

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: July 23, 2019

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Samuel Harworth, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

Clyde Fisher, Jessica Treweek

Also in attendance:

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Michele Haarr, Clerk

Others Present:

Margaret S Davis

Bruce Ennis

Bruce Boody – Landscape Architect

Mike Pence – County Administrator

Pam Holmquist – County Commissioner

Linda Tutvedt – FCTA

Anna Henderson – public

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 July 23, 2019. The meeting convened at 8:33AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the June 17, 2019, 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 June 17, 2019 Board minutes.

Sam Harworth seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Parks & Recreation Department Report

◦ **Volunteer Park Expansion – Maggie Davis and Bruce Ennis**

Bruce Ennis reported that a buy-sell agreement to purchase property next to Volunteer Park was signed in April. The new property would be about the same size as the current park. A walk-through was conducted in June and included Commissioner Brodehl, Parks Board President Pete Woll, County Administrator Mike Pence, Architect Bruce Boody, Bruce Ennis, Margaret Davis, and Department Head Jed Fisher. Negotiations with the County began by proposing a Preliminary Property Transfer Agreement, which was done for the first 2 phases of the park. The County Atty approved the transaction as of yesterday. Now the question is whether this Board is interested in going further. If okay, the document will go to the County Commissioners for their decision.

Margaret Davis reviewed the history of Volunteer Park and displayed a schematic. Prior to any park development at this location there were two less than adequate public accesses. The last land purchase was in 2008 or 2009 for phase I, followed by phase II – resulting in the current park. Bruce Boody, landscape architect from Whitefish, did the work for the current park and is here today. The current acquisition would about double the size of the park. Eleven structures would go away. Margaret stated that they live in Lakeside and see the park twice per day, and are aware of the year-round use. The current park is ADA assessable – making it one of the few County parks with this type of access. A big boon is improved property development and increased business around the park. It is busier this year than the past 10 years and is used for all types of events. Margaret googled Volunteer Park and found 135 comments and over 220 photos with a 4.6 rating. Bruce stated that the proposed design is seen as three pieces – a parking lot, a beach, and an area in the center that joins the two pieces.

Bruce Booty reviewed the schematic which included both the current and the proposed park. The first thing is to remove the existing buildings. The park size will almost be double. There are 37 parking spaces now, and the proposal is for an additional 44. There will be more landscaping which would be more maintenance, but a highway buffer is needed. The current grass area would be opened up, with two more small pavilions. The project would all be connected with concrete walkways and be ADA compliant. A big difference is that there are no new docks in new area. In the existing phases, new docks and a swimming platform were built and the existing dock was repaired. The new proposal looks at the beach as a big open area. The existing dock in the new area has sheltered the rock from migrating north and it is important to be sure that the very valuable gravel stays in place. An expert, who has done many projects on Flathead Lake, is reviewing this concern. The proposal eliminates a lot of open curb cuts and works toward safe crosswalks and good access to the parking lot, which may provide space for larger vehicles that would be shuttling people from another parking area. A spot for a caretaker is being considered at the north east portion of the grassy area.

One Commissioner was interested in public outreach to get comments. They don't own the property yet so they have not been enthusiastic about going out in the community for feedback. Review with civic groups has occurred in the past.

After the site tour there was discussion about what it would cost the County. Jed reported that approximately 10K is current annual income for various events. Expenses last year were \$5600 in labor, and it is anticipated that costs will almost double. This does not include a 5K job to replace bark that was managed by Montana Conservation Corps. They are not considering another bathroom, and the property is well-manicured. The Parks Department would take on additional mowing and labor to clean up more garbage – all very reasonable maintenance requirements. The properties on the proposed site bring in approximately 7K in tax revenue that would go off the books for the Flathead County portion. Funds are not available for a study to determine the advantage to the community, however, on a general basis there occurs a percentage of tax increase in the surrounding area because of park. The construction is quality, the area is well lighted, has a good location in middle of town, and is designed properly, making maintenance easier. Crosswalks would be based approximately 380' apart and the question came up about a flashing light – as yet undetermined.

Mike Pence stated that this is an amazing project and the County is very fortunate to have Bruce and Maggie bring this to the table. The benefit is above and beyond the dollars we receive from tax revenue and the Commissioners want to thank them for stepping up. The County couldn't do this without Bruce & Maggie. Jim Buechle said they should be commended. Volunteer Park is the finest park in Flathead County, and to double in size and knowing quality of work – it is great for the community.

Jim Buechle moved to recommend expansion of Volunteer Park and to forward the proposal to the County Commissioners.

**Sam Harworth seconded the motion.
There being no discussion, and all in favor, the motion was approved.**

◦ **Request for Advertising Signs at Herron Park – Linda Tutvedt**

Linda reported that FCTA has changed their name to Herron Park Equestrian, has new blood and young gals who have energy. A lot of the stuff at Herron is 30 years old. One gal is a certified jump builder so they have been working on that. They are in need funds and it was pointed out that Rebecca Farms has signs on their jumps. Linda requested that signs be placed on the jumps as they are improved and constructed. The advertiser would agree to an annual fee for perpetual maintenance. Linda said she understands that the softball fields have signs and wants to know how Board feels about having signs at Herron. Jed stated that he understands the rationale to help offset costs. There are 15 signs at the Conrad Complex, and there are periodic complaints that they are too industrialized. The County Attorney will need to review the matter. There may be limitations on the design and size so it does not become overwhelming. Members of FCTA have been good stewards and easy to work with.

Pete Woll asked if a percentage of the fees would be coming back to the County for the park and Linda responded that this has not been discussed. FCTA would do all of the accounting. Maybe the stables could have signs as well. The signs on the jumps would remain year-round. Some signs in Missoula at a horse park are burned into wood, which provides a rustic feel and ages well, creating a nice ambiance.

Jim Buechle moved to continue discussion of the signing concept.

Sam Harworth seconded the motion.

Discussion was had about keeping the signs in good condition. Commissioner Holmquist stated that the County has a good relationship with FCTA and they have done an awesome job. This sort of thing has been done in different settings so we are not reinventing the wheel, noting, however, that as a County we have some side bars we have to meet.

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

Linda reported that the jump derby went well last weekend, with 35 people participating.

◦ **Vendors in County Parks – Discussion**

Jed reported that this matter is still under review. Some are of the belief that it just costs more. If a hot dog guy exists one weekend with a permit, another vendor seeing this may show up, not realizing that a permit is needed. One thing not happening right now is that Flathead County does not see any of that money.

◦ **Trails Plan Discussion – Board Comments**

Jed reported that a good group of people, through no fault of their own, spent a significant amount of time creating a lengthy plan, which the County Attorney found unacceptable. Progress is being made on a revision of the Trails Plan. He has been working with Whitney Aschenwald, Dave Prunty, and staff, who are honing in on inventory, however, there are still more files to review. Once a complete list is compiled with trails for which the County is responsible to maintain, the draft update will be presented to the Board. At this time, there are 32 miles of trails.

Trail evaluation will provide the condition and cost of maintenance. Within the proposed plan there is a review by an outside company to determine needed maintenance, condition, and the cost to maintain. A 30-mile range was estimated to be 30K or 1K per mile. Those dollars will be increased in this plan, as well as dollars for general maintenance (\$1600 per mile). The County Commissioner's current plan is to use money allocated for a gym as seed dollars to more this forward. Pavement preservation is estimated at \$28 – 30k per mile. The proposal would be to deal with three miles of pavement preservation per year; over a 10-yr period this would take care of trails that the County is responsible to maintain. The

plan also recommends that a moratorium on future development of trails be set until a final trail inventory is complete and there is a way to fund continuing maintenance. Sam Harworth disagreed with moratorium.

Jim Buechle moved to forward the current plan draft on to Planning & Zoning, after Finance has reviewed the costs.

Sam Harworth seconded the motion.

Jim Buechle voted aye and Sam Harworth voted nay.

Pete Woll broke the tie with an aye vote and the motion was carried.

20 Acre Land Donation Offer - Bigfork

Jed reported that Russ Hoyt has graciously offered to donate 20 acres in the Ferndale area to the Parks and Recreation Department and have it named the Hoyt Memorial Park. Before Mr. Hoyt dies, he plans to selectively log and stump the land, plant some exotic leaf and pine trees, and put in frisbee golf. He stipulates that the land never be sold. If accepted, this would take the property off of the tax rolls. Public input would be solicited.

Jed wants to thank Mr. Hoyt for his generous offer and would like to set up a property tour with any interested Board members. A full report will be given to the Board.

Weed Department Report

Gordie reported that the State Highway contract was met and a new contract is in place. The crew is working on BPA and County roads, along with other County sites. The first round of mowing will be completed in a few weeks. Mowing has been completed for most of the Valley floor, with work to be completed north of Whitefish and in the canyon. One mower is under repair warranty. All is working well with the agreements with the City of Columbia Falls and the City of Kalispell. Ten sites are being sprayed for Kalispell, which are larger parcels that the City is unable to maintain themselves.

A travel trailer is coming from the Weed Association for us to use at the County Fair.

Other Business

The Flathead Conservation District has a sum of money available to expand weed education and enforcement work. Jed needs to work with Human Resources to expand the position.

Sam Harworth reported that his wife has taken a position in Helena and he needs to step down from Board. He may make August meeting. Jed and the Board thanked him for his service.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50AM.

Sam Harworth seconded the motion.

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

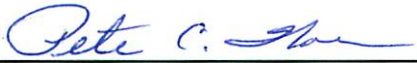
Upon conclusion of the meeting, the Board disbanded at the direction of Superintendent Jed Fisher. The time and place of the next meeting is **Monday, August 5, 2019** (subsequently changed to Wednesday, August 21, 2019) at 8:30AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

Schematic of Volunteer Park – existing and proposed expansion.

7.10.19 email from Russ Hoyt regarding potential 20-acre land donation in Bigfork

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President

8/21/19

Date