

## **Mecosta County Park Commission Commission Meeting**

The February 18, 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.

### **Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Mrs. Bradstrom, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Hatkowski, Ms. Miller, Mr. Vogel, Mr. Zimmerman, Mrs. Strong and Mr. Stanek. **Members Absent:** Mr. Lambrix and Mr. Johnson. **Others Present:** Jeff Abel – Superintendent, Taylor Jutila – Operations Director, Jose Santiago-Rivera – Operation Manager, Jaydin Johnson – HR & Marketing and Kathryn Hunt – Administrative Clerk.

**Approval of Agenda** - Approved as presented.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hatkowski motioned, second by Mrs. Bradstrom to approve the minutes of the January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, Park Commission Meeting & the minutes of the February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Rules and Regulations Committee Meeting. Motion Carried.

### **Public Comment**

Brandi Sweet stated she was attending the meeting should there be any questions regarding her Event Application for the Paris Park Easter Community Event.

### **Reports & Updates**

#### **Superintendent's Updates**

The Superintendent updated the Commission on 14 current and completed projects, including:

**New Computers** – We have ordered 4 new computers for the 2025 season. We were advised last fall that we had 3 computers that would be too old to update this year, so we plan to replace those and have one additional unit in inventory as it is common for us to have to replace a unit when we set them up at the park locations each spring.

**Prein & Newhof Update Meeting** - Current and upcoming projects include – Closing out School Section Campground Expansion, Closing out Brower Park Water Access Grant, EGLE Permitting for Brower Park deep water channel boat access, Davis Bridge Trust Fund Grant Project, School Section Bathhouse, Pavilion, and Playground Renovation Project, and updated 5-year Parks Masterplan.

**Davis Bridge Trust Fund Grant** – Our project plans were reviewed and approved by the DNR. I expect that this project will go out to bid on Monday, Feb. 17th.

**Wood Bundling Devices** – 2 were ordered, these can be moved around to different parks during the season and make the bundling of wood for sales purposes an easy process. The stands were \$800 each and will likely pay for themselves quickly.

**Stove at Family Group Camp** – Was repaired and should be ready for this season.

**Part Time Administrative Office Clerk Assistants** – Job offers for 2 positions for Part Time Administrative Office Clerks have been accepted. Each is expected to work a maximum of 24 hours per week year-round.

**MParks Conference** – Is March 3rd-6th in Traverse City – The Superintendent, Operations Director and Operations Manager are scheduled to attend.

**Save the Ponds Add On Buttons** – Have been created and are ready to go for the season. In addition, we were able to create an add-on for campers to select (if desired) when placing

camping reservations for the season. The camper amount is fixed at \$2. The in-parks button would be open for any desired amount.

**Cabin Mattresses** – Were ordered and are expected to arrive toward the end of March.

**Partner Meeting with Isabella and Muskegon Counties** – We hosted a partner meeting for County Park organizations using the Camis reservations platform. We found the meeting very beneficial and hope to make it an annual occurrence.

**Village of Barryton Request** – The County Parks had donated old picnic tables to the Village of Barryton, who sent a request stating that they were able to put many of the tables to use, but some require too much to repair. They requested approval to add the poor condition tables to an upcoming auction with proceeds going to park improvements. The Park Commission members noted that there were no stipulations in place regarding the donation of picnic tables and the Village may utilize or dispose of them as they deem in their best interest. The Village of Barryton also stated they would be interested in any used playground equipment that the parks have or would be replacing. The Commission unanimously approved to offer any used playground equipment as a donation, pending the signing of a Hold Harmless Agreement.

### **2025 Opening of Reservations Report**

The committee reviewed and discussed the opening day reservations spreadsheet, listing each park's opening day revenue over the past 10 years. The trends show that all parks are seeing a slight decrease in reservations over the past 2 years.

### **Save the Ponds Updates**

Mr. Hatkowski provided an update on the progress of the Save the Ponds Committee, reporting a donations total of \$102,000. \$150,000 more is needed to complete the raceway and south wall on pond 3 to be operational. The committee is working toward some grant applications. There is a series of 5 videos that are in the works, one of which is on the Save the Ponds website. There is some work and interest in a You Tube Channel. Mr. Hatkowski stated that he, Jeff Abel and Taylor Jutila met with students from the Ferris State University's Video Technology Program, to see if they would be interested in producing a You Tube Video. The students toured the Paris Fishpond areas and plan to do 5-6 interviews to obtain footage for creation of a 3-4 minute video to be placed on the Big Rapids Life YouTube Channel.

## **Correspondence**

State Representative Tom Kunse sent a letter congratulating the Parks on the Dragon Trail being named the Best New Backcountry Trail of 2024.

## **Committee Actions**

### **Masterplan**

**White Pine Valley Recreation Area Campground – Construction Permit** - We have received a construction permit to create a group camping site at the WPVRA. The site plan and construction permit were presented to the Commission, noting that the area approved would accommodate the equivalent to 20 primitive campsites and would allow for a maximum occupancy of 160 people.

## **Finance**

**The White Pine Valley Recreation Area Campground Well Installation** - Five bids were received toward installation of a 4 inch well and hand pump system. Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, seconded by Mrs. Strong to accept the bid from Lamms Well Service, LLC. Motion passed with a roll call vote, 7 yes to 1 no (Mr. Zimmerman.)

## Rules & Regulations

**2025 Rules & Regulations Document** - The draft document of Rules and Regulations updates, as reviewed and recommended by the Rules and Regulations Committee, was presented. Mr. Vogel motioned, seconded by Mr. Griffith, to adopt the Rules and Regulations document and to move it forward to the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners for their consideration. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

**Special Event Permit – Application** - With increasing numbers of requests for private events to take place within the Mecosta County Parks, a document was created that would serve as an event application process and would include indemnification and hold harmless agreements. The application requires the listing of event details, organizer contact information, and any special requests of the Park Commission or staff. Mrs. Strong motioned, supported by Mrs. Bradstrom for the updated Special Event Permit Application to be utilized moving forward for all applicable event request. Motion carried unanimously.

**Paris Park - Easter Community Event** - Brandi Sweet presented a special event plan and permit application to host an Easter community event within Paris County Park. Mr. Hatkowski motioned, seconded by Mr. Vogel, to approve the event application. Motion carried unanimously.

## Personnel

**Sick Time Mandate Updates** – The Commission was updated regarding the status of upcoming changes to sick time policies. Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, seconded by Mrs. Strong to approve that the Park Commission mirror any changes that the Mecosta County Board of Commissioners adopt into their Non-Union Employee Manual, to ensure compliance with Michigan’s Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA). Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

## Financial

**Financial Report – Revenue & Expenses, Cash Spreadsheet, Year-to-Year** - Reports were reviewed, discussed, and stood approved as presented.

**Approval of Bills** - Mrs. Bradstrom motioned, second by Mr. Vogel to accept the bills as presented in the amounts of \$19,806.50, \$30,815.96 and \$4,788.74. Motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

## Public Comment

None

## Other Business

**Schedule Personnel Committee Meeting** - Set for Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM at the Mecosta County Parks Administration building in Paris.

**Next Commission Meeting** is scheduled for 5:00 PM, Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Mecosta County Services Building in Big Rapids.

**Adjourned:** 5:56 PM.