

The regular meeting of the Board of Calhoun County Parks Trustees Board was held on Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at 5:53 p.m. in their office located at 13300 Fifteen Mile Road, Marshall, Michigan.

PRESENT: Commissioner Eric Tobin, Chairman
Commissioner Eric Johnson, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Scott Brown, Member
Commissioner Hugh Coward, Member
Commissioner Christopher Vreeland, Member

ALSO PRESENT: Kevin Henning, Managing Director
Mary Jo Crumpton, Board Clerk
General Public

Chairman Tobin called the regular meeting of the Calhoun County Parks Trustees Board to order at 5:53 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Brown and supported by Commissioner Coward to approve the January 5, 2011 regular meeting minutes. Voice vote: Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR, PUBLIC OFFICIAL AND CITIZEN COMMENTS regarding agenda items only

County Commissioner Julie Camp asked for more information on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the trailway design.

COMMUNICATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Mrs. Crumpton read the communications as follows:

- a) Received the Environmental Services Coordinator's Report

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Calhoun County Trailway: Mr. Henning reported that there has been a little action with the Trailway Group in that a walk-through of the trail took place in late January with those interested in submitting an RFP. The proposed alignment was reviewed, an addendum to the RFP was issued and the submittal deadline was extended until February 16, 2011.

Commissioner Brown asked what the addendum entailed. Mr. Henning responded that the addendum was to extend the submittal deadline, due to the timing of the walk-through. Questions and corresponding answers that occurred during the walk-through were posted on the website for those unable to attend. He asked what information we expect to receive from the RFP. Mr. Henning replied that we would receive information about the design firm, their qualifications, and a cost to design this trailway. Since this is an RFP to hire a design firm, we are not getting a design, nor are we asking for a realignment, route information, etc. At this time, the DNRE has approved the planned route through the route. Commissioner Coward clarified that this RFP is due diligence to ensure the qualifications of the design firm. Mr. Henning added that all references are to be included in the proposals. Commissioner Vreeland commented that he would like to review the RFPs and Mr. Henning stated that they would be provided for review.

Commissioner Vreeland asked about the Owen Group that was referenced in the Environmental Services Coordinator's report. Mr. Tom Garnett, Calhoun County Trailway Alliance, informed the Board that the Trailway Alliance has hired the Owen Group for assistance in fundraising.

Discussion took place on the alternate route through the Ott Preserve, in Consumer's right-of-way, that was not approved by the DEQ.

SUPERVISOR AND PUBLIC OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Camp stated that she still had questions on potential additional switchbacks that engineers may have found during the walk-through and/or their proximity to wetlands. Also, she noted that the conservation community is divided and at an impasse on the paved trail through the Ott.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

At the Board's request, Mr. Garnett provided an update on the trailway. He noted that members of the Trailway Alliance have met with two parties who are concerned with the trailway through the Ott. A proposed alternate route was identified; however, the DEQ did not approve the alternate route.

With regards to fundraising, Mr. Garnett stated that at this time, the Trailway Alliance has 10% of the engineering costs established and 10% of the local match and continue to actively seek contributions, as well as grant funding.

Mr. Garnett provided information on the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Great Lakes State-to-State Trail, as well as the Calhoun County Trailway as part of a series of connecting trails both locally and statewide.

Board members asked if there was more that could be done to encourage better communication between all parties involved and to educate the public on the trailway. Mr. Garnett responded that there is an upcoming story being published in the Marshall Ad-Visor and they are exploring other avenues to provide information such as holding public meetings, developing a Facebook page, etc.

Discussion took place on the increased public interest by both opponents and supporters of the trailway project, particularly regarding paving a trailway through the Ott Preserve.

Commissioner Vreeland asked about the Trailway Alliance meeting schedule. Mr. Garnett responded that they meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. in this room.

Chairman Tobin thanked everyone for the information provided tonight on the trailway and encouraged continued communication with the "Friends of the Ott", Parks Trustees Board, Calhoun County Board of Commissioners, and Road Commission staff.

COMMISSIONER TIME

Commissioner Vreeland commented that he is a member of the North Country National Scenic Trail and believes the proposed trailway is highly appropriate to increase public use.

Commissioner Brown stated that he supports the paved surface through the Ott Preserve and noted that if the "true" intent of the Ott is to be a preserve, there would not be foot trails running through it. If the intent is to allow the public to enjoy the Ott, a paved trail would provide more accessibility and the trail could be constructed in a manner that won't harm the environment.

Commissioner Tobin thanked everyone for the good discussion and stated his support of the trailway.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regular meeting of the Calhoun County Parks Trustees Board will be held on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. or following the Board of Calhoun County Road Commissioners meeting.

There being no additional business before the Board, Chairman Tobin adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Submitted by:

Mary Jo Crumpton, Board Clerk

Eric J. Tobin, Chairman