

Members Present: President Joe Krapohl, Vice President James Washington, Commissioners: Joe Madore, Michael Lynch, Mike Keeler, Cloyce Dickerson, Jeff Wright, Bryant Nolden

Members Absent: Commissioner Carl Arthur and Secretary William Lucas

Staff Present: Amy McMillan, Director; Barry June, Deputy Director; Leisa Gagne, Finance Officer, Hilda McShane, Marketing Specialist; Nancy Edwards, Recreation Programs and Grant Officer; Deborah Wilkes, Secretary

Others Present: LaMonica Harris, Gail Viers-Cook, Chris Miller, Jeff Harrington

1) Call to Order.

President Krapohl presided and called meeting to order at 10:00 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.

Stephanie Diana, member of the Friends of For-mar and regular park user, supports the opening of For-Mar as a seven day operation. She congratulated the commission on the passing of the millage and that is wonderful and hopes it creates some financial stability.

Even if only the grounds alone were opened for seven days a week it would be appreciated if the Visitor's Center cannot be opened all seven days. Probably there are as many users that use the grounds only and never use the nature center.

Ms. McMillan acknowledged the Friends of For-Mar were tremendously helpful during the millage campaign. They are also helpful throughout the year in funding programs and projects at ForMar and they also underwrite a number of school field trips every year. They have done that at least the last 13 years this director has been here, and probably many years before that. She thanked the Friends of ForMar for everything they do.

Keeler: Probably the best things the Friends group did was put the maps on the trails so folks don't feel like they will get back in the corner of the grounds and not get back. They are very user friendly.

Nolden: Noting the folks using the grounds and not the building. Is there a way to track users to the grounds and users to the building?

McMillan: We can discuss that in the agenda.

The President mentioned that Mr. Lucas had a death in the family (his sister) and is unable to be here and if you see him, please extend your condolences.

President Krapohl informed the commissioners that we are losing one of our team members, Hilda McShane, our Marketing Specialist. Hilda is going to the Genesee County Health Department in a similar capacity. She has been an integral part of this team in the past few years, a good friend, and we will miss her but we wish her well in her new position. Whoever comes in has some big shoes to fill.

Hilda said it has been fabulous working here. If you don't already realize it, we have one of the best parks systems in the entire country. She can say that because she has been working on a committee with Michigan Recreation Parks Association and they are amazed at what we do here with our traditional and digital marketing. She is very proud of the work that is being done here. She wishes us luck and there are a lot of good things coming this way for the parks in the future.

3) Consent Agenda. President Krapohl asked commissioners if there are any other 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 C, as listed in your information packet.

Roll Call

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

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Carl Arthur and William Lucas are absent.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0

4) Director's Report.

a. Opening Night at Christmas at Crossroads. We are requestng the commission approve the opening night at Christmas at Crossroads Village as a free night to Genesee County residents.

Krapohl: We did this last year for the citizens of Genesee County as a thank you for the passing of the millage. We discussed this at the retreat.

Madore: Clarification

McMillan: The Village is open to everyone, but Genesee County residents get in free. There is a fee for the train ride and the vintage rides.

Action Taken:

Motion by Commissioner Wright
Supported by Commissioner Washington

Motion and support to offer Genesee County residents free admission to opening night of Christmas at Crossroads Village for the 2015 calendar year.

Yeas: All ayes

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Carl Arthur and William Lucas are absent.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0

b. For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum hours. We are requesting the commission return

ForMar to a seven day a week schedule. We appreciate Commissioner Keeler and Steph Diana's comments about the people who come into the facility to walk the grounds only, rather than use the Visitor's Center. Our experience from staff input is that the majority of people do come in to the Visitor's Center, particularly people with young kids. There are all kinds of fascinating things in the building.

The schedule would start Memorial Day, 2015. We promised to have some cost estimates for you to consider.

Our estimate for a seven day schedule is 9-12 thousand dollars additional, primarily for staff and janitorial services for the additional two days per week for the remainder of this year. For an entire 12 month period it would be approximately \$24-30 thousand dollars.

Our recommendation is to approve the request to open For Mar to a full seven-day a week schedule beginning Monday, May 25, 2015.

Krapohl: Everybody understands the motion? This is a wonderful opportunity, ForMar is a well-used facility and it will serve the community well.

Madore: As we move down the road in the future, if we see any funding problems come up, it would be brought back to us to see if we will scale back?

McMillan: The budget sub-committee will start meeting in the next couple months, but she does not foresee any issues. We will use the time between now and May 25 to hire new staff people, several in fact, because seasonal employees can only work a limited number of hours per year. Our seasonal staff at ForMar have pretty high requirements.

Press releases, CRMs, a spot on ABC 12 will get the word out about the extended days of operation.

Nolden: Is there a way to gauge the volume of people using the grounds vs the building?

McMillan: It is hard because we have no user fees or checkpoints. The only parks we can give you accurate attendance numbers are Crossroads Village and even at the boat launches we count car loads not individual people. Campgrounds we can probably give individual numbers based on the number of people on a campsite. Generally people coming into the Visitor's Center sign in. The largest database and most read CRM messages all come from the ForMar group.

Keeler: If you get out there early in the morning there is a regular group of people out there to walk and exercise. This is also good for the summer because summer has a lot of Monday holidays.

Nolden: Is there some type of electronic device to record facility use? Or the ground only?

McMillan: We can take a look at what kind of technology might be available to us to do that.

Krapohl: Regarding Mr. Madore's question: Staff has been pretty good at projecting the budget and because of the millage passing we have 10 years of stable funding without having to rely on grants to operate. With their projections, and with it going through the budgetary process, if there is some catastrophic event and we have some budget cuts we would bring it back, but hopefully it will stay open seven days a week for a long time in the future.

Action Taken:

Motion by Commissioner Wright
Supported by Commissioner Keeler

Motion and support to reopen ForMar Nature Preserve and Arboretum to a full seven-day-a week schedule beginning Monday, May 25, 2015.

Roll Call

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

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Carl Arthur and William Lucas are absent.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0

5) New Business

a. Resolution correction. When the resolution was prepared in May of 2014 there was an error on the date regarding the public meeting for the 5 year Plan, and the minutes needed to be clarified that there were no public comments. If we don't do this we will not be eligible for grant money from the DNR. You should have received your amended documents from Deb Wilkes by now. We need a motion and support to amend the resolution, and a motion and support to amend the minutes.

Action Taken:

Motion by Commissioner Wright
Supported by Commissioner Lynch

Motion and support to amend the minutes of the May 8, 2014 meeting to reflect that no members of the public spoke in the matter of the 5-year master plan for the 2014-2018.

Yeas: All ayes

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Carl Arthur and William Lucas are absent.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0

Action Taken:

Motion by Commissioner Keeler
Supported by Commissioner Dickerson

Motion and support to amend the resolution 003-14 to reflect the actual date as May 8, 2014, that the plan was presented to the public, and approved by the commission to present to the Genesee County Board of Commissioners.

Yeas: All ayes

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioners Carl Arthur and William Lucas are absent.

MOTION CARRIED 8-0

6) Opportunity for Commissioners to address the Commission.

Madore: The Eagle Scout that wanted to do a dug out project in Richfield Parks at the ball fields dropped off his drawings to the township (Richfield). You introduced a young man who is the superintendent now, are there two superintendents now? Who do I work with; or do I give it to you (the director), or Matt, he was the person I worked with before.

McMillan: You will still work with Matt Armentrout, Park Facilities Director and that is not a project that is not in your role as a park commissioner so we should deal with that separate from this commission. Tyler Barto is the only park superintendent.

Keeler: This has been one of the more fun meetings, thank you.

Dickerson: Thanked Hilda for her service here at the Parks and wished her good luck.

7) Opportunity for the public to address the commission. No one addressed the commission.

8) Adjournment. Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Recorded and transcribed by D. Wilkes

p:commission/2015/Agenda and minutes/3-26-15