

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEARNS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Wednesday, October 9, 2019

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, Ken Mergen, Anne Ackerman, Lucas Sjostrom, Joe Perske, and Richard Blenkush

**Members Excused:** (none)

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

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

**Approval of the Agenda:** Mr. Perske added “Broker property” to the agenda. *Ms. Wenker made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition. Mr. Gaetz second. Motion passed.*

**Park and Trail Ordinance Discussion – Action Item:** Mr. Anderson proposed changes to the current park ordinance and the trail ordinance. He will have the County Attorney review before bringing to the County Board. *Mr. Sjostrom made a motion to approve the changes to the park and trail ordinances as discussed. Mr. Gaetz second. Motion passed.*

**Park Revenue:** Mr. Anderson shared the current revenue information for the Parks Department. The parking permits at Quarry Park are the greatest source of revenue.

**Park Patrol Summary:** Ms. Weed shared a summary of the warnings and citations issued by the Stearns County Sheriff’s Park Patrol from the summer. The report included better explanations of the warnings and citations that were issued.

**2019 Visitor Use:** Ms. Weed shared a chart of the estimated number of vehicles and park users at each of the parks and trails.

**MN Land Trust Conservation Easement:** Part of the property in Rockville County Park is governed by an easement with Minnesota Land Trust. Mr. Anderson reviewed the easement document and explained the limitations regarding development in the park. The area where the picnic shelter is being built is not part of the easement.

**Lake Wobegon Trail Maintenance:** Award contracts have been sent out for the repairs of the bridge decks and for air-patching cracks along the trail. The work will be completed this fall. The trail by Two Rivers Lake is open but will not be paved until next spring.

**Broker Property:** Mr. Perske has spoken with various agencies regarding the purchasing of this property. The Trust for Public Land organization may have a few options. Mr. Perske plans to invite a representative to speak to the group.

**Program/Events:**

- a) **Derrick Demonstration:** The derrick demonstrations at Quarry Park will be on Thursday, October 17, 2019 between 11 am and 2 pm. That is MEA weekend.
- b) **Buckthorn Removal (Rockville):** John and Linda Peck are doing buckthorn removal every Saturday in October.
- c) **Dairyland Trail:** The grand opening hayride had about 35 people attend.
- d) **Kraemer Lake - Wildwood:** HIKEhoppers' Park Escape is being held over MEA weekend. They also have a Hike and Read for Little Editions on October 26.
- e) **Prairie Yard & Garden:** A Public TV station out of Morris was at Quarry Park to do a story. The History Museum was involved and shared the history of the granite industry. Mr. Anderson talked about the development of the park. The show will broadcast in March. A video will be provided to the department.

**Volunteer Projects:** Ms. Weed has given a list of projects to a variety of volunteers. She is waiting for their reports. An Eagle Scout has built archery target houses for Oak Township. A group of high school seniors will be picking up trash along the Lake Wobegon Trail near Albany.

**Issues by Commissioner:**

Mr. Mergen asked about the St. Cloud Daily Times granite sign. He congratulated the Park Maintenance Staff on the great work they did on the Dairyland Bridge. Mr. Mergen also asked about the options of repairing the other bridges and culverts.

Mr. Gaetz asked about the Prairie Woods program and if that grant would be available in the future. In addition to grant options, Mr. Anderson would like to have funds for educational programming in the operating budget.

Ms. Ackerman shared photos of vehicles blocking the trail near the campsites at Warner Lake. Park Staff will follow up with the scout group.

**Public and Staff Comments:**

Mr. Anderson reported Emerald Ash Borer was found by Grand Lake in Rockville.

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