

Allegan County Parks Advisory Board



Allegan County Parks, Recreation &
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PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING – Minutes

Tuesday, June 3, 2025 @ 8:30am

County Service Building – Board Room -3283 122nd Ave, Allegan, MI 49010

Virtual Option: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82759464991>

CALL TO ORDER:

Driscoll called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Joshua Driscoll, Kevin Formsma, Jaclyn Hulst, Josiah Lampen, Tom Jessup, Mark DeYoung, Don Olendorf

Absent: John Clark III, Pam Brown

Also Present: Brandy Gildea, Heather Stormzand, Rob Sarro, Henry Reinart (public)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion made by Formsma, seconded by Hulst, to approve the April 15, 2025, minutes. The motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Henry Reinart, 3341 30th Street (Monterey Township Supervisor)

- Shared concerns about the millage and requested to see the proposed numbers.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS:

Olendorf requested a discussion regarding secondary beach access at West Side County Park. Item added under discussion.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion made by Hulst, seconded by Formsma, to approve the agenda with the addition of the secondary beach access at West Side County Park under discussion as item #5. The motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS: None

PARK ADMINISTRATION UPDATES:

- Littlejohn was vandalized again. Staff are looking into the cost of adding security cameras.
 - Driscoll suggested a trail camera with a cellular signal.
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REVIEW ITEMS:

1. Financial Statements

- Gildea presented data showing that pavilion and campground rental revenues are down compared to last year, largely due to a colder spring.
 - The board decided the full financial statement does not need to be printed in the agenda packet; it can be uploaded to the shared drive.
 - Formsma requested that only revenue comparisons be included in future packets.
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DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. National Community Survey Results Review – National Community Survey (NCS) | Allegan County, MI

Gildea reviewed key findings with the board:

- Economic outlook appears to be improving.
- Parks and recreation satisfaction was lower than other areas due to a lack of recreational opportunities.
- 71% said parks and recreation are important, while 64% were satisfied with quality.
- Satisfaction with opportunities has declined. The public is looking for structured reasons to visit the parks.
- Driscoll noted that public expectations may be higher.

2. Parks, Recreation & Tourism Donation Policy

The board discussed potential updates to the policy:

- In-Kind Donations: Hulst suggested including in-kind donations (e.g., volunteers helping plant county-purchased trees).
- Tracking Donations: Driscoll asked about tracking in-kind contributions. Formsma recommended tracking only monetary or physical donations.
- Hulst asked if volunteer hours are being recorded.
- Gildea confirmed that volunteer groups are submitting tracked hours.
- Approval of Donations: Jessup emphasized Board of Commissioners approval for physical items. DeYoung and Gildea clarified that only significant donations (e.g., structures or equipment) require BOC approval. Small items like trees or picket posts do not.
- Clarifying Donation Types: Driscoll requested clearer definitions for targeted fundraising. The board agreed the County may request project-specific donations if clearly communicated in advance.

3. County Budget Policy Change Recommendation – Local Government Revenue Sharing Fund #104

Current policy states 10% of current-year revenue plus \$20,000 annually reserved for DNR Trust Fund match until \$100,000 is saved.

- Hulst requested changing the wording to be more general, as the County has not qualified for DNR grants. Gildea noted changes would not take effect until the next year.
- DeYoung said opportunities can still be brought forward when they arise.

Motion made by Hulst, seconded by Lampen, recommending the County Administration review and revise the Fund #104 policy.

Current wording: "10% of current-year revenue plus an additional \$20,000 reserved annually for DNR Trust Fund match until \$100,000 is saved."

Proposed revision: "Fund Balance – 10% of current-year operating expenses plus an additional \$20,000 reserved annually for DNR Trust Fund match and/or other grant matches, until \$100,000 is saved."

4. West Side Park – Food Vendor Events

Gildea reported interest in allowing food trucks at County Parks, especially West Side Park, to reduce pressure on Pier Cove and attract visitors. Staff are exploring feasibility and seeks board feedback:

- Driscoll expressed concern about adding food vendors at Littlejohn Lake Park due to existing support from local restaurants.
- Jessup suggested creating a policy to regulate vendor selection and locations.
- Hulst supported tracking attendance to measure success.
- Driscoll cautioned against overcomplicating the process.
- The board agreed on the importance of promoting such events.

5. Secondary Beach Access – West Side County Park

Olendorf raised concerns that the current (north stair) access is insufficient and proposed a low-cost southern access.

- He suggested a contractor could build stairs or a flush wooden path for under \$30,000, though neither would be ADA-compliant.
- Gildea stated the project is not currently funded but could seek donations or request BOC support.
- Formsma supported additional access.
- Hulst requested a concrete plan before moving forward.
- Gildea noted that three comparable quotes would be needed per County policy.

Motion made by Jessup, seconded by Hulst, to table this item until the August meeting (All-Day Parks Tour) to review it onsite. The motion carried.

Gildea will gather quotes for review at that meeting.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION ITEMS:

1. Parks Budget

- Gildea reviewed the 2026 budget process. Budgets are due June 27.
- The Parks budget faces another shortfall. Staff recommended continuing to forego indirect expenses to maintain services.
- Several budget scenarios were reviewed:
 - i. Scenarios ranged from operating within existing revenues (possibly resulting in park closures) to expanded operations and completed priority projects.
 - ii. Sarro provided an estimate of the millage required.
 - iii. Gildea asked the board which scenario they support, based on public input and operational needs.
 1. Formsma supported Scenario 10, where residents would clearly see value for their tax dollars.
 2. Hulst and Driscoll expressed hesitation to seek additional funding due to the political climate.
 3. Hulst asked if Advisory Board members could hold public informational sessions.
 4. Gildea confirmed they can discuss park shortages and plans, as long as they do not state they are requesting a millage.

Motion made by Driscoll, seconded by Lampen, to support asking the Board of Commissioners to consider a millage or other funding to support Scenario 11 as the top priority, followed by Scenario 8, and at a minimum, Scenario 2. The motion carried.

NOTICE OF PARK ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Vacancies: None

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Parks Operations Plan
- Intergovernmental coordination to improve communication
- Gildea has been contacting local supervisors and DNR representatives

ROUND TABLE:

DeYoung: Complimented the DNR free fishing promotional post.

Driscoll: Gave an update on disc golf at Littlejohn and shared positive player feedback.

Hulst: Shared updates from her visit to the EPA Trowbridge Dam site. Also highlighted a mushroom-growing class offered by the Conservation District on June 18 at 6:00 p.m. off Taft Road in Allegan.

ADJOURNMENT:

Next Meeting: August 12, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. – All-Day Parks Tour.

Motion made by Jessup, seconded by Formsma, to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m. The motion carried.