

Parks & Recreation Subcommittee 5/29/20

Called to Order 9 am via Zoom virtual platform

Members Present: Dawn Lavanway, Karen Bargy, Christian Marcus (joined mtg at 9:30am)

Others Present: Pete Garwood

Purpose of meeting was to discuss the direction moving forward due to Covid-19 disruptions.

Jen Wright, Grass River Natural Area Director, reached out to the Department of Natural Resources with questions about grant funding availability in light of Covid-19 and provided a written response to the committee. Ms Wright also included a revised timeline for GRNA Boardwalk Reconstruction Phase II.

Committee discussed moving forward with public input utilizing the online survey platform Survey Monkey and how to notify participants of the online survey (County Facebook page/ Newspaper/ Newsletter to be included in tax bill mailings). It is proposed that the survey would be open for one month.

Next Steps:

BOC to review proposed survey questions

BOC to approve spending from BOC advertising budget for: Survey Monkey subscription, Public Notices for participation

Survey logistics, Inventory format and updates will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjourn 9:58 am

From: [Wright, Jenn](#)
To: [Boyd, Margie](#)
Cc: [Garwood, Peter](#); [Schrader, Tina](#); [Scott, Jeremy](#); [Boettcher, Ed](#)
Subject: Re: Parks & Recreation Plan Subcommittee Meeting (5/29)
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2020 3:12:05 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

I just received this additional note from Merrie from the State:

"I will also add that most plans are not approved on the first read and the main reason they are not approved is they failed to follow the public input requirements, starting with the early input, the notices, not just online, for the 30 day review period and the public hearing, having a 30 day review period, actually hosting the public meeting, reflecting hearing in minutes, and then passing the resolution. They usually just pass a resolution and skip everything else."

Jenn Wright

Executive Director

Grass River Natural Area

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From: Wright, Jenn
Sent: Thursday, May 28, 2020 1:26:21 PM
To: Boyd, Margie
Cc: Garwood, Peter; Schrader, Tina; Scott, Jeremy; Boettcher, Ed
Subject: Re: Parks & Recreation Plan Subcommittee Meeting (5/29)

Hello,

I have received word back from the State on a couple of questions. The responses are below. I know that one question that the committee asked was about whether or not we could pass a 1-year plan just to keep things moving. The guidelines specifically say that it needs to be a 5-year plan so this is not an option.

As for GRNA, we are proceeding with our architect to develop the plans for the Boardwalk Reconstruction Phase II. Part of those discussion will be around how to use Trust Fund dollars, but I don't anticipate the actual fundraising for this project to begin until late 2020 or even 2021. Therefore, if the AC Parks and Rec plan does not get done for the Feb 2021 deadline we would just have to wait until 2022 to apply. It's not ideal but we could make it work.

As the next steps appear to be administering the survey and we have identified the questions that we would want to ask, is there a way to get this into the Summer Tax bills/Township Newsletters? (I am not sure when those are mailed). We could set up an online survey and then send a brief write-up about the Parks and Rec plan, the committee work, and why it's important for residents to complete, and then include the link to the survey (so no paper surveys). This would be the most inexpensive way to get this done and would be quick once the committee

decided which survey platform you wanted to use (Survey Monkey could be purchased and used for as little as \$25/mth or \$75/mth with added features such as the ability to add bilingual options). If the committee wants to go this route and has a survey platform they want to use, I would be willing to create the online survey and do the write up for the newsletters.

Just some of my thoughts...Sorry to miss the meeting tomorrow. We are working on a GRNA reopening/Covid response plan so I really need to be at this meeting. Let me know how I can help going forward.

Here are the answers from the State:

- Do you have any recommendation on how detailed (or not) the Parks and Plan needs to be?
In reviewing others, it appears to be all over the board in this area.

It is the community's plan, not ours, so they can determine what level of recreation plan they want to invest in. Our requirements are minimum standards. If the recreation plans meets all of our requirements, it will be approved.

- Is there a good ballpark # for how many survey results should be recorded?

We require early public input, before a draft is written, but it does not have to be a survey. Some communities do an open house or workshop, various meetings with stakeholders, and some do surveys. There is not a ballpark figure for how many you must have, but we look for a wide and easily accessible distribution, such as in a parks and rec brochure or sent out with the tax bill. Many communities use an online survey platform. If a community has a large population, we will be looking for a higher survey number than a small community.

- This is likely a loaded question and you may or may not have answers, but....Given the affects of COVID on the State's budget, what is the likelihood that there will be funds available for the Trust Fund, Land & Water Fund, or Rec Passport (I assumed that these will remain as these dollars are 'given' for this specific purpose?)?

The State of Michigan is currently under an Executive Directive to limit spending. Things that are impacted include a hiring freeze, our hours, cut by 20%, and even some grant programs.

With that said, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, which is a constitutionally protected source of revenue, has been determined as exempt from any budget restrictive actions. All of our current and open TF grants are moving forward and being reimbursed. The 2019 Board recommended projects still await legislative action before we can issue contracts for those projects. We are not sure when that bill will be passed and signed into law by the Governor. In 2020 we are proceeding with review of all TF applications. It will be a TF board determination on how many projects to recommend for funding, depending on the overall performance of the investment portfolio and projections for the coming year. It is likely to be more conservative.

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund is also exempt from the Executive Directive. The 2019 grants are moving forward towards issuing contracts and 2020 applications are proceeding through review. So far this program remains funded from the National Park Service.

The state's Recreation Passport program has been determined as not exempt from the Executive Directive, even though it is fully funded by voluntary donations by the public. Since March 30 all current and open projects have been paused until further notice. We continue to review 2020 applications for issue in 2021.

Jenn Wright

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