

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: March 7, 2016

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Cindy Ercoline – Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee

Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Charline Payne – Foys to Blacktail Trails and Flathead Combined Training Association

Walter Kuhn – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Paul Mutascio – Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork

Ed Lieser – Whitefish Resident

Randy Sundberg – Many Lakes President

Vance Carolin – Many Lakes Homeowners Association Vice-President

Mary Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trails

Linda Tutvedt – Flathead Combined Training Association

Susan Wallace – Kila Resident

Judy McBeth – Kila Resident

Mac McBeth – Kila Resident

Cliff Kipp – Montana Conservation Corps & Foys to Blacktail Trails

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 7, 2016. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, Vice-Chairman Fisher presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 1, 2016 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Jim Buechle moved to approve the February 1, 2016 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.

Ray Sanders Memorial

Superintendent Jed Fisher gave tribute to former Board Chairman Ray Sanders, who passed away on February 25, 2016. Mr. Sander's service to the Board extended almost 40 years and his dedication and leadership in serving the citizens of Flathead County was sincerely appreciated. Superintendent Fisher suggested the

possibility of a scholarship fund for high school students, possibly through the Vocational-Agricultural Center. He will check into the matter and report back at the next Board meeting.

Flathead Land trust – Paul Travis, Executive Director

This topic was tabled until the next Board meeting.

County Rental Rates for Sports Groups

Bigfork Baseball has been notified that the rate for 2016 is \$1500 for the remainder of the fiscal year and includes Carlyle Johnson, Potoczny & Aero Lane Parks. \$3000 will be charged for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017. Edd Blackler said this group wants to be assured that all other sports groups are paying similar fees and asked if the Department had posted rates. Discussion ensued regarding various recreational programs and their rates. Variables such as number of players, number of days used and impact on facilities were reviewed. Mr. Blackler was invited to come into the office to discuss rates with Recreation Supervisor Bob Tuman.

Jim Buechle moved to affirm that fees set by the Department are non-negotiable.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Whitefish Lake Access – Road Closure/Walk-In Access Only

Ed Lieser endorsed having Whitefish Lake Access be walk-in only, with improvements to and possible relocation of the outhouse and along with landscaping to have it be more hospitable to users, while keeping it a quiet pocket park. The County is continuing to investigate recorded easements for the person currently using the road as a driveway to private property.

Elise Robocker moved to support road closure pending County Attorney and Department endorsement.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Aquatic Weed Management Strategies

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Flathead Basin AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Work Group would like to have Board approval of their Adaptive Management Strategy for Curlyleaf Pondweed management. Over 15 acres of this weed has been identified in Flathead Lake. The group understands that curlyleaf pondweed is in state waters and therefore control costs and oversight are the responsibility of the State or a group such as Flathead Basin Commission. The Board will review the draft prior to comment. This topic will be addressed at the next meeting.

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that the County Commission remains firm that the Weed District will not apply herbicide in any water body. Legislation dictates that Fish, Wildlife & Parks has ultimate responsibility to manage aquatic weeds, although the Weed District remains the enforcement authority. We support the management effort but cannot fund the effort.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Edd Blackler once again raised the concern of County park rental rates for sports groups. He stated the Departments claim that rates are per person needs to be published as a standard rate. Variables for user groups were reiterated, along with the invitation for Mr. Blackler to come into the office and talk with Recreation Supervisor Bob Tuman.

Sliter Park Lease Renewal

Walter Kuhn stated that the current lease between PacifiCorp and Flathead County for Sliter Park will expire on July 30, 2016. He requested approval of a 5-year lease extension. Superintendent Jed Fisher indicated that

Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork has a good working relationship with the Parks Department and has made annual contributions toward maintenance.

Pete Woll moved to approve a 5-year lease extension between PacifiCorp and Flathead County for Sliter Park, beginning July 31, 2016 through July 31, 2021.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

Charline Payne paid respect to former Chairman Ray Sanders and his many years of contribution to the Weed/Parks Board. Discussions continue with private landowners regarding easements between Herron Park and Blacktail Mountain. They are working with the County Attorney regarding easement language. There was a recent meeting with Gary Weiner of National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance to discuss the Community Forest, trail maintenance, permits, and a park master plan. Mr. Weiner is happy to assist as funding and time allow. A subsequent meeting with a hydrogeologist took place onsite at Herron Park meadow. More information will follow. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett stated the Department is responsible to be sure the culverts are set correctly and free flowing.

The group is working with the County's insurance agent to determine options for coverage of volunteers.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Linda Tutvedt reported that everything is looking good and thanked the Board for their work.

Kila Advisory Report

Susan Wallace, Judy McBeth, and Mac McBeth requested a memorial at Kila Park to commemorate a Vietnam War casualty who is the son of long time Kila residents. Superintendent Jed Fisher responded that a memorial policy has not been finalized; however, the memorial would need to be part of something serving a public purpose, for example a bench or a tree. The request will be reconsidered and the McBeth's will contact the office staff for further consideration.

Lakeside Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that staff returned to work today for the beginning of the season. Removal of approximately 80 trees at Ben Williams will be among the first work priorities. Most of the trees removed will be firewood.

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Middle Forks Parks Advisory Committee. Mary Ruby reported that all parks seem to be in good shape.

Gateway to Glacier Trails Report

Plans continue for breaking ground this spring, and possibly for gazebo installation at the Hungry Horse Park to provide visibility to the project. Separately, efforts to obtain a trail easement through Glencore property have stalled. It was hoped to have this connector trail between the Gateway to Glacier Trail and Columbia Falls. County Attorneys have concerns regarding liability and insurance. Superintendent Jed Fisher is hoping to reach a solution; however, there are many concerns.

County Gymnasium Report

County Commissioners approved a contract with Lantern Partners to create a business plan for the gymnasium. It is anticipated both the business plan and architectural schematic will be completed by June 30th. Next steps will be to meet with the land donor, the County Attorney regarding the legal set up and governance, and the City of Kalispell.

Weed Department Report

County Right-of-Way – Status of Montana Department of Agriculture Fine

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that he is working with Commissioner Krueger and legal to request an administrative hearing to voice Department concerns. If the crew continues with current practices the Department cannot be responsible for unforeseen circumstances, such as a farmer hooking into treated right-of-way areas and dragging the soil into private property.

Other Business

Jim Buechle moved to appoint Clyde Fisher as Chairman of the Board

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Randy Sundberg, President of Many Lakes Homeowners Association (HOA) introduced HOA Vice President Vance Carolin. Mr. Sundberg reviewed recent survey results regarding potential surplus of selected Many Lakes Parks. Survey responders would like to keep Swimming Lake Park, Plummer's Lake Park, Double Lake Park, and Tamarack Lake Park & Cree Lake Park. He plans to continue attending Weed/Parks Board meetings. Mr. Carolin stated that it was important to consider public and wildlife access.

There was no other business.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:31AM.

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 4, 2016** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

DRAFT-4th, Curlyleaf Pondweed Management, Flathead Lake and River, Montana: An Adaptive Management Strategy, prepared by Flathead Basin AIS Work Group December 2015