

**MINUTES**

**LAKE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 14, 2023**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Board President, Chris Dilts, called the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. in the large conference room of the Lake County Parks Corporate Office, 8411 East Lincoln Highway, Crown Point, Indiana.

II. ROLL CALL

Secretary to the Board, Jim Basala, called the roll and the following Board members were present: Christopher Dilts and Rita Gillis. Board Attorney, Louis Casale, was also in attendance.

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

Also in attendance: Brenda Roberts

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 14,2023 BOARD AGENDA

In a motion by Ms. Gillis, seconded by Mr. Dilts, the Board unanimously approved the Agenda of September 14, 2023.

V. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 10,2023 BOARD MINUTES

In a motion by Ms. Gillis, seconded by Mr. Dilts, the Board unanimously approved the Minutes of August 10, 2023.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. GKM Hunting Dates and Fees

Mr. Zandstra, reported that the current Grand Kankakee Marsh 2023/2024, Fall, Winter, and Spring Hunting Schedule was in their Board packets. The dates that are given in the schedule, are dates that the DNR (Department of Natural Recourses), Fish and Wildlife Division have come up with.

Indiana Fish and Wildlife Properties do not have any fees. A hunting license is all that is required to hunt on state property, free of charge. However, they do not have boats or blinds for hunters to use in all their properties. They also have limited access, to retrieve game, and access hunting areas. Mr. Zandstra stated that the hunters still really enjoy going to the Grand Kankakee Marsh.

Ms. Gillis made a motion to accept the dates and fees for hunting at the Grand Kankakee Marsh. Mr. Dilts seconded the motion. With no discussion, Mr. Dilts stated pending ratification at the next meeting.

VIII. ACCEPTANCE OF CLAIMS

Claims to be accepted:

1107 Operating Fund	\$ 212,705.20
1116 Non-Reverting Land	14,753.86
1117 Non-Reverting Operating Fund	334,535.25

4118 Gift Fund	49.99
9450 NLT Grant	<u>14,536.96</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 576,581.26</b>

Mr. Dilts asked if there were any questions about the claims up for approval this evening. Ms. Gillis made a motion to approve the claims. Mr. Dilts seconded the motion. With no discussion, Mr. Dilts stated pending ratification at the next meeting.

## IX. REPORTS

### A. Committee Reports

1. Policy and Personnel/Budget and Finance
2. Goals and Objectives/Land Acquisition

No Report

### B. Division Reports

1. Panning and Natural Resource Management

Mr. Zandstra, Division Superintendent, reported that Gibson Woods will be holding a kiosk dedication on October 27<sup>th</sup>, for former Park Manager and Naturalist Joy Bower, as well as her husband Rick Bower. Ms. Bower worked for twenty-three years with the Parks Department and helped make Gibson Woods what it is today.

Paving is continuing off the C & O (Chesapeake & Ohio) Trail at Oak Ridge Prairie and is almost complete. Amenities such as the fencing, shelters, and benches will be placed once the concrete is complete. The public will be excited once it connects to the Oak Savannah Trail. There is a parcel acquisition coming up on September 25<sup>th</sup>, for the Veterans Memorial Trail. Four point eight acres will be purchased of the right of way.

The pumps will be turned on, at Hog Marsh at the Grand Kankakee Marsh. Goose Lake will be starting in early October once the farmer gets the crops out.

2. Recreation and Special Facilities

Ms. Mateer, Division Superintendent, reported to the Board that the programming staff at Buckley Homestead, just wrapped up their first weekend of *Sleepy Hollow*. Looking forward to the coming weekend, when another sold-out show will be happening. *Fall Fest* will be starting September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, charging five dollars a person who is seven years or older.

The Waterpark wrapped up their summer season on Labor Day, with attendance slightly above last year's. Quickly starting on winterizing and putting summer equipment away. Preparing the park for the ice-skating season that will start in November.

The *Deep River Grinders*, will be finishing their season on October 1<sup>st</sup> at home at 2 pm, where they will be playing the Rock Springs Ground Squirrels. At Deep River County Park, the staff and volunteers are continuing to work on the water wheel restoration, the scrapping and painting of the Visitor Center as well. The volunteers have put in close to a thousand work hours over the summer, with many of them retired millwright workers. The water wheel is in place, with all the hardware in, hoping to see it running before the end of the year.

3. Park Operations

Mr. Landgrave, Chief Operating Officer, reported to the Board, that the carpentry staff has been making progress on the offices that held the planning department, at one time at Turkey Creek. Replacing siding, and cleaning up the area around the outside of the building. They are currently on the inside of the building, replacing ceilings and redoing the restrooms. Soon the building will be ready for the staff that work at the golf course. The mechanics have been active throughout the summer with mowers, ordering parts, and sometimes swapping out mowers with another parks in order to get routine jobs done.

C. Report From CEO

Jim Basala, CEO, reported that there was a budget workshop recently, where motions were made on the budget but not yet binding. The Council proposed four percent raises across the board in payroll. The group insurance line item will be going up five to eight percent, due to the rising health costs.

Mentioning that going into next year, having goal meetings and discussing projects and programs for the upcoming year. Staff is working hard in the department. Recently Nicole Drexler the Water Safety Manager, attended an Aquatics seminar for the IPRA and did an exceptional presentation. Mr. Zandstra is continuing to work on grants and the department should be commended for working hard to fulfill its mission to the county.

X. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Brenda Roberts, who was in attendance, had questions about existing property in Cedar Lake. Her main concern were the trees that are being taken down, and feels that it is encroaching upon the parks to the west and the wetlands. Ms. Roberts stated that she feels the eagles as well, had abandoned their nests. Very concerned what will happen to the sanctuary of the park area. Ms. Roberts asked Mr. Zandstra if he would attend a public hearing in favor of the parks. Mr. Zandstra stated that he is planning on preparing a letter for the Field and Planning Commission. Ms. Roberts questions were answered and the discussion concluded.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

In a motion by Ms. Gillis seconded by Mr. Dilts, the Lake County Parks and Recreation Board meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BASALA  
Secretary to the Board

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