



# MARION COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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**July 19, 2018, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**pudding Room at 5155 Silverton Road NE, Salem, Oregon**

**Members Present:** Sandy Grulkey, Marty Heyen, Ryan Mann, Wayne Rawlins, Ben Williams, Kyleen Zimmer

**Board Liaison:** Sam Brentano

**Staff Present:** Russ Dilley, Brian May, Jolene Bray

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### **ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)**

**Call to Order: 1:04 p.m.**

#### **Approval of May 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Marty made a motion to approve the May 17, 2018, meeting minutes. Sandy seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Sandy asked how commission members were supposed to track hours spent on park visits. Brian said staff would add a column to the meeting sign-in sheet for commissioners to enter their time spent on parks commission business, which includes attending meetings, researching and visiting parks, and creating presentations.

#### **Public Input**

No members of public in attendance.

#### **Commission Member Announcements and Upcoming Events**

Sandy said the filmmakers who created "Portlandia" just filmed a movie at Scotts Mills and are considering using a county park for another film. Commissioner Brentano said they also filmed in St. Paul. Sandy said she was asked to share the citizens of Scotts Mills' deep appreciation for the improvements to the Scotts Mills county park. She said the parking lot, with the new added parking, has been full on several days and the park is more popular than ever. Sandy said residents are still concerned that it is unsafe to walk along Crooked Finger Road because it doesn't have shoulders. She said the county has stepped up to help and put in a pedestrian path with pedestrian signs on Crooked Finger Road above and below the park, but doesn't think that is enough because traffic speed needs to be reduced and crosswalks installed. Sandy said she is also continuing talks with the Grand Ronde Tribe about creating a historic nature area around Scotts Mills Park and having it designated as a historic or heritage park. Ben cautioned her about the heritage designation because that may bring onerous requirements and may also restrict the current use of the park.

Ben said county staff created a passport in celebration of Marion County's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which directs people to visit various sites in the county where they will find the answer to a trivia question on the passport. He said after it's filled in it can be submitted for a chance to win a prize. Ben said he was disappointed that not a single Marion County park was included as a site to visit.

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

#### **Presentations on Eola Bend and Bonesteele parks**

**Kyleen reported on her recent visit to Eola Bend Park.** She said she and her husband bicycled in on the trail from Minto Brown Park, which is the only way into the park. She said the trail was in great condition and easy to

ride on. Kyleen said when entering park, there's a nice kiosk with county park rules, which she said were direct but not unwelcoming, and a map of the park map. She said she also observed picnic tables, trash cans, and interpretive and directional signage, but no restrooms. She said there are restrooms located in the adjacent city park. Kyleen said she saw eagles and an osprey nest. She said the trail opens up to the Willamette River where there are nice spots for picnic tables and good signage alerting park visitors that there was no river access. She said there was some trail areas where vegetation was starting to encroach but it was still easy to get through, and there were some invasive blackberries, which is typical for that area. Kyleen said Minto Brown was crowded but there was no one else at Eola Bend. She said even though the park was very private, it was very clean and well maintained.

Kyleen asked about the two parks being in different jurisdictions. Russ said Eola Bend used to be part of Marion County's Browns Island Landfill property, so it was already owned by the county. The Environmental Services Division, which operates the landfill, took care of this area for a long time, including planting trees.

Commissioner Brentano asked if it would be possible to install latrine type or portable restrooms. Brian said most of the park is in the floodplain so latrine type facilities are not being considered but they are looking at possibly placing portable restrooms in the park. He said there is maintenance access through the landfill for vendors to clean the portables. There was discussion about adding parking at the southern portion of the park. Brian said this would need to be done on landfill property and it is closed at the end of the day, so there is concern that people could be locked in. Wayne said the Parks Master Plan calls for adding a fishing pier and asked if that was feasible. Russ said it probably wasn't be because of the fluctuating river levels and river debris.

**Wayne reported on his recent visit to Bonesteele Park.** He said the 30.88 acre park, which is located on Aumsville Highway, was formerly a commercial grass field and is being restored to an upland prairie ecosystem. He said the park has a restroom, foot trails, and off street parking, and allows no camping, dogs or horses because it's a Natural Heritage Park. He said the forested area of the park is 6-10 acres (that includes 5 acres of mature Oregon oaks and Douglas fir) and the remaining acres are prairie land (with 6 acres of restored prairie habitat and 19 acres of grassland). He said there are many large conifers and deciduous trees that are marked and he asked why that is. Russ said one tree was being removed because it was a danger and needed to come down. He said there are no plans to remove any others.

Wayne said there is a nice flat area in the trees that could be driven to but it's gated off. He said there are acres of ferns, which he thinks are wood ferns. Ben asked if they are native plants. Wayne said he thought they were but if left alone they will take over the property. He said there is also tansy ragwort, which is very toxic to animals and the county required residents to eradicate it from their property. He said he found scat at the park entrance that he believes to be from a bear because it was full of cherry seeds that the animal was gorging on. Wayne said Bonesteele Park has a lot of heritage. He said in summer of 2001, 52 pounds of native seed including 67 upland prairie species were collected. Wayne said the 2010 Parks Master Plan called for a picnic area, interpretive signage, and environmental education. He said right now there is minimal continuation of the Natural Heritage Park (NHP) Plan due to funding, staffing, volunteers and turnover, clarity of plan, continuity, and dedicated management personnel. He said there was active management on only a small part and asked what the realistic expectations are of the county.

Commissioner Brentano asked if the "heritage" mantel should be maintained. Brian said staff has also asked that question. Russ said the only stipulation when the county acquired the property was that it remains a park property and the NHP designation happened long after the county acquired the property. Wayne asked if the county is pursuing an upland prairie designation. Russ said it was pursued by a previous Public Works director but when he left the department the efforts fell off. Wayne said if the park is not being managed as a NHP, he recommended the restrictions be modified. He said it is a nice place to ride a horse or walk a dog and if the NHP restrictions were modified he could see it being used for these activities.

Kyleen asked Russ for staff's thoughts on how the park should be used. Russ said he still liked the disc golf idea and the park is also a good resource for school field trips. Commissioner Brentano agreed that disc golf and horse riding would be good uses of the park, and asked if staff could section off areas that have natural plant growth.

Brian said in the past when Russ was the only Parks employee this park was closed seasonally but they now hope to keep it open year-round. Russ said there is a second picnic table being added under the oak trees and would like to add picnic tables to a few more areas in the future. He said the park will be mowed in August after bird breeding season ends. Wayne said he saw no evidence of parties or vandalism; the area was clean and clear.

Ben asked how the commission should discuss if the park needs a different management plan. Brian said after presentations have been given on all the county parks, the commission will discuss them all and make recommendations.

Ben thanked Kyleen and Wayne, and said both presentations were terrific and very thorough.

At the next meeting Ryan will do a report on St. Louis Fish Ponds and Sandy will do a report on Packsaddle.

### **Adopt-a-Park Program**

Ben asked if everyone read the Adopt-a-Park material from last meeting. He asked if anyone had thoughts about the process and reaching out to potential sponsors. Marty suggested reaching out to schools. Brian said the assignment was for each commissioner to think about potential sponsors for the parks they're responsible for reporting on. Ben said the idea is to ask people who may use the park if they want to volunteer to help maintain it a few times a year. He encouraged everyone to keep thinking about it and we will revisit this in the fall.

Ben said it would be nice to have an adopt-a-park program for San Salvador Park and the residents in St. Paul won't even visit it. Commissioner Brentano said the property was originally donated to Oregon State Parks but now belongs to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. He said it has a bad reputation but it doesn't have to be that way. He said if it had restrooms and garbage upkeep, neighbors might visit. Ben suggested doing research on this as an action time and revisiting it at a later meeting.

### **STAFF UPDATES**

#### **Approved 2018-19 Budget**

Russ said the 2018-19 budget was approved so work will begin on proposed projects. He said there are plans to build a couple of shelters with barbecues at Scotts Mills Park to increase capacity. He said a 20' shelter costs \$25,000 and the current funding for this project is \$84,000. Russ said they had to decide between building one large picnic shelter or two smaller shelters. He said on the other side of the playground is wide open non-shaded area, which would be a nice spot for a group shelter. Ben and Sandy both like the idea of two smaller shelters.

Russ said another idea was to install a restroom at Denny Park. He said the Sheriff's Office discouraged this because of the homeless population present in this area. Russ said the county instead put an ADA portable restroom in the park. He said it was knocked over once but is now staked down and there have been no other issues. Russ said because they are not putting a restroom in at Denny Park, they would like to add another one to Scotts Mills Park. He said there is currently a portable restroom that is very busy.

Ryan asked how much of the approved budget is left up to the discretion of staff and how much is directed by the commission. Brian said the commission has set the project priorities, which is what is being done. He said the commission and staff went through each suggested project and decided together which would be proposed to the board of commissioners. He said they requested \$170,000 for staffing and \$230,000 for projects. Brian said the Parks program also receives System Development Charges (SDC) and plans as matching funds in grant requests. Kyleen asked what happens if the proposed projects don't transpire. Brian said if the projects don't occur, the program doesn't receive the funding. Commissioner Brentano said the board is working to increase the funding for the parks program. Kyleen said that's obvious because the parks look great.

### **North Fork Corridor Update**

Russ said on Saturday they collected \$1,235 in parking fees on the North Fork Corridor and \$1,935 on Sunday. Brian said staff because vehicle traffic was so heavy they had to close the entrance gate at North Fork Park because the parking lot was so full. He said left the exit gates open so vehicles could depart. Russ said on Monday they collected \$675 in parking fees and \$335 was from North Fork Park. He said crews are keeping the parks clean and hosts are doing a great job at Bear Creek. Russ said the county has been working collaboratively with the Marion County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

### **Staff Updates**

Russ said the newly approved budget funded a new full-time medium equipment operator, who has been hired. He said all the seasonal workers have also been hired.

### **Spong's Landing and Scotts Mills parks**

Russ showed photos of new parking lot at Scotts Mills Park. The parking lot has been expanded, paved and striped. He said the crew from the Juvenile Department is creating stairs on the pedestrian trail. He said they pulled all the picnic tables in the winter and the Bridge Crew poured concrete pads for the picnic tables so they're level and don't slide off. Russ said the tables are situated close to the playground equipment so they can be close to children who are playing. He said there are also two tables on the bluff overlooking the river. Russ said the restroom update has also been completed at Spong's Landing.

### **FUTURE TOPICS / EMERGING ISSUES / OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Other Business – Recruitment for Parks Commission Vacant Seat**

Ben reminded everyone that there is a vacant parks commission position and asked everyone to think about potential candidates. Kyleen asked if there are any qualifiers besides residence. Ben said the only requirement is that they live in Marion County.

#### **Future Topics**

- Projects for Assigned Parks

**ADJOURN:** 3:01 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:** September 20, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. in the Pudding Room (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) at Public Works.