



MARION COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE MEETING

February 18, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

North Santiam Room at 5155 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sandy Grulkey, Marty Heyen, Steve Koch, George Moeller, Wayne Rawlins, Ben Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Anderson

STAFF PRESENT: Alan Haley, Russ Dilley, Jolene Bray

BOC LIAISON: Commissioner Sam Brentano

PUBLIC SIGNED IN: Joan Javin, Bill Ruff

ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)

- **Welcome and Introductions**

George called the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves. New parks commissioner Steve Koch told the group he lives in Butteville, and has roots in Woodburn and St. Paul. Everyone welcomed Steve to the commission.

- **Approval of December 1, 2015 Meeting Minutes**

Wayne made a motion to approve the December 1, 2015 meeting minutes. Ben seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

- **Public Input**

Joan Javin told the commission she had been working to identify public land that can be used for a dedicated camp area for the homeless community. She said the ideal property would be approximately two acres with showers, toilets, and laundry facilities, as well as an onsite manager to maintain order. She had previously looked into the Fairview campus in Salem but found that property was not appropriate and is looking for another venue. Joan said the long term goal is to find permanent housing but in the meantime this will give them a legal address and she is hoping various government agencies will help. Wayne said this has historically been difficult because many funding sources that help state and county agencies purchase their land do not allow agencies to restrict any of the land from 100% public access, and if they did they could be found to be in non-compliance and risk economic consequences. Russ said most parks land is funded through Land and Water Conservation, which would restrict this type of use. There was discussion about the camp location and whether it should be located closer to the city where occupants can more easily access services. Joan said she had not spoken to the City of Salem's park department but would contact them. George thanked Joan for attending and sharing her proposal with the commission.

- **Council Member Announcements and Upcoming Events**

George said the commission was asked to write letter of support for the Big Toy project at Keizer Rapids Park. He shared a draft of the letter for commission member's review. Alan said Commissioner Carlson shared some additional language that she would like included in the letter, which is attached to the letter. Commissioner Brentano suggested adding the language in the last paragraph of the letter. Ben asked for clarification about who is applying for the grant funding. Wayne said although the park is a joint project, the applicant for the funding is the City of Keizer. Ben asked if the city has all fiduciary and

legal obligations. Wayne said that was correct. Alan said one issue Commissioner Carlson wanted highlighted was that Keizer Rapids Park is a regional park and Marion County is part of the region. Wayne said this is important to share because if Marion County was to design a project and request grant funding, state parks would differentiate between the City of Keizer and Marion County. There was approval to add the language and Alan suggested he could edit it and send it back out for signature.

- **Nomination of new Parks Commission Chair**

George asked for nominations for a new Parks Commission Chair. Sandy nominated Ben to serve as chair and Marty seconded the nomination. Wayne moved to close nominations and the commission voted unanimously to appoint Ben as Parks Commission Chair.

SUMMARY OF PARKS WORK SESSION WITH BOC

Russ said he, Alan and Jeff met with the board of commissioners in December to discuss the parks master plan and direction of the program, including the budget, staffing and projects they would like to see done. Steve said the plan is five years old and asked if there was a suggestion to rewrite or update. Alan said at this time they were looking at specific points that need updates. He said he wants to use the master plan to drive the budget, as well as the reverse, and to be able to show when making requests for improvements that it has already been thought out and planned for. Alan said although maintenance is in the plan, it is not sufficiently highlighted. He said the plan may not identify a dollar amount, but it will identify specific maintenance needs for each park. Russ said there was also discussion about additional funding to the budget to address maintenance issues and upgrade playground equipment.

Russ said there was also discussion about the commission engaging more by meeting more frequently or possibly having parks commissioners act as liaisons to neighborhood groups since there isn't staff for this. Ben said he thought this was a superb idea and asked for feedback from other commission members because this will translate into some additional time and effort. Sandy said she thought it would be good to get out into the community instead of making them come to the commission. She asked if members can voluntarily meet with neighborhood groups and report back at commission meetings. There was discussion about what purpose commission members would have for attending these meetings. Ben said commissioners' purpose can be sharing and gathering information, such as community input, while updating the Parks Master Plan. Wayne said he's not sure if commissioners should be liaisons and needs to give it some thought. Ben asked about the number of neighborhood groups.

Russ suggested attending a neighborhood association or group meeting in the North Fork area. Alan said the board's point is more about commission members being open to attending or engaging with groups, not identifying a specific group. He said they also suggested working to create state and federal partnerships and this will take time. Alan said he is trying to set a meeting with BLM and the Forest Service to discuss collecting parks fees up the North Fork since they are already collecting fees in the same area. Ben asked if they were looking for a willingness in principle to engage with the public, which Alan confirmed.

Alan said at the work session meeting they also talked about regional focus and how many acres of parks we have, how much should we have and how much is held regionally. He said the commission could look at regional usability instead of tying up Marion County parks or funding. Commissioner Brentano said the public doesn't see a difference between city, county or state parks, so each agency should work together to provide services. Steve asked if there is a value in distinguishing Marion County parks through signage for the purpose of gleaning money for those parks specifically. He said if the county was to propose a bond measure for county parks, the public could identify those parks through visual cues. Alan agreed this was a good point and said most who live by Auburn Park don't know it's a county park, but most who live on the North Fork know those are county parks, but that for funding he doesn't think it makes much difference.

Alan said the City of Aumsville had made a proposal to take over Aumsville Ponds Park. He said they have plans for enhancements for improved trails and the Aumsville Police Department would patrol it. He said the Marion County Sheriff's Office currently does this, but on a very limited basis as time allows. He said from a regional perspective, the park is still here and available to use. Alan said the county has property connected to the back of the park property and would retain county water rights. Sam said he receives complaints of vandalism and it may be better served by the city.

Alan said they also discussed potential improvements and available funding with the board. He said they are spending one-third of what would be ideal to maintain parks at the level they'd like to see and wants to increase that. He said there was also discussion about grants used to develop Bear Creek Campground, which was a three year effort.

He said as far as engaging the commission, some issues to discuss include removing the concrete structure at Scotts Mills; transferring Aumsville Ponds to the City of Aumsville and whether other county parks in cities should be transferred; and improvements to parking areas at Salmon Falls with Title III money in conjunction with the Forest Service and BLM in the spring and into the summer. Alan said it would be helpful to the board of commissioners if the various parks maintenance projects can be prioritized.

Steve asked what the parks program pays when juvenile crews are used. Alan said although the program usually pays for crews, the county sheriff and juvenile director are collaborating with the parks program and the only expense is materials. He said both departments have contracts in place for projects and on days they don't have anything scheduled, they make themselves available to parks. Alan said the county is looking at increased sheriff's patrols up the North Fork. He said the sheriff's office is no longer using the cadet program there because it's too dangerous with them alone, but they may partner a cadet with a deputy.

Alan said the board wants a parks plan and will use the Parks Master Plan to build it. He said budgets are due in March and Jeff's position will be advertised soon. He said they are looking at his positional organizationally because it hasn't been reviewed for several years. He said they are not necessarily looking for an engineer because the division has engineers, but they are looking for someone with multiple qualifications and strong management skills.

George asked how to proceed on prioritizing maintenance projects. Russ said he has a list that he and Jeff created. Ben asked Russ to send this in an email to the commission. Russ also asked if commissioners are willing to meet every two months and all agreed.

FUTURE TOPICS / EMERGING ISSUES / OTHER BUSINESS

- **Butteville Project Update**

Ben shared a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed Butteville Landing project that Bill Ruff helped create. He said Butteville was once the center of the county in the mid-1800's but has since wound down to a small residential community with no social or economic driver, although it does have Oregon's oldest operating store, which is operated by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). Ben said OPRD installed a paddle dock at Champoeg State Park which makes it safer for paddlers to get out of their water craft. He said the Butteville property is 60' wide and 353' long and runs from First Street to the Willamette River.

Ben said Steve Koch, a landscape architect, and Bill Ruff, a building architect, are also on the Friends of French Prairie (FOFP) board of directors and have offered their services pro bono in redesigning the Butteville property. He said there is community support for the project from all the immediate local residents and the Butteville Community Church, with the exception of one property owner. Ben said the

FOFP board unanimously agreed to be the principal sponsor of property maintenance once it has been established and thinks the Butteville Community Church may also get involved. He said Champoeg Park is open to assisting with maintenance, but can't commit to a full-time employee.

Steve reviewed some photos that showed over the years how the property shrank from a road to a trail, with encroaching vegetation and down timber. He said just cleaning up the vegetation and timber would be a terrific improvement. He then shared a rendering of a proposed path, which can be straight or curved, with fencing and picnic tables along the path and available space for parking at top of the right-of-way (ROW). Ben asked what the county is willing to do to improve the ROW. Alan said the county has held on to this property for years even though there have been several offers to buy because the county wants to maintain it for historical reasons. He complimented Steve on his design concepts.

There was discussion about potential grant funding with one upcoming grant due on March 1. Alan said the project needs scope. Ben said he will work with Russ on identifying that. Wayne said local government grants have different rules about what does or doesn't qualify depending on the source of funds. He said he is suggesting caution against speed, the scope of project should be well defined and the right grant funds sought. Wayne said Fish and Wildlife and the Marine Board both work on boating access, but only Fish and Wildlife awards money for non-motorized boating projects. He said the Recreational Trails Program Grants are grants administered by OPRD for recreational trail-related projects and comes from federal transportation funds. The commission decided to take some time to identify grant opportunities and then submit a comprehensive grant application.

- **Other Commission Updates**

George said the Bonesteele Park discussion may take place at the next commission meeting depending on Scott's schedule. He shared a letter that was sent to the Sheriff's Office thanking them for their maintenance work in county parks. Russ said this can be used as a template for future letters.

Sandy said she has no update about Scotts Mills. She said she talked to Anna Rankin, Pudding River Watershed coordinator. She was told they are working to put together a plan that recognizes the historic nature of the old dam and removes the concrete that is a modern addition. Sandy said there is increasing concern about the safety of Scotts Mill Park. She will be reporting back about increasing partnerships with locals, including a local landowner who is interested in taking over maintenance of the park if he can work out a partnership. He has housing units on his land, which is adjacent to the county park.

Wayne thanked George for his leadership on the commission.

Staff Updates

- Work provided by inmate labor looks great.
- Some of the downed trees at North Fork Park have been removed. The rest will be cut into firewood by Juvenile crews.
- St. Louis Ponds Park opens March 1.
- The fence at Spong's Landing Park is being repaired because it was damaged by a car.
- Gates will be installed at Joryville Park and Prostar will open/close them each day. This is due to illicit activity afterhours.
- Will address Cain property at the next commission meeting.

ADJOURN: 11:42 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: April 14, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. in the Pudding Room at Public Works