

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2013

Board Present: Lauren Ammar, Doug Barrett, Tim Earl, Kathleen Hoyle, Jennifer Molner, Roger Smith, Charles Thomas, Susan William, Jan Whitcomb

Board Members Excused: Jim Bennick

Staff Present: William Deming

Guests: Kay Bowers, Portage, Jack Briggs of Hartford, and Bob Rasmussen of Marcellus

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Susan Williams at 6:32 p.m. in the Stuart Manor, Celery Flats Park.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINTUES: Upon review of the October 6, 2013 minutes, it was noted to amend Doug Barrett as excused from the meeting. Motioned by Kathleen Hoyle, seconded by Roger Smith. The Board approved the minutes.

New Business

A. New Members

Chairwoman Susan Williams welcomed new members Tim Earl and Jennifer Molner to the Parks Board.

B. Discussion of Stuart Manor

William Deming gave a review of Stuart Manor. It was originally built on Milham Road, near the site of Portage Northern High School. At one time it was the summer home of Michigan's second Senator, Charles Stuart. The home was donated to the City by Douglas Brown, DDS. It was moved in one piece in 1994 to its present location. The home was restored and the kitchen was added at that time. The stones in the foundation are from the original site. Stuart Manor was thought to be a stop in the underground railroad, although there is no documentation to confirm this fact.

C Recycle Art in the Park

May 10-17, 2014. An update was presented by Kathleen Hoyle. The 2013 program had 18 artists and 22 sponsors. The goal for the 2014 program is for 30 artists, 30 sponsors and prizes in the amounts of \$1,000, \$750, and \$250. The possibility of having an evening of Jazz music on one or more nights was discussed.

D. Friends of Park Update.

Kathleen Hoyle stressed the fact more volunteers are needed including professional help with the website. We are looking for grant money to help fund the costs for web site improvements. It is possible the website will take \$1,000.00 a year to maintain. The website will also be an asset in gathering a volunteer data base.

Grand Rapids has a Friends of the Parks volunteer group. It is thought they may have 250 to 280 members. They also have paid staff for fund raising.

E. Traditional Holiday

Tree Lighting will be Saturday, December 7, 2013. Volunteers for the evening's festivities include: Jim Bennick, Tim Earl, Jennifer Molner, Roger Smith, Susan Williams and Jan Whitcomb.

F. Ramona Park

Guest Jack Briggs shared with the Board that he grew up in the Ramona Park area. Mr. Briggs is very impressed with the way the city has developed Ramona Park. He wanted to suggest the possibility of more walking trails on the south end of Ramona Park, and the possibility of car enthusiasts using the park for a "Cruise In". He shared some history of the Ramona Park area including it was used in the summer by many area employers as the site for their summer company picnics. The baseball diamond was used by many traveling teams including the House of David. Also professional players Mickey Stanley and Yogie Berra played there. Mr. Briggs shared they have formed a group and call themselves the Ramona Gang. In good weather they meet the last Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. at Ramona Park. The other months they meet at Kaps on Portage Road.

Guest Kay Bowers shared her album with historic photographs of the Ramona Park.

F. Summary of Activities

Presented by William Deming, the Jingle Bell Run is scheduled for November 17, 2013 at Celery Flats. Weather permitting the ice rink will open December 12 for the season.

Ellison Park update – the city has purchased an additional 18 acre parcel. The goal is to complete the continuous trail from Osterhout Road to Kilgore Road.

Comments from the Board:

Charles Thomas: Thanked the guests for coming and sharing suggestions.

Doug Barrett: Thank the guests for sharing history on Ramona Park.

Tim Earl: Thanked the guest. He shared that Ramona Park is one landmark in Portage easily spotted from an airplane.

Jennifer Molner: Thanked the Board for making her feel welcome.

Kathleen Hoyle, Roger Smith, and Jan Whitcomb: Thanked the guests.

Susan Williams: Shared the Board is very pleased to have Tim Earl and Jennifer Molner as new members.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Tim Earl, seconded by Roger Smith. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jan Whitcomb