

Parks Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 13, 2013
6:00 p.m., Council Chambers



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order by Reinert at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Cobbs, Comeau, Fitzgibbon, Moore, Toneman, White, Reinert
Absent: None

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Fitzgibbon, second by Moore to approve the agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes – July 9, 2013

Motion by Fitzgibbon, second by Toneman to approve the July 9, 2013 regular meeting minutes as written.

All in favor. Motion carried.

5. Public Comments and Inquiries Concerning Items not on the Agenda

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

6. Black River Park – Proposed Master Plan

VandenBosch, Assistant City Manager. Developing a ten to twenty year plan for Black River Boat launch and marina.

Kathy Burczak, Senior Landscape Artist, Abonmarche. After a review of the process so far, Burczak presented a slide presentation. Improvement of vehicular flow to the boat launch is one area being addressed and has led up to this third iteration of the Black River Park Master Plan. Discussion regarding the area now being used for dredge spoils becoming a secondary parking lot; less conflict of traffic due to changing the main entrance but allowing

the current entrance to become a secondary entrance on the way from the bait shop. Current restroom would need to be upgraded for handicapped access since it is not currently American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Burczak also noted that the plan shows the addition of some ADA compliant parking near the current restroom and also closer to the boat launch to meet the current guidelines.

Burczak suggested, for the future, another restroom at the opposite end of the parking lot with more handicapped spaces. The goal is to create a totally accessible walkway from one end of the parking lot to the other.

Burczak also noted that the grassy area near the river could, at some time, include a picnic shelter and grills. The current canoe/kayak launch would remain and a canoe and kayak drop-off area would be provided as well as some boat trailer spaces, ADA compliant spaces and vehicular parking spaces that are free.

The fish cleaning station received unanimous agreement from the Harbor Commission to be located near the current dredging spoil location. Once the dredging is complete and dredge spoils are removed, this area can be capped with gravel and can provide free parking, a drop-off zone, and room for both trailers and regular vehicular parking.

An example of the fish cleaning station was shown and described by Burczak as attractive, high-function and low maintenance. Burczak suggested the addition of a small unisex restroom/lockable storage area near the station.

Moore's question regarding fish cleaning table size was answered by Burczak, "The facility can be personalized according to the city's needs." The grinder system is contained for safety; hoses have been made longer than the example shown; tables have been designed with a slope for drainage and a Plexiglas divider between the sides of the table has been added. Burczak noted that there continues to be improvement as plans evolve. Moore suggested more than one fish scaler might be needed due to perch fishing, tournaments, etc.

After a question about loss of parking spaces, Burczak pointed out that parking has actually been increased. Burczak noted that since a master plan is being developed it can change over time with more parking being added if needed. The current plans includes one-hundred twenty-four (124) boat trailer parking spaces in the main parking area plus thirty-three (33) boat trailer spaces and forty-three (43) vehicle spaces in the free parking area.

VandenBosch pointed out that there are only a few weekends when the extra parking for boat trailers is needed. There was discussion about the area being a run-off area so keeping porous surfaces is recommended. VandenBosch also pointed out that by only putting gravel as a cap on the free parking area, the area can still be used in winter for piling snow when plowing is being done.

Fitzgibbon asked about the current fish cleaning station; VandenBosch noted that the fish cleaning station is located a long way from the parking and the grinder is a little small for the purpose and tends to get jammed etc.

Comeau said over a year ago we approved a plan for a separate kayak/canoe facility; "Where is that on this plan?" Gildea said the area under discussion at that time was east of

the waste water filtration plant. VandenBosch said the city applied for grants for at least two years, maybe three, and did not get grants. VandenBosch noted that the city is applying again; we do have plans for the stream area, but cannot get into that area currently due to the dredging being done.

Moore asked about playground equipment, picnic tables, etc. in the green area. VandenBosch noted that while the treatment plant expansion area could be made nicer, it still has to be reserved for future expansion. Moore questioned whether the celery pond area is part of this master plan; VandenBosch said the celery is not part of the parks system.

Carol Niffenegger, head of Celery Pond Advocates. The group has been working with the city to keep this area as green as possible. Niffenegger requested that any extra parking be kept gravel or green pavers or some porous material since that is flood-plain.

Moore would like to take the map down to the area and look at it before giving educated suggestions. VandenBosch explained that this proposal will go to the Planning Commission, then the Harbor Commission, before going to City Council for final approval.

Reinert asked what the first step should be. VandenBosch noted the fish cleaning station is going to be used to apply for a grant. There is some capital improvements/maintenance which needs to be done before new improvements are done. Does not know what the second phase would be but the kayak launch and gazebo would improve the park aspect and be low cost. "The walkway we are putting in is to encourage pedestrians use of the park," according to VandenBosch. While boat launch parking is paid, pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to access the area without paying. VandenBosch noted that while this is not a direct access to the downtown, this area provides a scenic route from the Kal-Haven trailhead to the downtown.

7. Disc Golf

Gildea introduced the concept, noting that a committee needs to form to study this and make recommendations to the city, fundraise and focus on disc golf. We already know there is no room within the city park system so we have to look outward. Emphasized that a small focused group can accomplish more than the Parks Commission as a whole can.

Discussion regarding the type of land being important for disc golfers. There should be varied topography, not just a flat area, though it should be able to be mowed. Fitzgibbon said the committee should come to the city with suggestions and a plan. Fitzgibbon said this could eventually be directed through SHARA (South Haven Area Regional Authority), which includes representatives from the city and surrounding townships.

Alex Hayes, 250 Itzen Court. Has been playing disc golf for twenty (20) years with friends and his brother, traveling to Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. They are hoping for something to happen in South Haven. Feels having the property can make the planning of the course easier. Mentioned vandalism and theft as a downside; someone stole one of their obstacles. Responding to a question, Hayes said Shore Acres was designed by him and his group. Twenty acres is ideal; Shore Acres is an 18-hole course with an extra area for practicing. Disc golf is a growing sport; it is pretty safe and Hayes believes there is a lot of local interest. If it's a place that has good obstacles and draws people in, it can draw people from other areas. Shore Acres has gotten a lot of publicity and is getting quite a bit of traffic. Our

league currently has about seventy-five (75) members. Everything that happened at Shore Acres was privately funded by donations and fundraisers. Noted that the township put in the bike path that goes through the property, so we built obstructions from excess cement from paving the bike paths.

Reinert asked about approximate cost which Hayes responded as in the neighborhood of \$7,500. Much of the work was done by the group, rather than having someone come in and clear things; "you don't want to clear too much." Fitzgibbon asked about restrooms to which Hayes noted that Shore Acres currently has two portable toilets. Noted that there is an annual League Clean-up Day to spruce things up. Fitzgibbon asked who is responsible for the management; Hayes responded that Laketown Township manages the course. Fitzgibbon noted that there will be a lot of excavation being done at SHARP Park that could be used to make obstacles.

Gildea suggests that a committee form and have regular meetings. City can run a public notice in the newspaper, post something on the city website. There was discussion regarding which newspaper it would be posted in.

Motion by Fitzgibbon to form a committee of citizens interested in developing a disc golf course; schedule regular monthly meetings which will be assisted by the City in providing a location to meet and minute-taking; develop a relationship with South Haven Area Recreation Authority; find a location and provide funding through grants, fund-raisers and donations and report to City Council. Second by Moore.

All in favor. Motion carried.

8. Commissioner Comments

Fitzgibbon: "I'm excited about this; I think it is great when committees work together with the city and townships", to accomplish projects for which the public has identified a need.

Moore: "I'm starting to get used to how government works." Heard of an attempt to connect Saugatuck and South Haven to the Kal-Haven Trail. Fitzgibbon noted that Paul VandenBosch is very involved with that project. There is a committee that is working on fundraising. When it is regarding property outside the City's jurisdiction we have to count on private citizens identifying a need and running with it.

Reinert: "Cannot believe that we are this far into August already". Has been visiting the parks and enjoying them and observing how much they are used at this very busy time of year. Commented on how well-kept they are, trash containers are empty, parks are clean and thanked staff for a great job.

Moore: "Went to Elkenburg Park and met some people that expressed some very real needs." Gildea noted that on August 27 there will be a meeting regarding Elkenburg Park; staff mailed out letters to anyone within 1500 feet of the park. Discussion of money available and what to do first. Gildea said we need to make some plans, rate their importance and look for additional grant money, donors, etc.

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Fitzgibbon: Met with Brandy, Brian and Paul at the park regarding the contractor and the concerns. Gildea said the original contractor is no longer involved and others are being brought in to complete the work.

Reinert asked the effect of the beach being closed during Blueberry Festival. Gildea said it was noticeable that there were not as many people in the water, but town sure was busy, and "it has been a good year for the merchants."

9. Adjourn

Motion by Moore, second by Cobbs to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary