

**MARION COUNTY
Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, July 15, 2021
Time: 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Logistics: In person meeting with option for Zoom due to COVID-19
Location: Willamette Conference Room

Present: **Members:** Wayne Rawlins, Robert Emanuel, Malcolm Aquinas, Chris Teichroew,

Via Zoom: Marty Heyen, Alton Hoover, Josh Faulkner, Marisa Roskelley,

Staff: Brian May, Tom Kissinger, Pattie Phillips

Guests: Katy Waid (applicant), Shirley Stark, Duane and Karen Marks, Heather Croser, JoAnn Robben, KayLynn Clark, Gene & Maureen Johnson, Lars Schoreder, Pat & Tom Parks, Robert Vieyen-Braerdle, Susan Hatch, Gerald Higgle, Michelle Monahan, Jen & Charlie Blakely, Jerry Haig, Kaitlyn Clark, Valerie Shacker, plus about 15 more people who did not sign in.

Guests Via Zoom: Valerie Schaefer, Steve Staten (applicant), Kelly Thomas (applicant), Nancy Currier

Commissioner Liaison: Commissioner Kevin Cameron

Absent: None

Quorum: Yes

OPEN MEETING

Wayne called meeting to order at 3:00 pm. Welcome and introductions made by Parks Commission members, guests, and Public Works staff.

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION: Motion to approve the Approval of January 21, 2021 meeting minutes.

DISCUSSION: None

RESULTS: Voice vote unanimous – motion passes

ADMINISTRATIVE: INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

PUBLIC INPUT: Tom let the public know that each member will have three minutes to speak.

There were many questions regarding the possible proposal to make Macleay a park.

Tom shared information regarding the background of the Auburn Conversion Project. It began with the sale of Auburn Park in 2018-19. The sale was to help Auburn Elementary expand their parking area. When the park was initially purchased in the late 70's, the funds that were used were Land and Water Conservation Funds which is a federal program through the National Park Service facilitated through from Oregon State Funds. If funds are used and the property eventually gets sold, then to keep the funds, there must be a 'conversion.' The land that replaces the original land must be replaced with land of equal or greater value but there are two parts of that equation: 1) it has to be of equal or greater land value (appraised); and 2) that it needs to be of equal or greater recreational value.

In 2019, the county had explored a number of options that did not pan out, either because the owners did not want to sell, or the land just was not right for a park. The landfill came up as a possible solution as the county already owns the land. The money from the conversion project can be used to develop land rather than having to buy land at \$25/foot. Auburn Park was only about 4 ½ - 6 acres, so if the money was used to buy land, it would not buy much land for a park. The county owns the landfill and it was proposed to the Parks Commission in 2019 or 2020. The Parks Commission toured the land and voted to present the landfill as an option to the National State Parks and the Oregon State Funds as a potential site. The information was approved by both entities as a possible conversion.

There was a planned meeting with the community for March 16th or 19th and that is when the COVID restrictions were put in place so there was no meeting. The project was placed on hold. Once Tom came to the position, the county began the process again of seeing if there was any interest in the project and the survey was released in April 2021.

At this meeting, the Parks Commission is only going to discuss the results of the survey. There is no vote going on at this time with either the Parks Commission or the Board of Commissioners as the county is only in the information gathering stage. The next step is to see what the Board of Commissioners wants to do and that will be discussed at a work session on July 22. Unfortunately, it is not a public meeting as it is just to give the BOC information and ask for guidance.

Members of the public raised the following questions:

Concern: The county was trying to use the pandemic to hurry up and push the park to be built on the old Macleay landfill.

Response: There was a meeting scheduled in March but the pandemic shut down the county. The project was put on hold.

Concern: The county was not publicizing the plan for Macleay park and they had not received the survey card.

Response: The county reached out for public information using mail, social media and an online survey. The survey cards were sent to addresses of homeowners (possibly a 1 mile radius) in the Macleay area regarding the Auburn Conversion project. The county put the survey on its Marion County FaceBook page as well as the Marion County website.

Concern: They asked if the Macleay landfill was the only option and if the decision had already been made.

Response: There are a variety of options for the Auburn Conversion Project with the MacLeay landfill being only one option being put forth to the Board of Commissioners. The county does not make the decision and is only just putting forth suggestions for park locations to the Board of Commissioners at a Work Session on July 22, 2021 - 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Concern: They heard chainsaws and grinders at the landfill and think that there is already work being put in to make the landfill a park.

Response: Brian May responded to say that the chainsaws and grinders are there to clean up from the ice storm. All clean up from the ice storm for Marion County parks should be completed by the end of July. Local residents have probably noticed that there have been lawn mowers in the past at the landfill. There will be one there in the next couple of weeks to do regular maintenance.

Concern: They want to know who to talk to voice their concerns.

Response: They can email parks@co.marion.or.us or email the Commissioners. As an aside, Commissioner Cameron is part of the meeting and has heard all of your questions.

Other concerns that they had were:

- They are afraid of the homeless coming into the area.
- They think their property values will go down.
- Is the county aware that there is a pipeline on the property.
- Is the county aware of report from the EPA.

The public was given an hour to voice its concerns before the Parks Commission needed to resume its meeting.

Public Comment ended

By-Laws and Handbook Update

MOTION: Motion to approve the Bylaws and Handbook update with corrections. Marty made a motion to pass with corrections.

DISCUSSION: Marty asked that the wording in 6.6 be changed to “. . . must be a majority of the commissioners in attendance.”

RESULTS: Voice vote unanimous – motion passes. They will be presented to the Board of Commissioners.

Santiam Parks Update

FEMA PROCESS

Tom let the commission know that the FEMA application had been resubmitted (fourth time). FEMA is reviewing and there should be a quick turnaround. The final number for funds from FEMA should be in the \$2.7 million

range. The main goal with these funds is to give access to the parks.

ROAD CLOSURES

The roads are still closed though there is evidence of unlawful presence in the park (trash in the park). The Engineering and Sheriff's departments are installing three gates which will be accessed by key codes and a few remote controls for public safety. The work should be completed in August.

PARK NAMING POLICY

Tom suggested that the Parks Commission create a subcommittee to be able to name parks as it has occurred to the county that we do not have a naming policy. This came up recently as the family of a person who died at the Beachie Creek fire wants to rename North Fork with the child's name. Additionally, with the Auburn Conversion Project, we do not have a mechanism to name that park. Pattie will send out the latest draft of a sample policy to name/rename parks to all members of the Parks Commission.

FUTURE TOPICS/EMERGING ISSUES/OTHER BUSINESS (Information/Discussion)

Staff Updates:

ORPA MEMBERSHIP

Tom shared that Parks Commissioners are eligible for free membership in the Oregon Recreation Parks Association. The ORPA conference is offered at a discount, but it is a virtual event and it takes place during the week. The county may be able to help defray the costs. The sessions may be recorded so you can see them later. We will need your name and email addresses if you are interested.

ICE STORM DAMAGE

We are just about done and clean up should be done by end of July.

AUBURN CONVERSION PROJECT

There has been a lot of interest in the project. Tom will discuss the survey results. We received 533 responses with 80% of them being positive. It seems that people are interested in trails, a disc golf course, pickle ball and possibly a dog park.

Marty suggested that we take a field trip to the location as well as the surround neighborhoods to understand the concerns of the public. Tom agreed and said that the area is still being cleaned up from the ice storm but there is just under 3000 cubic yards as it was a staging place for other sites. He is looking forward to getting the Parks Commission out to the site to see the area and to see what the concerns are for the neighbors. We will schedule a tour.

CANYON PARKS

Tom would like to schedule a tour of the Canyon Parks. It will be arranged for a Saturday so that more people can attend. We have a couple of large passenger vans and will leave from here. We will use Doodle poll to see which Saturday would work best for people.

One of the issues that we are dealing with up there are noxious weeds. Tom is looking into applying for FEMA funding to help deal with that.

Part of the long term plan, Phase 2, which will help with restoration process. If parks commissioners want to look at the Walter Macy report, they can see a breakdown of the cost estimates of for the whole project. Tom has a spreadsheet separating the costs by Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 is to get the parks open. Phase 2 is to more of restoration and interpretation.

Commissioners Roundtable:

Marty asked if we could have access, like emails or phone numbers of the other Parks Commission members. We will move forward with getting that information and sending it out.

Marty mentioned that she had toured the Santiam Parks already just after the fire and wasn't sure that she needed to see it again.

Marissa was at a park and saw a gentleman who had two dogs who were unleashed and causing problems with other visitors. He said that his dogs are certified support dogs and that he can bring his dogs. Malcolm shared that Oregon law is very permissive and does people do not need proof of any kind.

Malcom suggested that since this was a public meeting that Marty might want to restate what she said about "a grain of salt." Marty stated that what she said was her opinion and may not be correct.

Bob Emanuel mentioned that he would be interested in seeing the survey results relating to the Auburn Parks Conversion and the comments. Tom said that he would look into it and mentioned that the survey cards just went to homeowners.

Wayne said that he would like to suggest that it is time to nominate new chair/vice chairs. He also asks if commissioners could begin coming to the meetings since the pandemic restrictions have changed, though people are more than welcome to continue to use Zoom. Wayne mentioned that the nominations for chair/vice chair that he has extended his tenure a bit. The past vice-chair moved to WA. If anyone is interested in running, it would be for a two year term. Tom shared that anyone who is interested in the positions and wants to find out more, to reach out.

Motion to adjourn meeting: Wayne moved to adjourn meeting. Voice vote was unanimous – motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 5:10.

Next meeting: Saturday, August 7, 2021. Off site.