

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: September 14, 2020

Members of the Board in attendance:

Clyde Fisher, Lori Moran, Jessica Treweek, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

James Buechle

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Debbie Meiers - Equestrian

Peggy Hedin - Equestrian

Bonnie Streeter - Citizen

Gabe Dillon – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Mike Pence – Flathead County Administrator

Pat Young – Citizen

Linda Tutvedt – Herron Park Equestrian

Bruce Ennis – Sand Wedge, LLC

Margaret S Davis – Sand Wedge, LLC

Bruce Boody – Bruce Boody Landscape Architect, Inc

Carolyn Mulnix – Bruce Boody Landscape Architect, Inc

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 September 14, 2020. The meeting convened at 8:32 AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the June 29, 2020, meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Jessica Treweek moved to approve the June 29, 2020 Board minutes.

Lori Moran seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Weed Department Report–

This item was moved down on the agenda.

Parks & Recreation

• **Department Report**

This item was moved down on the agenda.

- **Herron Incident Involving Bicycles and Horses – Peggy Hedin & Debbie Meiers**

A letter dated August 16, 2020, from Peggy Hedin and Debbie Meiers was distributed, along with a summary of Safety Implementation Ideas.

Equestrians Debbie Meiers and Peggy Hedin received injuries as a result of an incident on August 3rd at Herron Park that involved a bicyclist. A lot of internal discussion has taken place since then to develop preventative measures.

Debbie Meyers has ridden in Herron Park for years and has never had an issue until August 3rd, when she and Peggy had just finished a ride. There was a commotion that startled both horses, who went from zero to 30 miles an hour in a split second and were running for their lives. Although neither Peggy or Debbie saw what caused the problem, other people saw an out-of-control cyclist. Debbie sustained mostly bruises and abrasions, a swollen knee, and a cracked helmet. Peggy landed flat on her back and sustained more serious injuries. She is still in physical therapy and will be for a few more months, with the possibility that she will never fully recover.

Peggy suggested a new trail designed for bikers and speed. Her research shows that this is a problem with multi-use trails across the Country. Gabe Dillon stated that he reached out to Becky at Flathead Area Mountain Bikers. He is willing to work on a safety plan to be reviewed by the Board.

Pat Young was among group that started equestrian activities at Herron Park. The culvert remains an issue, and a bridge built over it would help to keep horses separate from other users. There are a lot more newcomers and tourists who are unfamiliar with Herron trails, and there are areas where signing would help. People would appreciate knowing where the fast trails are, and also suggestions about slow areas.

There was a concern about emergency access and Gordie stated that emergency services have been issued a gate key and carry bolt cutters, which may be used at any time. Pat would like to see a motion from the Board for Foys to Blacktail Trails to develop a safety plan for all user groups, with signing put in place right away. Gordie suggested that signing be specific about the type of use. Pat indicated that they would help with fundraising for a horse bridge.

Jed stated that maybe it is time to have someone present to monitor the park, although finances are always a problem as well as the potential for conflict with any authority figure. Jed sees increased use in upcoming years and the need for immediate action to get something done. The Department needs an effective and affordable solution.

One hundred and twenty new drainage features were put across 1.6 miles of the Notch Trail. What happened in steeper sections makes it less fun to ride on a bike and the drains make you pay attention. It has been suggested by more than one person that this be done on a lot of trails and really groove them out.

Bonnie Streeter is a multi-recreational user at Herron and has heard disagreements between users when riding horses her horse. She agrees an ambassador is a good idea – maybe a ranger volunteer type of program, with a determination how to best use volunteer help. Communication could be done using a radio. Education and people skills are also important.

Pat Young would like a commitment from the Board for development of a safety plan, with good input from everyone. The Board directed Jed to come up with a plan and commit money to the effort, which will involve changes on the trail, signage, etc. The importance of this was stressed,

with Herron being a high-use park. Signage would be a good place to begin. Gabe has about 30 'caution' and 'intersection ahead' signs that could be placed on trees for good visibility.

Slash piles will be burned hopefully in the fall. Jed is working on a plan for logging at Herron.

- **Paved Trails Maintenance Plan – Ryan Mitchell of Robert Peccia & Associates**

This topic has been delayed. A draft of the Paved Trails Maintenance Plan has been reviewed and there are ongoing revisions. It is anticipated that a final draft will be available at the November Board meeting. Ryan Mitchell was impressed with the condition of the trails, with the overall ranking coming in at a 7. Jed pointed out that there is currently about 1.5 million worth of miscellaneous work to be addressed. The revisions include work on the ranking system with the priorities and budget established for immediate work.

- **Foys to Blacktail Trails Report, Trail Maintenance & Safety – Gabe Dillon**

Trail Maintenance continued in June and July, and will move forward again in October – to continue until the money runs out. There was a 20K budget for the overall project and the first two miles was 8K. The drains will be cleared out at the upcoming volunteer days. There is a new map posted at the kiosk.

Gabe has received comments about weeds at Herron and Jed reported that there will be fall applications.

- **Property Transfer Agreement Volunteer Park – Bruce Ennis & Maggie Davis**

Margaret Davis distributed a **Report from Sand Wedge, LLC on the development of Volunteer Park, Phase 3 (VP3)**. The review covered the history and project details.

Jed reported that the conveyance document was received for Board review today. The documents were prepared by Ogle, Worm & Travis PLLP, and approved by Bruce Ennis and Margaret Davis, and the County Attorney. The documents are very similar to the past agreements, with one signature change.

Jessica Treweek moved to accept the Agreement for Transfer of Property Restrictions on Use and Reversion and the Restated Preliminary Property Transfer Agreement, and to forward these documents to the County Commissioners for their approval.

Lori Moran seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion the motion was carried.

County Administrator Mike Pence expressed thanks to Bruce Ennis and Margaret Davis for their generous donation of the expansion of Volunteer Park, stating it was amazing what they have done for the County and also personally on behalf of his family.

- **Department Report**

Plans to thin trees along a 7-acre parcel at Belton Addition is on hold due to concerns of the Department of Transportation. This scenic corridor runs along Hwy 93. Peter Steele, former Flathead County Attorney, and his neighbors have hired a logger and plans to do extensive work, thinning the forest adjacent to Belton Addition.

Softball has gone well using social distancing protocol set by the Flathead City-County Health Department. Going forward, The Department is uncertain whether Recreation Department sports programs will be able to use school gyms. If okay, there could be increased costs due to cleaning,

which is understandable and acceptable. If we are unable to use school gyms, we may not be holding some programs this year. The question remains whether we would we lose these programs forever.

Weed Department Report

Gordon Jewett reported that the Department is right on track for the season. Spray operations are at a standstill until colder weather, and the crew is catching up on needed park work and other projects. The second pass of roadside mowing continues with about ½ - 2/3 of the Valley completed. Highly traveled roads and roads with drifts are being addressed. Herron meadow and trail system are on schedule to be sprayed. The Department is on schedule with contract work, with some money left for spring applications. \$58,000 worth of building repairs on the office (caused by storm damage) is progressing.

Volunteer Park Tour

The meeting was temporarily adjourned at 9:43AM, for travel to Volunteer Park in Lakeside.

Jessica Treweek moved to temporarily adjourn the meeting at 9:43AM, and reconvene at Volunteer Park.

Lori Moran seconded the motion.

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

The meeting reconvened and was called to order at Volunteer Park in Lakeside at 10:37AM, President Woll presiding.

Members of the Board in attendance:

Lori Moran, Jessica Treweek, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

James Buechle, Clyde Fisher

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Phil Mitchell – Flathead County Commissioner

Mike Pence – Flathead County Administrator

Randy Brodehl – Flathead County Commissioner

Mark Mussman – Flathead County Planning & Zoning Department

Margaret S Davis – Sand Wedge, LLC

Bruce Ennis – Sand Wedge, LLC

Sidney Pitcher - Citizen

Bruce Boody – Bruce Boody Landscape Architect, Inc

Carolyn Mulnix – Bruce Boody Landscape Architect, Inc

Pam Holmquist – Flathead County Commissioner

Jessica Treweek moved to reconvene the meeting at 10:37AM.

Lori Moran seconded the motion.

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

Bruce Ennis and Margaret Davis gave a tour of the park and the library. The construction gate and fence dividing the new addition from the existing park will be removed tomorrow at 10:15AM. The library will open for business on October 1st.

Lunch was provided by Mark Blasdel of Vista Linda, with contributions from Commissioner Philip Mitchell and Flathead County Parks & Recreation Department.

Other Business

There was no other business of the Board.

Matters of the Board

There were no matters of the Board.

Adjourn

Jessica Treweek moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:26AM.

Lori Moran seconded the motion.

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

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 5, 2020.

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President

10/5/20

~~9/14/20~~

Date