

S T A T E O F M I C H I G A N

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF ALLEGAN

PARKS & RECREATION—APPROVE LETTER OF SUPPORT RELEASE

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners approves the request from the Parks Manager to release the attached letter of support on behalf of the County.

DRAFT



ALLEGAN COUNTY
REQUEST FOR ACTION FORM

Completed RFA form must be attached to a work order request through the Track-It System. If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact Administration @ ext. 2633.

RFA#: 206-123

Date: 10/5/21

Request Type	Routine Items	Select a Request Type to reveal and complete required form.
Department Requesting	Parks	
Submitted By	Brandy Gildea	
Contact Information	EXT 2542	

Description

I am seeking approval from Administration (Rob) to send this letter of support on behalf Robert Allegan & 5 A group for creation of a bicycle & XC ski trail system in areas of the Allegan County State Game area. Our goals and objectives (see listed in letter) in our current recreation plan that was approved by the BOC on December 12, 2019 support this request. They do not have any plans to ask the county for any financial or maintenance assistance with this project now or in the future. Let me know if you have any questions.

Request from Dr. Robert Allen(was sent in email to me):

Good morning Brandy,

Thought I would give you an update on the efforts to improve outdoor recreation trails(xc ski,bicycle) in the ASGA. After reaching out to the county a year ago, I decided to go a different direction in the goal of creating a quality, safe, accessible recreational trail system in the ASGA. Last month a proposal to recreate the trails was submitted to the Michigan Trails Advisory Council, DNR Wildlife Division Chief, and DNR Parks and Recreation. It is presently working it's way through the DNR and back to MTAC, where it will be formally reviewed in November. The proposal recommends community trail loops located in Hamilton and Allegan at ASGA boarder, with a linear trail through the ASGA connecting the loops. This plan actually decreases the total amount trail while increasing community access. Trail quality is improved by recruiting community (5As trail group) and regional (MEMBA) volunteer trails group for trail maintenance. It actually improves the mission of the DNR in the game area, shifting human activity from the center of the game area to the more populated boarders. Reviews thus far by the DNR have been favorable. Communities are supportive of the proposal because it provides economic opportunity and healthy community activity for kids and adults alike.

The proposal steers clear of the counties 60 miles of equestrian trails (largest non-linear equestrian trail in Michigan). It avoids equestrian trail sharing or mixing of horses with other recreation activities. That said, and given the appeal of the proposal to other groups invested in the ASGA , I wonder if the county government would reconsider its support for quality outdoor recreation trails in the Allegan State Game Area?

Thanks
Rob Allen
5As

This item was referred to the Parks Advisory Board to review. The Parks Advisory Board review this attherei October 5, 2021 meeting. A motion was made by Kapenga, seconded by Langeance to recommend BOC/County Administrator authorize the Parks Manager send a Letter of Support to Rob Allen/5A's for creating a bicycle/XC ski trail system through the Allegan County State Game Area. The motion carried by roll call vote. Yes -5, No -0, Absent -4

Brown: Yes Dykstra: Absent
Clark: Yes Formsma: Absent
DeYoung: Yes Kapenga: Yes
Dugan: Absent Metz: Absent
Langeance: Yes

The Parks Manager also reached out to her State Game Area contact, Wildlife Technician Don Poppe and he stated that no decisions have been made about the request for trails. It is still being reviewed.

To further clarify, the DNR does not prohibit proposals such as this; however, they will not make a decision until everything is received.

INSERT LETTERHEAD

_____, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Allegan County Parks, Recreation and Tourism, I am writing to express support for creating a quality, safe, accessible bicycle & XC ski trail system in areas of the Allegan County State Game area not already in use and that would align with the mission of the DNR for the State Game Area. This effort is consistent with the goals and objectives below from within the Allegan County Board of Commissioners approved Parks 5-Year Recreation Plan.

- Goal 2: Provide safe, broad community-based recreation opportunities, facilities and programs that improve the overall quality-of-life year round for all Allegan County residents and tourists.
 - Objectives
 - Add recreational opportunities/amenities, which fall in line with the purpose of the park and are based upon recreation needs, trends, and input from the community.
 - Continue efforts to find and enhance recreation opportunities throughout Allegan County
 - Create more winter recreation opportunities, such as cross-country skiing, sledding and snowshoeing.
- Goal 3: Provide leisure time activities with special consideration given to improving health, wellness and fitness.
 - Objectives
 - Provide both passive and active activities for a variety of ages and abilities of the community.
 - Expand healthy lifestyle, physical fitness and wellness programs, educating residents about the benefits of this lifestyle.
- Goal 4: Provide non-motorized and/or multi-use pathways/waterways for recreational and transportation use.
 - Objectives
 - Expand non-motorized and/or multi- use pathways/waterways through Allegan County with a focus upon linking parks, schools, neighborhoods, cities, business areas, regional trails and local destination points.
 - Support the efforts of trail groups (Friends of the Blue Star Trail, River to River trail committee, etc.) to connect Allegan County to parks, schools, neighborhoods cities, business areas, regional trails and local destination points.

Based on alignment with these goals and objectives, to include increasing community based recreation opportunities, increased tourism, economic growth and public health improvements, Allegan County Parks, Recreation and Tourism supports your effort to move this project forward.

Sincerely,

Brandy Gildea
Parks Manager

Allegan County Parks Advisory Board



Allegan County Parks, Recreation &
Tourism
3283 122nd Ave
Allegan, MI 49010
269-686-9088
parks@allegancounty.org
<http://www.allegancounty.org>

Chairperson: Pam Brown
Vice Chairperson: John Clark III

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING – Minutes

Pam Brown
616-490-1627
Allegan

Tuesday, October 5, 2021 @ 8:30am
Zimmerman Room – Human Services Building – 3255 122nd Ave, Allegan MI 49010

John Clark III
269-274-2736
Allegan

CALL TO ORDER: Brown called to order at 8:34am

ROLL CALL:

Present: Brown, Clark, DeYoung, Kapenga, Langeance

Absent: Dugan, Dykstra, Formsma, Metz

Also Present: Brandy Gildea; Heather Bausick

**Mark
DeYoung**
616-318-9612
Dorr

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion made by Langeance, seconded by Kapenga to approve the June 6, 2021 minutes as presented. The motion carried.

Gale Dugan
269-694-5276
Otsego

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

**Samuel
Dykstra**
269-792-2945
Wayland

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion made by Kapenga, seconded by DeYoung to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried

**Kevin
Formsma**
616-886-7030
Hamilton

PARK ADMINISTRATION UPDATES: Gildea went through the written administrative update that she sent out to them parks board.

Dean Kapenga
616-218-2599
Hamilton

- Last day for seasonal staff is 10/21/21
- Additional safety railings added at New Richmond
- Fence at Littlejohn not taken down. Hope to have removed by fall
- Floor resurfacing done at Gun Lake, West Side, Dumont, and Littlejohn
- Park Expenditures are on track
- Park revenue on track – Future concerns are dumpster costs
- 2020 revenue was \$111,397.61. So far in 2021 revenue is \$123,136.79 and we still have rest of fall.
- Capital Improvement projects in progress:
 - Gun Lake Park – watercraft launch replacement to begin May 2022
 - Pavement Maintenance – complete by fall 2021
 - Refinish restroom floors – complete by late September 2021
 - Playground equipment for West Side
 - Vehicle Replacement for parks staff – complete
 - Utility Box for F-350 truck - complete

Jackie Metz
269-521-6524
Allegan

**Maryl
Langeance**
269-694-9326
Otsego

REVIEW ITEMS:

1. **Financial Statements** – Gildea went over the expenditure and revenue statements located in agenda packet. Gildea then went over the quarterly revenues comparisons
 - Q1 – Similar to past first quarters
 - Q2 – Best second quarter ever
 - Q3 – great numbers compared to 2020 and previous years
 - i. Decrease in Dumont launch fees – could be because of less lake usage, higher gas prices, people are paying
 - ii. Slight decrease in pavilion rentals – not many early reservations made in spring because people not sure about Covid restrictions
 - iii. Equestrian trail fees down – very hot and buggy. Hopefully numbers increase as fall brings cooler weather
 - iv. Increase in Gun Lake and New Richmond launch fees.

RECOMMENDATION/ACTION ITEMS:

1. Letter of Support for Blue Star Trail – Review and recommended to BOC/County Administrator a request for a Letter of Support from Friends of Blue Star Trail (FOBST). They are currently assisting to apply for a grant for a section in the Saugatuck area.
 - a. This trail will connect South Haven to Holland
 - b. This section of trail will not need any financial/maintenance support from Parks or the county

A motion was made by Kapenga, seconded by Clark to recommend the BOC/County Administrator authorize the Parks Manager send a Letter of Support to the Friends of Blue Star Trail(FOBST) for current and future grant applications that aid in the development and construction of Blue Star Trail project with the purpose to provide a non-motorized trail to connect people and communities from Holland to South Haven while improving their safety, wellness, economic health, and environment. The motion carried by roll call vote. Yes -5, No -0, Absent -4

Brown: Yes

Dykstra: Absent

Clark: Yes

Formsma: Absent

DeYoung: Yes

Kapenga: Yes

Dugan: Absent

Metz: Absent

Langeance: Yes

2. Bicycle/XC ski trail through State Game Area – Review and recommend to BOC/County Administrator a request for a Letter of Support from Rob

Allen/5A's for creating a bicycle/XC ski trail system through the Allegan County State Game Area.

- Rob Allen's group is working with DNR to create a trail system on the outskirts of the game area by Hamilton and Allegan.
- Current equestrian trails, hunting areas would not be disturbed
- Looking to use old XC trails/walking trails that have not been used or maintained in years.
- Clark questioned if trail would run by Littlejohn park and Gildea answered there were no plans at this time

A motion was made by Kapenga, seconded by Langeance to recommend BOC/County Administrator authorize the Parks Manager send a Letter of Support to Rob Allen/5A's for creating a bicycle/XC ski trail system through the Allegan County State Game Area. The motion carried by roll call vote. Yes -5, No -0, Absent -4

Brown: Yes

Clark: Yes

DeYoung: Yes

Dugan: Absent

Langeance: Yes

Dykstra: Absent

Formsma: Absent

Kapenga: Yes

Metz: Absent

3. Disc Golf Course @ Littlejohn Lake County Park – Clark discussed the addition of a course to be constructed at Littlejohn Park. Clark discussed using county equipment to make sure areas stay safe and clear for operation.
 - BOC approval needed before a grant can be written to request funding. Clark states most startup costs would be through donations and volunteer work but grants would be needed for toilets, additional signage, and potential bridge construction over the stream.
 - Kapenga advised the motion should be structured to include an overall financial obligation including costs to build, maintenance cost, usage costs, etc.
 - Gildea suggested to Clark to develop estimates for costs for all aspects of the course; including baskets, tees, tee pads, signage, maintenance, tree removal/stump grinding. Also to form a volunteer group/Friends group that would help budget costs and start a fundraiser to generate money for startup. 501(c)3 as an option for group also discussed.
 - Gildea will be preparing a spreadsheet for items needed from Clark that need to be put in place before a motion can be considered by the Parks board.

Once John gets all requested information it will be brought back to the the Parks Advisory Board for review and recommendation to the BOC.

4. West Side Park – Gildea reviewed three choices for new playground equipment for West Side Park, which is budgeted for in the Capital Improvement Plan.
 - In 2016 as a result of a property dispute over a section of the park it was determined that the neighboring land owner would pay the county \$12,500 for this section of property and as part of that agreement that money would be used to purchase playground equipment.
 - Gildea worked with Game Time, who is approved through MIDeal to determine option that would fall near the approved \$20,000 budget. Gildea also reached out to the public for feedback on what they would like to see placed at the park. General consensus was to replace merry go round or add something that is not located in any of our other parks.
 - After review the three options the Vista Treetop 2 structure, which is a climbing, and spinning structure that can be used by more than one child at a time was the preferred option. The Vista Treetop 2 structure is \$24,988.50, which is \$4988.50 over budget.

A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Langeance to recommend that the BOC allow for an additional \$5000 in funds from the parks capital funding for the purchase of the Vista Treetop 2 structure. The motion carried by roll call vote. Yes -5, No -0, Absent -4

Brown: Yes

Dykstra: Absent

Clark: Yes

Formsma: Absent

DeYoung: Yes

Kapenga: Yes

Dugan: Absent

Metz: Absent

Langeance: Yes

5. 2020-2024 Recreation Plan Review
 - a. Step 1: Discussed Parks Advisory Board recommendation from National Community Citizen Survey, Board and Elected Official Combined Board Survey and input from Parks Advisory Board Members
 - b. Step 2: Discussed any updates to current Goals/Objectives
 - c. Step 3: Discussed any updated info/action plans for County owned/operated Parks listed in Recreation Plan
 - d. Step 4: Recommended changes and/or additions to Recreation Plan(current Park system)
 - e. Step 5: Recommended Additions to the Park System
 - f. Step 6: Recommend to the BOC
 - i. BOC approve changes in current plan and be included in 2025-2029 recreation Plan
 - ii. Additional projects and or funding requests

Gildea went over all the steps and information that has been prevented and reviewed at part meeting. She then started that The Parks Advisory Board needed

to determine; 1.) Are there any changes or missed actions for parks in our current park system, 2.) Is there anything that needs to be added to our current park System 3.) What would be the top priority projects for the parks to recommend to the BOC.

Clark stated he thought the site plan at Littlejohn need to be changed as the current site plan shows campground plans for the back area of the park. Gildea stated that the most current approved BOC site plans are what are shown in the Recreation Plan but it is listed in the action section for the change to update site plan and no longer have campground at back of park. Discussion took place about adding the Trowbridge Dam property located on 26th Street to our county park system.

A motion was made by Brown, seconded by Langeance that after review of the recreation plan and additional information that they had no changes to the current recreation plan/parks and would recommend the BOC work with the Trowbridge Township for assistance (funding) and negotiate with the DNR to lease the Trowbridge Dam property located on 26th Street and add it to the County Parks system. The motion carried by roll call vote. Yes -5, No -0, Absent -4

Brown: Yes

Dykstra: Absent

Clark: Yes

Formsma: Absent

DeYoung: Yes

Kapenga: Yes

Dugan: Absent

Metz: Absent

Langeance: Yes

The Parks Board discussed priority projects & operations and currently identified four items currently that would be top priorities; West Side Park Beach Access, Playground Equipment for Ely Lake Campground, Modern Campground at Littlejohn and better compensation for and to keep parks staff (rangers/maintenance). Further discussion on this is needed.

A motion was made by Clark, seconded by Brown for Parks Advisory Board to review all park projects and operations at their December 7, 2021 meeting so they can then make a recommendation to the BOC for funding/priority of park projects/operations.. The motion carried by roll call vote. Yes -5, No -0, Absent -4

Brown: Yes

Dykstra: Absent

Clark: Yes

Formsma: Absent

DeYoung: Yes

Kapenga: Yes

Dugan: Absent

Metz: Absent

Langeance: Yes

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Gun Lake Park Improvements – Gildea reviewed site plan for the 2022 MNRTF grant in advance of the public input session.
 - Key items in site plan include moving handicap parking to accessible site near paved walkways, extending beach, sidewalk along front of park, new swings
 - A public meeting is scheduled for 10/12/21 from 5:00 pm -6:00 pm at the Gun Lake Park to get feedback from the community.

NOTICE OF PARK ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS: No openings at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Issues at Silver Creek Campground with non-equestrian campers using sites which are larger and should be available to accommodate large horse trailers

ROUND TABLE:

Gildea: Gildea went over staff's schedules, and was worried due to those schedules that the park board member may have heard that services might be being missed. Board members stated they have not heard of any missed services or issues and will let us know if they do.

ADJOURNMENT: Next Meeting –Tuesday, December 7, 2021 @ 8:30 am in Zimmerman Room - Human Service Building -3255 122nd Ave, Allegan, MI 49010

A motion was made by Kapenga, seconded by Brown to adjourn the meeting at 11:09am. The motion carried.