

MINUTES  
City of Alpena Planning Commission  
Joint Meeting of Alpena Area Planning Commissions (Ossineke Township Hall)  
November 9, 2023 Alpena, Michigan

CALL TO ORDER:

The Joint Alpena Area meeting of the Planning Commissions was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Steve Gilmore, Planning Commission Vice-Chairman.

ROLL CALL: PLANNING COMMISSION

PRESENT: Peterson, Gilmore, Moses, Kostelic, Sundin, Kemp

ABSENT: Wojda, VanWagoner, Boboltz

STAFF: Rachel Smolinski (City Manager), Kathleen Sauve (Recording Secretary), Niko Tucker (NEMCOG)

Other Planning Commissions in attendance called to Order: Alpena County, Charter Township of Alpena, Green Township, Ossineke Township, Sanborn Township, and Wilson Township

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

RECREATION PLAN: Niko Tucker (NEMCOG) explained the purpose of the meeting. Each Planning Commission gave their input about what was important to them to have in the Recreation Plan. Some ideas outlined below:

- Sundin said that the parking lot at the Apex should be expanded.
- Mary Catherine Hannah (County Administrator) recommended everyone take the survey about the Apex expansion. She also explained that the goal for the meeting was to have discussion about shared visions and top goals within all the different Planning Commissions in relation to the Recreation Plan, such as trails, boardwalks, and waterfront access; what the big, shared vision is around recreation for the entire County.
- Smolinski spoke about the Lake Huron Forever pledge and preserving natural resources.
- Tucker said that the deadline for DNR grants is April 1<sup>st</sup>, so plans would need to be submitted prior to that.
- Hannah said that Sunken Lake Park got a SPARK grant to expand the trails.
- Nathan Skibbe (Township Supervisor) suggested creating a hybrid committee; Tucker suggested a Recreation Authority board.
- Smolinski said that if a Recreation Authority was formed, they could talk about ways to fund the things that affect all the different jurisdictions, such as trails; programming is also something that could be a shared goal.

- A representative from Beaver Lake Park said a good common goal would be kayaking opportunities with landing spots, and keeping the rivers opened up; it would be an easy one, making us the next Ausable north of the Ausable.
- Smolinski said that maintenance is an issue for almost every park and trail and the Michigan Asset Management Program helps plan for maintenance for years to come; that should be a good, shared goal. Moses said that maintenance was mentioned in the survey a lot for almost every facility.
- Smolinski said land acquisition is also a good goal.
- A representative from Green Township said they have interest in kayaking and trails and have partnered with the County on Manning Hill to improve the hall facilities.
- A representative from the Charter Township said that they would like to extend the City's bike paths to the North to the Rails to Trails section, to the Misery Bay Nature Preserve, and South to the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel sign.
- Skibbe said land acquisition is important to them as well, and they have applied for rec grants already.
- Smolinski said that the pool could be a shared goal. Hannah said that connecting the Aplex to trail systems surrounding it would be a good idea.
- Peterson said they need to keep the trails diverse and accessible for all.
- Skibbe verified that the Thunder Bay River Restoration is still ongoing.
- Better directional and information signage was suggested and making all the signage unilateral and linear.
- Kemp suggested a "One stop shop" website where all area events are advertised. Hannah said that the Visitor's Bureau must have information up to one year in advance for brochures and calendars; a shared website would be great but who will run it. Kemp said having a Recreational Authority would be beneficial for better planning.
- Moses asked if there was anything out there to encourage users to report maintenance issues or trail blockages. Signs at trailheads were suggested, as well as an app that a user could mark where on the trail it needs maintenance.
- A County representative asked where to find grants. Tucker said there is not a one stop shop to find them but suggested contacting Community Foundations for grants. Peterson said Grants.gov is a good website.
- Tucker summarized what seemed to be the shared goals – trails, maintenance, keeping the river open, programming such as park to park, activity to activity, promoting nature, sports, arts, archery, and so on.
- The group agreed to form a recreation committee which would be a subcommittee of the Intergovernmental Council. In order to keep the group manageable, they will name representatives from each jurisdiction. This group would remain informal for now.
- Three corrections were suggested in Chapter 3 of the Alpena Area Joint Recreation Plan (page 3-47 and 3-48) and Chapter 3 of the City of Alpena Recreation Plan (page 3-40 and 3-41) as follows:

- Aces Academy is not located at 700 Pinecrest Street anymore; it is located at 3303 South Third Avenue at the Alpena Senior High School.
- Pied Piper School is not listed with the other schools, and it is a fully functioning center-based school located at 444 Wilson Street.
- Alpena Community College is not located at 666 Johnson Street, it should read 665 Johnson Street.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m., by Gilmore, Planning Commission Vice-Chairman.

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Clayton C. VanWagoner, Secretary