

STARKE COUNTY PARK BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
November 29, 2016 6:00 PM
Minutes

The Board of Directors of the Starke County Park Board held a special meeting on November 29, 2016 at the Starke County Annex Meeting room. Roger Chaffins, president, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Roll Call – Present: Roger Chaffins, Butch Gerstandt, Chris Lawrence, Deb Mix, Rosie Rose. Attorney Martin Lucas and Consultant Michael Reese of the Troyer Group were also in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance –

This meeting has been scheduled to interview the consultants that will work with KIRPC to write a 5 yr plan.

Mr. Chaffins notified the board that Arion Consultants called him yesterday, Nov. 28, and withdrew their offer to write the plan stating that the quick turn around with a deadline of mid-January is something they weren't able to pursue due to prior commitments..

Mr. Michael Reese of Troyer Group spoke to the deadline and assured the board that they are able to meet the IDNR grant requirements in a timely manner as long as we would be able to work with the time table he presented in his contract. The draft plan is due on Jan. 15, 2017 with the final grant application due on April 15, 2017. He explained that the 5 yr plan needs to be specifically ours for Starke County. To discover what the users want to see in the county as well as envisioning amenities in the county, the process usually takes 2 – 6 months.

Mr. Reese went over what is expected to be done in the first couple of weeks including first forming an advisory committee (4-6 people), enough for representation of the County. They will need to meet to help write goals and make site visits. They will also help with an ADA accessibility analysis.

There will also need to have public information gathering (usually in the form of a survey) or a non-random process usually in the form of a public hearing and focus groups. The focus groups should consist of stakeholders of specific areas. The group decided to have the advisory group consist of two Park board members (Lawrence & Mix), Someone from the Koontz Lake area (Chris L. will check with Rhonda Hurford), someone from the North Judson area with a knowledge of the trails (Kathy Lucas will be contacted by Deb M.) and someone that represents the forests and environmental natural resources (Deb M. will ask Mr. Wakeland for a suggestion). The last person will be the consultant, Mr. Reese.

Other components of the plan will include the implementation of the project and goals, prioritizing what needs to be done utilizing timeframes. System-wide maps will need to be developed. Once the plan is in a final draft form it will be submitted to the IDNR.

Commissioner Norem came in at 6:15. Attorney Lucas advised to go through the process, and the proposed schedule with key dates. Discussion noted that the survey needs to be done by Dec. 9 and the public hearing on Dec 12. The information will then be sent to the Park board by Thurs., Dec 15. The 5 yr plan will need to be submitted to the IDNR by Friday, Jan 13. We need to remember that this will be a draft plan, it isn't the finished product.

Mr. Reese presented his proposal in the amount of \$21,300. The park board explained they only had \$15,000 for the project. Ideas of how to lower the costs were presented which included more hands-on work by the board. Mr. Lucas asked if they could tailor the contract to meet the funding that we have available. Mr. Lawrence asked Mr. Reese if he could meet us half way per the difference of what we have and his \$21,300 proposal. Commissioner Norem said she would check with her fellow commissioners to see if they would be able to find the additional \$3000 if Mr. Reese can meet us at a final cost of \$18,000 including all expenses. Mr. Reese said he would be able to do so and we would work towards that goal until we can confirm if the additional funding is approved. Mr. Reese agreed to revise the contract to read \$18,000 maximum and will send it to Mr. Chaffins for final signature.

The next Advisory meetings will be planned for Dec. 8 and 15, both at 6 pm. to be held at the Starke County Visitors Center. The next regular and final board meeting of the year is Wed., December 12, 2016 at 6 PM, at the Annex meeting room.

With no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded (Lawrence-Rose), and the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Mix, Secretary