



Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission

MEMORANDUM

To: WCPARC
From: Robert L. Tetens, Director
Date: February 1, 2013
Re: MNRTF grant application: Staebler Farm

Background

In 2001 WCPARC purchased 98 acres of land in Superior Township from Donald Staebler (Staebler Farm). The major portion of the land (86 acres) was owned by the Staebler family who has been living on and working the land for nearly a century. At the time of purchase it was agreed that Donald Staebler would have a life-long lease on the property and that when it was developed the essential farm character would be retained. The property is bisected by Plymouth Road with the residence (homestead) located south of Plymouth and the main farm buildings located to the north of this main road (farmstead). During the last decade the Commission has invested considerable effort and funds to repair and preserve several of the key components of the farmstead: loafing barn, cattle barn, horse barn, milk house, corn crib, etc. This area has been fenced off from the remaining portion, which has been used for cattle grazing. Apart from the homestead area the majority of the land to the south of Plymouth Road is used for hay production. Currently there is no public access to the facility.

Staff presented a concept plan and park development alternatives for the Staebler property to the Commission at the June 2012 meeting and to the Superior Township Planning Commission in January 2013.

Discussion

The current Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2010-2014 calls for completing a master site development plan for the park and providing entrance drives to allow public access to both the north and south portions of the park. Staff has examined other opportunities and constraints offered by the site and has developed a conceptual site plan to be used as a basis for a site master plan. Based on past successes, we believe this project is a good candidate for an MDNR Trust Fund grant. The budget for this project is \$750,000 (current CIP). If our application is successful WCPARC could receive \$300,000 from the Trust Fund to assist in project implementation. Development of this park would add a new dimension to the recreational activities we now offer to County residents. Providing public facilities for the north portion of the park (Phase 1) could be followed by expansion of the agricultural uses (cash crops, nursery, incubation farms, etc.) on the southern portion (Phase 2) to further strengthen the park's important farm theme.

Recommendation

It is my recommendation that the Commission authorize staff to prepare and submit a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (prior to April 1, 2013) to obtain a Trust Fund grant to help fund this worthwhile project. Further, a public hearing is a requirement of the grant application and will be scheduled for the Commission meeting in March.