

Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board
Courthouse, Old Courtroom
Thursday, January 18, 2024

The Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2024, in the Old Courtroom, Kosciusko County Courthouse. Members present included: Rob Bishop, Mike Cusick, Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley.

President Rob Bishop called the meeting to order.

IN THE MATTER OF SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS:

Rob Bishop, Mike Cusick, Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley were sworn in as 2024 board members.

IN THE MATTER OF 2024 ELECTION OF PRESIDENT:

President Rob Bishop called for nominations; Mike Cusick renominated Rob Bishop for President.

Motion: Mike Cusick
Second: Aggie Sweeney
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the nomination of Rob Bishop as President, as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF 2024 ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT:

President Rob Bishop called for nominations for Vice President; Mike Cusick nominated Aggie Sweeney for Vice President.

Motion: Mike Cusick
Second: Matt Metzger
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the nomination of Aggie Sweeney as Vice President, as presented.

Rob Bishop thanked Troy Turley for his service as Vice President and his continued service on the Parks & Recreation Board.

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 11-02-23/11-16-23/11-30-23 MINUTES:

Motion: Matt Metzger
Second: Troy Turley
Ayes: 5 Nays: 0
Motion Carried

To: Approve the 11-02-23, 11-16-23, 11-30-23 minutes, as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF CLARIFICATION OF BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

It was confirmed that the term for board members Aggie Sweeney and Matt Metzger is a 4-year term versus a 2-year term per the Parks & Recreation Board Ordinance.

IN THE MATTER OF TRAILS MASTER PLAN:

Member Mike Cusick presented the progress for the Trails Master Plan stating Aggie and himself in previous discussion are representing the board for working with the vendor to develop a steering committee for the master Greenway and Blueway Plan. The intent was to reach out to 6-10 individuals to be part of that steering committee. The list for the steering committee so far includes Aggie Sweeney, Mike Cusick, Matt Sandy, Fred Helfrich, Rob Parker, Steve Moriarty, Tim Metzger, Ryan Martin, Amanda Plank, and Larry Plummer. Two additional committee members have not been confirmed. TSW Design Group advised they will put an invite out for an initial meeting within the next week for the steering committee. Mike advised there is awareness from our adjoining counties in what they're trying to do with the trails. Aggie brought up a concern of where the steering committee could meet that also would offer people to attend virtually. There was a brief discussion from several members and people in attendance on possible locations available to hold the meetings.

IN THE MATTER OF GREENWAY/CHINWORTH EXTENSION:

President Rob Bishop presented the Chinworth Extension progress update stating that they have the base agreement ready to submit at the 1-30-2024 Commissioners Meeting for their review and approval. The Parks & Recreation Board is continuing to work with Triad Associates as to the extension agreement and there is still a great desire to get at least the design and engineering done all the way up to the county line. Aggie stated they have been working with Triad Associates on their work, the design and engineering for the trails, and the base plus the two alternates. They provided preliminary cost estimates for the construction of the trail, and estimates for the base for each alternate. The total adds up to just under \$3 million, with about 90% of that being the preliminary construction cost with the chance it will change. There are some timeline issues with the allocation of ARPA dollars that were received from the county. Aggie expressed how do they want to allocate or invest the ARPA dollars they already have since it needs to be committed by the end of this calendar year and spent by the end of 2026. Mike stated because of the ARPA restrictions that they at least need to get the base design, engineering, and construction completed. There are some concerns that the construction estimates might be low and could take more of the ARPA funds than they realized. Mike stated if they were to do all of the design and engineering for base 1 and 2, plus the current construction estimate if that construction estimate is 50% of the total, then they won't have enough money to complete it. The group spoke about adding attractive features and making sure the trails go somewhere and connect. The 0.8 miles is the main focus. Aggie advised that they need to keep in mind if the trail crosses any waterways, they will need permits.

IN THE MATTER OF 2024 GOALS:

President Rob Bishop opened discussion about their 2024 goals starting with the Master Plan and the Chinworth Extension both need to stay as their top goals for 2024 because they are not complete. Rob advised the group they are in a good spot to set up a Friends of the Park Program and a county wide trail sign to get all of the trail holders together and discuss things. Aggie added on the boards 5-year master plan they completed in April of 2023 there were 8 primary

goals and some sub goals that she would like to discuss at the next meeting. The group held a discussion about priorities moving forward.

IN THE MATTER OF FURTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Cary Groninger voiced that the Parks & Recreation Board is right on point of what the county needs and to keep the main goal ahead with the objective of trying to finish out the HELP Program. Cary thanked the board for their efforts and stated he looks forward to what 2024 will bring.

Executive Director of the Syracuse-Wawasee Trails Amanda Plank mentioned a local subcommittee of these trail users and she would love to be a part of leading that discussion with more of a peer focus. Amanda advised the board of a DNR Trails Advisory Board has 2 spots open, one for Parks & Recreation and another for health if they have any members interested.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board
Courthouse, Old Courtroom
Thursday, February 15, 2024**

The Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 15, 2024, in the Old Courtroom, Kosciusko County Courthouse. Members present included: Rob Bishop, Mike Cusick, Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley.

President Rob Bishop called the meeting to order.

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 1-18-24 MINUTES:

MOTION: Aggie Sweeney

TO: Approve the 1-18-24 minutes, as presented.

SECOND: Troy Turley

AYES: 5 NAYS: 0

UNANIMOUS

IN THE MATTER OF GREENWAY/CHINWORTH TRAIL EXTENSION:

Triad Associates Project Site Manager John Nelson presented an update for Chinworth Trail Extension stating that Lakewood Surveying has it on their schedule to start surveying this week or the beginning of next. Triad advised it will be 30 days before they receive the drawings so they can start their work. From the surveyor Triad will receive drawings of both sides of the road, topography and everything at grade, including driveways, street intersections, trees, power poles, property corners, and anything that would be in the way. Triad stated from what they have preliminary looked at for the 1st phase they would like to stay on the south side of the right of way of Old 30. Rob stated Aggie and him met with Highway Department Superintendent Steve

Moriarty and he told them that crossing Old 30 would not be pleasant in terms of everything they would have to do to get permission to do.

IN THE MATTER OF TRAILS MASTER PLAN:

Vice President Aggie Sweeney presented an update on the Trails Master Plan stating the first meeting for the steering committee has been set for Monday, February 26, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the video conference room in the Justice Building lower level. The first meeting is to do an overview of what is the Trails Blueway Greenway Master Plan all about and where is it going. The meeting will be open to the public. Aggie advised Amy Roe and Craig Allebach have confirmed their participation on the steering committee. Aggie mentioned that Winona Lake did provide some of the funding for this plan along with ARPA funds. Troy and Matt let the board know they would like to be a big part of the blueways when that time comes.

IN THE MATTER OF REVIEW OF GOALS:

President Rob Bishop opened the discussion about their review of goals starting with the Priority Action Schedule. Rob stated some of it they have been working on and some of it is apart of the Trails Master Plan that needs to be completed first. The first priority goal was to add trail connections between communities. In regard to that Rob and Mike were approached by Amy Roe who is on the Rochester City Council and is the Kosciusko County Community Coordinator, she stated there is a meeting with the Rochester City Parks Department on March 11, 2024 that Mike is going to attend. There is discussion in Rochester about extending the Nickel Plate Trail northward into Marshall County and there are some route decisions they have to make about their master plan to update it so if it ever got to the point were a number of counties all get together and got a grant from the state it would need to be updated.

Mike discussed that Peter Hru from Elkhart County stated he wanted to discuss how to connect the Pumpkinvine into Kosciusko County.

Georgia Tenney of Pierceton told the board it is her passion to get the trail from Winona Lake to Pierceton. Rob agreed there are not a lot of miles between Pierceton and the trail in Winona Lake to Pierceton will not be forgotten. Matt agreed and stated there is the new KCV bike park that's going to be there, and potentially a multi-use building that's going to be happening at Grace College.

Aggie stated with the Trails Master Plan they think the trails master plan process will take at least eight months and while there is a steering committee to help guide, there will be multiple opportunities for public input. TSW will have information available through a website so the public can learn more and stay updated.

Mike suggested Chinworth is a more ready opportunity and should be taken advantage of due to the interest Marshall County has with connecting to Nickel Plate Trail

Matt spoke of the Tippecanoe River and if it is navigable or not, Rob stated they have discussed this with TSW. Aggie contacted Kyle Quandt with Northeast Indiana Water Trails and asked Kyle about navigable waters. Kyle stated most of the rivers in their network of blueways are not designated navigable, however they are careful with there signage so that way people on the rivers are aware of trespassing. Kyle felt it wasn't needed for the board to move forward.

Mike referenced phase 1 and 2 of the Greenway/Chinworth Trail Extension to determine the cost of engineering and design and funding for construction is still an open item that needs to be closed, however Triad did provide estimates for that.

Aggie discussed after construction of the trails and parks having a friend of the park volunteer group in place as early as next year should be a goal to review.

Commissioner Cary Groninger stated envisioning most of the pocket parks would probably be in cities and towns in our county and that it would be beneficial to get in touch with who is in charge of the parks department and find out if there is acreage that the pocket parks can be developed on.

Rob suggested creating a mailing list so as people come in and come to these community events there will be a sign-up list that can be maintained through the parks and recreation email. Cary advised getting a list of the lake associations emails and contacts as well for the blueways.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board
Courthouse, Old Courtroom
Thursday, March 21, 2024**

The Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024, in the Old Courtroom, Kosciusko County Courthouse. Members present included: Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley.

Aggie Sweeney called the meeting to order.

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 2-15-24 MINUTES:

Aggie Sweeney presented the minutes for approval.

Motion: Troy Turley

Second: Matt Metzger

Ayes: 3 Nays: 0

Motion Carried

To: Approve the 2-15-24 minutes as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF GREENWAY/CHINWORTH EXTENSION PHASE 1 & 2:

Lou Savka-Triad Associates, Inc. presented an update on the Greenway/Chinworth Trail Extension. He stated that the survey crew had a mishap with their drone during the process and

added that they had instructed them to use the old fashioned way of surveying. Plans will be forthcoming, the trail is set and we have what is needed.

Matt Metzger asked if the survey crew had been approached as to what they were doing in the area. Stu recommended that the board may want to publish a notice of the activities.

Aggie Sweeney said she had been contacted by an associate of the Kosciusko Board of Realtors and that they could request grant funds of up to \$7500 for amenities along the trail. She made references to bike racks, benches, picnic tables and wayfinding. Aggie would like more clarity on a timeline from Triad at the April meeting and include how they are communicating with the land owners along the trail.

IN THE MATTER OF PROGRESS UPDATE TRAILS MASTER PLAN:

Aggie presented a progress update email on the Trails Master Plan from Katie Clark-TSW Design Group as follows:

- Physical condition mapping and analysis have begun-all team members are focused on a specific portion of the assessment.
- Discussions with Donny Ritesma of MACOG to better understand the park planning effort, intended goals, and available mapping data. Donny is providing data and will serve as a resource throughout our effort.
- The week of 3/25 we will be launching the public-facing tools including website updates, social media posting, and digital map tool. When these are ready we will coordinate with the parks board for a press release and/ or social media updates.
- Members of our team will be reaching out to coordinate a public information display at the Fat & Skinny Tire Festival.
- Next steering committee meeting in late April will be focused on reviewing an updated route map and an initial set of design guidelines.

Aggie added that the Trails Master plan is slated to be completed in late October.

IN THE MATTER OF FURTHER DISCUSSION:

Troy stated that he would be able to attend the Kiwanis meeting Thursday March 28, 2024 to give them an update on the projects they are working on.

Matt added that he would like to look at what other projects are slated to start next and that we should keep moving to get things done.

Aggie related that the Greenway/Chinworth Trail Extension project phases 2 & 3 will need additional fundraising for continuing.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.