

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation
MINUTES
Board of Directors
Meeting Date: September 10, 2012

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Ray Sanders, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All board members were present.

Also in attendance:

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Gordon Jewett, Assistant Superintendent; and Michele Haarr, Clerk

Others Present:

Tom Esch – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Elma Giavagis – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Greg Gunderson – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Alex Hogle – Flathead County Planning & Zoning
Sharon Hopkins – Bigfork Advisory Committee
Tamara Tanberg – Lakeside Advisory Committee

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors, Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation, was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, on September 10, 2012. The meeting convened at 8:31AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the August 6, 2012 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to approve the August 6, 2012 minutes.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Take Action on Addendum to Parks Master Plan – Tom Esch, Jim Watson

Tom Esch reported that Foys to Blacktail Trails was awarded a 400K Community Forest Grant to assist in the acquisition of land at Herron Park. It is a matching grant and matching funds are essentially in place. The largest portion of the matching funds, from 350K – 360 K, comes from land acquisition Phase III which closed in July. FTBT retains short-term ownership in order to use it as a match. The remaining 40K will be reimbursements from the last round of funding. FTBT will administer the grant.

The original 120 acres of Herron will continue to be managed as a park, with the additional phases of land acquisition to be managed as a community forest as well as a public park. An existing Community Forest Management Plan will be followed and includes weed management, thinning, reforestation if necessary, fire prevention, and education – **see Attachment A**. This will be an evolving plan. The education component includes sustainable forestry and will be conducted in partnership with Montana Tree Farm, Montana Forest Stewardship Program, Flathead Valley Community College and the Vocational-Agriculture Center.

The forestry plan specifies an inventory, condition, and any problems with diseases. It is a dynamic document and will be updated as needs occur. Administration of the Forestry Plan was discussed last week at a meeting with Esch and Jim Watkins of FTBT, County Administrator Mike Pence, BJ Grieve of Planning & Zoning and Jed Fisher, Superintendent of Flathead County Parks & Recreation. A Memorandum of Understanding between FTBT and Flathead County states that FTBT will help the County manage forestry goals and there will be no out-of-pocket money from the County – **see Attachment B**.

Implementation is supervised by an advisory committee. Esch recommended the existing Herron/Foys Advisory Committee be the oversight group with the addition of a forestry person – perhaps someone from Stoltz Lumber and a representative from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The group would meet at least once per year for Forestry Plan management to set annual goals.

Mr. Esch asked the Board to adopt the Forestry Plan as an addendum to the Parks Master Plan. This plan was adopted in 2007 and has been revised.

Elise Robocker made a motion to adopt the Community Forest Plan as an addendum to the Parks Master Plan.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

Superintendent Jed Fisher indicated that Planning & Zoning will be working on zoning changes.

Discussion Regarding New CTEP Trail Proposals & Review of Evaluation Form – Alex Hogle

Alex Hogle from Flathead County Planning & Zoning reviewed the role of the Flathead County Weed/Parks Board with the Flathead County Trails Plan adopted on October 12, 2010, particularly with the selection of new projects. Subsequent to the adoption of the new plan, County Commissioners decided to disband PATHS (People, Athletics, Travel, Health & Safety) – a Recreational Trails Advisory Committee which was active in the evolution of trail planning. It is the responsibility of the Weed/Parks Board to review all trail project proposals which are due by October 1st of each year.

Past concerns of the initial plan included lack of continuity, connectivity, and maintenance. These concerns have been addressed in the revised plan, which includes a standardized approach for reviewing new trail requests. Appendix C –Trail Evaluation Form is the tool that the Board will use in evaluating and rating trail project proposals – **see Attachment C**.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Sharon Hopkins announced that Skip Gilmore was resigning his position on the Advisory Committee and the Board should receive the letter shortly. Ms. Hopkins requested an update on the kayak rack installation and Superintendent Jed Fisher responded that this escalating situation has now involved staff time, Planning & Zoning who reviewed the floodplain & set-backs, the Road Department who obtained the right-of-way encroachment permit, the County Attorney, and the Commissioners. All agencies have reviewed and approved the installation. Bill Myers of Pointer Scenic Cruises is the neighbor to the west and has reported that sewage

was hit when County staff was digging the foundation for the concrete pad. In the past there have been issues with disturbing the dirt due to leaks from the old station, which has since been renovated. Myers has hired an attorney to represent him and refers to a document he has indicating that the County had an obligation to review the situation with him prior to install. Myers is also reporting that he cannot access his property from the east side.

Ms. Hopkins reported that the reason the need for a kayak rack on County property came about was because Mr. Myers declined a request from local landowners to park kayaks on his property. Superintendent Fisher indicated that this is a County property rights concern. The claim that the County agreed to notify Mr. Myers will be researched and if there is no issue, installation will proceed. Hopkins will speak with Myers to discuss the existence of the referenced document and report back.

Jim Buechle made a motion to proceed with installation unless a document is produced indicating that the County had an obligation to review any changes at the Bigfork Dock property prior to changes being made.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Foys/Herron Advisory Committee.

Foys to Blacktail Trails

Elma Giavagis reviewed signing design for Herron Park Trails - **see Attachment D**. Greg Gunderson indicated that he worked extensively with Whitefish trail signing which experience has helped in design of Herron Park signing that is both inexpensive and can be easily modified. Material for the post is Rhino Plastic, with adhesive decals. The plan is to mark infrastructure, trail intersections and direction, and address locations for horses and bicycles. The graphic design component has been carefully considered to provide standardization throughout the Park. Any information posted on the Kiosk will be sent to the Parks Department for approval. Private property signing will be distinctly different and more permanent.

Installation will be coordinated with National Trails Day next September. Templates will be provided to the staff and Board prior to construction.

Lakeside Advisory Report

Volunteer Park – Tamara Tanberg reported the lawn watering that was insufficient last year is now too abundant. The ground is spongy & soft making it vulnerable to damage from foot traffic and random vehicles. This will continue to occur due to the soil composition which has a lot of clay. The water runs across the clay, but is not fully absorbed. Volunteers continue to work on weeding. On several occasions, park renters needed to clean up the pavilions prior to use. There was discussion regarding hiring a part time semi-retired or young person to spend several hours per day during the busy season to manage trash, glass on the beach, clean and stock restrooms and general clean-up.

Jim Buechle made a motion to hire a seasonal employee from Memorial Day through Labor Day at \$10 per hour to provide custodial and maintenance services at Volunteer Park in Lakeside.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that a horticulturist looked at the trees and could not identify any specific issue. Three trees have been lost – possibly due to construction disturbance and old age.

Ben Williams Park – Bob Hislop Tennis Services has provided annual tennis court surface maintenance. Last year there was no charge and this year a \$500 fee paid out of the residual funds from the initial construction. He recommended getting a waterline closer to the courts to hose down in order to minimize the potential for dirt & debris, which tears up the surface.

Lakeside Boulevard Swim Beach – Kristi Buffington of the Flathead Lakers is working on a proposal for improvements on the steep eroding bank. The possibility of installing grass mats, plants and seeding was discussed.

Middle Forks Advisory Committee

There was no one present.

Other Business

Weed Department News

- Beaver Lake Hybrid Water Lily – Elise Robocker questioned the status of the hybrid water lily that was discovered while surveying for Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) at Beaver Lake. The owner of the property who placed it in the water has offered to remove it. The majority of EWM has been removed from Beaver Lake with the initial removal of 7 pounds and an additional 23 pounds removed as a result of a snorkel survey. Bottom barriers will be pulled at the end of the season and we hope to see good results. Most of the mats should be able to be reused after clean-up.
- Weed Plan – Remains under review by the County Attorneys.
- Weeds along BNSF Railway – Staff reviewed the weeds along the railway line and BNSF was responsive in their weed control.
- Tansy Ragwort – Two men were hired for the Tansy Ragwort project and the department did the best it could with control efforts.
- Salt Cedar – Removal of Salt Cedar continues. After U-Dig marks the area the plants are removed with shoveling around the main structure. The majority of removal contracts will be completed by fall. Removals are taken to the landfill and buried with the regular trash.

There have been no spills or wrongful applications.

Fisher reported that Haily Meeker was married and is now Haily Hoff and long-term employee Bill Weseman will be retiring in 3 months.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05AM.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

The time and place of the next regular meeting is Monday, October 1, 2012 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.