Call to Order:
The Parks & Recreation Committee meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Chairman William Shorter.

Present: Commissioner William Shorter; Commissioner Toni Drier; Commissioner Neil Ahrens; Paul Fairbairn; Jack Jones, Danna Marvin; Wendy Armstrong

Absent: none

Staff: Mary Mitchell, Interim County Administrator; Laurie Gaetano, Parks & Recreation Director; Nancy Salar, Planning, Zoning & Construction Resources; Mary Stewart Adams, Dark Sky Program Director; Mark Fairbairn, Camp Petosega; Shelly House, Headlands; Linda Lorusso, Recording Secretary

Appearances: Art Tebo, Dark Sky Coast Association; Rod Slocum, Dark Sky Coast Association

Public Comment:
Sandy Planisek presented information regarding revenues and visitor numbers for the McGulpin Lighthouse. She also expressed how charging a fee to tour the lighthouse would affect revenue. In her opinion, charging a fee would negatively impact the amount of “good will” donations.

Approval of Agenda:
Approved by Consensus.

Approval of Minutes:
Motion made by Drier and seconded by Ahrens to approve the minutes from the July 10, 2017 meeting.

  Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

New Business:

Dark Sky Coast Association:

Slocum spoke to the committee of the need for the operations agreement between the Dark Sky Coast Association and Emmet County. He expressed that they want permission from the Board of Commissioners to solicit donations during specific events at the Headlands. He also wants to set up a membership drive. Funds collected would be used to cover expenses which are not funded through earmarked donations (i.e. for the telescopes) or grants. He also wants to organize a volunteer staff to work the events and help with parking or tours. He also stated that the county is losing revenue by not having something in place. There have been many lost opportunities to raise cash/members. Tebo also spoke and wants to get direction as to where the donations will be set aside in the budget. Will the money be kept in a separate account that benefits the event center or will they be deposited into the general fund? Mitchell stated that the money would not be deposited in the general fund but in the Parks and Rec fund the same way that the McGulpin donations work. She elaborated that if a donor donated for a specific purpose, the County would
earmark those funds for that use only. Tom Bailey gave the agreement between the County and the DSCA to the County’s legal counsel, Bob Engel for review. He will be investigating any restrictions that might be in place due to grant requirements.

**Parks & Recreation 5 Year Plan:** Salar presented the P & R Mission Statement to the committee. She asked for recommendations for corrections or improvements. Shorter asked that suggestions be brought to the next meeting.

**Parks & Recreation Director’s Report:**
Gaetano reported the following:

**Alanson Locks:** Riverfest was held this past weekend. Many more boats participated in the boat parade this year. The locks are working properly with no problems.

**Camp Petosega:** The dock permit was issued and the dock is in the water. Buildings are being painted and damaged water lines are being repaired.

**McGulpin Point Lighthouse:** The informational signage and docent are being installed by Sam Stafford.
- Apartment rental: the apartment is being furnished and painted. It will be advertised in a new brochure for the Lighthouse.
- Staffing: Many of the staff is leaving the Lighthouse this month leaving only a few employees. The hours of operation may have to be reduced if the hours cannot be covered.

**Headlands Event Center:** Over 1200 people came through the park this weekend to view the Perseid Meteor Showers.
- The DNR meeting will take place August 16 at 9am.

Marvin stated that the event center is currently only open to the public on Thursdays, noon – 5pm. She would like to see it open on a regular basis. Shorter expressed that the problem is the lack of staffing.

**Fairgrounds:** the marquee sign is currently non-operational due to a radio failure at the sign. Matt Hellens from IT is looking in to the repair or possible replacement.

**Discussion of Rental Fees:**
Discussion was given regarding whether there should be a resident vs non-resident rate for all parks. Poll was taken of the committee –
- Armstrong – should be on a per park basis.
- Ahrens – one rate
- Fairbairn – one rate
- Marvin – one rate
- Jones – one rate
- Drier – one rate
- Shorter – one rate

Staff will bring rate recommendations for each park to the next P & R meeting.

**McGulpin:** Gaetano discussed the option of charging a fee to tour the Lighthouse. She presented the fee schedule from other lighthouses around the state.
Petosega: Mark Fairbairn presented the fees currently being charged and a comparison of other campgrounds. After reviewing the materials presented, the committee agreed to go to one rate.

Headlands: House presented the fees currently being charged and comparison of hotels/motels in the Mackinaw area. It was suggested that the committee look at creating a broader seasonal rate schedule, perhaps having weekday and weekend rates.

Fairgrounds: Lorusso presented the fees currently being charged. It was suggested that we keep both the resident and non-resident rates. However, the partial rate of $150 for a four hour block should be raised.

Public Comment: Karla Buckmaster stated that she had no problem with the raising of fees as long as the board will continue to allow county residents to have a discount. She also expressed that the Vision Statement should focus more on the county people and not so much on making us a “world class” resort destination.

Announcements:
The next meeting will be on Monday, September 11, 2017 at 12:30 p.m. at the Headlands Event Center.

Adjournment:

Motion made by Jones and seconded by Armstrong to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Approved: XX-XX-2017