

**Minutes
Village of Elk Rapids
Parks & Recreation Commission
January 7, 2021**

Present:

James Dake, Mike Conrad, Kwin Morris, Charlie Pryde, Paula Moyer, Gordon Stewart, Melissa West

Staff: Village Manager Bill Cooper.

Dake calls meeting to order.

MOTION to approve agenda by Pryde. Second by Moyer. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Pryde to approve December minutes. Second by West. **MOTION CARRIED**

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Dianne Richter: requests written discussion of DNR thoughts on fish spawning impact. Matt Soper says it will be published. Also concerned about the conservation area at dam beach being damaged and limited space for spectators outside the protected area. Also concerned about sound of boats.

Nancy Doe (last name unknown): four questions:

1. How many boats? Answer: 45
2. How far offshore is race course? Answer: minimum of 400 yards
3. Top speed of fastest boat? Answer: 140mph
4. Decibel range at beach? Answer: 96dB

NEW BUSINESS: Matt Soper - OPA Presentation

Questions by PR Commission:

Mike Conrad: Is the date flexible? Post labor day a possibility? Answer: no, August date is firm due to schedule.

Gordon Stewart: Risk of Covid-19 related cancellation? Answer: optimism, needs planning in advance. If there is still social distancing, event will be cancelled.

Paula Moyer: Is there prize money? Answer: no, mostly bragging rights. Fundraising opportunities? Answer: yes, will seek out if approved. Steering committee including locals chooses charity.

James Dake: How many in crowd spectating on beach? Answer: roughly 5000 at last event in Moorehead City. Open to using other beaches for spectating.

Charlie Pryde: What vendors will be coming? Answer: Steering committee chooses. Local focused. How much are boats running outside race time? Answer: only during closed course time. How are funds raised? Answer: varies greatly, based on local opportunities.

Melissa West: Concerns: Our recreation plans are all passive recreation-based. This is our first proposal of its type. Parks are already crowded as it is. Concerned about overcrowding on small beaches with high water levels, possible need for social distancing. Alcohol consumption on beaches is also a concern with family friendly park beaches. Parking is a concern; Short's Brewing was unaware they were listed as a parking spot. Noted that website already lists Elk Rapids event before any approval.

MOTION by Stewart to NOT recommend this event's approval by council. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Moyer: Yes. West: Yes. Conrad: Yes. Dake: Yes. Morris: Yes. Pryde abstains. (To clarify, a Yes vote indicates that we DO NOT recommend the event).

Discussion on motion: Matt's effort and professional presentation are appreciated. However, we see our role as primarily protecting the parks and providing a positive experience there for all, not just race spectators. We are concerned about over-crowding during an already crowded time. We're also concerned about preservation of a positive, quiet, family-friendly experience in parks with limited space and fragile ecosystems. 5000 people would overwhelm our already crowded parks, especially considering high water levels. We are concerned about the extremely high noise levels. Timeline for preparation is short. Other concerns noted in discussion above.

If the event is approved, P&R Commission would like input/involvement in managing event as it pertains to parks.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A: Ice Rink update: Mother nature is not cooperating. Above freezing temperatures will prevent ice in near future as well. Stewart feels we should wait to purchase tent due to weather and pandemic. Need to discuss alternative expenditures. Cooper: need letter to council requesting tent money be transferred to general fund due to weather and covid and tent expenditure postponed. Alternative idea is a canopy to cover entire rink and prevent snow on ice. Rink is 60' x 80'. Conrad will look into cost.

B. Budget Discussion: request ice rink tent money be saved for next year due to warm temperatures and pandemic.

Correspondence -- n/a

Reports: Pryde: Council looking at hiring new manager and solar panel project.

MOTION by Stewart to Adjourn. Second by Morris. Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting – February 4, 2021