

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Board of Directors

Meeting Date: August 5, 2013

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Ray Sanders

Members of the Board not in attendance:

Elise Robocker, Pete Woll

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Christine Bailey – Broker
Jami Belt – Columbia Falls Trails
Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory
Danielle Coffman – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Matt Cottle – Wolf Creek Weed Concern
Sarah Dakin – Columbia Falls Trails
Maggie Davis – Volunteer Park
Jennifer Drew – Lakeside Advisory
Bruce Ennis – Volunteer Park
Cindy Ercoline – Kila Advisory
Joe Johnson – Wolf Creek Weed Concern
Craig Naylor – Aikido in Kalispell
Alan Ruby – Middle Forks/Gateway to Glacier
Fred Smith – Wolf Creek Weed Concern
Robert Tuman – Flathead County Parks & Recreation Department
Linda Tutvedt – Herron/Foys
Elaine Wilson – Lakeside Advisory

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 August 5, 2013. The meeting convened at 8:31AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the June 3, 2013 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Jim Buechle made a motion to approve the June 3, 2013 board minutes.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

Matt Cottle, Joe Johnson and Fred Smith voiced concerns about a weed problem at Wolf Creek Drive in the area around Swan School and to the east. The situation is out of control and they are asking the County to help.

Superintendent Jed Fisher check if there may be grant funding available. The next steps are to define the area, map it and obtain a list of the landowners, and then get the topic on the Commissioner's agenda for discussion.

Volunteer Park Expansion – Christine Bailey, Broker

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported on an opportunity to purchase land adjacent to Volunteer Park. The Cash property was recently put up for sale in the mid-\$700,000 range. An appraisal completed by Steven Backer for the County indicated a value of 560K. Christine Bailey stated that the property is .61 acres and has 83' of lakefront.

Jim Buechle made a motion to proceed with efforts to negotiate a purchase of the Cash property located at 608 Lakeside Boulevard, Lakeside, MT.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Superintendent Fisher reported that the majority of park users are very pleased with Volunteer Park; however, the office recently received a complaint from a woman who was unhappy that she had to pay a base rate for park use and also a fee to rent a pavilion. Also, she was not happy that she had to wait several weeks for her security deposit to be returned. In addition, there was an unhappy renter who arrived at the park at 5:30 am to set up for a 5K race. The County cleaning crew did not arrive until 8am so the area had to be cleaned by the person who rented the park. That person was not happy with the situation.

There was discussion regarding the employment of a caretaker type person during the busy summer months – especially if the park is expanded.

Columbia Falls Trails

Jamie Belt & Sarah Dakin presented a summary of potential trail construction that would connect Columbia Falls to Bad Rock Canyon and would tie in nicely with the Gateway to Glacier Trail from Badrock Canyon to West Glacier. The proposed site is located on Glencore Corporation property, the parent company of Columbia Falls Aluminum Company. Representatives of Glencore have expressed an interest in working with the community to establish this trail. The Board was asked for their support of the project which was enthusiastically given.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to endorse moving forward in pursuit of trail construction through the Glencore property in Columbia Falls, Montana.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Aikido at Foy's Community Center

Dr. Craig Naylor would like to use the Foy's Community Center to teach Aikido, a non-violent martial art. Dr. Naylor has trained in four styles of Aikido since 1979, earned his first-level black belt in 1993, and Sandan (third-level black belt) in 2007. He is POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) certified in Idaho and Montana certification is pending.

The County attorney endorsed hiring Dr. Naylor through LC Staffing, with sufficient participant fees to cover the cost of labor and profit.

Jim Buechle made a motion to proceed with due diligence in getting Dr. Naylor set up to teach Aikido.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Park Rental Rate Complaint – Deb McCready

Ms. McCready was not present, but Superintendent Jed Fisher relayed her concern under Volunteer Park Expansion.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Edd Blackler discussed working with the Road Department to have a curb and small parking area installed around Holt Drive. Citizens for a Better Bigfork will be contacted for help with funding and winter maintenance. Safety concerns will be addressed.

Overall, things are going well with Bigfork parks. There have been periodic issues at the Bigfork Dock and the County is working on a plan to install irrigation there.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Linda Tutvedt reported that the Department is doing an outstanding job maintaining Herron Park and Foys Lake Access.

The annual event at Rebecca Farm contributed to heavy use of the Herron Park stalls and jumps. It was suggested that Flathead Electric's Round Up for Safety dollars might be used to maintain the arena and jumps.

There was a request for a Flathead Combined Training Association donation box. It was suggested that proceeds from the existing donation box be shared with FCTA rather than installation of a second box. This will be reviewed with the County Finance Department. Having a park host was discussed. In addition, installation of a culvert in the creek at the south end of the meadow was suggested.

The stairway access to Foys Lake access remains on hold until there is clear direction regarding permits. Discussion ensued regarding installation of graded switchbacks. The improvement would involve Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Foys to Blacktail Trails

Danielle Coffman reported that Foys to Blacktail Trails have successfully added 260 acres of 320 planned acres to Herron Park. The Montana Conservation Corps will be working at Herron from August 5th – 9th to remove barbed wire fencing, complete minor trail work, and perform work on the John Chase property. Use of RTP dollars for kiosk improvements was discussed.

Kila Advisory Report

Cindy Ercoline reported on progress at Kila Park. The fence was moved, paths defined, mowing accomplished, and ADA compliant picnic tables are on order. The next effort will be to determine ADA requirements for the location of a spotting scope on the old railroad spur, which is a 600' grade, approximately 220' long and 9' wide, and to obtain estimates for prepping and pavement.

Lakeside Advisory Report

Jennifer Drew thanked the department for clean-up of Ben Williams Park. The 10 & under tennis camp went well and had a good turn-out. A request was made to have water located next to the courts for surface maintenance. Discussion took place regarding hooking up to Lakeside Water & Sewer as opposed to using the old well or installing a new well.

Elaine Wilson reported that all the parks are getting huge use and the amount of trash generated is incredible. Maggie Davis alerted the Board to a Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments hearing regarding new construction that would access storm water drainage through Volunteer Park. There is a concern about compromising the water quality at the park, which is a very popular recreation area. The hearing takes place August 6th at 6pm. Superintendent Jed Fisher will attend.

Middle Forks Advisory Committee

Alan Ruby reported on a successful “Pints for Paths” fundraising event that took place on July 13th. There were 11 brewers and 27 flavors. A press release was distributed regarding “Pedal for Paths Road Fun Ride and Tour” to take place on September 21st. Mr. Ruby is excited about the proposed trail from Columbia Falls to Badrock Canyon, which will be a great addition to the trail effort in West Glacier.

Finally, Ruby thanked the Board for doing a great job in working with all corners of Flathead County in doing all that they can with what is available.

Church Slough Update

After a 2.5 year legal battle, and over 250K in legal fees, the Slough access was reopened on July 30th. Logs will be maintained to track use and the comment box will remain in place. Discussion ensued regarding education and encouragement for responsible use, consideration of residents along the Slough, and pack in – pack out garbage.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks will install a porta-potty. There is no money budgeted for a vaulted bathroom and the County is requesting funding assistance to help with the 9K capital outlay.

Sliter Park Lease Agreement

There was continuing discussion regarding the Sliter’s Park lease being turned over to the Citizens for a Better Bigfork, or a similar group. This would relieve the County of managing & maintaining a leased park and give the population of Bigfork local control over what happens at the park.

Application Rates

Superintendent Jed Fisher requested a 10% increase of all Weed Department herbicide and equipment costs.

Jim Buechle made a motion to increase all Weed Department herbicide and equipment costs by 10%.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Flathead Conservation District – Salt Cedar Agreement Renewal

There was discussion about renewing a Memorandum of Understanding with Flathead Conservation for a cost share program related to the removal of salt cedar. The County Weed Department and Flathead Conservation District will each contribute \$25 toward the cost of tree replacement.

Jim Buechle made a motion to continue with the program.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Gymnasium Feasibility Study & Management Plan

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that he is diligently working on a business plan for a gymnasium which would offer long term sustainability for the Parks & Recreation Department. The Board agreed to have a special meeting to discuss surplus of 20 – 30 County parks that are not conducive to development. The proceeds from the sale of these parks would help fund the gym project.

Recreation Director Bob Tuman spoke on behalf of the gymnasium effort saying that although there was initial concern about the proposed location being too far south, it will better serve the increased participation of the Lakeside community, be a good compliment to Kidsports fields north of town and the Conrad Complex fields

east of town. The proposed gym would have 4 – 6 basketball courts and would tie in with Rotary Basketball – a 25 year old organization. Convenience is the key.

The department was unsuccessful in working with a religious affiliated financial donor due to separation of church and state. A local landowner has generously offered to donate land; however, the impact fees required by the City of Kalispell are in excess of 1 million and would make the project unfeasible. Superintendent Fisher has contacted Mike Baker of the City of Kalispell to work on a partnership with the City in order to move the project forward.

Spartan Race 2014 Discussion/Large Group User Fees

More than 4,000 Spartans participated in Montana's first Spartan Race held in Bigfork on May 11, 2013. Another Spartan Race has already been planned for next year on June 14th. Representatives of the Race have expressed an interest in using Herron Park as a venue, possibly in addition to continued rental of the Bigfork property and/or other locations. There was discussion about setting up workshops to develop large group user fees and player fees.

Flathead AIS Workgroup Letter 5-31-13

Flathead AIS Work Group added Flathead County's name to a list of AIS workgroup members which was placed on the bottom of correspondence that addressed treatment permission and included a request for financial contributions to be sent to Lake County. It was agreed that Flathead County's name should be removed from the letter and not used without permission. Superintendent Jed Fisher will draft a letter for the Board.

Background Checks

Years ago the County Parks & Recreation Department began background checks on coaches and referees. This practice has continued over the years and is now costing 7K per year and up to \$400 for a single investigation. The program began with checks every year, and was subsequently expanded to every 2 years. The suggestion was made to complete background checks every 3 years.

Recreation Director Bob Tuman will check with the Rotary Club and the City of Kalispell to see what they are doing.

Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Adjourn

Clyde Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:45AM.

Jim Buechle 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, September 9, 2013 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

Summary Appraisal Report of Real Property – 608 Lakeside Boulevard, Lakeside, MT

Proposal for Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Trail/Bike Path

Press Release “Pedal for Paths Road Fun Ride and Tour” – Gateway to Glacier Fundraising

Letter from Flathead AIS Work Group dated 5-31-13 re Aquatic Weeds