

# **Tuscola County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday July 15, 2025, 8:00 AM**

**Tuscola County Purdy Building Conference Room**

**125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, MI 48723**

## **Call to Order:**

At 8:05 A.M., Michael Clinesmith, Chairperson, called the meeting to order.

## **Pledge of Allegiance:**

Michael Clinesmith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Roll Call:**

Mark Putnam, Secretary, called the Roll.

Appointed Members Present: Michael Clinesmith, Chairperson; Nancy Barrios, Vice-chairperson; and Mark Putnam; Secretary.

Appointed Members Absent: Kim Vaughan, Tuscola Board of Commissioners: Vacant, Vacant, & Vacant.

Ex-Officio Present: Alecia Little, Drain Commission's designated representative.

Ex-Officio Absent: Rick Boylan, Planning Commissioner; Dara Hood, Drain Commissioner, Excused; & Julie Matuszak, Road Commissioner.

Public Present: Halie Sizemore, Tuscola County Health Department.

## **Ex-officio Members Elevated to Voting Status:**

Michael Clinesmith elevated Alecia Little to voting status.

## **Approval of Agenda:**

Mark Putnam, seconded by Nancy Barrios, moved to approve the July 15, 2025, agenda as presented.

After discussion, motion carried.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

Nancy Barrios, seconded by Alecia Little, moved to approve April 15, 2025, Minutes without amendments.

Motion carried.

**Public Comment:**

Halie Sizemore presented a discussion on the Narcan Trailhead Boxes that the Tuscola County Health Department distributes. In taking steps toward a safer community, Halie said that Vanderbilt County Park & Campground needs to have a box located at the park. The box offers free and discreet access to Narcan nasal spray and fentanyl test strips. These resources would be there to help prevent overdose and give individuals the tools they need for a safer tomorrow. Halie said that Tuscola County Health Department would install the machine and periodically refill it. After discussion, the commission reached an agreement that Michael Clinesmith would talk to Mike Miller regarding having a Narcan Box installed and where it would be located at the Vanderbilt County Park & Campground.

**Election of Officers:**

Mark Putnam, seconded by Nancy Barrios, moved to re-elect the current officers—Michael Clinesmith (Chairperson), Nancy Barrios (Vice-Chairperson), and Mark Putnam (Secretary)—to their respective positions for another year.

We discussed that the Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission still needs three new members to fill the vacancies on the commission.

Motion carried, unanimously.

**Acceptance of Financial Reports:**

Mark Putnam, seconded by Nancy Barrios, moved to accept the financial reports.

Three trees at Vanderbilt County Park & Campground are set for removal this day with the \$2,500 the Board of Commissioners budgeted in the “Tree Trimming/Removal” account. Workers will leave the wood for use by campers as firewood.

Motion carried.

**Cass River Greenway Update:**

Nancy Barrios gave a presentation. The goal of the Cass River Greenways presently is to extend the Cass River Water Trail from its upper reaches at Evergreen Park on M-53 to where M-46 crosses the Cass River southwest of Caro. The Kelly Road Launch Ribbon Cutting was held July 7th. Evergreen Park ribbon cutting was July 12th.

There was discussion with the DNR about adding a Cass River "Rest stop" at the Hurds Corner DNR site so paddlers could stop off and eat or rest before continuing along the river. It would be along a clearing next to the river and would not be an entrance or exit site from the road, but simply a rest area to get off the water.

### **Vanderbilt County Park—Historical Grant:**

#### **Kiosk Design Review:**

The commission reviewed plans for the kiosk at Vanderbilt County Park & Campground, including the installation of three narrative and photo frames describing the site's history. Members discussed whether three bids are required for the kiosk's manufacturing and the installation of the frames and agreed to consult the Controller's Office for clarification.

The Controller's Office will establish separate expense and revenue accounts for the project. Installation costs exceeding materials and rental equipment—expenses reimbursed by America250MI—will be charged to the "Grounds Care/Maintenance Vanderbilt" account

#### **Approval of Plan & Expenses:**

Nancy Barrios, and Mark Putnam seconded, that Mark Putnam be the Representative for Tuscola County in the Contract Agreement between Tuscola County and American250MI and that Kim Vaughan, Chairperson, Tuscola County Board of Commissioners, sign for Tuscola County.

Motion carried.

### **Special Meeting:**

Michael Clinesmith scheduled a Special Meeting for August 19, 2025, at 8:00 AM, at the Purdy Building.

### **Vanderbilt County Park Updates:**

#### **Rules & Posting:**

We discussed asking Mike Miller, Director, Tuscola County Department of Buildings & Grounds, to acquire an enclosed outdoor "Bulletin Board" for park license, notes, rules, and other park information to be available to the public.

Nancy Barrios, seconded by Mark Putnam, moved that Michael Clinesmith ask Mike Miller to acquire an outdoor bulletin board.

Motion carried.

#### **Bathroom:**

Nancy Barrios asked whether the electrical outlet in the men's bathroom worked. Pam Shook responded that it did not. The new bathroom painting cost \$500–\$600.

#### **Stair Tree:**

Mark Putnam gave a presentation on the Native American Trail Marker Tree, known at Vanderbilt County Park & Campground as the "Stair Tree."

Mark had believed that the oak tree was a trail marker tree. He found evidence of that with a Google.com-AI search. In 1930, two Chippewa workers of the State Highway Parks Program

create a Trail Marker Tree at Vanderbilt County Park & Campground. It was a memorial in Mark words to the two trails that led to what is now Caro from the Chippewa Fishing Village located at Vanderbilt County Park & Campground. The branches of the trail marker tree point in the direction of those two trails. Mark indicated that money in the fall will be available for such things as signage and preservation of this old oak tree that is nearly one hundred years old. We should add historical signage to explain the trails. Pam Shook indicated that there currently is a trail that goes south from the Trail Marker Tree, the Stair Tree, that is on a knoll. Mark said that was the old trail heading to the Chippewa Village on Cass River that was just below Caro. The other trail went in a different direction to make its way to the same Cass River site.

#### Fence Posts:

The old white posts at the sides of the entryways and driveways that run around within the park need attention. They are decomposing. An installation of a new split rail fencing is desired. We will discuss this subject at our next meeting, August 19, 2025. Michael Clinesmith will talk with Mike Miller about fencing.

#### August Visit:

We discussed an August visit to the park. We decide it is not likely.

#### America250MI Grant:

There were discussions about applying for another grant at the end of this year.

#### **Vanderbilt Park Project Proposals:**

Mark Putnam made his discussion concerning new proposals for Vanderbilt County Park & Campground under “Vanderbilt Park Updates: Stair Tree.”

Playground and recreational equipment and improvements that we discussed were a cement “Corn Hole, improved Horse-shoe Pits, Ladder Toss (not recommended by Pam Shook), Teeter-totters (for kids), and springy or bouncy things for young children.

Michael will talk with Mike Miller about applying more sand to the Volleyball Court.

Pam Shook pointed out that the partially fallen Willow tree that fell on the drive and was pushed to its present site to clear the drive. Pam Shook stated that the Willow tree currently is not on Park property.

#### **Parcels Future Development:**

##### Grant Denial:

The commission did not get a POET Grant for a kiosk at the Parcels.

##### Naming of the Parcels:

Nancy Barrios offered the name “Indian Dave Memorial Launch.” Michael Clinesmith said we should ask the public to decide by having a contest. Mark Putnam said, “Lets to both and combine them with Indian David as an entry.”

Kayak Launch Design Proposals:

The Controller’s Office will set up specific accounts for the Parcels.

Tuscola County Community Foundation:

We will apply for grants by Fall with Frankenmuth Credit Union, too.

A site survey or plan would be beneficial.

### **Facebook Update:**

Tuscola County has a Facebook page called “Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission.” Michael Clinesmith will contact Terry Eden to request access to administrative passwords and other information.

### **Caro Dam:**

There are three proposals currently beside doing nothing: Removed the dam with a cost up to \$5 Million; build a small dam with a cost of \$10 Million or more; or construct a large dam with a cost of \$20 million or much more. There is considerable maintenance cost associated with a dam. Dam removal in comparison requires continued lampricide application to the water upstream that is an ongoing process now.

Michael Clinesmith gave a history of the Tuscola County Economic Development Corporations involvement in the Caro Dam.

### **Grants & Park Committee Update:**

There were no additional comments or discussions.

### **Adjournment:**

Mark Putnam, seconded by Nancy Barrios, moved to adjourn.

Motion carried.

The Tuscola County Parks & Recreation Commission adjourned the meeting at 10:28 A.M.

**The next meeting will be a Special Meeting that is scheduled for August 19, 2025, at 8 A.M. at the Tuscola County Purdy Building Conference Room located at 125 West Lincoln Street, Caro, MI 48723.**

Mark Putnam, Secretary, respectfully, submits the minutes: