

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation
MINUTES
Meeting of the Board of Directors
Meeting Date: May 7, 2018

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Mary Ruby, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All Board members were present.

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Michael Miller – Flathead Valley Disc Golf
Terry City – Landowner in Many Lakes
Mark Freidline – City of Kalispell
David Engle – Flathead Valley Disc Golf
Gabriel Dillon – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Nick Kynetl – Flathead Valley Disc Golf

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 May 7, 2018. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the April 2, 2018 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 April 2, 2018 Board minutes.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

Dave Engle runs Flathead Valley Disc Golf (FVDG) - a non-profit organization. It is the fastest growing sport in past 7 yrs. The group has worked with college, city, and state level agencies, with experience from approximately a dozen other disc golf areas and are aware of the challenges. Their goal is to encourage youth activity by using public land to build disc golf courses. FVDG is in year 2 of running a league at Lawrence Park in Kalispell. They are capable of putting in a course free of cost and are willing to maintain any installed courses and cover any required insurance costs.

Jed appreciates Dave's enthusiasm and discussed past experience with disc golf at Leisure Island, which created a dirt bike trail and ground disturbance created weed patches. The County allows volunteers to use only hand tools in parks – no chain saws, mechanical tools or 4-wheelers. That being said, Jed is certainly willing to discuss it again and staff is willing to meet to address all concerns including parking, and ADA. Lawrence Park is a class act and flow with the other uses there. If a possibility exists at Herron Park, it will be necessary to consider all of the other uses there.

Jim Buechle moved to have Parks & Recreation Department staff look into disc golf possibilities in County parks.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Terry Cito has 4 properties that surround a County park in Many Lakes and there is a little piece of road that he is trying to get abandoned. Terry is looking at all possibilities with the goal to enhance the park and to keep people off of his property.

Jed mentioned the possibility of Terry donating the land. Another taxpayer is considering donating land adjacent to Swimming Lake. Abandonment needs to be run through the County Attorney's office and the Commission. More information will be provided to the Board for review at the next meeting. This matter will most likely need the County Attorney's office and Terry's lawyer involved.

Foys to Blacktail Trails

Gabe Dillon sent a proposal to Parks Department for another volunteer day at Herron Park this Sunday. Trees are down on all of the trails and the proposal includes having Scott Udhe perform sawyer work, which cost would be covered by Foys to Blacktail Trails. It is estimated that the work can be accomplished in half a day and cut limbs will be broadcast well off the trail. Gordie indicated that County staff is headed to Herron today to take a look.

A nail pit exists by the a-frame from burning pallets and needs to be cleaned up. June 2nd is National Trails Day and Gabe will check into getting a volunteer plan to the Department as soon as possible.

Request for Reinstatement to Recreation Programs – Jesse Grilley

It was agreed that it is important to send a message that the County has zero tolerance for bad behavior, and to adopt a 'one and done' policy. As with a recent similar request, there are consequences to choices made.

Jim Buechle moved to deny reinstatement of Jesse Gilley to the Flathead County recreation programs.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Trails Plan Update

Mary Ruby reported that the next Trails Plan Update meeting will be Wednesday, May 16th, at the Earl Bennett Building. The 2nd public meeting is planned for Tuesday May 22nd at the Flathead County Fairgrounds from 6 PM – 8PM.

The group continues to work on maintenance and safety – both difficult topics. Excerpts from “The Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation and the Whitefish Trail in Whitefish, Montana” and “Montana Outdoor Industry Association – Montana” were reviewed. Mary met with Rachel VandeVoort, the Director of the Office of Outdoor Recreation for Montana. The Whitefish Trail contributes to \$6.4 million in annual spending by visitors and spending by visitors translates to 68 additional jobs and \$1.9 million in labor income in Whitefish.

There is a need for some sort of a coordinator to handle trails efforts. There is a social media page that is used for hiking information that is gaining popularity. People want to know where they can go. The Forest Service is looking to open a trail at Cedar Creek.

Parks Department Report

Jed reported that Gordie & staff have completed a substantial amount of work at Bigfork Parks and all parks there look good.

- **Potential Land Donation of Property Adjacent to Bass Lake in Many Lakes**

There was discussion about letting the situation take its course. The cost for a survey & appraisal is 4-5K with no guarantee that the County will be able to recoup that cost.

Clyde moved to table a decision about recommendation of a potential land donation of property adjacent to Bass Lake in Many Lakes.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

- **Agreement with Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork**

This Agreement was approved by the County Attorney and is the same as last year. It defines the responsibilities of both Flathead County Parks Department and CFBB relative to Sliter Park. CFBB contributes \$3500 to the Parks Department to be used for maintenance, repair and other costs associated with Sliter Park operations.

Clyde moved to approve the Agreement with Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Weed Department Report

Rental sprayers have been calibrated and all equipment has been tuned up and ready to go for the season.

- **Weed Rodeo Annual Donation**

The Department supports weed education and weed pulling efforts hosted by Brenda Guzman, the spouse of a Department employee. Each year Brenda coordinates efforts of volunteers on 5 different river sections from Essex to Blankenship.

Jim moved to approve the donation of \$500 toward the Weed Rodeo.

Elise seconded the motion.

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

- **Weed Free Gravel Pit Certification**

Jed reported that Tanner Smith & others have requested weed-free certification of gravel pits. Once certified there is a substantial amount of money involved for weed-free gravel. Jed opined that it is a fallacy to believe a gravel pit can be cert as weed-free and he is firm that the County not be held responsible for these certifications, which could result in significant liability.

Clyde moved to not allow the District to provide weed-free gravel pit certification.

Jim seconded the motion.

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

Other Business

Revegetation is being accomplished while the weather improves prior to any routine park work and weed spraying. The Department lost another staff member.

Matters of the Board

Board members previously indicated to Jed that they are in agreement with the settlement of 16K to restore trees at Lake Park Addition. Jed reported on the progress of the situation and the Board reiterated their agreement of the 16K settlement for the purpose of documenting said agreement at this meeting.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00AM.

Elise Robocker 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, June 4, 2018** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

- Foys to Blacktail Trails May 13th Volunteer project
- Excerpts from: “The Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation and the Whitefish Trail in Whitefish, Montana” and “Montana Outdoor Industry Association – Montana”
- Agreement with the Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President



Date