

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: November 17, 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:

Dallas Casazza – Recreation Program Past Participant

Jennifer Drew – Lakeside Advisory

Cindy Ercoline – Kila/Smith Lake Advisory

Sharon Hopkins – Bigfork Advisory

Cliff Kipp – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Walter Kuhn – Bigfork Advisory

David Link – Kila/Smith Lake Advisory

Sue Wallace – Kila/Smith Lake 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 November 17, 2014. The meeting convened at 8:34AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the October 6, 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 October 6, 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.

Weed Enforcement Report – Education and Compliance Officer

Superintendent Jed Fisher gave the report. Fifteen years ago the 1st Education and Compliance Officer was hired. Since that time the Department has invested a substantial amount of time and effort into noxious weed enforcement. For the past two seasons temporary contract labor has assisted in this effort. Reported statistics are as follows.

2013 Spray Applications

- Private acres/number of jobs 274/42
- FCD acres/number of jobs 118/33

- BPA acres/number of jobs 257/22

2014 Spray Applications

- Private acres/number of jobs 266/54
- FCD acres/number of jobs 250/42
- BPA acres/number of jobs 91/15

Onsite Inspections/Weed Management Plans

- 2012 836/240
- 2013 851/416
- 2014 1055/449

Over the years Plum Creek’s weed control efforts have improved and the Department would like to see a commitment to a long-term plan. Upper level management will be invited to the next Board meeting.

There was discussion regarding the possibility of charging for site inspections, similar to fees charged by other County departments such as Planning & Zoning, Environmental Health, Roads, and Animal Control.

Aquatic Species Management Requiring Flathead County Park Access - Procedural Protocol Draft

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that aquatic species management on the part of a private individual has impacted County park land. The individual launches his equipment and disposes of the weed debris pulled from the water on public park sites. There was discussion regarding how to manage this activity. Should the County allow private individuals who work for a select few to use public land to enhance their business? There is also a concern about the methods used for removal as weeds can easily fragment, spread and propagate. Celestine Duncan who is a consultant for the Department of Agriculture and an aquatic weed specialist, along with the County Attorney, will be invited to attend the next meeting.

Bigfork Advisory Report

- Report on “Observations & Comments” from site visit October 29, 2014.

Walter Kuhn and Sharon Hopkins toured Bigfork Parks and reviewed the summary of their observations. The majority of the items were standard maintenance. Other topics included the possibility of a dog park at Lake Hills Park, along with less frequent mowing to minimize costs, and construction of a parking area to accommodate 6-8 vehicles.

Swan Retreat public access site needs to be improved or surplus for sale. This is a 15’-20’ easement without parking. The Board will make a site visit in the spring.

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Larry Jochem and Bob Keenan are working on a plan for improvements to Bigfork Dock.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

There was no one present from Foys/Herron Advisory group.

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

Cliff Kipp reported that the final 60 acres of Herron Park land acquisition will transfer to the County next month. County Attorney Caitlin Overland has been working with Tom Esch of Foys to Blacktail trails for documentation details.

Jim Buechle made a motion to incorporate the final 60 acres (Phase 6) set to be transferred to the County by the Conservation Fund into the existing Foy’s Community Forest, along with all obligations of participation in the Community Forest Program thereto.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost to maintain the additional acreage. There is an existing Flathead Community Foundation endowment fund and a continuing effort to add to that fund. In addition there are two big volunteer days per year that manage a portion of the maintenance.

The motion was amended to state:

Jim Buechle made a motion to incorporate the final 60 acres (Phase 6) set to be transferred to the County by the Conservation Fund into the existing Foy’s Community Forest, along with all obligations, excluding financial obligations, of participation in the Community Forest Program thereto.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Now that land acquisition is complete Mr. Kipp stated that the group would be working to redefine its mission going forward with a shift to a more traditional ‘friends of the County’ type group. A strategic meeting toward this effort will be held in January 2015. In addition the group is working on a coalition between Whitefish Legacy Partners and Gateway to Glacier Trails to construct an online trail information resource. There is a fundraiser for the endowment fund at the Kalispell Brewery is hosting “Ales for Trails” to support Foy’s To Blacktail Trails on Tuesday November 18th.

Kila Advisory Report

- Proposal for Kila Community Park & Staff Review

Cindy Ercoline presented a conceptual proposal for development of Kila Park, a three-acre property that lies between Kila Road, the Great Northern Rails-to-Trail, and the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area. Components of the proposal include: outdoor classroom / learning circle amphitheater, covered pavilion with 6 picnic tables, band shell, interpretative signs, audio stations, spotting scope, toilets, and a long-range parking area. Staff review of the project was presented. Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that the primary concern is adding more facilities to maintain on a budget that won’t support it.

Elise Robocker made a motion to approve the concept for Kila Community Park as presented per the proposal.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued regarding the importance of having a perpetual maintenance fund in place with 15% of all donations going into that fund.

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

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

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

Lakeside Advisory Report

The tennis courts at Ben Williams Park have several cracks and are in need of resurfacing. Jennifer Drew presented two proposals for re-conditioning the courts ranging from \$14,000 - \$18,000. Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that a contractor will be selected after the funds have been raised and all insurance requirements must be met prior to any work being performed.

Other Business

- Authorization to Incorporate Phase VI Land Transfer in Foy’s to Blacktail Trails in the Community Forest Program.

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

- County Access at Echo Lake – Correspondence Received

This topic was tabled until the spring when the Board will do an onsite tour.

- Request for Reinstatement of Dallas Casazza – Recreation Programs

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed Board records from 2012 which described an incident at a local school where a participant physically attacked a referee. The participant was Dallas Casazza who was in the audience and ready to make an appeal for reinstatement in the basketball program. The Board will talk to the Recreation Supervisors and the person with whom Mr. Casazza had an altercation prior to making a decision. Mr. Casazza was commended for appearing before the Board.

Pete Woll made a motion to table the request for reinstatement until a meeting could be arranged with Recreation Supervisors Bob Tuman and Mike Dyon, and the person with whom Mr. Casazza had an altercation.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

- Remote Aircraft Discussion

A request came before the Department to allow remote controlled aircraft at County parks. It was agreed that the old airstrip at Happy Valley Park is the only appropriate location for this activity.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to allow use of the old airstrip at Happy Valley Park for remote controlled airplanes.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

- Commercial Driver's Licenses

Superintendent Jed Fisher requested consideration for payment of Commercial Driver's License fees for up to three employees. The current rate for a single license runs \$200 and covers a period of eight years.

Jim Buechle made a motion to approve the expense of \$600 over a period of eight years for Commercial Driver's License expense.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

There was no other business.

Adjourn

Clyde Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:47AM.

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

Documents Submitted to the Board:

Proposal for Kila Community Park

Staff Review and Recommendations – Proposal for Kila Community Park

Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee – Response to Staff Review and Recommendations

Ben Williams Tennis Courts proposals for Re-conditioning of two tennis courts from Triton Construction LLC and Advantage Tennis