

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: May 1, 2017

Members of the Board in attendance:

Clyde Fisher, Mary Ruby, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Elise Robocker

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Paul Mutascio – Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork

Cliff Kipp – Foys/Herron Advisory

Linda Tutvedt – Foys/Herron Advisory

Orrin Webber – Foys/Herron Advisory

Charline Payne – Foys to Blacktail Trails

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 1, 2017. The meeting convened at 8:32AM, Chairman Fisher presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the April 3, 2017 of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Pete Woll moved to approve the April 3, 2017 Board minutes.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

County Athletic Complex Report

Jed Fisher reported that during budget sessions with the Commissioners, there was continuing commitment for dedicated gym funds in the amount of 1 million, although there may not be additional funds added due to a shortfall in the County budget.

A private party has expressed an interest in building the gym and turning over a completed project to the County. Jed Fisher and County Administrator Mike Pence will meet with the potential donor this week. Potential sites are the Fairgrounds, the Conrad Complex, and property owned by Davar Gardner located off of Hwy 93 south. Jed and Mike will arrange to meet with the Cemetery Board regarding the Conrad Complex.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Bigfork Dock – Report of Meeting Regarding Removal of Park Sign – A meeting that included Commissioner Phil Mitchell, County Administrator Mike Pence, Jed Fisher, Walter Kuhn and Paul Mutascio resulted in an agreement to assist the Road Department with landscape maintenance at Bigfork Dock. Parks & Recreation will be on site 6 times throughout the year.

Paul Mutascio discussed a legal matter involving an independent contractor who worked at Sliter Park and other areas around Bigfork. The contractor was hired by the Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork (CFBB). This person has been terminated and CFBB is desperately seeking a replacement.

The dock and the parks are seeing increased activity and Mr. Mutascio wants assistance from Gordon Jewett to determine what is needed for dock improvement and maintenance.

Jed plans to have new Recreation Manager Andy Hergesheimer oversee sports activities at the Bigfork Parks. This will greatly enhance the ability to coordinate activities between various sports groups and to better control no parking along Shawnee Drive – a private road adjacent to the park. In addition, Andy will look at introducing sports programs at other County parks.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

Letter of Interest for Advisory Committee Appointment – Liz Makman, a former Herron/Foys Advisory Committee member, sent a letter of interest to serve on this Committee.

Mary Ruby moved to appoint Liz Makman to the Herron/Foys Advisory Committee.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Issues with Dogs at Herron Park – David Girardot & Others

At the last Board meeting, David Girardot's email regarding aggressive and unleashed dogs was discussed. David suggested strict enforcement of the leash rule, or making Herron a dog free park.

There was general discussion regarding successes and failures of dog activity at other locations including Whitefish Trails and Swan River Trail. It was recommended to involve the PAWS group. Email from Advisory Committee member Margaret Herron was distributed, who recommended exploration of ways to ease the conflict potential and elicit cooperation between all users – bikers, runners, hikers, horses, and others. Cliff Kipp reported that the Herron/Foys Advisory Committee would like to explore ideas for a social media campaign to encourage responsible dog ownership, including picking up feces and keeping dogs on leashes. The group plans to report back to the Board at the next meeting.

The ground conditions at Herron were discussed, with the desire to provide a path to the dressage area and trails. Gordon Jewett reviewed the conditions last Friday and will review them again this week.

Foys to Blacktail Trails Report

Jed Fisher reported that Forest Service trail person Gary Danczyk is interested in revising the 2010 trail plan to encompass a Federal, State and local trails network, and ensure sustainable, 4-season recreation opportunities now and in the future. There are currently many trails projects in various stages of implementation that are not on track for integration into a coordinated plan. The revised plan will include sustainable operations and maintenance plans for motorized and non-motorized uses in both front and back country. A group email list is being established to include participants with a broad range of knowledge and experience.

Cliff Kipp gave his annual plug for sorting out how the County can allow volunteers to work in the parks. He also noted that all Department staff time spent at Herron can be counted as 'in kind' for grants.

Mary Ruby moved to support efforts to allow volunteers to work in County parks.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

The nature loop area at Herron needs to be cleared for benches. Charline will meet on-site with Parks Superintendent Gordon Jewett to discuss it.

Charline reported that they hope to have trail construction from Herron to Blacktail Mountain open by August. They are proceeding with placing ads for bids.

Somer's S-2 Engine Park

The Parks and Recreation Department has inherited Somer's S-2 Engine Park. Former Commissioner Dale Lauman gave permission for construction of a shelter for the engine, located at 159 Somers Road. The project sits partially on County property and partially on Sliter's property. The Parks Department will have the portion on the County property added to the County insurance policy. Gordon Jewett reported that there are 2-3 very large diseased trees close to the power lines that will need to come down. He will contact Flathead Electric.

Weed Department Report

United States Forest Service – Fire Operations Weed-Free Sites Protocol

An email was received from Steve Shelly of the US Forest Service, requesting assistance in determining protocol for the use of weed-free sites during fire operations. Jed Fisher recommended that the Forest Service determine their own protocol based upon their criteria, and the Weed Department will coordinate with them. The Board agreed.

Columbia Falls City Manager Susan Nicosia has drafted a Weed Management Agreement which outlines the goals and objective of noxious weed management within the geographical limits of the City's Planning and Zoning Jurisdiction. The agreement is being reviewed by the County Attorney. The Weed District plans to provide a 100 gallon sprayer and training for its use to a City employee who is a licensed applicator.

There will be a reduction in Weed revenue from approximately 170K to 140-150K due to cutbacks of applications for private property and Flathead Conservation District spray jobs.

The chemical bid request was approved for the purchase of chemicals with short residual timeframes.

Other Business

Walleyes Unlimited is interested in providing a floating dock for Church Slough. Jed is checking into permits needed, which would also include a vaulted toilet and a paved parking area. There was discussion about notifying the neighbors of this intent. Jed will visit with the County Attorney.

Jed informed the Board that Easement Deeds have been drafted by the County Attorney to allow for a gas hookup and ingress and egress for a property is located west of town adjacent to Rails to Trails. The landowner's property is landlocked and it was necessary to provide the easements.

Adjourn

Mary Ruby moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:05AM.

Pete Woll 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 19, 2017** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

3/6/17 email from Liz Makman stating interest in serving on Herron/Foys Advisory Board

4/27/17 email from Margaret Herron regarding dogs at Herron Park

4/26/17 email from Gary Danczyk, US Forest Service, regarding revision of 2010 Flathead County Trails Plan

5/1/17 Weed Management Agreement between Flathead County and City of Columbia Falls

4/5/17 email from Steve Shelly, US Forest Service, regarding protocol for use of weed-free sites during fire operations

March, 2017 Easement Deed drafts for gas and road