



Van Buren County Parks Commission
Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers
219 E Paw Paw Street, Suite 204 Paw Paw, MI 49079



Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2025, 11:00 AM

1. **Call to Order & Attendance** – Chairperson Mike Chappel called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

Present: Chairperson Mike Chappel, Becky Grabemeyer, Kurt Doroh, Wayne Nelson, Daywi Cook, Gail Patterson-Gladney and Emilly Hickmott. **Absent:** Vice Chair John Small, Joe Parman and Paul Garrod (all excused)

2. **Approval of April 10, 2025, Agenda** - A motion was made by Doroh, with support from Hickmott, to approve the amended agenda for April 10, 2025. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

3. **Approval of March 11, 2025, Minutes** - A motion was made by Doroh, with support from Patterson-Gladney to approve the March 11, 2025 minutes. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. **Communications / Reports:** Ransler reported that a letter was issued on February 11, 2025, to Mr. Clark Joseph concerning several encroachments onto Van Buren County Fairgrounds property from structures and debris associated with his parcel (Parcel #80-11-013-026-00). The identified issues included a dwelling extending approximately two feet over the property line, a shed located entirely on county property, and a significant portion of the driveway situated on county land, in addition to various debris. The County requested a response by February 26, 2025, to discuss resolution options. No response was received by the deadline. The Commission directed Ransler to reissue the letter via certified mail and to consult with legal counsel regarding the appropriate next steps for resolution.

5. **Public Comments** - None.

6. **New Business:**

1. **Receive Strategic Plan:** The Commission received and reviewed the 2025 Van Buren County Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan. The plan outlines the County's mission to provide quality recreational opportunities, emphasizes stewardship of natural and historical resources, and presents goals focused on park maintenance, accessibility, public engagement, and strategic growth.

Key initiatives include updating the County Recreation Plan, constructing the Paw Paw River Kayak Launch, assessing Syndicate Park, implementing a Capital Improvement Program, and developing formal maintenance agreements and policies. The Commission acknowledged the Strategic Plan as a guiding document for upcoming projects and priorities.

7. **Ongoing Business/Reports**

1. **Award of Master Plan to SWMPC** – Cook, supported by Nelson, made a motion to contract with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) to update the Van Buren County Parks and Recreation Plan at a cost of \$11,054.40. Motion carried. Doroh and Patterson-Gladney abstained due to their positions on the SWMPC Board of Directors.
2. **Membership and Bylaws** – An updated membership roster and term expiration was distributed and will be presented to the County Commission for approval.

Draft bylaws were also distributed and discussed. Nelson, supported by Patterson-Gladney, made a motion to approve the bylaws with modifications and forward them to the County Board. After discussion, the motion failed with five in support and two opposed, falling short of the required six-member majority. The bylaws will be revised and brought back for consideration at the April meeting.

8. General Member Comments and Discussion – None.

9. Adjournment: All business being completed the meeting was adjourned at 11:49 AM by unanimous consent.

Note: The next meeting will be held on April 10, 2025, at 11:00 AM due to the Michigan Association of Counties meeting on April 8.

Submitted by:

Lisa Ransler, Recording Secretary