

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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6:00 p.m., Monday  
October 8, 2018

**BIG BEAR SPORTSMAN CLUB**

8927 Puustinen Road

Kaleva, Michigan

## **Agenda**

Introductions

County-Wide Recreation Authority/Committee/Commission  
Organizational Structure Recommendation

Logo Contest

BVT Cleon Township Trail segment update

Pure Michigan Trail Towns

Next Meeting Date

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6:00 p.m., Monday  
September 24, 2018

**BIG BEAR SPORTSMAN CLUB**  
8927 Puustinen Road  
Kaleva, Michigan

## MINUTES

### **Ms. Lisa Leedy called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.**

**Introductions:** Introductions were done at a later time in the meeting

Present: Lisa Leedy, AES; Linda Finout, Manistee Twp; Karla Kasten, Kaleva Village; Randy Sanovic, Manistee Snowbirds; Jacque Erdman, Pleasanton Twp; Elaine Gibbs, Copemish Village; Greg McPherson, Bear Lake Village; Ken Blakely-Shell, MAPS and City of Manistee; Michael McCann, City of Manistee; Wayne Beldo, Maple Grove Twp; Mary Reed, Onekama Twp, Village and PLWF; Rob Carson, Manistee County Planning Director; Margaret Batzer, Manistee Co Commission; Karen Kolk, Filer Twp; Sharon Goble, Manistee County Planning Commission; Al Taylor, GTRLC; Laura Heinzelman, MCCF; Sharron and Donn Lemmer, Community Members; Bill Ringel, Bear Lake Twp; Harry Burkholder, Land Information Access Association; Julie Clark, Traverse Area Trail Systems and Nancy Baker, Manistee County Planning Assistant.

### **Trail Segment Update**

- **BVT Copemish Trail Grant Application DNR Score**
  - The preliminary score of 330 was received. The Community Foundation received notification of the grant application. Raising the score level will be checked into.
- **BVT Copemish Tail Matching Fundraising Needs**

The DNR grant application was for 440,000 which 300,000 was applied for. A 60,000 internal DNR grant for engineering was received, 25,000 was received from the Community Foundation, leaving 59,000 left to raise. The Trail Committee will assist in fund raising. The money does not have to be in hand. A decision of moving forward or putting in an application in the spring must be decided on soon. Cleon Township may have a format fund raising letter. The Betsie Valley Trail Committee will be looking into finishing their end of the trail to the Manistee County line. This completion will help in receiving bigger funding for completing the Copemish trail segment. The Community Foundation will provide a letter of support in fund matching. Applying for small funds can help build the match amount. The fund raising must go forward and must be started now.

### **Introductions were given at this time**

**Julie Clark, Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation Trail Systems (TART)**  
Several trail groups purchased property for the trail systems. Most trail segments are

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former rail corridors. In 1999, to be more efficient, the groups combined the trails which is now known as the TART. Many trail portions are owned by others such as the DNR. They have a contract that pays for a grooming crew on their segments. Other trail segments are city and county owned. A Friends group was formed to handle low maintenance, fundraising, volunteer work etc. They support trail care and growth but not development. Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail has partnered with the Friends, but they do all the maintenance on their segment. The Friends handle private fund raising for state and federal grant matching for their segments. They raised about \$3 million to match \$8.6 in state and federal grants. Construction and engineering costs were raised by 10% for long term preventative maintenance. The TART has a staff of 8 for planning and technical resources. They started as volunteers, not staffing, but volunteers are vital to trails.

The start of organizing a trail system, like the TART, will have trials and errors, ideas that work and don't work. For every \$1 in private funds the Friends have been able to leverage about \$7 in public funds for TART. Donors like to know their funds actually help bring in the trails. Government partners like the support of the local matches. Private funding helps to supplement this. The Friends became important as they had a lot of volunteers out maintaining the trails. The infrastructure and the maintenance should not be taken on by the same group. The Friends have separated the two parts. The holding of the maintenance funds was a dilemma. TART/Friends have placed 80% into CD's with the rest into a long-term investment. Avenues of where to place/keep fund money and allow this money to gain interest need to be thoroughly thought out and explored. Brownfield has been a source of money assistance. TART maintenance agreements and timelines were given. One segment (Boardman Lake Loop) has 3 jurisdictions involved. There is a 3-year maintenance agreement with the entities. Agreements can be made with no legal binding. Agreements can be done for a short or long period of time depending upon its future needs. Nothing must be set in stone on a forever basis.

**Harry Burkholder, Land Information Access Association (LIAA)**

The LIAA was established in 1993. They assist with land use projects around the state and local jurisdictions planning projects. They have assisted in establishing Rec Authorities across the state and writing their Article of Cooperation. A booklet on collaborating on parks and recreation is available. MPARKS is on the state website. Things are looked at in several ways: a trail, trails in general, park and recreation as a whole or all parks and recreation as an asset.

The Recreation Authority Act is the youngest act for public jurisdictions to cooperate for parks and recreation and trails. It's used by 14 different communities across the state. The most successful recreation program has 2 points. 1) A budget independent of that jurisdictions general fund, 2) Having an independent body to oversee the allocations of these monies so the fund is separate from the general fund. The Articles of Cooperation are the Authority's by-laws. Local jurisdictions appoint members to be part of this body.

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This body would oversee spending of the funds. A millage up to 1 mil for 20 years can be sought however all the jurisdictions in the Authority must pass the millage or it does not go through. The Rec Authority would be considered a new unit of government. They can write their own rec plan, submit it to the DNR and be eligible for its own trust fund grant. The Rec Authority is allowed to contract for services for developmental building. Entities can join the Rec Authority anytime. They do not have to be part of it right away. The entity's voters must approve of joining and if there has been a passed millage they will be part of the approved millage when they join the Rec Authority: must pay to play. Liability lies with the Rec Authority, but they can hire out and contract with a legal entity. Rec Authority meetings must be posted, have minutes, etc. and follow proper procedures like all other government organizations.

The County Recreation Act allows for county-wide millage for parks and recreation. The Authority can then decide how to dispense the funds. Typically, they own the corridor of the trail. A millage does not have to be sought-out right away but can instead approach the jurisdictions for small contributions. The act has restraint requirements such as involving the drain commissioner.

A commission can be made up of people, like the Trail Committee, which have been chosen by the local entities to represent them. The county can then appoint a Parks and Recreation Commission. This commission can be given the authority to oversee the spending of a millage. The Park Commission can hold land. If a millage is sought for Parks and Recreation, it is recommended not to go the Rec Authority route. The more formal a group is, the more formal they must do things. The commission is not elected but rather appointed by the participating entity. The commission can have a sub(s) body to focus on a particular task(s).

The Trail Committee needs to take the next step very soon for the trail work to continue moving forward. The trail planning began by looking at the best starting point. The decision was to connect to an existing trail. The Copemish location was the best starting point as there were 2 trails that come to this area but are not connected. Those existing trails are the Betsie Valley Trail to the north and the White Pines Trail to the east. The local Snowbirds have obtained leases from private land owners to use in different areas of the county. This has opened the possibility of these trail segments to be used as multi-use trails. The responsible maintenance group on the DNR to the White Pines segment has not been accomplished. Leveraging private dollars is a question regardless of whether the group is a Rec Authority or a Parks and Rec Commission. Nonprofits in the area should be investigated and who could/will be fiduciaries for taking in money and writing checks. A 501c3 status is extremely important as it allows those contributing the ability to receive a tax deduction. The committee has worked on planning priority and secondary routes which is a recommended process. Overcoming obstacles and legal challenges will occur throughout the process.

A Friends group is very important in this area (the northern part of the state). The group can do things a government entity such as the Trail Committee or a Parks and Rec Commission cannot do such as fund raising and trail maintenance. The maintenance hours can be used on a match. They can form a 501c3. The county could have a Park & Rec Commission which could levy a millage. The Trail Committee could be the Park & Rec Commission with another group being the Friends. The control of items will need to be determined. It is recommended to start small. Focusing on the Copemish segment is a great start.

A body should be established to do the plan and be made an official body. This body has a task, completes the task and then moves on to the next task. Phase 1 is to apply for a grant to create a body, create this body and then go for grants to do the next round of planning. Planning is doing the details, meeting with the DNR and helping to draft the articles.

### **General Discussion**

Accepting funds was discussed, and if there is not a body entity, who will be accepting the funds for trail segment development. It is essential to find out who can accept the funds (Friends or another 501c3 group) and if the accepting party must own the trail, such as the DNR segment. Fund matching is sometimes done by companies that match employee funds. Health establishments are beginning to ask the employees to do community service each year.

Summarizing the steps: come up with a small committee to have a subcommittee such as a Friends group to accomplish tasks; this group will do work for the first trail segment in the next few weeks; establish fund raising contacts; move the fund raising forward; approach the county board with a group decision of being either a Rec Authority or Park and Rec Commission; find a fiduciary and fund raising partners.

It is important for the townships to be reminded of the positive impact a trail system will have on their community.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 8, 2018 at the Big Bear Sportsman Club in Kaleva. The meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Baker, Recording Secretary

Date: September 24, 2018