

TOWN of MAY
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
February 17, 2023

The Board of Supervisors of the Town of May convened a special meeting on Friday, February 17, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. at the May Town Hall. Those present included: Board members John Pazlar and Steve Magner; Clerk/Treasurer Bobbi Hummel, Planner Nate Sparks. Board Chair John Adams was absent.

Washington County officials Frank Ticknor (Deputy Director of Public Works), Jan Lucke (Deputy County Administrator), Sandy Bauer (Parks Director) and Commissioner Fran Miron were present.

Notice was posted on the township's website and at the Town Hall more than 72 hours prior to February 17, 2023.

The sole purpose of the special meeting is to hear updates from Washington County Parks related to expansion of Big Marine Park Reserve and the surrounding Kelley Farm and Cattle Company land.

Acting Chair John Pazlar called the meeting to order at 11:36 a.m.

Deputy Director of Public Works, Frank Tickner reports that Washington County understands they need to apply for a CUP in the future for a building improvement. A detailed history and current boundary are reviewed and attached to these minutes. Big Marine Park Reserve currently includes 204 acres that are owned and open to the public, 642 acres are owned and are not open to the public. An additional 685 acres is planned to be purchased from Kelly Farms to expand Big Marine Park Reserve. The overall plan is to create a low intensity use of the park.

Permit history is presented (attached). In 2021 May Township amended the town code that would require Washington County to apply for a new conditional use permit to move forward with a planned maintenance facility project. This would include a CUP that includes all lands currently owned by Washington County. In the future, if the Kelley Farms land becomes available, an amendment would be applied for. The new maintenance facility project would add a small building adjacent to the existing structure that includes restrooms, private rooms, and running water. ARPA funds have become available to complete this project now. This facility is currently used for storage only. Water and sewer would need to be brought in from existing lines in the park. There may be a need to increase the size of the utilities (septic), Sandy Bauer will check on this. Supervisor Magner would like to see that information in the CUP application. This proposed project is 24 x 36 with a custom interior. It is made off-site and delivered when complete.

Planner Nate Sparks notes that that this maintenance facility is not on the master plan nor is a future larger proposed building. This deviation from the master plan needs to be addressed and

detailed in the CUP process. Any projects/updates also need to match what the master plan outlines for specific uses (ie: parking). Mr. Sparks recommends that the county seek approvals in a CUP only when they are ready to complete a project. This would avoid confusion with public input and a potential long lag time a from CUP approval to project completion.

Magner comments about parcels at the end of 156th and a building in that area. There is a pole barn that is currently being used for storage. The allowed usage of this needs to be checked on and future plans need to be known. Also, 165th is currently not being maintained by the township and moving forward there may need to be consideration for future maintenance by Washington County. Conversations with the township attorney would be needed for this.

The potential purchase of some of the Kelley Land and Cattle property would add an additional 685 acres to Big Marine Park Reserve. This would bring the park to its full potential. Future plans include separate trail crossings to connect north of County Road 4, multiple trails (soft surface, equestrian, hiking, mountain biking), archery loop trail system, boardwalks, overlooks, group camp sites, group & equestrian camp facility, primitive camping area, and native vegetation buffers. No hunting will be allowed within the park.

Supervisor Pazlar asks if there any studies have been conducted regarding future traffic counts. Specifically off of 155th and May. It would be good to have a comparison of traffic from similar parks with this type of activities.

Kelley Land and Cattle Property contains a total of 2,443 acres, Washington County is interested in purchasing land only in the park boundary (685 acres). The purchase will be done in 3 phases. Phase I is 240 acres, phase II is 192 acres, phase III is 253 acres. This purchase is still in the negotiating phase. The anticipated timeline is 3 years at minimum. Each phase is an annual project. This would allow Washington County to maximum funding from the Metropolitan Counsel. Commissioner Miron indicates that this property may be purchased over three years but not developed for many more years.

Concerns are raised by Supervisor Magner about miscommunication and misinformation surrounding the development of the park. Also, the size of the area that will potentially turn into park areas only. With no commercial district in the township, we have no services to provide to users. In turn, there are expenses for the township (fire, road maintenance). Commissioner Miron notes that future costs associated with this type of project need to be planned for and discussed at the county level.

The county will update the township as land enters into county ownership and update the CUP as improvements are needed to the park and open to the public.

The Keystone Woods Wildlife Management Area (the additional area of Kelley Farm and Cattle Company the DNR is potentially purchasing) is pending with the legislature. Hunting would be allowed in this area. Concerns are raised regarding the proximity of the land to people, traffic and the open-ness of the land itself. Commissioner Miron urges communication with Senator Housley to voice concerns. A WMA that large in May Township could have a large impact.

Washington County will have a Board workshop on Tuesday, February 28th, 2023 and report the feedback and direction received from this meeting to all Board members. These workshops are typically after their regular Board meeting. The hope is to be transparent with the plans for the park. There has been some mis-communication with the Minnesota Land Trust that needs to be made clear as this moves forward as it differs from what is presented today.

Supervisor Pazlar nor Supervisor Magner have any objection or concerns to the plans as presented today.

Discussion amongst the Board around a potential WMA is concerning with a nearby park and multiple visitor activities. A major concern is the number of public attractions to be supported by our non-commercial township. Maintaining gravel roads is already a concern for our own residents and becomes more of a concern with an area like this bringing more traffic. Parking on the roadside from hunters is also a concern.

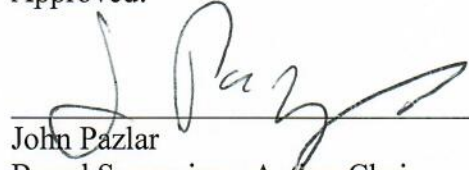
Meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Submitted:



Bobbi Hummel
Clerk/Treasurer

Approved:



John Pazlar
Board Supervisor, Acting Chair