



Van Buren County Parks Commission

Donald Handon Board of Commission Chambers 219 E
Paw Paw Street, Suite 204
Paw Paw, MI 49079



Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2024, 11:00 AM

1. **Call to Order & Attendance** – Chairperson Mike Chappell called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.
Present: Chair Mike Chappell, Richard Godfrey, Joe Parman, Becky Grabemeyer, Kurt Doroh, Emily Hickmott, Vice Chair John Small, Paul Garrod and Daywi Cook. Also in attendance included: Lisa (Imus) Ransler, John Faul, Julie Pioch and Ron Sefcik. **Absent:** Wayne Nelson.
2. **Approval of March 12, 2024 Agenda** - Motion to approve by Doroh, supported by Parman; Motion: Carried.
3. **Approval of Minutes** - Motion to approve the February 13, 2024, minutes by Doroh, supported by Hickmont; Motion: Carried.
4. **Public Comments** - None.
5. **New Business**
 - a. **Veterans' Therapy Garden** – Julie Pioch, District Director from MSU Extension, updated the Parks Commission on the Veterans' Therapy Garden, detailing a \$500,000 grant for infrastructure enhancements including solar power, irrigation, and fencing. This garden offers veterans opportunities for volunteering, therapy, and training. The grant will support a three-year collaboration among veterans, MSU Extension, and Van Buren County. Pioch will prepare a decommissioning document to transition the garden's upkeep to the Parks and Recreation Department after the third year.
6. **Ongoing Business/Reports**
 - a. **Fairgrounds and Museum Lease** – A meeting is scheduled with Fair Board President Pat Birnell to discuss proposed lease changes for property boundaries at the Fairgrounds. These changes aim to reduce the Fair Board's liability on land shared with other county departments, including the Sheriff's Department, and to explore more recreational opportunities at the Fairgrounds. Chappell and Doroh will attend.
 - b. **MNRTF Kayak Launch** – The County Surveyor continues to work on the new boundaries for the property to be split from the Meacham family for the Kayak Launch. An official split will be required by the township once the new property description has been created.
 - c. **Village of Paw Paw Parks and Recreation Plan** – The Village has updated their Parks and Recreation Master Plan and provided a copy for review. It can be found on their website at [Paw Paw Parks Plan](#)
 - d. **Blue Star Trail** – MDOT TAP staff have been contacted regarding the potential project and have agreed to set up a meeting to discuss the project. If invited, a grant application will be due in October 2024.
7. **General Member Comments and Discussion** – Faul confirmed that the Kal-Haven Trail Lease with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources was cancelled in March 2022.
8. **Adjournment:** All business being completed, Doroh, supported by Godfrey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 AM with unanimous consent.

Submitted by:

Lisa Ransler

Lisa (Imus) Ransler, Secretary