

**Van Buren County Parks Commission Board
 Regular Meeting Minutes
 February 14, 2023**

**Physical Location: Conference Room 303
 Van Buren County Administration Building
 219 E Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw MI 49079**

1. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum and Attendees

At 11:00 AM, by Chair Mike Chappell with attendees/absentees/status as follows:

Board Member Attendance Report--Parks and Recreation Commission										
<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Attendance/Quorum Status</i>	<i>Declared Remote Location</i>			<i>Present Anytime</i>	<i>Present @ Start</i>	<i>+ Late Arrivals</i>	<i>- Early Departs</i>	<i>Present @ End</i>
			<i>Municipality</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>State</i>					
Mike Chappell	Chair	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
John Small	Vice Chair	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Wayne Nelson	Secretary	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Joe Parman	Member	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Kurt Doroh	Member	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Ryan Post	Member	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Dick Godfrey	Member	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Paul Garrod	Member	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
Emily Hickmott	Member	Attended physically				Yes	Yes	✓	✓	Yes
<vacancy>	Member	Did not attend meeting				No	No	✓	✓	No
Count:						9	9	0	0	9
Members Present:							9 of 9	9 of 9	9 of 9	9 of 9
Quorum (Yes/No):							Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- a. **Board Members Present (9); Board Members Absent (0); Board Vacancies: (1).** A quorum (9 of 9) is initially present, and a quorum remained throughout the meeting.
- b. **Staff and Others Present:** Don Blackmond, Keeler Township Supervisor.

2. Approval of Agenda--The prepared agenda, modified by the additional of Item 5c, was approved 9-0 on the motion of Doroh, supported by Garrod.

3. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting held January 10, 2023--The proposed minutes of the meeting was included in the agenda packet. The minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0 on the motion by Doroh, supported by Parman.

4. Public Comment—None

5. New Business—

- a. **Keeler Township Sites—**Don Blackmond, Keeler Township Supervisor, reviewed several sites in the township that could be appropriate for public park or recreational use. The township owns some of the sites and some are under unclear ownership in recorded plats. Blackmond particularly expressed interest in establishing a park at the corner of CR-687 and Territorial Road in the “downtown” area of Keeler, and another along Round Lake on CR-690 in the “downtown” Sister Lakes area. There was consensus to arrange a bus tour of the sites for the Board, hopefully in May. The Chair thanked Blackmond for his presentation.
- b. **Fruit Belt Trail Letter of Support--**Through Board Member Hickmott, we have received a request from Oshtemo Township our support for their application to the Michigan DNR for funding to expand and improve the Fruit Belt Trail, which hopefully could ultimately expand into Van Buren County as part of the envisioned Fruit Belt Rail Corridor trail. Nelson had prepared a proposed letter of support that was approved by a vote of 9-0 on the motion by Doroh, supported by Hickmott
- c. **Southwest MI Land Conservancy request for fee waiver—**Chair Chappell received an email request from Mitch Lettow, Stewardship Director of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, who are developing a proposal for a new linear trail along the Lake Michigan dunes in South Haven and Covert Townships. They are working with the National Park Service, the University of Michigan, and the South Haven Area Recreation Authority, to create technical specifications using LiDAR data for the proposed trail that would include the county’s existing Syndicate Dunes area. Due to the non-profit and intergovernmental involvement in the project, the Conservancy is requesting that we recommend to the Board of Commissioners that a waiver of the county’s normal fee for the use of LiDAR data be authorized. Approved by a vote of 9-0 on the motion of Godfrey, supported by Doroh.

6. Unfinished Business—

- a. **Mission and Vision Statements—**The approved statements, put into presentation form by the Secretary, are now part of the Commission records.
- b. **Board Vacancies—**There was no discussion on the remaining Board vacancy.
- c. **County & Fair Board Lease—**The current lease between the county and the Van Buren Youth Fair Association was distributed in the agenda packet. Nelson proposed that the county’s GIS staff review this lease, the lease between the county and the Van Buren

County Historical Society for the county museum site, and the entirety of county-owned land along CR-681 and Red Arrow Highway in Hartford Township to determine if any land description errors, gaps, overlaps, or other problems exist, and to prepare a presentation map showing all uses of the land. There was consensus on this proposal.

- d. **Kayak Launch Project**—Marcy Hamilton of SWM Planning Commission followed up with Chair Chappell on the status of recommendations from the January meeting. Among these items would be a formal funding of the VBCPRC, a small supporting property tax millage, a federal LATSf grant, upgrade sustainability points, retain Disability Network Southwest Michigan for an accessibility study on the site for about \$100, and schedule another public hearing. Post announced that the county has received a \$50,000 LATSf grant that can be used for Parks & Rec funding, including this project. The Board recommended to the Board of commissioners to schedule a public hearing at the COW meeting on February 28, with the hearing to be held March 14, approved by a vote of 9-0 on the motion of Parman, supported by Doroh.
- e. **Michigan Sparks Grant Program**—Marcy Hamilton continues to monitor this for us.

7. General Member Comments—

- a. Parman mentioned that the South Haven to Bloomingdale portion of the Kal-Haven Trail will be refurbished starting this summer, later than originally anticipated.
- b. Small mentioned that the county has nice wrought iron fencing for that north and south borders of the county park in downtown Paw Paw. The fencing had been acquired a number of years ago and was in storage for some reason.

- 8. Adjournment**—All business being completed, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent by the Chair at 11:59 AM.



Wayne Nelson, Secretary

Van Buren County Parks and Recreation Commission