

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: October 6, 2014

Members of the Board in attendance:

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

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All board members were in attendance.

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Russ Barnett – Bitterroot Lake area resident
Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory
Tia Celentano – 24 Hours of Flathead
Mark Christensen – 24 Hours of Flathead
Karlene Kohr – Flathead Combined Training Association
Gary Krueger – Flathead County Commissioner
David Link – Kila/Smith Lake Advisory
Derek Milner – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Mary Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trails
Linda Tutvedt – Foys/Herron Advisory

Call to Order

A meeting of the Board of Directors for Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana on October 6, 2014. The meeting convened at 8:34AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the August 25, 2014 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 25, 2014 Board 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.

Russ Barnett – Request for Access Permit at Little Bitterroot

Mr. Barnett requested permanent access through County property to his cabin at 665 Lodge Pole Drive, Marion, which is adjacent to Blue Grouse Boat Launch. Access through his own property is impacted by a drain field that would require a substantial outlay of money to remedy. Mr. Barnett stated that access through the County parkland has existed since 1952; however, no formal agreement has been in place for access.

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that the matter is outside the purview of this Board and is currently being reviewed by the County Attorney's office for a recommendation to the County Commissioners. The Board may

choose to make a recommendation to the County Commission. Superintendent Fisher will request a summary of the County Attorney findings to report to the Board.

The County Parks Department plans to install a fence along the property line as they have been doing in numerous parks after the Commissioners make a decision on the matter.

Pete Woll made a motion to table a recommendation until an opinion is obtained from the County Attorney's office.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Tia Celentano – 24 Hours of Flathead

Ms. Celentano inquired if there was any feedback on the recent 24-Hours of Flathead bicycle race event. Superintendent Jed Fisher indicated that the Department's concern was the location of the tents in the meadow. Typically camping is not allowed in County parks and when exceptions occur at Herron Park, tents are located adjacent to the horse stables – not in the meadow. The permit holders want to be close to the equipment and view the tents located in the meadow as a staging area.

Discussion ensued between Karlene Kohr, who represented Flathead Combined Training Association (FCTA) – the equestrian group – and Mark Christensen and Ms. Celentano, both with 24 Hours of Flathead. Ms. Kohr was concerned about the safety of riders and horses which is already impacted by ground squirrels. Man-made holes add to this concern. Mr. Christensen was the last to leave the area after the event and stated that there were virtually no holes there. It was generally agreed that better coordination needs to occur with the Parks Department in addition to better coordination between the permit holder and FCTA. Ms. Kohr stated that convenience is not as important as safety. Everyone wants to avoid a person or horse getting hurt. Communication and education are important.

Sports Fields – Fee Structure

Superintendent Jed Fisher requested discussion of this topic with the Bigfork Advisory Board prior to discussing it with the Board. The Board concurred.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Edd Blackler and Sharon Hopkins gave new Advisory Committee member Walter Kuhn a tour of the Bigfork Parks and submitted a summary of their observations and comments. These will be reviewed by staff and prioritized for standard maintenance jobs and budget items.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of Carlyle Johnson Park and the minimal return. In some cases no return. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported his continuing concern with park user groups who have the incorrect assumption that their taxpayer dollars cover all costs associated with park maintenance. Similar to Glacier National Park, a fee is required from people entering the park. There was discussion about a possible tiered fee structure which would include the standard user group without special needs; the user group with limited staff assistance; and the special events that would require more significant staff assistance.

Karlene Kohr stated that she is amazed what the County Parks Department can accomplish with so little staff.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Karlene Kohr reported that after several event cancellations due to inclement weather, FCTA was finally able to host a mini-event on September 20th. What can be done about the ground squirrel concern? They have holes throughout the dressage and arena areas. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett said it is too late to address it this season. FCTA needs to send a written request for the Department to hire a service to handle it. Assistant

Superintendent Jewett will coordinate the work, which will be completed at FCTA's expense. In the future, the request should be generated by FCTA as needed.

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

Derek Milner introduced himself as the new chairman of the Trails Committee. He has lived in Kalispell for seven years and works for the Forest Service.

There is \$27,000 left to raise to complete the final purchase of land acquisition for Herron Park. Public Lands Day on September 27th went very well with most of the effort spent clearing vegetation for a new multi-user trail, preliminarily referred to as the "Boundary Trail". Montana Conservation Corps was recognized for their significant contribution to this effort.

Results of the recent survey posted on Survey Monkey were reviewed, along with submitted comments. The group was pleased with the results from the survey which was posted for a short time with limited outreach. Copies were distributed to the Board. Results will be posted on the Foys to Blacktail Trails website.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that grass cutting was done on the stream bank which had a negative impact on the culvert drainage. Anytime trail construction or meadow work is planned a written request needs to be submitted to the Parks Department and Parks staff will be on site while the work is conducted.

Kila Advisory Report

David Link reported that the landscape architect has completed his work and has been paid for his services. Cindy Ercoline will be in touch with a full report.

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Middle Forks Advisory Committee. Mary Ruby reported that things are clicking along with the trail groups. The 6.8 mile path from Coram to West Glacier is pretty well nailed. Request for Proposals for construction of this segment were reviewed last week. The folks with the trail segment from Columbia Falls to Badrock are working hard to make that section happen. The path will go from Columbia Heights over the bridge to Hungry Horse Highway, where the Department of Transportation takes over. Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that groundbreaking for the Gateway to Glacier trail need to take place by the spring. Ruby thanked the Board for their support of the vision.

Lakeside Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee.

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that the tennis courts at Ben Williams are in need of maintenance that needs to be accomplished quickly. The Parks Department previously donated maintenance funds for this type of work. Staff is aware of dead trees which present a hazard to park users and will be removed this fall.

Superintendent Fisher reiterated the need for a park host at Volunteer Park. The thought is to have a kiosk/hut type structure that would operate as a Visitor's Information Center.

Other Business

Flathead County Gymnasium – Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that he met with several key people who are interested and willing to help with gymnasium fundraising efforts. A brochure is in the planning stage which will include a schematic of the proposed gym, along with a mission statement and other pertinent information. The current manager of Kid Sports has an interest in participating and will discuss the project with his board. The intent is to pull together a core foundation group to help move the project forward. The current favorable location is the property located north of the County Fairgrounds, which is within City limits. The County

Commission has committed 1.5 million with the remainder to be supplied by private funding, grants and donations through the efforts of the Parks & Recreation Department.

Correspondence from Bruce Ennis and Margaret S Davis was distributed to the Board. Mr. Ennis and Ms. Davis thanked the Board, staff, Commissioners, and County Administrator for their contributions toward Volunteer Park expansion.

There was no other business.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:47AM.

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

Documents Submitted to the Board:

- Correspondence from Russ and Lindsay Barnett dated October 1, 2014, along with photographs of their property and Blue Grouse Boat launch.
- Bigfork Advisory Committee's report on the observations and comments of area parks.
- Survey Results and comments from the Foys to Blacktail Trails recent survey regarding Herron Park.
- Correspondence from Bruce Ennis and Margaret S Davis, Driver Spoon LLC, thanking the Board, staff, Commissioners, and County Administrator for their contributions toward Volunteer Park expansion.