

**Members Present:** President Joe Krapohl, Vice President Jim Washington, Commissioners Keeler, Lynch, Dickerson, Nolden, Madore, Wright, Nealy

**Members Absent:** Secretary Bill Lucas

**Staff Present:** Amy McMillan, Director; Barry June, Deputy Director; Kevin Shanlian, Chief Ranger; Leisa Gagne, Financial Officer; Nancy Edwards, Recreation Programs and Grant Officer; Deborah Wilkes, Recording Secretary; Danielle Fulcher, Marketing Specialist, Patrick Linihan, Administration Intern

**Others Present:** Kandie Deweese, Kim Lemaster, Tom Kehoe (did not sign in)

**1) Call to Order.** President Krapohl presided and called meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**2) Opportunity for members of the public to address the commission.** According to commission rules, the public has three minutes to address the commission. Please state your name and address for the record.

Tom Kehoe 4304 E. Stanley Rd., There is a project to replace the train trestle between his property and Mott Lake. The plan would interfere with his access, as it is now, to the lake. He'd like to know who would be responsible to get the plan changed or who can ensure that his access to the lake is not infringed upon in any way.

Kimberly Lemaster 4680 Briggs Rd, Otter Lake. Wants to know if Elba is addressed as a wildlife or recreational area. If the water pipeline does not go through the park and it goes down the road does the money go to the road commission. If it does go through the park, could we get a few people to work with the construction company and Genesee County Parks so that we can give our advice for the horse trails. Would we be able to access Elba during construction? Could we get some culverts and bridges through the unsafe places. Along Stanley Road where there is construction and they put in new dirt, someone almost lost a horse they just stepped off the road a few inches and it took about 25 people to get the horse out. How wide will the access area be for maintenance if it goes through? Would it be above ground or below ground?

### **3) Jeff Wright Drain Commissioner**

Jeff Wright: Based on some of the input from equestrian folks and after some soil borings it was determined it is best to go through the old Coldwater Road right of way, rather than through the Hogbacks. The maps will show the old Coldwater Road right of way and the proposal is to follow that road right of way exactly. The ultimate width, permanent width, is 25 feet for maintenance purposes. If there are areas that need culverts or bridges for construction, they will be included as part of the project. There is a temporary easement request for, in some areas, up to 100 feet along that road right of way which is still within the existing right of way and the final design work has not been completed. It is a 48 inch diameter pipe, the average depth of around 7-8 feet. We would prefer to hug one side of the right of way or the other. There are areas that the temporary easement for construction purposes is narrower than the 100 feet maximum in some areas, it really depends on terrain and the ability to move equipment around. The Parks board has to authorize the easement, then it goes to the County Board of Commissioners for their approval. It is also reviewed by corporation counsel, and Brian Barkey, legal counsel for the Parks board.

Joe Krapohl: You are asking for 7 easements?

Wright: Yes, there are seven different parcels of land (maps are handed out) If you look at the maps there are actually dozens of parcels out there along Coldwater Rd. This right of way traverses seven of those parcels. He thinks that anybody who has ridden or walked out there knows where the old Coldwater Rd right of way is. It is a little further distance than the proposal that we looked at originally. It is a little more costly, but he thinks it is the least disruptive to the whole area to go down that road right of way rather than through the Hogbacks itself.

McMillan: Ms. McMillan displayed a map for the commissioners to see the area. This particular route is an easy area to access and generally out of the way of the areas of normal usage and the least disruptive. The cul-de-sac area, to the left, is the area where we permit dog training in the off seasons.

Wright: (Mr. Wright showed the areas on the map where he proposes the pipeline follow) We have installed much larger, deeper and wider pipelines across the County and inside park properties over the last 15 years. Although there is a short term disruption, if you look at those sites today, you'd never know it was there. Our goal is to improve the parks along with the project. He is looking forward to working with the parks or any other groups to make sure all needs are met to get a joint project that benefits all.

Krapohl: We will hold any further discussion until we have a motion. Mr. Wright will be acting as the drain commissioner and, as in past practice, he will abstain from voting.

**4) Consent Agenda.** President Krapohl asked commissioners if there are any items they wish to remove from the consent agenda for discussion. No items were removed from the consent agenda.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Keeler  
Supported by Commissioner Washington

**Motion and support for approval of consent agenda items A through D, as listed.**

**Roll Call**

**Yeas:** Dickerson, Keeler, Krapohl, Lynch, Madore, Nealy, Nolden, Washington, Wright

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Secretary Bill Lucas absent.

**MOTION CARRIED 9-0**

**5) Director's Report.**

The Board of Commissioners has approved our request to extend our accommodations tax contract. We have also signed the MOU associated with that contract. We appreciate their support and also we would like to recognize the Flint and Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce. We worked hand-in-hand with them on a presentation to the Board of Commissioners and we have a strong partnership with them in marketing efforts for the County as a whole, both internally and externally to businesses. We won't be talking to you about this for another five years. This is the longest agreement we have ever had for the accommodations contract. We thank them for their efforts.

Earlier in the season we made some changes at Elba in order to expand camping and day use of the area that people commonly think of as Elba. It is the big open field when you drive up into the center. It was a large area that now needs some fill dirt. We have asked the drain

commissioner, and he has agreed, to provide us with tons and tons of fill dirt that area. There is an actual process in which these materials are given and accepted. It does require the signature of the Parks Commission Chair and we are bringing it to you today to ask if you have any questions or concerns about accepting what is called the 'spoils'.

Krapohl: There is a request by the drain commission to enter into an agreement, based upon our request, to provide fill dirt for the parks.

Wright: The request came from the Parks board and this agreement formalizes and spells out what we are doing and why we are doing it. Unfortunately it is called spoils, but it is fill dirt.

Madore: Since this is in Lapeer, do you have to deal with Lapeer County?

Wright: Yes, the Health Department has jurisdiction and issues permits. We've been working with them on the pipeline and are familiar with the permitting process.

Krapohl: We've had a good relationship with the Drain Commission. When he leaves an area he generally leaves it better than when a project is started. Just look at ForMar as proof. It looked nasty when the work was being done along the right of way, but when it was done, with the re-growth, it looks very nice and it was beneficial to both agencies. Our track record with Commissioner Wright is good.

Wright: Most of the dirt is from the farm where the water treatment plant is being built. Some may also come from the pipeline dirt.

Krapohl: What is your timeframe on the spoils.

Wright: As soon as it is approved. It doesn't need to go to the County Board.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Keeler

Supported by Commissioner Washington

**Motion and support to execute the agreement between the Genesee County Drain Commission and the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission for spoils material for the Equestrian Park at the west end of Coldwater Rd.**

**Yeas:** All Ayes

**Nays:** None

**Abstaining:** Jeff Wright

**Absent:** Secretary Bill Lucas absent.

**MOTION CARRIED 8-0**

**6) New Business**

**Drain Commission Request** The Drain Commission is requesting seven easements for the proposed water line along Old Coldwater Road. The Drain Commissioner proposes \$1 per easement. We have the legal descriptions available. They are authorized to negotiate a final value of money or in-kind services, which has worked quite well in the past for the Parks Commission.

Wright: The goal is to bid this portion of the project by late September and weather permitting it may start late this year, although he doubts that, so probably spring when things dry out. With the distance, and weather permitting, we should be through there in about 5-6 weeks with initial construction; and again, weather permitting 2-3 weeks for cleanup. So probably next spring.

Krapohl: Understanding there will be some temporary disruptions, but it will be for the good of the county and the parks.

**Action Taken:**

Motion by Commissioner Nolden

Supported by Commissioner Washington

**Motion and support to approve granting the Drain Commissioner easements on seven parcels for the proposed Karegnondi Water Authority pipeline.**

**Yeas:** All Ayes

**Nays:** None

**Abstaining:** Jeff Wright

**Absent:** Secretary Bill Lucas absent.

**MOTION CARRIED 8-0**

Krapohl: We are going to ask the Director to give the commission a timeline as far as the request from the public about the train trestle. The project, a bridge trestle replacement just west of Genesee Road, was approved by the commission. She will go through the timeline and agreements.

Amy: A contract for removal of the existing train trestle and replacement of the trestle by Gerace Construction was brought to the Commission about a month ago. The current trestle has reached its life span. The project was bid according to County policies and Gerace was the low bidder. There were pre-bid meetings onsite prior to the bidding. Project is set to begin, weather dependent, on September 8, 2015, which is the day after Labor Day when the train is done running. It is scheduled to be completed, with all inspections, in time for us to have the train on tracks on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the first day of our Halloween Ghosts and Goodies program. It is a tight timeline but we have tremendous confidence in the contractor's timeline guarantee.

Our staff, Mr. June, Mr. Armentrout and Chief Shanlian have met with neighboring property owners, including Mr. Kehoe to talk about certain aspects of the project, one of which includes removing some personal property from parks property. We came to an agreement as to the date by which that would be accomplished in order to move the project forward.

Krapohl: The property owners have agreed to remove the property and has had approximately two months to remove the personal property from parks property. There was a deadline, which the property owner suggested and agreed to. It is just west of this office, there is a train trestle and a canal type that goes to a small pond. The park owns all that property under the trestle. The property owner has a boat that accesses the lake under the trestle. That access would be restricted during the construction period. The property owner does have the opportunity of launching the boat from the boat launch if desired during that short amount of time. Unfortunately our construction project, which is on park property may impact his access to the lake, but we have a boat launch available. There is not much else we can do, it is a very big and important project for the parks to get completed in a timely manner.

McMillan: There was a formal survey done on the property as well to make certain that everybody is on their own property. We hired Rowe Professional Services to survey the property.

Krapohl: We are not restricting his access to the lake, because a boat launch would be an alternative. It would be for approximately one month.

Nolden: The property would be available and accessible after the project is complete?

Krapohl: Yes, the new trestle will allow his pontoon to access the lake. If he got a larger boat or something that would not fit under it, we would not alter our plans to accommodate that, but once the current project is complete, as it stands, his boat would still fit under the trestle.

McMillan: The area that is park property is open to everyone, not just the neighboring property owners. We are not constructing something to benefit the individual. Anyone can take their boat through the area where the trestle is located.

Krapohl: After conversations with Mr. June and Chief Shanlian, everything was in place, everything was agreed to and the project will still go forward on September 8 to re-open on October 3.

Madore: The new trestle design, will it be less or the same spacing?

Krapohl: The trestle will be the same on the center access to the lake; and the height will be the same. There would be three passing areas, the outer ones may change dimensions, but the center one stays the same.

McMillan: Regarding the Elba questions: Whether it is a wildlife or recreation area: when it was acquired (the Hogbacks, which includes the Elba Equestrian Center) it was many parcels. It was acquired for the purposes of preserving the geographical features of that area, which are pretty unique and formed by a glacier not common in Michigan. We are responsible, as stewards of that property, for preserving the property in that area and it is also a wildlife corridor. Over the course of time, the parks commission has permitted equestrian use of the properties and allows hiking. No bikes or motor vehicles of any sort are permitted. Bicycle use is not compatible with equestrian use on a single trail system. If we had billions of dollars to create trails for each individual type of use, we could build a trail system.

Hogbacks is the only area in the parks system that prohibits bike use. There are restricted areas at ForMar. With any sort of development of the wooded area outside of the camping area, preserving the natural areas and the wildlife does come first, horses and people come second. There are places in the Hogbacks that are regularly wet, because they are supposed to be regularly wet. There are no plans to install culverts or bridges to alter the flow of water. Some areas are just naturally wet. We don't have any plans or intentions of filling them in any way, shape or form. We are aware that some culverts have been installed without our knowledge or consent. We don't have any plans to install other culverts or bridges that would alter the flow of the water in the area. We do understand it might provide more equestrian access, but that is not the primary purpose of the property. The dirt that we receive from the Drain Commission will be used in the camping area and the turnaround areas for ease of turning around the big horse trailers. The area that was discussed on Stanley Rd., people who trail ride at the Hogbacks regularly use that, but it is a road easement, it is not an equestrian trail and it is subject to varying conditions and it is not park property. The thing that we always advise: It's outdoors, and there are areas in the parks than can be used at certain times of the year, and other areas that cannot be used at certain times of the year. There are park systems around the state that

close certain trails during certain times of the year. We don't do that, we expect people to use their own good judgment. We expect at some point in the future we will be able to do a little bit more signage on the trails. We are working on using GPS on several of the parks and would be able to make that available to folks.

We will leave the remaining questions about the pipeline project to Mr. Wright.

Wright: The maximum width is 25 feet, the water pipe itself is 48 in diameter and is 100% underground with a minimum of 4-5 ft coverage over the pipe. He would be happy to work with groups to address any concerns.

Regarding the horse that got stuck with his horse, it was unfortunate, but he pointed out that it was an active construction site. That site still has not been finished, there will be all new shoulders and all new pavement to complete that area. An active construction site is not where any of us should be in because that can be a problem.

Culverts will be installed only if it does not alter land and flood plains. What can and cannot be drained is up to the DEQ. Only the state can issue permits to alter water areas and they want things left as they are. We can only improve areas that do not alter water flow.

Krapohl: While we appreciate input from outside groups, ultimately the Parks and Drain make decisions, with or without input from outside groups.

#### **7) Opportunity for Commissioners to address the Commission.**

Nealy: She attended Literary Day at Crossroads Village and rode the train. There was a lot to see and do; it turned out to be a nice day.

Madore: The August 1<sup>st</sup> event at Richfield Park went well. The weather was good and everyone behaved and it went well.

Krapohl: The Budget Sub-committee will meet immediately following this meeting. It will take about ½ hour.

#### **8) Opportunity for the public to address the commission.**

Kehoe: the plan that Barry gave him for the trestle has a whole extra row of pilings and the center distance is not correct or the same as the current trestle. This is a major change not a minor change, and by the plan he was given, it will be a major long-term infringement on his use and he would not allow this as it is.

Kim Lemaster asked if Elba will be closed during the construction or will it still be accessible.

Kandie DeWeese: Regarding not filling in the wetlands, what do you consider the really muddy part at trail heads?

McMillan: We will discuss this after the meeting.

**9) Adjournment.** Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.