



**Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners and Parks and Recreation Commission
AGENDA**

Thursday, September 27, 2017

**Governmental Center, Training Room, Second Floor
400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan 49684
5:30 p.m. JOINT STUDY SESSION**

General Meeting Policies: Please turn off all cell phones or switch them to silent mode. Any person may make a videotape, audiotape, or other recording of this meeting. Standing equipment, cords, or portable microphones must be located to not block audience's view. If you require auxiliary assistance, please call 231-922-4780 or TDD 231-922-4412.

- A. Pledge of Allegiance (Chair, County Board of Commissioners)
- B. Call to Order (Chair, County Board of Commissioners)
- C. Roll Call (County Clerk)
- D. First Public Comment (County Clerk)
Any person shall be permitted to address the Parks and Recreation Commission, which is required to be open to the public under the provision of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, as amended (MCLA 15.261, *et. seq.*). Public comment shall be carried out in accordance with the following Board Rules and Procedures:
 - 1. Any person wishing to address the Commission shall state his or her name and address.
 - 2. No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter, excluding Commissioners' questions. The Chairperson shall control the amount of time each person shall be allowed to speak, which shall not exceed three (3) minutes. The Chairperson may, at his or her discretion, extend the amount of time any person is allowed to speak.
- E. County Parks (Overview by Parks and Recreation Director with Visuals; Discussion Facilitated by MSU Extension Educator John Amrhein)
- L. Second Public Comment (Please refer to Item D. on agenda for rules.)
- M. Notices and Commissioner Comments
- N. Adjournment (Chair, County Board of Commissioners)



Overview of Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation-Senior Center Network's Parks, Facilities, Programs, and Partners (As of September 2017)

NOTE: A visual presentation summarizing this document will be made during meeting.

Introduction

Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Department-Senior Center Network creates community through its many parks and facilities that offer diverse recreational opportunities. Located at the County's Civic Center in Traverse City, the department and the County Parks and Recreation Commission steward of ten county parks and the Senior Center Network. With five area locations, the Senior Center Network (SCN) is devoted to making longer lives better lives through its hundreds of programs each year.

Strategic Ties

Parks and Recreation-Senior Center Mission

"Enhance community and quality of life through people, parks, and programs."

County Board's Mission (Draft)

"Provide necessary services and resources that ensure safety and add value to our community."

The County Board of Commissioners' draft strategic plan lists eight 2017-2018 Strategic Priorities. Those which directly tie to the Parks and Recreation/Senior Center Network's mission statement are:

3. Maintain and invest in the county's infrastructure.
4. Protect vulnerable populations.
5. Advance the quality of the region.
6. Establish new collaborative partnerships and enhance existing partnerships.
7. Maintain public safety.
9. Engage internal and external stakeholders to support a strong brand.

YOUR County Parks

NOTE: The following information was researched and compiled from several Parks and Recreation files and records, some conflicting and some unverifiable. Any suggested corrections and requests for additional research are welcomed.

Beitner Park: 2651 Beitner Road, Traverse City, Michigan 49684

Description: Part of the rich geography of and a gateway to the Natural Education Reserve. Located on the southernmost edge of the Natural Education Reserve along the Boardman River, this five-acre park has 1.5-miles of riverside hiking trails and is heavily used as a boat launch and takeout for canoes, kayaks, and inner tubes. There are restroom facilities and a parking lot.

History: In 1990, a portion of property deeded to County by the Road Commission, and portion purchased from D. Ward Templeton.

Partnerships: Parks and Recreation has an *Agreement for Resource Management Services* in place with the Grand Traverse Conservation District to manage the Natural Education Reserve, including Beitner Park.

Looking Ahead: Parking lot, restroom, and trail maintenance.

Civic Center Park: 1213 W. Civic Center Drive, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: With a one-mile walking track, Easling Pool, outdoor amphitheater, skate park, pavilion, Howe Arena, basketball courts, concession stand, new 10,000-square-foot playground, ample parking, public restrooms, a Native American Marker tree and monument, and Norte! Youth Cycling Group's clubhouse in the Sector Building, the 45-acre Civic Center attracts over 700,000 visitors annually. The only public pool in the Grand Traverse area, Easling Pool has six lanes, a shallow teaching area, and a sauna on deck. The pool offers many aquatic opportunities, such as public and private swim lessons, exercise classes, private parties, lap swim, family swim, and more. and is used by Centre I.C.E. between August and March for hockey and ice skating, then for shows and events between March and August each year.

History: Between the early 1900s and 1973, the county fairgrounds were located where the Civic Center is today. In 1970, Easling Pool was built on this property by a citizens' group who raised private donations. Between 1973 and 1975, the Grand Traverse County Fairgrounds transitioned to what is known today as the Grand Traverse County Civic Center. Records are unclear, but it appears the pool was closed for one or two years after opening in 1970, because pool funding ran out. There were attempts made to have the city and the county share costs for pool operations and maintenance. Then, operations were assumed by the county and continued until 2016, when Grand Traverse Bay YMCA took over operations. Howe Arena was constructed in 1989 with funds raised by another citizens' group, Involved Citizens' Enterprise, now known as Centre I.C.E.

MDNR Grants: In 1973, \$150,000 for development of ballfields and rest of property to transition from fairgrounds to park. In 1989, \$60,000 for heating and plumbing for pool, and \$62,250 for jogging path lights.

Partnerships: Norte! Youth Cycling, TART Trails, American Legion Baseball, Grand Traverse Bay YMCA, Traverse City Roller Derby

Looking Ahead: A capital fundraising campaign led by the Friends of Easling Pool is underway to raise \$625,000 to entirely refurbish Easling Pool. An operations agreement with the YMCA is in place through 2018. An agreement with Centre I.C.E. is in place through 2019. The Civic Center building has capital needs such as a new roof and new bleachers in the arena.

Keystone Soccer Complex: Keystone Road North, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: Seventy-seven-acre parcel with 15 soccer fields, home to over 3,000 Traverse Bay Area Youth Soccer players.

History: Purchased in 1996. Since then, property has been leased to TBAYS for \$1 annual rental fee. In return, TBAYS improves, uses, and maintains the property exclusively for recreational amateur soccer, and is responsible for all development, capital, maintenance, and operational costs, including utilities.

Partnership: Traverse Bay Area Youth Soccer (TBAYS)

Looking Ahead: Agreement with TBAYS ends on March 31, 2020. TBAYS will meet with Parks and Recreation before end of 2017 to begin discussing new agreement terms.

Keystone-Birmley Property: Keystone Road North, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: Twenty-eight acres of undeveloped property, purchased in 1996. Currently zoned "Recreational".

History: Purchased in 1996. Property under a lease option for a few years with the Traverse City Little League to be developed into a baseball/softball complex. Option expired in 2013. Two years ago, Traverse Bay Area Youth Soccer developed plans to use the property for indoor and/or outdoor soccer, but did not secure funding. In fall 2016, after the Parks and Recreation Commission passed a resolution in support of the county marketing this property for sale, and the county listed the property. In June 2017, Parks and Recreation rescinded the resolution, after concluding that there is more recreational value in the property than what was being offered by potential buyers. Property again is under Parks and Recreation's stewardship.

Looking Ahead: TBAYS Board has reopened discussions about developing property to accommodate TBAYS' and other community recreational offerings. Parks and Recreation has also recently been approached by other entities interested in developing this property for recreational purposes. TBAYS representatives say the organization will bring a plan to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Maple Bay Park and Natural Area: 10849 U.S. 31 North, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: Four hundred acres of land in northernmost Grand Traverse County, which has 2,586 feet of pristine shoreline, trails, preserved wetlands, farmland, and a variety of wildlife and plant species. Park recently designated as an official site along the Sunset Coast Birding Trail, which showcases diverse birds and natural features of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Grand Traverse counties, and promotes economic development and environmental stewardship.

History: In 2001, Parks and Recreation Department submitted a grant application to MDNR Trust Fund requesting funding for the county to purchase this property, then primarily owned by Maple Bay Farms, to become Maple Bay Park and Natural Area. There was a tremendous outpouring of community support for this purchase, indicated by the volume of correspondence and private donations. On January 30, 2002, the County and MDNR executed a grant agreement, whereas the MDNR Trust Fund granted \$6.9 million (74 percent of purchase price) in funds to the county, in exchange for the county owning and maintaining the park for recreational purposes into perpetuity. Park may not be sold or leased without written approval and consent of MDNR.

Partnerships: Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy manages property for Parks and Recreation at no cost under a memo of understanding. TART Trails is spearheading Traverse City to Charlevoix Trail project, which will pass through Maple Bay Park. Send Brothers manage the farmland. Natural Resources Conservation Service Agency is developing the required soil conservation plan for park.

Looking Ahead: Proposed Traverse City to Charlevoix Trail will pass through this park, which may be designated as a trailhead in the future. House and the barn on east side of the highway recently were secured so that no one may enter them. Parks and Recreation is researching the cost of removing the house, and will research grant opportunities to restore the barn for use as a revenue-generating recreational facility that may also support the site as a trailhead. Immediate needs are a trail counter, a County Parks and Recreation kiosk, and funds to grade road and lot several times a year.

Medalie Roadside Park: 1910 S. Airport Road, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: Fifteen-acre park on the south end of Boardman Lake, which connects to TART Trails' East Boardman Lake Trail. Picnic shelter with electricity, parking, three overlooks/fishing platforms along the Boardman River, and a canoe launch site.

History: Acquired from County Road Commission in 1990.

Partnerships: TART Trails; River Outfitters providing canoe/kayak/bicycle livery service from park in summer.

Looking Ahead: Application for \$50,000 grant from MDNR pending to make improvements related to designation of park as trailhead for completed TART Trails' Boardman Lake Trail. Completion of trail expected in 2019. Grant awards to be announced in December 2017.

Meyer House: 1091 N. Keystone Road, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: The historic Meyer House and barns are located on this 15-acre property on Keystone Road. Property is part of the Natural Education Reserve.

History: Purchased in 2002 as part of the several acquisitions (such as the Keystone Soccer Complex and Birmley-Keystone property) that evolved into Parks and Recreation's "Keystone Corridor" properties.

MDNR Grants: In 2000, \$786,509 from Trust Fund for the Meyer Property portion of purchase.

Partnership: Property currently leased to residential tenant to offset property maintenance costs and to fulfill wish of sellers to have property inhabited. Lessee mows and plows property as part of lease agreement, and acts as a "watchdog".

Looking Ahead: New septic system installed in September 2017. General maintenance, as necessary.

Nature Education Reserve: 1450 Cass Road, Traverse City, Michigan 49685

Description: Nearly seven miles of trails along the Boardman River, on 505 acres, with 1,200 feet of boardwalks, bridges, canoe portage sites, a boat launch, and picnic area. Boardman River Nature Center there, which is open to the public and home of the Conservation District and its many nature programs for children.

History: In 1975, 370 acres were donated to the county. In 1990, ten acres acquired from the Road Commission. In 1995, 25 acres acquired with an MDNR Trust Fund grant.

Other MDNR Grants: In 1977, \$16,300 for wooden bridge across Boardman River.

Partnerships: Grand Traverse Conservation District; TART Trails.

Looking Ahead: Grant awarded in 2017 from Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians for trail maintenance, signage, and other improvements related to general maintenance and dam removal.

Power and Bassett Islands: West Grand Traverse Bay, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: Over 200-acre island has ten primitive campsites, three miles of waterfront with sandy beaches, five miles of hiking trails, vaulted toilet restrooms, a caretaker's cottage, and outbuildings.

History: Purchased from Rennie Oil Company between 1973 and 1975 by the National Nature Conservancy and by the Eugene Power Family, and then donated to the county with the understanding that the park will be preserved as a public wilderness park and be managed according to the established principles of good forestry and wildlife management. There is a "Project Measure Plan" for the island between the County and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS); a "Land Rights Agreement" between the County and SCS; and an "Operation and Maintenance" Agreement between the County and SCS.

Partnership: SEEDS helps with projects on island in return for use of Twin Lakes Park facilities for its biannual camps.

Looking Ahead: Plans to develop one or two primitive cottages on Power Island to increase revenue for Parks.

Twin Lakes Park: 6800 North Long Lake Road, Traverse City, Michigan 49685

Description: Picturesque park and camp on 160 acres of land in Long Lake Township. Two miles of trails, Gilbert Lodge (which has a commercial kitchen), a pavilion, and a dormitory. Park used for weddings and special events, church retreats, graduation parties, business meetings, scouting activities, dances, and more.

History: Land donated to county in 1940. Gilbert Lodge built in 1944. Dormitory built in 1980. In 1941, Judge Parm Gilbert deeded 25 acres to the County “to be used as a county park, to be owned, improved and used as such and for recreation purposes.” On October 14, 1943, Judge Gilbert deeded additional property “as part of an addition to County Park to be owned, improved, and used as such for recreation purposes and programs.” On June 22, 1967, Wilbert and Beulah Lautner conveyed property to be added to Twin Lakes “to be used as a nature study and recreation area.” Several grants and donations made to the Twin Lakes Universally Accessible Waterfront Project of nearly ten years ago, including a \$250,000 Kellogg Foundation Access Recreation Grant, \$145,615 from Grand Traverse County, \$100,000 from Rotary Charities, and \$75,000 from Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. Contributions were also made from Zonta Club and the Schmuckal Foundation.

Partnerships: Crystal Bindi Studios leases space in lower level and offers “Twin Lakes Fitness” programming. SEEDS uses facilities for its biannual camps in return for labor to improve county parks (such as construction of new playground at Civic Center).

Looking Ahead: Twin Lakes Park is a major source of revenue for County Parks, and increased building maintenance needs will have to be addressed. Department staff is cleaning two unused cottages for short-term rentals to increase revenue for Parks.

VASA Trailhead (Bartlett Park): 4450 Bartlett Road, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: The VASA Trailhead is the gateway to the VASA Pathway, a vast network of loops (34 kilometers) explored by hikers, skiers, mountain bikers, and naturalists. The trailhead features a warming house with restrooms and parking. A year-round playground with some of the best cross-country skiing in the state.

History: County purchased 64 acres known as “Bartlett Road Property” from the state in 1991.

MDNR Grants: In 1990, \$95,500 from Trust Fund for road improvements and parking, maintenance building, and trail improvements.

Partnerships: TART Trails.

Looking Ahead: General building and parking lot maintenance.

Senior Center Network at Senior Center Beach: 801 E. Front Street, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

Description: Grand Traverse County Senior Center Network is a county-run program that annually provides over 200 social, wellness, and educational offerings designed to meet the interests and needs of the 50-years-and-over generation. The Senior Center has locations in Acme, Fife Lake, Interlochen, Kingsley, and Traverse City. The Traverse City facility is located in a city park along the beaches of Grand Traverse Bay.

History: An intergovernmental agreement between the city and county is in place through 2021 for the operations and maintenance of the Traverse City Senior Center location. The program is funded by a millage, which renewed in 2016 for seven years.

Partnerships: Too many to list!

Looking Ahead: A fundraising campaign to refurbish the Senior Center in Traverse City is expected to begin soon. Project cost is \$1.25 million and approximately \$500,000 is needed.