

County Commissioners
Colm Willis, Chair
Kevin Cameron
Danielle Bethell



Chief Administrative Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

Parks Update Minutes

Tuesday, January 8, 2026, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Commissioners' Boardroom
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Suite 5231
Salem, Oregon 97301

Attendance:

Commissioner's: Kevin Cameron, and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Matt Lawyer, Trevor Lane, Toni Whitler and Chris Eppley.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Public Works: Brian Nicholas, Ryan Crowther, Scot Tencza, Kevin Thompson, and Lani Radtke.

Commissioner Kevin Cameron called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

-Commissioner Danielle Bethell

2. Fire Memorial

-All

- Several memorial designs considered:
 - Honoring those who died and first responders.
- Discussed future maintenance, American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and durability.
- Concrete paths favored over brick for accessibility and ease of maintenance:
 - Bricks may be used in a pony wall or as accents rather than ground surface.
- Kiosks and plinths for displaying names:
 - Options included one- or two-panel versions:
 - Name those who died and first responders together or opposite sides.
- Agree on smaller, more natural design aesthetic:
 - Blending in the park setting.
 - Using timber and minimizing visual obstruction.
- Finalize a list of names with the sheriff before proceeding with memorial design.
- Engage families of those being honored:
 - Outreach will be conducted after design options are prepared.
 - Families to be asked for input on verbiage for plaques.
 - Meeting to review and decide.
- Cost estimates:
 - \$86,000 option for a large area with a pony wall.
 - Flexible approaches considered based on the number of bricks and names.

3. Scotts Mills "Community"

-All

- Two primary parking solutions:
 - Converting existing parallel parking to angled parking.
 - Creating a new lot.
- Community engagement included a digital survey:
 - 32 responses from about 420 residents.
 - 60% felt parking changes wouldn't improve their experience.
- The Parks Commission recommended option one:
 - Due to lower cost and faster implementation.
- Main community concerns identified in the survey:
 - Safety, noise, litter, and both in-park and out-of-park parking.
- Need to clarify what "safety" concerns mean:
 - Include more detailed questions in future surveys:
 - Distinguish between water/dam safety and on-land behavioral issues.
- Enforcement Discussion:
 - Park staff:
 - Ongoing complaints.
 - Significant behavioral and enforcement issues.
 - Crowded, negative interactions, excessive litter, vandalism:
 - Especially during busy seasons.
 - Challenging environment for maintenance staff and community.
 - Lack of sufficient enforcement presence to address behaviors well.
 - Sheriff's office:
 - Respond to complaints and visiting during busy times.
 - Do not perceive major ongoing enforcement or conflict issue.
 - Generally, visitors had permits, and no major incidents needing law enforcement intervention.
- Coordinate a pre-season work session with sheriff's and parks staff:
 - Strengthen enforcement and presence.
 - Address behavioral concerns and improve park environment.
- Possible solution:
 - Host during busy seasons.
 - Deter negative behavior without requiring full enforcement responsibility by park staff.

4. Bear Creek Local Government Grant Program (LGGP) Grant

-All

- Requested a signed resolution to apply for a grant:
 - Match peer grant funding and increase available resources for park projects.
- Grant requires a local financial match:
 - Peer grant funding on hand can serve as the match.
- Grant stipulates a 25-year park use requirement:
 - Park meets perpetual-use mandates per existing land and water agreements.
- Timeline for grant application is January through April:
 - Prepare resolution for signature to avoid delays.
- Any project relying on matching grant funds will adhere to all restrictions and requirements already in place.

5. Oregon Parks Forever – Role

-All

- Information and reference materials explaining difference between Oregon Parks Forever and other park foundations.

- Oregon Parks Forever supported park improvements through funding and program support.

6. Other

-All

- Recent in-kind volunteer/vendor contributions for Detroit area cleanup:
 - Following wildfires and related emergencies.
 - Specifically opening roads urgently needed for infrastructure recovery.
- Consider formal recognition or appreciation of contributors in the future.

7. Next Steps

-All

- Obtain names for the memorial from the sheriff.
- Finalize design options.
- Plan family engagement for input on plaque content.
- Present two to three memorial design options for family and board feedback.
- Schedule work session with sheriff's office and park staff before next busy season:
 - Develop an actionable enforcement and patrol plan.
- Expand Scotts Mills community outreach survey:
 - Use the elementary attendance area.
 - Include refined questions about safety and behavior.
 - Postcards/QR codes and digital distribution.
- Investigate feasibility of discounted annual pass for locals instead of a free pass:
 - Potentially via alternative QR codes.
 - Report implementation options.
- Draft resolution for Bear Creek LGGP grant in advance to ensure readiness.
- Send Oregon Parks Forever summary to board and other parties for review.

Adjourned – time: 2:07 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White