

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Board of Directors

Meeting Date: May 2, 2011

Members of the Board in attendance:

James Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Ray Sanders, Jim Watson

Members of the Board not in attendance:

There was no one absent.

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Dan Fagre – Middle Forks Advisory Committee

Skip Gilmore – Bigfork Advisory Committee

Clifford Kipp – Montana Conservation Corps

Tamara Tanberg – Lakeside Parks Advisory Committee

Andy Young – Foy/Herron Advisory Committee

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors, Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation, was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, on May 2, 2011. The meeting convened at 8:32 A.M., Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the April 4, 2011 meetings of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board and approved as printed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Batting Cage Proposal

Superintendent Jed Fisher updated the Board regarding the verbal proposal of Michael Kazmier for batting cages installation at the Conrad Complex. Mr. Fisher had a meeting last week with Jim Korn, the lessor's representative of Conrad Complex, who had no opposition to the proposal which would include one enclosed area with 4 – 6 cages. A sublease agreement would be executed between Flathead County and Mr. Kazmier. There was discussion regarding insurance; porta-potties; potential noise concerns of neighbors; percentage profit to the County; safety; coin-operation or employee on site; and hours of operation. It was acknowledged that a lot of details would need to be discussed and agreed upon, however, at this point the Board was in favor of continuing discovery and discussion.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to pursue discovery and discussion regarding the batting cages proposal at the Conrad Complex.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Bigfork Advisory Committee

Skip Gilmore reported on Jerry Murphy's efforts to improve the entry at Sliter's Park. Bricks are being installed by the flag pole and a large rock will soon be placed at the entry. Mr. Gilmore has obtained pricing from Dakota Fence for playground equipment and will pass the information to Superintendent Jed Fisher.

Mr. Gilmore thanked the Board for the efforts at Carlyle Johnson Park which includes tree trimming and lining out the baseball diamond. The group is exploring possibilities for additional parking.

Superintendent Fisher reported he has received several emails from Bob Keenan, who oversees a trust with the interest invested into the community for projects such as roads, parks, and to the Bigfork Business Association. It is estimated that this is approximately 100K each year. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett met with Mr. Keenan, who relayed that he is considering redirecting some of his investments and would like to hear more about the needs in the parks. Previously Mr. Keenan opted to focus on private efforts as opposed to government concerns. Mr. Gilmore was directed to contact Mr. Keenan.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Andy Young reported that the group met in March and will meet again in 10 days.

Herron – Mr. Young stated that a lot of work has been done. The stall doors look sharp and the closure of access for the horse entry was really appropriate because the ground is soft and mucky. Even where it appears to be dry there is some post-hole damage which is a trip hazard for horses. Young suggested signs indicating the reason for the closure and directing people to turn around. These signs could be used annually. Young reiterated that the group's decision was that Herron is not an appropriate location for a dog park.

Assistant Superintendent Jewett reported that the National Forest Foundation had 1 million trees to plant nationwide and Flathead County received a portion of these. Mr. Jewett spent last Saturday working with a crew to plant 200 Ponderosa Pines at Herron. Jewett reported that the remaining stalls at the north building will be refurbished.

Foys – Young reported that this area looks terrific with the new paving job and parking barriers. Jewett reported that plans are in place to work on the cribbing to extend the boat launch.

Foys to Blacktail Trails – Cliff Kipp reported that new maps are available at several locations, paid for by the Roundup for Safety dollars from Flathead Electric Coop. The Montana Conservation Corps has been working on a new trail for the past several weeks. It would be nice to have a water source at the parking lot.

This weekend is the Herron Hustle which hosts 120 – 150 runners. June 4th is National Trails Day and there will be trail work that day. Mr. Kipp requested borrowing tools which are in short supply compared to the number of volunteers. Superintendent Jed Fisher will assist with contacting OES to borrow the fire crew's tools.

Kipp further reported that they would like to do a better job with weeds and plan to lay out a work schedule for this effort. He has an outdated weed map with the goal to get an accurate inventory. Fisher indicated that the Weed Department has a GPS and will assist with this effort. The Weed Department will put Herron on the spring spray priority list.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) that funded the trail work appears to have all of the 12K available. The reimbursement documentation will be compiled after National Trails Day. Kipp spoke with Deb Pierson regarding the decision to submit an application for the 2012 trails grant.

Jim Watson reported that RTP grant award has been increased from 70K last year to 90K this year. The new trail is nice, connects to the kiosk, and will soon be connected to the upper trail. They have had lots of good feedback.

Fisher reported that the County budgeted 33K for trail maintenance next year, which will include sweeping, mowing, and sign replacements for areas not connected with the Department of Transportation. Maintenance has been completed on the Sam Bibler trail. Assistant Superintendent Jewett stated that the department purchased a sweeper attachment for the skid steer which appears to be working well.

Fisher indicated that 7K in salaries is dedicated to trail work and plans to hire a temporary worker during the weed season.

Lakeside Advisory Report

Volunteer Park - Tamara Tanberg reported that there has been good participation at Volunteer Park in spite of intermittent weather.

Ben Williams – Assistant Superintendent Jewett reported that the north edge will be firmed up with fill and the swing set will be moved. The maintenance crew will finish work including hauling dirt and revegetation. There is a drainage issue near the fence that is the low point and will eventually dry up. The bathrooms have been pumped. Ms. Tanberg indicated that the Lower Valley Somers Fire Department has been contacted and will hose off the tennis courts. Tanberg asked about the status of the Memorandum of Understanding which will transfer remaining allocated funds to the Foundation. Superintendent Fisher will check into it.

Bierney Creek Boat Launch – Tanberg asked if there were any plans to enlarge the launch and was advised that no meetings have taken place to address this topic.

Middle Forks Parks Advisory Report

Belton Stage Park – Dan Fagre reported that there were safety concerns this winter with the high snow level covering the majority of orange capped posts, which were not very visible to sledders. The group has plans to tour and inspect all the parks in April but weather delayed this effort. Maintenance needs will be determined and prioritized. The elk continue to use Belton Stage Park. The group plans to meet each month as West Glacier emerges from hibernation. At 4,000' elevation there is 2 – 3' of snow and at 6,000' elevation the snow level is 13.5'.

Other Business

Emergency Animal Shelter – Fisher reported that the animal shelter wardens requested use of the barn area behind the office for an emergency animal shelter if needed. Vocational Agriculture (VOAG) students may be able to assist with taking care of issues.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to approve the use of the barn area for an emergency animal shelter, with assistance from the staff as needed.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

There was discussion regarding Deputy Lance Norman from Happy Valley who donates hay that he grows in one of the County parks.

All in favor, and there being no further discussion ~ the motion was carried.

Jim Watson reported that the Montana Department of Transportation reviewed the adopted trails plan and has agreed that future design work will be taken into consideration.

There is a plan to improve Highway 2 from Hungry Horse to Columbia Heights which may include a new bridge. Mr. Watson will check on the status.

Watson reported that Planning will set up a meeting with all County Commissioners present to review 3 CTEP allocations and the Trails Plan. Of the 3 CTEP allocations, Lakeside Trails, Bigfork and Red Bridge, Red Bridge did a better appraisal that greatly increased the cost of the project. Planning staff is developing a resolution for the Parks Board and Commission that will activate the Trails Plan.

Going forward, it is anticipated that this Board will administer the trails plan, with the assistance of the PATHS group. Fisher commented that he anticipates endorsement of the Commissioners. It would be a good business plan that would include public involvement and takes politics out of it.

Reserve/Hwy 93 Trail – Fisher reported that he met with Harvey Sterner regarding plans to make a trail along a 30' strip on the north side of Reserve off Hwy 93. It is hoped that the Montana Department of Transportation will build the trail if the Homeowners' Association donates the property. This trail is in the Trails Plan and rated as a very high safety concern.

A pedestrian path is designed to the "Y" intersection north of Lowes on the west side of the Highway. The Department of Natural Resources likes the trail on the north side of Reserve.

The FVCC pedestrian tunnel work will begin at midnight on Friday May 13th and will work around the clock for 10 days – 2 weeks. It is anticipated that the 10' high – 14' wide tunnel will be installed prior to the ball season and tourist season.

Andy Young questioned whether the Parks & Recreation could have a Facebook page and Fisher advised that the Information Technology (IT) Department has filtered Facebook off of the County's web access so it is not possible, however, the Committee could set up their own Facebook page.

Adjournment

Clyde Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Jim Buechle 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 6, 2011 in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, and the May 2, 2011 meeting was adjourned at 9:52 A.M.