

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Board of Directors

Meeting Date: February 13, 2014

Members of the Board in attendance:

Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

Ray Sanders, Jim Buechle

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Jack Bradford – Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee

Cindy Ercoline – Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee

Tom Esch- Foy's to Blacktail Trails

Bob Keenan – Bigfork/Sliter Park

Walter Kuhn – Bigfork/Sliter Park

Eric Mulcahy – Sands Surveying

Paul Mutascio – Bigfork/Sliter Park

Alan Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trails

Mary Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trails

Liz Seabaugh – Foy's to Blacktail Trails

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 February 13, 2014. The meeting convened at 8:33AM, Board member Pete Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the December 2, 2013, and January 10, 2014 meetings 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 December 2, 2013, and January 10, 2014 Board minutes.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Vote to recommend or Deny Forest Stewardship Plan for Foy's Community Forest

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that there was no public comment on the Forest Stewardship Plan for Foy's Community Forest. Chairman Sanders had some concerns but in talking with the County attorney it was determined there is sufficient protection for the County in the event of a failure to perform. Foy's to Blacktail Trails has done a good job in working with Flathead Valley Community College and other groups to set up the structure for Plan compliance.

Elise Robocker made a motion to recommend that the County Commission move forward with approval of the Forest Stewardship Plan for Foy's Community Forest.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding a concern about who will be responsible for maintenance of the Plan 10 years from now. Superintendent Jed Fisher explained that the purpose of the Plan is to lay out responsibilities if the Board feels the County cannot perform, in which case the land would revert back to Foy's to Blacktail Trails. Tom Esch explained that the Plan includes three components – land management/forestry, recreation and education. The current version of the Plan is essentially the same plan as approved 4 years ago. The Flathead Community Foundation has set up a perpetual maintenance fund with a current balance of \$9,400.

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

Sliter Park Discussion – Paul Mutascio

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed the ongoing concern regarding the County's level of funding for parks, which is essentially the same as it was in 1997. Since that time revenue from recreation programs has increased from 55K to 170K from 1997 and has helped shore up the budget. Over the years, the number of parks has increased, and deferred maintenance continues to accrue. Sliter Park is one of two leased parks – all other County parks are owned by the County, including 4 other parks in Bigfork. \$7,500 per year average expense at Sliter Park includes maintenance, utilities and special projects. Parking encroachment on Shawnee Drive has raised concerns regarding emergency access. Mr. Fisher recommended that an agreement with the community of Bigfork be reached by June 2014 or the County would consider turning the park back over to PacifiCorp. PacifiCorp's obligation per Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is to provide the property as a park.

Lease – Paul Mutascio stated that the Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork is made up of volunteers, is not an established group and has no paid staff. Sliter is a community park as compared to three of the four other parks which are sports fields. The group does not want Sliter Park to go away and does not want to lease the park themselves. They contribute financially to the park: pays the lease in 5 year increments (it is currently paid until 2016 and PacifiCorp pays the taxes); hired an independent contractor last year to assist with maintenance; and provided 32K to remodel the bathrooms.

Beer and Wine Events – The basic issue in making Sliter Park a success is Resolution 513A adopted in 1990, which places limits on the consumption of alcohol. If this resolution is repealed the group will begin to market special events at the park. Mr. Mutascio discussed this possibility with Sheriff Curry, who has no issue with it as long as there is sufficient security/control and insurance. Superintendent Fisher stated that historically the County has long been against the service of alcohol in the parks. Recently, the Cities of Whitefish and Kalispell have allowed alcohol at events.

Walter Kuhn, a resident of Bigfork spoke in favor of the County maintaining the lease. Prior to 1990, Bigfork had a big reputation for being a huge, out-of-control party. Sliter is a jewel of Bigfork, has been in the park system over 35 years and is an easy target because it is leased, but it is well used and placed park. The cost standpoint is really no difference whether it is owned or leased.

Bob Keenan indicated that the group became aware of the lease concern only two months ago. It is assumed that any event (which allows the service of alcohol) at the park will be a permitted situation with controls. The trust fund he manages has no strict guidelines and provides money for capital assets that may be seen, touched and felt, but not for maintenance. Mutascio stated that money may be generated above and beyond maintenance costs to expand on the success. Board member Elise Robocker stated that it is important for all citizens to step up with volunteering.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett questioned the outcome if the County did not renew the lease. Edd Blackler acts as liaison between Bigfork and the County to keep the channels of communication open and feels things are on track to come up with an agreement for people who use the park. Tom Esch said that alcohol was served at a Herron Park event and at the County Fairgrounds. He is open for consideration of repeal under the determination of certain conditions, such as a licensed server, specific time, possibly limiting the number of drinks and insurance. Kuhn indicated there would be service of alcohol, but no selling.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to continue the lease of Sliter Park with PacifiCorp for another year contingent upon having a Memorandum of Understanding with Citizens for a Better Bigfork in place by June 1, 2014.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Elise Robocker made a motion to support the repeal of Resolution 513A upon determination of certain conditions, as yet to be determined.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Superintendent Jed Fisher requested permission to delay discussion of the next agenda item CIL Parkland for Turner Subdivision until Eric Mulcahy arrived. The Board heard from Bigfork Advisory Committee member Edd Blackler who needed to leave for a scheduled appointment.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Edd Blackler reported that permit requests for Bigfork Baseball were submitted this day. Committee member Sharon Hopkins will be back in town soon and they are hopeful for a smooth season.

Advisory Board Appointments

The Board reviewed letters of interest for service on the various park advisory committees. New appointments shall be for a three-year term.

Elise Robocker made a motion to approve the following additions to the Parks Advisory Committees:

Bigfork Advisory Committee: Edd Blackler, Dave Hadden, Sharon Hopkins

Foys Lake/Herron Park Advisory Committee: Elizabeth Makman, Gail A Watson-Fulsaas

Kila Park/Smith Lake Advisory Committee: Jack Bradford, Ann Keenan, David Link, Cindy Ercoline, Susan Wallace

Lakeside Advisory Committee: Tamara Tanberg, Elaine Wilson, Kathy Cummings

Middle Forks Advisory Committee: Pat McClelland

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Weed Enforcement – Approval for Court Orders

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed 14 cases of non-compliance with Montana Code Annotated Part 21 County Weed Control. Each of the landowners have received two letters from the Weed Department and one from the County Attorney.

Elise Robocker made a motion to proceed with Court Orders for the following landowners:

Richard Berger, Harry Bland, Dewey Fischer, Nathan and Mary Garber, Verne Hebert, Hungry Horse Development Partners, Landon and Laurie Jones, Andrew Kent, Craig Kiser, Michael Maroney, Montana Land Concepts, John Rosenlund, Gary Seaman, and Ross Wilde.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

CIL Parkland for Turner Subdivision – Sands Surveying

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed the proposed park land dedication on behalf of Wayne & Peggy Turner. The subject property is located 5-6 miles west of town right behind the fire hall and Julie's restaurant. The development encompasses 220 acres and the proposed park is 31 acres, with a 1.4% slope across the entire park. A 30' right-of-way exists at the property boundary, which would be paved at the developer's expense when that property is improved. Eric Mulcahy of Sands Surveying indicated stated the parkland is 5.248 acres and includes some road right-of-way.

Land acquisition and land management concerns go before the County Commissioners with a recommendation from this Board. The cost to develop this parkland could be \$500,000 and the current budget cannot support it. Until there is money available for development, weed control and mowing would occur. The property has water access with domestic water lines running under the park. In addition Wayne Turner has water rights to a creek nearby that could be used for irrigation as the water lines running under the park are insufficient for all of the water needs. The County would need to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the Turners that would include but not be limited to water rights, trail easement, and usage. Absent Board member James Buechle recommends accepting the land as there is no park in Kila or West Valley. Mr. Fisher strongly recommended that a clear and concise Memorandum of Understanding be prepared in advance of approval so that the County is protected, along with public comment that would reach out to the local community.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to recommend accepting the Turner Parkland in lieu of cash.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

CIL Requests

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that there is approximately \$300,000 in the cash-in-lieu account. It is important to consider long-term sustainability for the Parks and Recreation Department when considering cash-in-lieu requests.

Foys to Blacktail Trails

- \$50,000 – Tom Esch distributed a packet of information regarding Foys to Blacktail Trails which reviewed funding of land acquisition for Herron Park. Since 2008 the group has acquired 260 of the anticipated 320 acres. Over \$162,000 has been expended for trail construction and maintenance by Montana Conservation Corps and volunteers. The final phase is 60 acres and will cost \$440,000 to complete. \$50,000 of cash-in-lieu funding was requested. The funds are required for the 1st quarter of 2015.

Kila Park/Smith Lade Advisory Committee

- \$6,135 – Cindy Ercoline requested continued mowing and weed control, along with \$6,135 for a Double SM-1000 all-weather spotting scope. They are hoping to address parking issue, fill and drainage.

Lakeside Advisory Committee – Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed correspondence from Tamara Tanberg stating requests:

- No stated cost – Upgrade and restoration of water well in Ben Williams Park and electrical services.
- \$2,250 – Little Kompan Blazer playground piece.
- No stated cost – Trees that need special care or replacement; new pea gravel or bark, other maintenance such as paint or cleaning.

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that all of these requests are handled within the budget with the exception of \$2,250 for playground equipment.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to request extension of cash-in-lieu awards until the next Board meeting on March 3, 2014.

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

There was no report from Foys to Blacktail Trails.

Kila Advisory Report

There was no report from the Kila Advisory Committee.

Lakeside Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee.

Middle Forks Advisory Committee

There was no one present from the Middle Forks Advisory Committee.

Alan Ruby of Gateway to Glacier Trails stated they have no request for cash-in-lieu funding. The next fundraiser is “Cabin Fever Days” on February 14-16, 2014. Construction plans are progressing and a plan will be developed for maintenance funds.

Other Business

Cindy Ercoline introduced Jack Bradford, a new member of the Kila Park/Smith Lake Advisory Committee.

Adjourn

Elise Robocker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:42AM.

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, March 3, 2014 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

“Foys to Blacktail Trails at Herron Park – A Partnership with Flathead County Parks”.

Letters of Interest to serve on Parks Advisory Committees.

Email from Tamara Tanberg of Lakeside Advisory Committee stating cash-in-lieu requests.

Brochure for Cabin Fever Days in Badrock Canyon, Montana, February 14-16, 2014.