

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: October 4, 2021

Members of the Board in attendance:

James Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Pete Woll, Lori Moran, Jessica Treweek

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All Board members were in attendance.

Also in attendance:

Chris Maestas, Director; Haily Hoff, Clerk

Others Present:

Amanda Davey, Maggie Davis, Gabe Dillon, Brad Abell

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 October 4, 2021. The meeting convened at 8:30 AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the September 13, 2021, 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 September 13, 2021 Board minutes.

Jessica Treweek seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

Maggie Davis gave the following report:

Volunteer Park, Flathead Lake

1. A big thank you to the Parks Department for staying on top of maintenance at the expanded Volunteer Park in 2020-2021.
 - a. Use of the park during fall, winter, and spring was steady. Due to Covid, outdoor exercise and games, meeting with friends and family, and enjoying take-out food were popular activities.
 - b. Summer use of this park was astounding! Many multi-generational families came for the day.
 - c. When the boats were launched in the spring at just below full pool, it became apparent that the swim buoys were needed. Power boats and swimmers were using the swim docks early in the season.
 - d. Swimmers have been spotted in the water from April to October.
 - e. Kayak and paddleboards are numerous, primarily because of a nearby rental shop. People walk the boards and kayaks one block on Adams Street to the lake.
 - f. On-going issues with the irrigation pump were addressed by Sand Wedge LLC and project manager, Mark Buck. Among the troubleshooting activities, a diver discovered the intake pipe was blocked with a fish.

- g. Volunteer Park property has had and will continue to have seasonal seeps from natural sources. A few were addressed with underground drainage mitigation.
 - h. Use of the park as a possible farmers' market site has been mentioned.
 - i. The Flathead County Parks list entry for Volunteer Park needs updating.
 - j. The use of the Montana Conservation Corps to refresh the landscaping was a plus.
 - k. ADA use of the north and south docks is not unusual. Lake access for fishing is popular with many, including veterans.
 - l. We had hoped that groups from area assisted living homes, etc. would take advantage of the accessible features of the park. When Covid is no longer a deterrent, we hope the park attracts outings from these facilities.
 - m. Birds and dogs. Gulls seem to have taken over for Canada geese on the docks. Dog owners are usually responsive to being told their "exceptional pet" is not welcome on the perimeter sidewalks...but not always.
2. One of us walks through the park 3-4 times a week en route to the Post Office. It rarely is entirely empty and overwhelmingly the visitors are respectful.
 3. The West Shore Community Library has re-opened to regular hours. It has attracted new users and card holders. Public gatherings such as story hour and speakers have been curtailed due to Covid. There also has been an uptake in people seeking the Chamber of Commerce tourist information resources.

Flathead County Park Inventory

1. During the last 12 years of working on the three phases of Volunteer Park, we became aware of the numerous small parcels of "park land" held by the County.
 - a. Many of the smaller parcels were acquired from developers in lieu of cash and often they were of marginal value.
 - b. Many of the smaller parcels have been "adopted" or encroached upon by adjacent landowners.
 - c. During this period, we suggested that the County acquisition of Volunteer Park shoreline could offset or free up some un-developable properties for sale or trade. This would put some of these properties back on the tax rolls and clarify ownership and maintenance issues.
 - d. Finding a balance between larger, multi-use parks and smaller, dispersed parks will always be a consideration.
2. As the County population grows, the role of parks and recreation spaces will become of increasing importance.
3. The County has in the past invested in developing and maintain parks on Montana highway ROW and privately-owned property. Some of these resources may not be available indefinitely.
4. Social media and the internet will play in increasing part of county park use. People will "discover" previously unused park lands.
5. Many new residents and visitors do not understand Montana regs on county ROWs or property lines along Flathead Lake and other bodies of water that extend to the low water line.
6. Flathead County has not pursued securing ROW on county roads that cross state forest lands. By contrast Beaverhead County has purchased 85 ROWs from the State of Montana. This could affect future access to county parks. (This seems like an ideal use of PILT funds.)
7. Opportunities to work with other government agencies to meet the future needs for park and recreational opportunities should be encouraged when feasible.

Gabe Dillon of Foys to Blacktail Trails reported that the youth mountain bike race held recently at Herron Park was fantastic. Gabe volunteered to assist in parking. The kids had a great time and everyone jumped into action as soon the race concluded to clean up; the entire course was cleared within an hour. Volunteer Trail Day was scheduled for October 3rd. Nineteen people showed up, fourteen of them were from NICA and nine of those fourteen were student athletes. Forty-nine hours of volunteer work were completed. Dave Landstrom led the operation to clear lines of sight and clear debris from trail sections. A large amount of trash was also removed from the receptacle near the kiosk. Gabe mentioned that they consider Foys to Blacktail Trails as contractors, not volunteers to Flathead County. Professional training and insurance standards are maintained for projects executed by FTBT. Safety briefings are conducted before waivers are signed and all records are scanned in following the physical work. A trail courtesy skeleton policy has been assembled by Foys to Blacktail trails and they are willing and able to implement community outreach if allowed.

Parks & Recreation Department Report

A National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) bike event was held at Herron. The race accommodated 230 student athletes and a kind letter was received from the event organizer. Herron parking lot overlay took place last month. TruGreen sprayed Volunteer Park this fall. Underwater Soldiers divers pulled 260 pounds of litter and debris from Flathead Lake. This same group would like to follow up with a similar project in Somers this spring. The scoreboard donated for Carlyle Johnson was delivered to the shop. Finding an affordable contractor for installation has been challenging, the most recent estimate for this work came in at \$15K. Bigfork soccer is taking place currently at Carlyle Johnson. Mark Buck and Tanner Smith are trying to find a solution to the seeping water at Volunteer Park. Running surface water was visible in December last year indicating the irrigation system may not be the problem. Docks and swim line from water access parks have been removed for the winter season. Seasonal employee layoffs are beginning as well as winter maintenance projects. Vandals are tearing up the parking area at Kelsey Cummings near Bitterroot Lake. Sliter vandalism continues. Gordie has been up to Herron to enforce the leash law. The original equestrian crossing at Herron Park may be roped off to allow a natural trail to develop.

Two trail grants have potentially been awarded for maintenance of school trails and Rails to Trails sections. If awarded, the projects will take place in the spring & summer of 2022. Whitefish Stage to Lawrence Park switchback project will likely not be receiving funding the grants system. All paved trails will be rated at a 9 out of 10 with the exception of Whitefish Stage switchbacks.

Adult and youth flag football are underway and both are completely full. These programs could grow with additional staff and space. Amanda is currently working on confirming gym time for adult basketball. Fall softball and Adult Flag Football are playing under the lights at the Conrad Complex. Youth basketball registration coming soon.

Weed Department Report

Continuing contract work for City of Kalispell. Will be picking off BPA jobs and picking up more MDT contract work throughout October. Highway 2 East line and North Fork Road to Canada still waiting for weather timing and decreased traffic. Moved roadside operations east until the construction calms down in the south. CIP truck estimate from Corwin was ~\$41K for a ¾ ton.

Other Business

There was no other business

Matters of the Board

There were no matters of the Board


Adjourn

Jessica Treweek moved to adjourn the meeting at 09:31 AM.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President

12/6/21

Date