

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: March 2, 2015

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:

Steve Robinson – Flathead County Education/Compliance Officer

Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory

Randy Sundberg – Many Lakes HOA President

Cliff Kipp – Foy's to Blacktail Trails

Mark Christensen – 24 Hours of Flathead

Tia Celentano – 24 Hours of Flathead

Heather Cauffman – 24 Hours of Flathead

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 March 2, 2015. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the December 1, 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 February 9, 2015 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.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Edd Blackler is working with the groups who use the sports fields and has contacted both Bigfork Baseball and Bigfork Soccer Club. Bigfork Baseball was under the impression that there was no concern with the parking on Shawnee Drive because they haven't received any calls. They would be willing to provide manpower to monitor it. Mr. Blackler has not had a response from Bigfork Soccer Club.

The Parks Department has concluded that the answer to the parking concern along Shawnee Drive is "No Parking" and tickets will be issued to offenders. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that all infields at Carlyle Johnson Park are groomed each spring with a box scraper and plow drag, than bases are reset.

This is done once per year and on an as needed basis, along with herbicide application. The back field is treated the same as the rest.

- Bigfork Whitewater Festival

A permit has been submitted by Bigfork Whitewater Festival for participant camping at Sliter Park – approximately 50 campers with personal tents. Assistant Superintendent Jewett does not support this activity because it sets a precedent for the rest of the year, in addition to a substantial amount of clean-up. All irrigation lines need to be identified to avoid penetration of tent stakes. There has been no authorized camping at Sliter Park since the lease began.

Superintendent Fisher commented that as our programs expand it is important to consider requests of this type while still protecting County assets. There was discussion regarding increased user fees and security deposit and tents only, vs recreational vehicles.

Elise Robocker moved to approve the permit submitted by Bigfork Whitewater Festival for camping on May 22, 2015, approximately 50 campers, tent camping only.

There was discussion regarding additional enforcement time and the no vending regulation.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

- Sports Field Use

Superintendent Fisher reported that a meeting was held with the principal and athletic director of Bigfork High School to discuss use of Bigfork parks. It was suggested that they consider purchase or lease of Carlyle Johnson in order to have complete control of their sports activity schedule.

- Sliter Park Revenue/Expenses

Superintendent Fisher reported a meeting was held with Paul Mutascio and Walter Kuhn regarding Sliter Park expenses. The lease will remain in place for the next fiscal year.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

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

- 24 Hours of Flathead Mountain Bike Race

Tia Celentano plans to host another 24 Hours of Flathead event at Herron Park on September 5-6, 2015, Labor Day weekend. There are no significant changes in the plans except camping location and the course. There will be no vendors at this event. Camping by the stable area may cause a conflict with equestrians. Staff will make a determination. Ms. Celentano suggested establishing a group rate for camping.

Last year there were a few complaints from neighbors, however, there were no major concerns regarding camping. Mark Christensen recommended more communication with Flathead Combined Training Association.

The Board was in favor of the event.

Other Business

- Aquatic Permit for Weed Removal

Steve Robinson reported that Lane Ross/Aquatic Weed Abatement Montana, contracted with 3 landowners to remove aquatic weeds last July, and launched his harvester at a County park. The equipment reaches 4' – 5' in the water and does not touch bottom. Clippings were placed on landowners' properties. Concerns with this operation are cleanliness of equipment to avoid contamination and spreading infestation by plant fragmentation. Assistant Superintendent Jewett commented that tansy ragwort was visible at low water levels and is now

moving up onto properties. The Department reached out to Celestine Duncan, a contractor for DNRC, regarding potential issues. She is willing to attend the next Board meeting but will need help with the expense to travel from Helena. Lane Ross and a representative from Planning & Zoning and Fish, Wildlife & Parks will be invited to attend. Superintendent Fisher stated that it is important to be consistent in setting standards.

Permits are issued by Planning & Zoning who notifies the Weed Department as they occur.

Clyde Fisher moved to pay the expense for Celestine Duncan to travel from Helena Montana to make a presentation to the Board.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

FTBT met with Plum Creek who is very interested in providing an easement connecting the new Herron land up to Blacktail Mountain. The first step is to review it with County insurance agent Kim Thomas, then determine who will be accountable for it and what it will look like. Easement holder options are Flathead County, State of Montana or Forest Service. Flathead County is the preferred for several reasons: Plum Creek prefers it; there is an established relationship with Flathead County who provides an easement for Plum Creek thru Herron; and Flathead County is the adjacent property owner. The County is reluctant to assume liability of the trail and is hopeful a conversation with Kim may allay concerns. The matter would then go to the Park Board and be passed to the Commissioners. Plum Creek would like the easement completed by June 1st.

FTBT has partnered with Montana Conservation Corps to provide a May to August intern to help out at Herron Park. It is anticipated the intern will spend time in the park and work with the Superintendent Fisher and Assistant Superintendent Jewett to job-shadow and see what the County does, and to coordinate with Gordie to line out summer work.

Work on the kiosk at Herron is progressing and history panels are being developed. Work on building a boundary trail at the western edge of the Park is being planned. An MOU will be drafted for trail work.

A meeting of all user groups of Herron is on the docket for May. FTBT will publicize event information on their website and Facebook page in an effort to avoid user conflict.

Superintendent Fisher announced that the resident caretaker at Herron Park is moving on and the position will be staffed internally if there is any interest.

- 2015 Long Range Plan

Cliff Kipp reported results of the recent strategic planning meeting held to discuss a shifted emphasis for the FTBT board. Now that Herron Park land acquisition is complete FTBT is working to restructure objectives for the next ten years. It is likely there will be turnover on the Board and new representation from all user groups is desired. There is discussion regarding a member fee which will be added to the endowment fund for long-term maintenance at Herron Park.

Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Report

There was no one present from Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee.

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

There was no one present from Middle Forks Parks Advisory Committee. Superintendent Fisher reported that Val Parsons is working on a grant to obtain funds for construction of a donor wall for Glacier to Gateway Trails, to be located at a Hungry Horse Island Park.

Lakeside Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee.

- Dragon Boat Race at Volunteer Park

Superintendent Fisher reported that Diane Medler of Kalispell Convention & Visitors Bureau is working on managing the traffic and parking for the upcoming Dragon Boat Race September 9-14, 2015.

County Gymnasium Report

Superintendent Fisher reported that the first kick-off meeting will be held to discuss formulation of plans to build a County gymnasium. The date will be within the next month. A questionnaire is being circulated to determine demographic information of individuals who will participate in County Recreation programs. County Commissioners remain supportive.

Weed Department Report

Steve Robinson reported on the Aquatic Permit for Weed Removal earlier in the meeting.

Other Business

- Aquatic Permit for Weed Removal

This topic was moved up on the agenda.

- Many Lakes Homeowners Association Meeting

Many Lakes HOA President Randy Sundberg reported a successful meeting of members, which was attended by Superintendent Fisher and Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett. There were 50+ attendees. Results of the questionnaire were reviewed – approximately 60 landowners responded. Some want things to remain the same; some want to buy adjacent property. Parkland locations were reviewed. There will be another meeting in June and Fisher and Commissioner Pam Holmquist plan to attend.

- House Bill No 183 – City Annexation of County Parks

This bill is being monitored. The recent amendment to the bill protects parkland assets of Flathead County.

- Bees

Commissioner Gary Krueger feels strongly that there are not enough pollenating plants for bees. The Weed Department has been successful in creating a monoculture of plants that are not bee friendly. Spotted Knapweed was introduced into the Flathead Valley in the early 1900's for bees and has since been managed as a noxious weed, thereby eliminating a pollenating source for bees.

There was no other business.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15AM.

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, April 6, 2015** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

Bigfork Whitewater Festival Proposal & Permit Application

Sliter Park Revenue and Expense Summary

24 Hours of Flathead Permit Applications

Foys to Blacktail Trails 2015 Long Range Plan

Dragon Boat Race Permit Application
Flathead County Parks in Many Lakes Questionnaire Results as of 2/19/15
Correspondence from Ken Haisch regarding Many Lakes parks
House Bill No 183