

**CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**Dodd Park
61437 Creek Rd.
Niles, MI 49120**

August 6, 2026

4:00 P.M.- CALL MEETING TO ORDER - President VanBelle

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Commissioner File

ROLL CALL – Secretary Dohm

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DIRECTOR’S REPORT - Director Wyman

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Dark Sky/WiFi Update**
- **LWCF Update**
- **Sears Boat Launch**

NEW BUSINESS

- **Patty’s Updates**
- **Cass County Conservation District**
- **Cass County Historical Commission Harvest Fest**
- **California Dreamin’**
- **Dodd Park Overview**
- **September meeting location**

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next regular meeting September 10, 2026. Please call 445-4456 if you cannot attend.

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
1st Floor Conference Room
120 N Broadway
Cassopolis, MI 49031

July 2, 2026

4:00 p.m. – CALL MEETING TO ORDER –President VanBelle

INVOCATION – Commissioner Barerra

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner Kucklick

ROLL CALL –

Director Wyman – P

Sam Barrera – P

Annie File –A

Tharan Suvarna - P

Jamie Stafne –A

Jayne Bailey – P

Fritz Kucklick -P

Jeff VanBelle - P

Joyce Sheteron-Locke - A

Robert Parrish –P

Tami Stewart - P

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to accept: Commissioner Barrera

Second: Commissioner Parrish

Approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to accept: Commissioner Parrish

Second: Commissioner Barerra

Approved

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS –

Commissioner Langley and Ambrosia Neldon

COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS – There will be an ad hoc committee meeting prior to next month's meeting. Committee members should arrive 45 minutes early.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Director Wyman

1. Was Presented

- a. Thankful for all the volunteers that have come together at the parks. It truly does take a village.
- b. The swimming area at East Harmon has a new walkway to the beach.
- c. Hoping for a demonstration from the Conservation District showing how to create a natural seawall.
- d. West Harmon has a temporary fix to the launch. Have contacted the DNR to see if we can partner with them to fix it permanently and sustainably.
- e. There is now Wi-Fi in the community room at Lawless. The Friends purchased an extender to hopefully allow it to be accessible in the Schug and the fee booth.
- f. Had 60+ hikers on the trails at Lawless on Saturday.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Dark Sky**

- a. Compliments to Jody for keeping everything straight at the booth for the Photon Harvest Star Party.
- b. For the August Star Party, we have a musical group all set for August 14th, plus all the speakers for the event.
- c. The high winds took down the tarp used for keeping lights from showing on the viewing field.

2. **LWCF Update**

- a. No update as of yet, still waiting on the final approval from the federal government.

3. **July Parks and Recreation Month Resolution**

- a. Commissioner VanBelle will attend the BOC meeting for this presentation.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Patty's Updates**

- a. Reported that we have sold 32 more passes than as of the same date last year.
- b. Looking into a way around clientele being able to reserve a cabin or shelter without calling into the office.

2. Russ Donation

- a. A family whose father loved Russ Forest is donating a memorial bench in his honor. It will replace a bench that was destroyed by one of this spring's storms.

3. Sears Park Boat Launch

- a. The launch is concrete and is being damaged by the improper use of our boaters. We will need to get a permit from EGLE to be able to take the plank out and repair it. That's a project for the end of summer.

4. Dodd Park Tree

- a. During one of the storms a tree fell on shelter #2. Luckily the damage caused can be repaired by us and is approximately ¾ of the way complete.
- b. Referring to the rescue of a group of tubers trying to navigate the Dowagiac River, there are signs at Dodd warning the public about the dangerous conditions downstream, however people continue to ignore them.

5. August Meeting Location

- a. The meeting will be held at Dodd Park August 6, at 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be a vacancy on the board as Commissioner Suvana will be leaving us. Commissioner Barerra stated that Sgt. Shields of the Cass County Sheriff's office is interested in becoming a member.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Parrish

SECOND: Commissioner Barerra

MEETING ADJOURNED

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Dohm
Recording Secretary

Next meeting will be August 6, 2026 at Arthur Dodd Park, with the ad hoc committee meeting earlier. Please let us know if you cannot attend.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CASS COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

August 6, 2026

Dr. Lawless:

- **Hosted one scouting troop.**
- **Hosted three reservations.**
- **Mowed and trimmed.**
- **Installed extended WiFi to shelter and entrance booth.**
- **Hosted social media influencer from California.**

Dodd:

- **Did monthly water testing.**
- **Hosted four reservations.**
- **Mowed and trimmed.**
- **Hosted Parks and Recreation monthly meeting**

Russ Forest:

- **Mowed and trimmed.**
- **Hosted four reservations.**
- **Met with SMC Professor.**

Stevens Memorial Park:

- **Mowed and trimmed.**
- **Repaired buoys**
- **Replaced split rail fencing**

Sears Park:

- **Trash removal.**
- **Mowed and trimmed.**

Harmon Park East / West:

- **Mowed and trimmed**

Veteran's Memorial Park:

- **Removed woody debris.**
- **Trimmed.**

Again, growing conditions continue to be optimal for vegetation throughout the park. Jay and Jodi continue to spend much of their time mowing, trimming and cutting back trails within all our parks. I am hoping the new budget will allow us to get back to contracting some of our parks out for mowing and trimming. With a small crew such as ours, having enough time to do projects is our biggest challenge. They did a great job assisting as we re-stripped the Dodd Parking area.

Patty continues to do an amazing job handling all the phone calls, reservations, annual pass requests and answering various questions about our parks. Some the many projects on her plate include re-doing more than 100 signs for the Sandhill Crane ½ Marathon course, researching ways to enhance the Harvest Festival Trunk -n- Treat, and working on the Fall Newsletter.