

Menominee County Parks and Recreation Committee

Special Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2012

The special meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Bob Desjarlais at the Stephenson Annex Building in Stephenson, MI on August 1, 2012.

Reporting for roll call were: Bob Desjarlais, Vola Bleile, Ruby Ivens, Gail Jerzyk, Glenn Cody, County Administrator Brian Bousley, and County Commissioners Charlie Meintz and Mark Jasper. Al Thompson, Buildings and Ground Supervisor also attended the meeting. There was a quorum present to conduct the meeting.

Approval of agenda: A motion was made by Glenn and seconded by Vola. The motion carried.

Business:

- a. **Camp Host (Volunteer Camp Host Program at Kleinke Park)** Brian had called this special meeting of the committee to address the concerns of several campers as well as the camp host concerning recent events at Kleinke Park. Ruby offered a motion seconded by Gail that comments from members of the audience be limited to five minutes. The motion carried.

Several campers from Kleinke park then addressed the committee. A summary of their comments follows:

One camper stated that she felt “intimidated” by the camp host, and that he was frequently “hanging around” the campsites of others.

Another camper accused the camp host of using “racial and ethnic slurs” in his interactions with at least one individual. She also criticized the camp host for his “disrespectful manner” with some other campers, especially on one incident in July concerning a family of weekend campers who had not yet paid for their campsite. She blamed the camp host for the subsequent “unfair” eviction of this family by the Menominee County Police.

Additional allegations included the “planning of a séance and a satanic ritual” by the camp host.

Other campers spoke positively concerning the camp host. They cited his efforts to promote a harmonious atmosphere at the park including several “enjoyable and well-attended” social events for the campers. They also stated that the camp host had been consistently “positive and respectful” in their interactions with him. One man praised the camp host for his efforts to monitor the behavior of at least two “potentially dangerous” individuals – visitors whose statements or actions, in his view, might threaten the safety of other campers.

Another camper stated that one couple in particular had sought to promote discord and conflict among the long-term camping community at the park since their arrival several years ago. She recommended that the committee consider their eviction.

Next, the committee asked the host camper to respond to these comments. He regretted that his "efforts to assist" had been misinterpreted by some campers, and he stated that he thought he had been consistently respectful in his interactions with others. He explained his reasons for becoming alarmed when two individuals began to behave in an irrational manner: One man had spent the better part of a day raking the entire beach and digging holes in the sand thereby frightening several other campers; he received three separate complaints. Another individual, in addition to behaving in a strange manner, had warned him that "Satan was in the park" and that there was to be "a satanic ritual" that evening. The camp host stated that he believed it was his responsibility to warn others of this individual's erratic behavior, especially those camping adjacent to him. He went on to relate the events of one particular evening when the state police arrived at the campground and then surrounded his (the camp host's) campsite. The police explained that they had received a telephone call from one of the long-term campers stating that the camp host was planning "a séance and a mass murder" at the campground. He believed that the phone call to the police had been in retaliation for the perceived "unfair" eviction of the family (the man who had raked the beach, his wife and children) the week before who had not fully paid for their campsite.

Following the camp host's comments, the committee discussed the situation at the park and asked several clarification questions to some of the campers who had spoken earlier. No action was taken pending the regularly-scheduled meeting on August 6.

Vola offered a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Mark. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Glenn D. Cody