

La Porte County Park Board Meeting

April 2, 2024 Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by Ron at 5:18

ROLL CALL:

- Present: Mike King, Nick Landers, Mary Nell Murphy, Ron Knickrehm (via ZOOM)*
- Absent: Amanda Nebelung, Jim Holifield, Mary Komenas
- Guests: ALCO TV
- ZOOM attendees: Ron Knickrehm

*Quorum requires four board members in attendance

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- Mary Nell suggested an amendment to the agenda, to move the discussion on the future of the Health Cabin at Red Mill to New Business
- Mary Nell then made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Nick; motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Mike made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting; seconded by Mary Nell; motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comment

FINANCIAL REPORTS

- Jeremy explained the new account numbers in the non-reverting as required by the Auditor's office
- Mary Nell made a motion to approve the financial reports; seconded by Nick; motion carried 4-0.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

1. Administrative Report

- Bluhm project update: Agreement has been reached and purchase agreement signed between the landowner and the DNR; this project is finally moving forward!
- Animal Shelter improvement project: A local church has mustered community support and funding for a Splash Pad to be built at the Small Animal Shelter on Hwy. 2 by the fairgrounds. The staff at the Animal Shelter will be responsible for the daily chores/maintenance required for

the operation and upkeep of this Splash Pad. Park Dept. Maintenance staff will assist with any larger maintenance issues.

- AED Grant: We *did* receive this grant, applied for by Jeremy, and will be receiving AEDs for Bluhm and Creek Ridge, putting an AED device at **all** of the county parks.

2. Maintenance & Construction Report

3. Program Report

- Jeremy highlighted the Eclipse event on April 8. While eclipses happen regularly, total eclipse in a location occurs once every 400 years.
- We will be having an eclipse program at both Creek Ridge and Luhr, in participation with the La Porte County Public Library.

4. Park Counts

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Executive Committee: Ron and Jim

- No report

2. Budget Committee: Nick and Mary

- No report

3. Personnel Committee: Nick and Mary

- Seasonal hiring is underway.
- We have 4 seasonals lined up already; still looking for a part-time gardener
- Nature Center staff is already hired.

4. Property Committee: Mike and Mary Nell

- Hunt Lake property update: We are still awaiting the property transfer through the County Commissioners Office.

5. Planning Committee: Amanda and Mary Nell

- Department of Health trails planning grant: We also received this grant! Moving forward at getting requests for proposals ready. Jeremy will be getting training from the Dept. of Health to make sure that everything is done correctly according to their procedures.
- Jeremy also applied for another grant from the HFL for this same project to assure that we get a comprehensive and detailed plan.

6. Rules Committee: Amanda and Mike

- No report

OLD BUSINESS

- No old business to discuss

NEW BUSINESS

- Future of the Health Cabin at Red Mill:
 - This cabin has been here since the park was a Girl Scout camp (It was the camp infirmary, hence the name "Health Cabin")
 - The Parks Dept. only used this building once a year during Envirothon.
 - It was vandalized last year and all the windows have been boarded up.

- It currently has a mold issue, and so, was not used during this year's Envirothon event.
- It is costing us around \$35/month for electricity with no benefit to the Parks at all, at this point.
- Ron's two questions: is mold mitigation possible? and is the structure moveable?
- Mary Nell made a motion to table this discussion after further investigation by the Planning Committee; seconded by Mike. Motion carried 4-0.

BOARD & STAFF COMMENTS

- Ron brought up the subject of common interest "clubs" meeting at the various parks for socializing as well as utilizing the parks, specifically a running club that he participates in.
- Jeremy also shared the results of a community survey in which these types of "common interest groups" were requested by those who took the survey.
- Mary Nell also said that she is involved in a bird watching group that meets at the various parks to hike and look at the birds.
- Jeremy mentioned the **Breakfast With the Birds** program and what a success that turned out to be, 44 attendees. There were groups from Paladin and Oakwood Manor that came out to enjoy breakfast, socializing, and birds.
- Mary Nell invited everyone to come out to the Dunes Bird Festival May 15-19.
- Jeremy pointed out that the next meeting is on June 4 and is at Luhr, **not** at Red Mill, as stated on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

- Mike made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Nick. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned.