

**Bigfork Steering Committee Minutes**  
**September 11, 2008,**  
**bigforksteering.org**  
**(draft)**  
**Community Forum**

In attendance: Edd Blackler, George Darrow, Elna Darrow, Shelley Gonzales, Sharon Hopkins, Gary Ridderhoff, Leslie Budewitz, John Bourquin, Julie Spencer, Bruce Solberg, Ralph Walton and Joe Brenneman

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Elna Darrow at 12:05 p.m.

**Minutes:** It was moved to approve by John Bourquin and seconded by Gary Ridderhoff and Edd Blackler. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** None

**Community Forum:**

Leslie Budewitz raised concerns about the County Library Board and how the vacant seat created by the resignation of Dave Hilde and was filled by the Commissioners with the Columbia Falls representative who moved to Bigfork. She expressed her concern that the process did not allow anyone from Bigfork to apply for the position and that it was important that we have a member who is connected to Bigfork and who will represent our interests. Leslie presented a petition to the BSC stating that a member of Bigfork should be allowed to apply for the position. John Bourquin suggested that we discuss this with Joe when he arrives for this meeting. Edd Blackler suggested that a letter be sent to the Commissioners addressing our concerns if Joe does not arrive. Leslie motioned to discuss this issue directly with Joe Benneman or send a letter to the Commissioners stating our concerns over the process used to transfer Laura Long of Columbia Falls to represent Bigfork. Shelley Gonzales seconded the motion. Further discussion concerned how we should get to know Laura and urge her to attend BSC meetings. Motion was approved unanimously.

Joe Brenneman arrived for the meeting and discussed the process in which Laura was transferred. Joe stated that state statute requires that 5 board member must be appointed for 5 year terms. In so far as Laura's term had not expired and that she moved to Bigfork, the remainder of her term will be served representing Bigfork.

Sharon Hopkins inquired about what types of committees there are in Bigfork and if they are listed in the Chamber of Commerce booklet. Bruce Solberg replied that not all are listed but the Bigfork Steering Committee is linked to the Chamber website. Sharon Hopkins stated that she is a member of the Bigfork Parks Board consisting of 5 members which was created when the Bigfork Library wanted to relocate to Potoczny Park. Members are Mike Peterson, Sharon Hopkins, Brenda Jordt, Derika Barnes and Serena Keller. The mission is to gather information on Potozny Park, Sliters Park, Boat Dock, Carlyle Johnson Park, Aero Lane Park and Lakehills Park to determine what the upgrade

needs are and to create a 20 year master plan for the parks. It was stated that the county has no budget to maintain and upgrade these parks. The board is using Applied Communications to create the master plan. The next meeting of the board will be October 16<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church. There was additional discussion on maintenance of the Boat Dock. Julie Spencer stated that the property is owned by the Flathead County Road Department but has been maintained by the Flathead County Parks Department until this year. Bigfork Water & Sewer has maintained when no one else would.

Bruce Solberg indicated that the Chamber of Commerce approved to host a Commissioner's Candidate Forum. It was requested that both Lake and Flathead county candidates be invited. On Wednesday September 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at Clementine's, the Oldivai Forum is hosting commissioner candidate Steve Qunell.

There was a question on the status of the Neighborhood Plan. Joe stated that after the 30-day public comment period, and unless there is no other compelling information to the contrary, the text amendment would be adopted and the Plan would then go back to the Planning Board for a workshop.

There was a discussion on the status of the Bigfork sign violations and why the county is not doing anything about them. Joe stated that to begin the process of citing violators each and every violation within the county would need to be identified so no one person would be singled out. He stated that large billboard companies are also in violation, and while the county feels they could prevail against these large companies, the county does not want to spend the money in litigation. The sign ordinance has to be applied consistently across the county.

There was a discussion regarding the need for a regional wastewater treatment facility. A \$100,000 million grant has been written by Joe Brenneman and presented to the Department of Natural Resources requesting that a waste water management group be created represented by tribal groups, Lake and Flathead counties and Bigfork. This "stakeholder group" would analyze waste water needs and where the new facility would be needed. This request will be forwarded to the Legislature. There was a related discussion regarding the recent application by the Lee family to use approximately 50 acres of there land for the deposit of septic sludge. Joe stated that there are approximately 30,000 septic tanks in the county generating 2-5 million gallons of septic sludge pumped annually. With the declining availability of vacant land for the deposit of septic sludge this is becoming a problem. Waste treatment plants cannot accept this product. He stated that it is the State Board of Health's decision to approve or decline applications to create septic sludge disposal areas.

Lastly, there was a discussion that the Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork has offered to fund Director and Officer insurance for BSC for one year; the annual premium is approximately \$1,800. It was moved by Edd Blackler and seconded by John Bourquin to accept the payment for D&O insurance by CFBB.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Submitted by:

Shelley Gonzales