



LAGRANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES

August 17, 2023 7:00 PM
Maple Wood Nature Center

PRESENT: John Egli, Ardala Hepler, Julia Wolheter, Paul Baker

ALSO PRESENT: Mary Franke, Emily Wolfe, Terry Martin, Chris Sluyter, Leslie Arnold

MINUTES: Paul Baker moved and Ardala Hepler seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the July 20, 2023 meeting. Motion carried.

CLAIMS:

Julia Wolheter moved and Paul Baker seconded a motion to approve August 17, 2023 docket claims. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. 2024 Budget

John Egli presented the proposed park 2024 budget at commissioners meeting August 14. Next Thursday, August 24, Mary will attend the Salary and Wage committee meeting. The 2024 budget comes before County Council on September 11 in public hearing.

B. Mike Metz Fen LWCF Project

Mary Franke shared that the crew is completing finishing touches. DNR will be here Wednesday, August 23 to inspect.

C. Tetrick Property

Mary Franke received the property survey from Taylor Land Surveying and met with appraisers at the property. Appraisals need to be received and final purchase price needs to be established; then LCCF will purchase and hold the property until grants are received to reimburse LCCF.

D. Rogers Pavilion/Pickleball

Paul Baker shared that the next step is to have shelter removed. Board discussed options.

E. Suzanne Arnold Memorial Bench

Julia Wolheter moved and Paul Baker seconded a motion to purchase a memorial bench and plaque with park funds. "In memory of Suzanne Arnold". Motion carried.

F. Art in the Park Event

Chris Sluyter shared plans for a new event to be held at Dallas Lake Park on September 23, 2023 from 2-8pm. Plans to have 2 bands performing; Blazing Gun BBQ will be a food vendor. Chris is working with Mary Woodworth, President of LaGrange County Arts Council to help bring in artist vendors. Plans to have yard games set up. Wants this to be a family

event. Board suggested contacting area school art programs to seek interest in displaying student art. Chris Sluyter asked the board for consideration, in starting a new event, to waive vendor fees for 3 years to generate interest and business. Paul Baker moved and Julia Wolhuter seconded a motion to waive vendor fees, allow vendors to sell their goods, complete a vendor permit, and obtain sales report from all vendors for this event for this year. Motion carried.

G. Disc Golf Tournament

Chris Sluyter shared plans for a disc golf fundraising tournament to be held at Delt Church Park on October 14, 2023. Tournament will be held by a tournament organizer associated with Michiana Pro Shop. Tournament will allow 72 players with entrance fee – Entrance fee split 50/50 – half used for tournament winner gift cards and half paid to parks dept. Michiana Pro Shop will be present with mobile shop to provide winners an opportunity to use their winnings right away. The organizer handles everything. Julia Wolhuter moved and Paul Baker seconded a motion to allow Michiana Pro Shop to sell their goods at this event with completed vendor permit and no vendor fees. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Maple Wood

Mary Franke shared visitor counts that come into the Nature Center over the past year, compiled by Naturalist Leslie Arnold. As the board reviewed the numbers, Leslie Arnold shared that her time could be better utilized on Wednesdays with school programs and weekends by visiting other parks. The Nature Center would still be open for organized programs and events, especially during maple syrup season. This would allow more rentals. A port-o-john is provided from March through Memorial Day & again from Labor Day through Halloween for peak visit times. Paul Baker moved & Ardala Hepler seconded a motion to not have an open-hours schedule for the Nature Center building. Building will be closed except by appointment or reservation, & will still be open for scheduled monthly classes/meetings. Motion carried.

B. Rogers Barn

Mary Franke shared that one, possibly two, of the cabins at Rogers Park is in very bad condition. Logs are dry-rotting and appears unsafe. Board discussed and requested a quote for repair and also requested research on how to preserve the quality of the barn and remainder of cabins.

C. Director's Report

Mary Franke shared the rental calendar of Delt Church Park this summer and that there is an overwhelming increase in trash. An additional dumpster was brought into Delt this summer to deal with trash overflow. There is also an increase in horse manure. The board discussed different ways to address the trash issue. Will discuss further at next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Wolfe, for Ardala Hepler
EW/ew