

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation**

**MINUTES**

**Board of Directors**

**Meeting Date: May 19, 2014**

**Members of the Board in attendance:**

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Pete Woll

**Members of the Board not in attendance:**

Ray Sanders

**Also in attendance:**

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

**Others Present:**

Sharon Hopkins – Bigfork Advisory Committee

David Randall – Flathead County Attorney

Tara Fugina – Flathead County Attorney

Karlene Khor – Flathead Combined Training Association

Bruce Boody – Landscape Architect

Margaret Davis – Driver Spoon LLC

Bob Keenan – Bigfork resident

Paul Mutascio – Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork

Walter Kuhn – Bigfork resident

Mary Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trail

Sally Finneran – Bigfork Eagle

Mike Pence – Flathead County Administrator

Liz Seabaugh – Foys to Blacktail Trails

**Call to Order**

A regular 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 19, 2014. The meeting convened at 8:34AM, Acting Chairman Pete Woll presiding.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the March 3, 2014 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

**Clyde Fisher made a motion to approve the March 3, 2014 Board minutes.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

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

Bruce Ennis relayed that an agreement is being drafted that has two components: the stated land has been acquired and is being built out, and second, that Flathead County accepts the land as a gift and agrees to operate and maintain it as a public park. The most important aspect is what the park will look like. The piece of property acquired is adjacent and to the north of the existing Volunteer Park and adds 86' of shore line. It will

have a gravel beach and will preserve as many large trees as possible. Sewer, water & electrical will be available for a potential campground host. Bruce Boody reviewed a schematic of the park.

The agreement will state that the County is willing to reconvey the property if it does not want to operate it. Bruce Ennis is the sole owner of Driver Spoon LLC and conveyed the property to Oro Y Plata Foundation, Inc., who will convey it to the County. This arrangement puts distance in terms of potential liability and maximizes the ability to treat it as a gift from a charitable organization. It will go back to Bruce Ennis & Maggie Davis by way of financial benefit. The park addition and the existing Volunteer Park will be treated as one park. All documents were reviewed by the Flathead County Attorney's office.

Superintendent Jed Fisher stated that there is no draft of the agreement for review as of this Board meeting. It will be necessary to have a special Board meeting to review it, hopefully within the next week after an agreement is approved by the County Attorney's office. Maggie Davis explained the need for haste in concluding the documentation. It was only mid-March when the former owners agreed to sell, which created a compressed timeline. She apologized for the need to rush things along.

### **Annual Weed Rodeo Donation**

Superintendent Jed Fisher requested approval for a \$250.00 donation for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual noxious weed pulling rodeo along the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. The Weed Department has made this donation for several years and the money is used to help provide lunch for the volunteers.

**Jim Buechle made a motion to approve a \$250.00 donation to the Brenda Guzman for the 12th annual noxious weed pulling rodeo along the Middle Fork of the Flathead River.**

**Elise Robocker seconded the motion.**

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

### **Sliter Park Discussion**

Paul Mutascio, President of the Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork (CFBB), was unhappy that he received the "Financial Contribution Agreement" draft late Friday afternoon and did not have time to properly review and discuss it with his Board or their attorney. Mr. Mutascio felt the Financial Contribution Agreement terms went beyond the scope of the amicable meeting recently held with Superintendent Jed Fisher and Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett. Mutascio reiterated how important Sliter Park is to the Bigfork community and also to all residents of and beyond Flathead County. CFBB wants to see Sliter Park remain a County park and added that their contribution would be approximately 10K per year, which includes in-kind costs. The group would like to have reassurance beyond a season or a year that the County intends to maintain the lease with PacifiCorp. The fear is being denied the ability to see the park continue. Alcohol would have helped generate additional income, but that was shot down. The staff has to have a big role in advertising Sliter Park. The more funds generated in park rental the less CFBB will need to contribute. Mutascio requested that Gordon Jewett meet with George Wilcoxon as soon as possible to review Wilcoxon's duties at Sliter Park. Mutascio repeated that the Bigfork community has already agreed to pay its fair share and is taking care of it themselves. They are not "deadbeats" and are making donations. They want to work with the County and overcome these differences.

Bob Keenan reported that the Bigfork Community Development Foundation Trust (BCDFT) has put 34K into Sliter Park over the past 5 years and 90% of all of the leasehold improvements have been provided by BCDFT. The title of the document 'Financial Contribution Agreement' is of concern as opposed to a Memorandum of Understanding, which they were expecting. It obligates CFBB for property owned by PacifiCorp. Mr. Keenan would like to see a better understanding and a friendlier tone to the agreement. Keenan said they cannot be legally bound by #7, which discussed donations made to CFBB on behalf of Flathead County Parks & Recreation.

Walter Kuhn is a 24-year resident of Bigfork and spoke on his own behalf. He was furious after reading the Financial Contribution Agreement, which he felt was way overboard. CFBB has limited funding through fundraising and support many other causes. Sliter Park has been leased since 1981 (33 years), and for 28 of those years there have been no major problems. Sliter Park is an easy target because it is leased. The Parks Department has never had to make significant capital expenditures. The Parks Department needs to quit threatening and it is nothing short of extortion. It is not a great advantage for the County to save an average of \$7500 per year. Mr. Kuhn's desire is for a workable agreement that is reasonable and for the County to quit making threats. Kuhn would like to go forward on a handshake basis.

Jed Fisher assured the group that there was no attack on Sliter Park or the CFBB. He clarified that the topic was up for discussion and comment but would not be put up for a vote at this meeting because of the late serving of the draft agreement to all interested parties and Board members. Income of 1.86 mils down to 1.45 mils includes the support of 6 new parks over the past 12 years. In order to successfully manage property, we have to get creative on how to maintain it. The Conrad Complex sports facility receives 17K from players to help pay the lease. Maintenance on the Evergreen Medians has been cancelled. An estimate of 400k to improve the parking lot at Carlyle Johnson Park is outside the budget. These concerns are what initiated the discussion about the Sliter Park lease.

Sharon Hopkins of the Bigfork Advisory Group stated that the group knew that topic would be controversial but did not expect this much animosity. The community of Bigfork was asking for the ability to have alcohol in the park and the County said 'no', so the thought was to have CFBB take over the lease. The Advisory group was trying to work out an amicable agreement.

### **Parks Advisory Appointments**

The following requests for appointments on advisory committees were reviewed: Lakeside – Kathleen Cummings; Kila/Smith Lake – Susan Wallace; Middle Forks – Patricia McClelland; Bigfork – Sharon Hopkins; Herron/Foys – Gail Watson-Fulsaas & Elizabeth Makman.

**Elise Robocker made a motion to approve advisory committee appointments as follows: Lakeside – Kathleen Cummings; Kila/Smith Lake – Susan Wallace; Middle Forks – Patricia McClelland; Bigfork – Sharon Hopkins; Herron/Foys – Gail Watson-Fulsaas & Elizabeth Makman.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

### **Lakeside Advisory Report**

Kathy Cummings was happy to see the new addition to Volunteer Park. There remains a concern regarding erosion and traffic at the Lakeside Hwy 93 swim beach.

### **Bigfork Advisory Report**

Sharon Hopkins reported that the Advisory group has not met formally with the sports groups who use Potoczny, Aero Lane and Carlyle Johnson parks. Baseball and soccer have activities at different times, which helps to alleviate traffic and parking concerns. It appears people have stopped parking on Shawnee Drive. There was a discussion regarding the excessive number of soccer nets on the field compared to the number of registered players – four permanent nets are okay. Someone from the soccer group drove 100 or so spikes 10 to 12 inches into the ground without a thought about irrigation.

### **Foys/Herron Advisory Report**

Flathead Combined Training Association (FCTA) is becoming a 501C3, which will be beneficial for both the County and FCTA. There is a mini-event scheduled for May 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> as well as an event once per month until October. The group is committed to their share in taking care of the park.

Karlene Kohr spoke on behalf of FCTA and indicated there is a significant concern regarding cyclists racing down the hill and into the direction of the equestrian arena. There was discussion regarding better signage to educate cyclists and perhaps a separate entrance for cyclists and/or a barrier at the top of the hill. Superintendent Jed Fisher indicated that current signing will be reevaluated with discussion about who yields to whom.

### **Foys to Blacktail Trails**

Liz Seabaugh reported that 40K in grant funds has been awarded and they are grateful for the County contribution of 20K.

### **Kila Advisory Report**

There was no report from the Kila Advisory Committee.

### **Middle Forks Advisory Committee**

Pat McClelland reported that both Max Edgar and Belton Stage Parks are looking good and are a credit to the system. Where the pavement ends at Belton Stage the ground is very rough and there is a large pothole that needs attention.

### **Conrad Complex Lease Update**

The lease with Conrad Memorial Cemetery Association will expire August 31, 2014 and a letter from Flathead County was sent three months ago indicating the Flathead County's interest in a lease renewal. The County has been in touch with Jeff Ellingson of the Cemetery Board, who indicated that the Board would like to see an increase in the lease fee. The Kids Sport lease is the 50K and the golf course lease is 20K. There was discussion about increasing income at the Complex.

Superintendent Jed Fisher and Board Member Jim Buechle have continued to pursue options for a full service gymnasium. The appropriate land location needs to be identified, appraised, and then put before the Commissioners for CIP fund dollars.

### **Other Business**

Gateway to Glacier trails have requested that the County partner in maintenance and additional avenues for grants to maintain the parking area where the donor wall will be placed. Long term potential costs and liability were discussed. The area has approximately 12 parking spaces and is off the highway where people can access the trail. The Gateway to Glacier group has been very responsible in fundraising and setting aside 58K in a separate maintenance fund account. The Board was in favor of providing a letter of support for help with maintenance at this roadside kiosk and parking area near Coram.

Superintendent Jed Fisher gave an update regarding weed enforcement efforts.

### **Adjourn**

**Clyde Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:33AM.**

**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 2, 2014 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

### **Documents Submitted to the Board:**

Schematic of Volunteer Park addition

Weed Rodeo donation request from Brenda Guzman

Financial Contribution Agreement for Sliter Park

Photos of Herron Park kiosk construction progress