

**MINUTES**

**LAKE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING**

**JANUARY 11, 2024**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Board President, Chris Dilts, called the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the large conference room of the Lake County Parks Corporate Office, 8411 E. Lincoln Highway, Cown Point, Indiana.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Secretary to the Board, Jim Basala, called the roll and the following Board members were present: Christopher Dilts, David Uzelac, Jesse Rippe, and Julie Jones. Board Attorney, Louis Casale, was also in attendance. Board member Carl Ploense, was present via phone conference.

Staff members present: Jim Basala, Chris Landgrave, Chris Nawracaj, Sasha Mateer, Craig Zandstra and Marsha Rodriguez

Also in attendance: Brenda Roberts & Nicole Drexler

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Dilts, asked if there were any nominations for Park Board President. Mr. Uzelac, stated that the nominating committee, would like to nominate Mr. Dilts, as president. Mr. Dilts, asked if there were any other nominations for Park Board President. There being no other nominations, Mr. Dilts closed the nominations, and called for the vote, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the nomination of Christopher Dilts, as Park Board President.

Mr. Dilts asked for a nomination for Park Board Vice President. Mr. Uzelac stated, that the nominating committee would like to nominate Mr. Rippe, to serve as vice president. Mr. Dilts asked, if there were any other nominations, for Park Board Vice President. There being none, Mr. Dilts closed the nominations and called for the vote, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the nomination of Jesse Rippe, as Park Board Vice President.

**V. APPOINTMENT OF BOARD SECRETARY AND BOARD ATTORNEY**

Mr. Dilts asked if there were any nominations, for the appointment of the Board Secretary, and Board attorney. Mr. Uzelac, nominated Jim Basala as Board Secretary. Mr. Dilts asked if there were any other nominations, for Park Board Secretary. There being none, Mr. Dilts closed the nominations, and called for the vote, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. Basala as Park Board Secretary.

Mr. Dilts asked if there were any nominations, for the 2024 Park Board Attorney. Mr. Uzelac nominated Louis Casale, as the Board Attorney. Mr. Dilts, asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Mr. Dilts closed the nominations and called for the vote, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. Casale as Park Board Attorney.

Mr. Dilts stated, that with the Boards approval, he wanted to review the Committee assignments. The Policy and Personnel/Budget and Finance committee, will consist of Carl Ploense as chair, along with Julie Jones and David Uzelac. The Goals and Objectives/Land Acquisition committee, will consist of John Salzeider as chair along with Jesse Rippe and Chris Dilts. Mr. Uzelac made a motion to accept the committee. Motion was seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the committee.

Mr. Dilts congratulated the new Park Board members.

**VI. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 11, 2024 BOARD AGENDA**

In a motion by Mr. Dilts, seconded by Mr. Uzelac, the Board unanimously approved the Board

Agenda of January 11, 2024.

VII. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 14, 2023 BOARD MINUTES

In a motion by Mr. Uzelac, seconded by Ms. Jones. With no discussion the Board unanimously approved the Board Minutes of December 14, 2023.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consider Spurlock Parcel Acquisition at the Future Lake Hills County Site

Mr. Craig Zandstra reported, that he has been working with the DNR (Department of Natural Resources). Funds were approved by the State, that will be applied to the purchase of the Spurlock property. We will also be applying for a Lake Michigan Coastal Grant, along with putting in an application with the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission. Our hope is to receive the remaining funding, to purchase the property. Mr. Basala reported, that the property being discussed, is in Schererville, next to the Sarros property. Between 77<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 85<sup>th</sup> Ave., west of Cline, and south Chapel Lawn Cemetery. Currently there is one hundred acres, adding the additional property, will make it one hundred twenty-eight. Plans may include acquiring an easement, to connect the Spurlock property with the Sarros property, for possible trails. Part of the Department’s goal and mission, is to provide open space, and if not done, it will all be gone. In a motion by Mr. Uzelac, seconded by Mr. Rippe, and with no discussion, the parcel acquisition was approved.

B. Gas Quotes

Mr. Chris Landgrave reported, that every year we solicit different gas suppliers in the area to provide us our fuel for our different park sites. Both diesel and gasoline. In the Boards packet included the list of different suppliers. Two replied with their quotes, with Petro Choice beating out the current supplier. Fuel prices will always vary, but what is being locked in is the profit and delivery. Staff’s recommendation is Petro Choice. In a motion by Mr. Uzelac, seconded by Mr. Rippe, and with no discussion, the gas quote by Petro Choice was approved. The quotes are as follows:

1/8/2024 3:00 PM LAKE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT GASOLINE & #2 DIESEL FUEL QUOTE	.87 OCTANE UNLEADED GASOLINE	.89 OCTANE UNLEADED GASOLINE	#2 DIESEL FUEL	
			OFF ROAD	ON ROAD
Co-Alliance LLP 6435 Howard Avenue Hammond, IN 46320	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024 - Morning Listing \$1.7427 add delivery & profit \$0.25 \$1.99 PER GALLON	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024- Morning Listing \$2.0761 add delivery & profit \$0.25 \$2.32 PER GALLON	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024 - Morning Listing \$2.2207 add delivery & profit \$0.25 \$2.47 PER GALLON	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024 - Morning Listing \$2.2231 add delivery & profit \$0.25 \$2.47 PER GALLON
Petro Choice 865 N. Superior Dr. Crown Point, IN 46307	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024- Morning Listing \$1.7427 add delivery & profit \$0.20 \$1.94 PER GALLON	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024- Morning Listing \$2.0761 add delivery & profit \$0.20 \$2.27 PER GALLON	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024 - Morning Listing \$2.2231 add delivery & profit \$0.20 \$2.42 PER GALLON	Hammond Pad 2 OPIS Rack Average from 1/5/2024 - Morning Listing \$2.2207 add delivery & profit \$0.20 \$2.42 PER GALLON

\*NO STATE OR FEDERAL TAXES INCLUDED

C. Donations to Deep River County Park/Fanning Mill & Miscellaneous Vintage Tools

Ms. Sasha Mateer reported, that a donation of many miscellaneous vintage tools, was donated to the Deep River Grist Mill by Mr. Robert Marszlek. The tools will be displayed, and interpreted during programs. Mr. Uzelac made a motion to accept the donation. Mr. Rippe seconded the motion. Mr. Dilts asked if there was any discussion, there being no discussion, Mr. Dilts called for the vote, and the Board unanimously accepted the donation.

The second donation, is a late eighteen hundred fanning mill, valued at six hundred dollars. The fanning mill, is donated by Ms. Sandra Mendez. Mr. Uzelac made a motion to accept the donation. Mr. Rippe seconded the motion. Mr. Dilts asked if there was any discussion, there being no discussion, Mr. Dilts called for the vote, and the Board accepted the donation.

Mr. Basala announced, that there was an additional donation, that he wanted to add to the list of donations. Mr. Ryan Perterson from Chicago Title in Crown Point, visited the office to give the Lake County Parks, a painting of the Wood’s Historic Grist Mill, due to relocating and redecorating their offices. Mr. Basala asked the Board to accept the donation from Chicago Title. Mr. Rippe made a motion to accept the donation. Mr. Ploense seconded the motion. Mr. Dilts asked if there was any discussion, there being no discussion, Mr. Dilts called for the vote, and the Board accepted the donation.

X. ACCEPTANCE OF CLAIMS

Claims to be accepted:

1107 Operating Fund	\$ 52,431.92
1116 Non-Reverting Land	1,639.00
1117 Non-Reverting Operating	<u>13,115.86</u>

**Total: \$ 67,186.78**

Mr. Rippe made a motion to accept the claims. Mr. Uzelac seconded the motion. Mr. Dilts asked if there was any discussion. There being no discussion, Mr. Dilts called for the vote, and the Board unanimously approved the claims for payment.

XI. REPORTS

A. Committee Reports

1. Policy and Personnel/Budget and Finance  
None
2. Goals and Objectives/Land Acquisition  
None

B. Division Reports

1. Planning and Resource Management

Mr. Zandstra, Division Superintendent, reported that the staff at Gibson Woods, will be working throughout the cold weather, and winter. Thinning out Black Oak, and invasive species.

The C & O Trail is complete at Oak Ridge Prairie. A final meeting with Milestone, discussing final items that need completion. Hoping to have a trail dedication on National Trails Day in June, with the Town of Merrillville. Stating that the trail now will run from Oak Ridge Prairie, to North of Lowes, on Mississippi St.

The Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative, with the Nature Conservancy, Great Lake Audubon, and Wetlands Initiative, have acquired grants. There will be large scale restoration work along the Little Calumet River, between Martin Luther King Dr. and I65, north of the Borman. Another grant was approved for the Chase St. Complex, along the Little Calumet River, between Grant St. and Clark Road. The area is along Lake Etta County Park. Meandering along the Little Calumet River, and the bike trail doing habitat work.

2. Recreation and Special Facilities

Ms. Mateer, Division Superintendent, reported Bellaboo's held their New Years Eve *Bellabration* program. The program had over two hundred in attendance, having a wonderful time throughout the day.

At Deep River County Park, they are getting ready for *Maple Syrup Time*. Open registration for tours, started after the new year, and already over five hundred participants have signed up. Tapping trees will begin soon, if the weather is good enough to start that process. December weather was mild, so staff were out repairing roads, and picking up trees, and limbs that had fallen.

3. Park Operations

Mr. Nawracaj, Division Superintendent, reported that golfers came out on days that the weather permitted. As the weather turns the courses will slow down.

At the Waterpark, the New Years Eve program *Swifties on Skates*, an event geared around Taylor Swift went well. About three hundred people showed up, making friendship bracelets with the programing staff. It was a happy return for ice-skating, at the Waterpark. The Waterpark, has also started sending out rehire forms, and getting ready for summer hiring. StarGuard ELITE, is our lifeguard certification agency, and will be starting lifeguard training, with their first class in February.

Mr. Nawracaj, stated he wanted to take the opportunity to introduce Nicole Drexler, who recently was promoted to General Manager for the Waterpark. Nicole, started with the Parks Department in 2012, as a lifeguard, and then became the Water Safety Manager. She is the fifth general manager there, since the waterpark opened and we all are excited to have her in this position.

4. Administrative Services

Mr. Landgrave, Chief Operating Officer, reported that coming into the new year the balances are high. The 107 balance is sitting good, with staff doing a great job, so that it does not affect the next business cycle.

There have been some Park organization adjustments, in the department. Due to the adjustments, Mr. Landgrave, will now be giving the carpenter and mechanic reports. The carpenter staff has been taking advantage of the weather, doing a lot of work at Turkey Creek Golf Course. The maintenance building has been cleaned out, new siding has been put up, and utilizing it now for a storage area. The mechanics staff have already frontloaded maintenance, by servicing frontline mowers before the spring season.

XII. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Brenda Roberts, who was in attendance, wanted to let the Board know, that the eagle nest made last year, has been destroyed by racoons. Suggesting wrapping the trees with metal wraps, to keep the racoons from destroying any future nests. Ms. Roberts had questions as well, about property, in her surrounding area concerning development.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

In a motion by Mr. Uzelac, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BASALA  
Secretary to the Board

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