



LAGRANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MINUTES
May 27, 2021
7:00PM
Dallas Lake Park Lodge

PRESENT: Ardala Hepler, Bob Arnold, John Egli, Julia Wolhuter, Eric Maginn

ALSO PRESENT: Mary Franke, Richard Muntz, Emily Wolfe, Steve McKowen, Leslie Arnold

MINUTES: Bob Arnold moved and Julia Wolhuter seconded a motion to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2021 meeting. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Mike Metz Fen LWCF Project - Boardwalk installation planned to begin next week. Lumber has been delivered.
2. Agley Cedar Lake Property – Appraisal was done on property. Property owner thinks the appraisal is too low and will not accept, or sell for, that price. We have stopped pursuing this property.
3. ADA Projects – Kitchens in Dallas Lodge and Pine Knob Learning Center are complete. Concrete pad is complete at Maple Wood. Pit Toilet at Rogers Park is planned to begin next week.

NEW BUSINESS:

2022 Budget

Made a few salary changes. Randy Merrifield's salary is way low. Emily Wolfe's salary is also low. We are planning to ask for more to be in line with wages of similar positions. Increased amount for recreation assistant to cover five weeks of summer camp wages. Discussed different line items. Paper supplies can be reduced, Paint needs increased. Sign budget increased, at least for one year, to replace many worn signs and to create a similarity with all county park signs. Sand, Gravel, & Concrete budget needs to increase due to rising material costs. Most line budgets remained the same, a few can be reduced, and others to be increased due to increasing material costs. Discussion on possibility of asking for funds to purchase a skid loader to aid in park maintenance. Mary will collect quotes. Added budget lines to allocate funds for a fall festival and other special events.

Dallas Beach – Report from Randy Merrifield

Randy Merrifield reported a large group of young people (minors) at Dallas Lake Beach Thursday, June 17. Approximately 52 kids from surrounding counties (Elkhart, Dekalb, Allen) and Michigan, gathered on the beach with loud music, alcohol, marijuana, and vaping. The large majority of the youth were not from LaGrange County. The group did not respond respectfully to Randy Merrifield's request to turn down music and follow the rules. Randy Merrifield left. Friday, June 18, the same group of young people returned to the beach. Randy Merrifield returned with two officers. The three of them made requests to follow the rules and the group refused and were extremely disrespectful to Randy Merrifield and the 2 officers. This resulted in 5 arrests and the rest fled the property. There are plans to check in on the beach in the near future to prevent illegal and rude behavior from preventing our local community from enjoying our park. Randy Merrifield shared an excellent report.

No more applicants for Lifeguard. We have one that will be present for day camp swims. The rest of the time, she will be at the gate house. We also have one beach/gate attendant so far, and a waterfront director.

Park Hours

Sunset closing is too late in summer, especially with daylight savings time. Discussion for an appropriate time and applicable dates. Decision is 8am to 9pm from May 1 through Labor Day. Bob Arnold moved and Eric Maginn seconded a motion for above decision. Motion carried.

Playground Repairs

Need and ordered parts to repair slides on playground at Delt Church Park. One slide is currently closed.

IPRA Conference

Conference is in Muncie this year in November. Julia Wohleter moved and Ardala Hepler seconded a motion to pay for Mary Franke to attend. Motion carried.

Maple Wood Host

Discussion about the difficulty to find hosts for Maple Wood Nature Center on Sundays. Naturalist, Leslie Arnold, shared the numbers for both Saturdays and Sundays, in regards to visitors in the Nature Center. Discussed the possibility of Leslie Arnold spending more time at other populated parks during the summer, if not committed to have Maple Wood Nature Center open. Decision is to close the Maple wood Nature Center on Saturdays and Sundays with the exception of peak visitation times of the year and during planned festival/special events. Eric Maginn moved and Bob Arnold seconded a motion the above decision. Motion carried.

Events/Programs

1. Discussed the idea of a trailer for the naturalist, Leslie Arnold, to use while visiting county parks. This trailer could also be used when visiting schools.
2. Ribs Event – George has tried to communicate with the group for the Rib Event without success.
3. Discussed the idea of having a festival with several food trucks and maybe a beer & wine tasting tent. Would look into ways to limit the number of drinks so patrons wouldn't drink too much at the event.

Other - None

CLAIMS:

Ardala Hepler moved and Eric Maginn seconded a motion to accept May claims as presented. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ardala Hepler, Secretary

AH/ew