to move forward with this process as quotes are finalized.
- Ownership Of School Section Schoolhouse – While property deeds do not reflect ownership, historical documents show transfer of the property to the county from Morton Township. We will proceed as though we own the property but will continue to consult with the County Administrator and Register of Deeds for their recommendation on obtaining a corrected deed.
- School Section Fall Newsletter – Is included with the board packet for those that are interested in keeping up with the SSLPOA News.
- Reservations Go-Live Dates for 2026 – Monthly Camping, Family Group Camp, and Pavilion reservations will open on December 10th, and Nightly Camping and Cabin reservations open on January 14th.
- Brower Stumps – Stump grinding was completed throughout Brower Park last week.

b. Save The Ponds – Organization Updates

Mr. Hatkowski updated the commission members on committee progress. He highlighted how grateful he is for the group of volunteers involved and applauded their efforts and dedication. Permitting for phase 1 and 2 construction has been delayed with EGLE while the committee provides additional project clarifications. The need for a comprehensive construction plan was discussed, with that being a priority action item of the committee. Save The Ponds will have a table present at the Community Giving Day event in Big Rapids.

7. Correspondence

a. Letter of Support Request – Remus Historical Society

The Remus Historical Society requested a letter of recommendation from the Park Commission in support of their application to the America250MI Grant Program. The proposed project is to replace the windows at the historic one-room schoolhouse located within School Section Lake Veteran’s Park. This project represents an important step in preserving and maintaining one of Mecosta County’s treasured historical landmarks.

Mrs. Strong motioned, Mrs. Bradstrom second, to approve submitting the letter of recommendation for the Remus Area Historical Society’s grant application. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Committee Actions

a. Masterplan

i. 2026-2030 Draft Plan – Public Notice Period

No public comments have been received in response to the public notice of the 2026-2030 Draft Master Plan. The plan will continue to be available until November 28th for public review and comments.

ii. Resolution for School Section Lake Grant Acceptance

Mr. Griffith motioned, Mrs. Strong second, to recommend to the County Board of Commissioner to accept the DNR Trust Fund Grant for School Section Lake improvements. Motion carried with a roll call vote.

iii. School Section Bathhouse Orientation

Orientation of the School Section bathhouse was discussed with 3 options being presented to the Park Commission for consideration.

Mr. Griffith motioned, Mr. Vogel second, in favor of the first option that oriented the bathhouse facing the Store. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Finance

i. 2026 mParks Conference

The Superintendent presented information regarding the proposed attendance of 3 staff members at the annual mParks conference.

Mr. Lambrix motioned, Mr. Griffith Second, to approve the travel and expense for 3 staff to attend the 2026 mParks Conference. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

ii. Budget Adjustments – Review/Approval

The 2nd round of adjustments to the 2025 budget were presented for review. The Commission noted one additional budget line that required an addition of funds.

Mr. Vogel Motioned, Mrs. Strong second, to approve the budget adjustments with the additional amendment as recommended. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

c. Rules & Regulations

i. Dragon Trail Advertising Request – Shuttle Service

The Park Commission discussed a request to allow outside service companies to post trail-related services on the Dragon Trail kiosk within the Mecosta County Parks. The Park Commission reserving the right to rescind approvals at any time. Signs shall not be permitted to advertise services or products that conflict with those services already offered through the County Parks.

Mr. Griffith motioned, Mrs. Strong second, to approve the posting of shuttle services at kiosks located on the Dragon Trail within Mecosta County Parks grounds. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

ii. Public Act 261 – Proposed Changes

The Commission was informed of proposed changes to Public Act 261, which would allow for the size of a Park Commission in lower population areas to be reduced from 10 members to 7 members. The Superintendent is working with MACPRO and mParks to propose additional revisions to the Public Act that we believe should be considered.

d. Building & Grounds

i. Concrete Bid – Merrill Pavilion

The Commissioners were advised that a request for quotes to replace the concrete floor of the Merrill Pavilion was sent to 5 local contractors for review. Only one contractor provided a bid.

Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, Mr. Griffith second, to approve the project cost of \$9,800 to have the Merrill concrete work completed in Spring of 2026. Motion passed with a roll call vote. 8 yes, 1 no with Mr. Zimmerman opposed.

9. Financial

a. Financial Report – Rev & Expenses, Year-to-Year, Cash Spreadsheet

Reports were reviewed and discussed

b. Approval of Bills

Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, Mr. Vogel second, to approve the bills presented totaling \$109,975.72. Motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

10. Public Comment

Marjorie Steele added a comment thanking the Park Commission for allowing EDRA to continue hosting events at Paris Park and gave a brief update on the Trunk-or-Treat event from October.

11. Other Business:

A. Next Meeting is December 16th at the County Services Building in Big Rapids.

B. 2026 Park Commission Meeting Schedule - was presented and accepted.

12. Adjourned: 5:54 PM