

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEARNS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

6:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Stearns County Park Commission was held at the Stearns County Park Office, 1802 County Road 137, Waite Park, MN 56387.

**Members Present:** Sean Gaetz, Kaye Wenker, Orville Willenbring, Anne Ackerman, Joe Perske, and Richard Blenkush

**Members Excused:** Lucas Sjostrom

**Others Present:** Ben Anderson (Park Director), Sarah Weed (Operations Coordinator), Julie Nistler (Office Specialist II), and Greg Konsor

**Approval of the Minutes:** *Ms. Wenker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Blenkush second. Motion passed.*

**Approval of the Agenda:** Mr. Anderson added 9A “Lake Koronis Joint Powers Board Members for 2020.” *Mr. Gaetz made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Ms. Wenker second. Motion passed.*

**Lake Wobegon Business Trail Connection – Action Item:** Mr. Konsor owns a business in Holdingford with a café and art exhibits with a focus on biking. The business is near the Lake Wobegon Trail. He would like to have safer access for the people on the trail to get to his building. Mr. Anderson requested a motion to pursue the access connection. Further research must be done with the township, the city, the county attorney, and possibly the RRA. He believes the cost will have to be paid by the business owner. *Ms. Wenker made a motion to support the connection from the trail to the business. Mr. Willenbring second. Motion passed.*

**Warner Lake Entrance Road Discussion:** Mr. Anderson received an email from a concerned citizen regarding the dangers of the entrance/exit to Warner Lake County Park. All agreed it is a concern, especially since the county road is in a 55-mph speed limit. There is blocked visibility because of the height of the bridge and the guardrail. Mr. Anderson has discussed the matter with the County Engineer. Immediate plans are to post “blind driveway” or advisory speed signs for westbound traffic. Additional studies will be conducted as part of the Beaver Island Trail Engineering Plans.

### **Quarry Park:**

- a) **Mountain Bike Trail Update:** The County Board approved the partnership with the mountain bike club and the lease agreement has been signed. The group is raising funds, working with local bike shops, and building memberships. The first trail section will probably go from the parking lot to Quarry 11. The DNR will also be consulted.

- b) **Floating Board Walk Update:** Mr. Anderson shared photos of the floating boardwalk project. Park Maintenance Staff did all the removal, repair, and replacement of the 320-foot boardwalk. Once the ice is out, the sections will be attached, and the boardwalk will reopen. Because the project was completed by park staff, costs were significantly lower.
- c) **City of Waite Park Outdoor Warning Siren Request:** The City of Waite Park would like to install an outdoor siren in Quarry Park. It would be located southeast of the SNA off a private driveway near the south entrance of Quarry Park. They would install a pole and underground wire. Mr. Anderson will work with the Surveyor's Office and the County Attorney to write up an easement.

**Great River Archery Club Update:** The archery club is planning a 3D Archery Shoot for May 29-31 and one in August. The park is closed during the events, but the boat landing remains open. The club is committed to providing an indoor archery league space. They continue to discuss funding, materials, and size of a new building.

**Parkland Dedication Fund Discussion:** Mr. Anderson explained what the Parkland Dedication Fund is, how the funds can be used, and how they have been spent in the past. The fund is set by the State of MN Statute.

**Social Media and Reservation System Update:** Ms. Nistler shared information regarding the new Stearns County Parks Facebook page. The page went live on March 3. The department is also in the process of setting up a new reservation system through CivicRec. Beyond the shelter rentals, the new system also has the ability to manage Volunteers and Ski Patrol as well as a Point of Sale option for the gatehouse.

**Seasonal Employees:** Interviews for the seasonal positions were held today. Human Resources will be sending out offers soon. There are a few employees returning from last year.

**Lake Koronis Joint Powers Board Members for 2020:** Mr. Anderson is looking for two members to be a part of the Joint Powers Board for Lake Koronis. There are also two members from the Park Commission in Meeker County. The board meets twice a year. Ms. Wenker and Mr. Willenbring agreed to serve on the Joint Powers Board.

**Program/Events:**

- a) **Legislative Action Day:** Mr. Anderson and Mr. Perske attended on February 26. It was good to have conversations about our Parks.
- b) **EAB Woodpecker Survey:** There will be volunteer training to look for woodpecker activity to find evidence of the Emerald Ash Borer at Warner Lake on March 26.
- c) **Sugar Shack Open House:** The open house will be April 11 from 12 PM - 4 PM at Kraemer Lake-Wildwood.

**Issues by Commissioner:**

Mr. Willenbring stated that the Rockville Lions Club may be interested in donating to the playground at Rockville County Park. Park Staff is encouraged to attend their meetings to share information.

Mr. Perske reported that Brockway Township is supportive of purchasing the property north of Mississippi River County Park.

**Public and Staff Comments:** Mr. Anderson shared photos of an owl on a nest with a couple of eggs. However, within the last week all have disappeared.

*Ms. Ackerman made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Blenkush second. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.*