

## LaPorte County Park Board Meeting

March 7, 2023

### I. CALL TO ORDER

- Ron Knickrehm called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM

### II. ROLL CALL

- Present: Ron Knickrehm, Jim Holifield, Mary Komenas, Mike King, Erin Lozano, Jeremy Sobecki, and Cathy Fuller
- Absent: Amanda Nebelung and Mary Nell Murphy
- Guests: Joe Haney, ALCO TV, Laura Moyer, Jordan Matthews, Breanne Blankenship, Mary Benke

### III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- One addition to the agenda: Resolution 16-01 Form for the 2023-2027 Park and Recreation Master Plan and the Request for Eligibility form need signatures
- Mike made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mary seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- No additions or corrections made to the minutes from Feb. 7 meeting.
- Mary made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Erin. Motion carried 5-0.

### V. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- Auditor's office has uploaded the amounts of allocated funds to the accounts, so this financial report is accurate to date.
- Jim made a motion to approve the financial report, seconded by Mike. Motion carried 5-0.

### VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

#### A. Administrative Report

- Annual Park Awards
  1. Organization of the Year Award: Northwest Health Outpatient Rehab.
  2. Volunteer of the Year Award: Katie Sarver
  3. Outstanding Park Service Award: Niki Schmutte for 29 years and Laura Moyer for 16 years of dedicated service to the LaPorte County Park Dept.
- Update on possible Bluhm expansion- new appraiser has been hired and the project is moving forward

- Update on hiring
  1. New Chief Naturalist has been hired, April Messacar
  2. New Rec. & Ed. Programmer, Cara FitzGerald
  3. New part-time office person, Shannon Parish
  4. Two new seasonal Nature Center attendants
  5. Still looking for seasonal maintenance workers

B. Maintenance & Construction Report

- General winter maintenance of equipment to be ready for summer
- Painted EEC
- Installed new base trim in EEC to finish up the area from the EverDry project

C. Programs Report

D. Park Counts

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Executive Committee: Ron and Jim

- No report

B. Budget Committee: Erin and Mary

- No report

C. Personnel Committee: Erin and Mary

- Election of officers- Erin reported that no one expressed any desire to change offices, so she made a motion to keep the same officers as before. Mary seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Property Committee: Mike and Mary Nell

- No report

E. Planning Committee: Amanda and Mary Nell

- No report due to absence

F. Rules Committee: Amanda and Mike

- No report

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- Signatures needed for Master Plan submission, one for request of eligibility, and one for submission.
- Paperwork was signed

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- Request to move forward with new restroom/septic at Creek Ridge County Park

1. Request to go to the Commission for permission to go before the Council to start the process for the project for flush bathrooms at Creek Ridge County Park (our busiest park and ONLY park without flush restrooms.)
  2. We have estimated a cost of \$100,000
  3. We hope to do the majority of this project in-house
  4. This was one of the originally submitted projects for use of ARP funds
  5. Also want to use some of our own non-reverting funds as a match to offset the cost
  6. Mike made a motion that Jeremy go to the Commission, seconded by Erin. Motion passed 5-0.
- Resolution 2023-01 Encumbering \$29,382.30 in our non-reverting fund
    1. This is money that was left in our non-reverting account at the end of 2022.
    2. Request permission to go to the Commission and Council to have access to that money for use in the restroom project at Creek Ridge
    3. Mary made a motion to go to the Commission for use of the encumbering funds, seconded by Jim. Motion passed 5-0.
  - Request permission to go before the Commission/Council for \$39,000 for asphalt sealing and repairs at Creek Ridge, Bluhm, and Red Mill
    1. This is also one of the projects originally submitted for ARP funding.
    2. It is definitely needing to be done at this time.
    3. Jim made a motion, seconded by Mike, approved 5-0.

#### X. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Joe Haney- Thanked Laura and Niki for their service; stated that the next commissioners meeting is delayed one day; asked if the County Highway Dept. might be able to assist with the asphalt sealing of the trails.

#### XI. BOARD & STAFF COMMENTS

- Jeremy Sobecki- Thanked everyone for all their patience, thoughts, and prayers during his father's illness and subsequent passing.
- Ron Knickrehm- Invited everyone to his author talk at the LaPorte library main branch in the conference room on Thursday, March 9 at 6:00.
- Jim Holifield- Stated that it will be "weird" not having Niki and Laura at the Nature Center. He thanked them for everything for all they have done over the years.
- Jeremy Sobecki- Reminded everyone that it may take a while for the new employees to get their programs going, and newsletter out. We are losing 29 + 16 years of experience. It will take a little while to build up new programs, but we'll get there!

#### XII. ADJOURNMENT

- Mary made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mike. Motion approved 5-0.