

MARION COUNTY Parks Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, May 16, 2024
Time: 3:00pm – 5:00pm
Location: Teams or Willamette Conference Room at Public Works, 5155 Silverton Road NE

Present: **Members:** Wayne Rawlins, Bob Emanuel, Herschel Sangster, Alton Hoover, Tabitha Henricksen

Absent: Steve Staten, Chris Teichroew, Marisa Roskelly

Staff: Ryan Wade, Kevin Thompson, Cory Swartwout

Guests: Kathy Rogers (Teams), Dan Handel, Bryan Hall

Quorum: **Yes**

ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)

Hersch called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm.

Member and Staff introductions: Members and staff were introduced.

Attendance/Rollcall: Done.

Agenda Changes: None.

Approval of March 21, 2024 minutes

Motion: Bob made a motion to accept minutes. Alton seconded.

Discussion: None

Result: A voice vote is unanimous – motion passes.

Public Comment:

Kathy Rogers commented that Kevin and Ryan came to a Hayesville neighborhood meeting and wanted to compliment Kevin for such a personable meeting.

Parks Tour - Feedback

Hersch commented that the tour was very important for him. Hersch was very excited and depressed, at the same time, about what he saw.

Kevin thanked the Commission for joining the tour to see what the parks look like now and the direction that the County is going.

Hersch shared that he wasn't as excited about creating RV parking and liked the design of Bear Creek. North

Santiam Parks is a gem and is real rough at the moment. If we put too much RV parking, it will change the nature of that park. He believes some RV parking is important, just not as much.

Alton shared that after the tours, he was talking to his wife, and she stated that a lot of the parks were closed. That's when he thought that maybe the key was to get to where the parks are good, instead of perfect, so the community can be serviced. If they can open sooner, revenue can start coming in and improvements can be made later.

Wayne shared that the Parks Commission worked on and approved the plan and has seen the County changing the plans. Although understanding that conditions change and the Parks Manager needs some liberty and that you have to be able to react to that, but curious if there can be a discussion on whether these changes need approved by the Commission or if changes can be made as the Parks Manager sees fit; Kevin shared that the Walker Macy plan was the direction the staff were going when he started. Within a couple months, he was told by the Public Works Director and Deputy Director, that it was not a realistic goal at this time. Now, he is being told to use the Walker Macy plan as a structure of what it can be one day and look at it as a guiding vision, not a fixed design. Every step of the way, he will be communicating these steps with the Parks Commission and the Board of Commissioners.

Tabitha asked if there were rules that dictate our park planning process and how we must adhere to that; Cory clarified if she was referring to the Parks Commission specifically; Tabitha clarified for the Marion County Parks in general. In the past she had to follow the plan and only had a small amount of variance that they could change things; Kevin shared that he wasn't sure and would get back to Tabitha.

Bob shared that when he got to the Canyon and looked around, his mind went blank because there was so much to do and such a change in what they looked like. At the same time, he looked at what had been accomplished in the past year or so and was very impressed with the work the County has been doing. Bob also shared that the priority should be where revenue can be made. He was also surprised that Bear Creek ranked as high as it did, to get the stairs built. However, the stairs look great.

Tabitha shared that she was also overwhelmed but for her it was a promise of the future. Marion County is doing great work in the Canyon, and she is very impressed with what the County has been able to accomplish.

Bryan Hall joined the call as a guest.

Tabitha shared that there were conversations surrounding North Santiam planning and profitability. Tabitha would like to know if there has been an opportunity to look at other counties and see what has been profitable for them. Tabitha also mentioned the possibility of a field trip to look at other County parks; Bob discussed that it was a goal, but they couldn't find time for everyone to go. Hersch shared that he would like to tour Linn County and potentially get some information from them. Wayne shared that Brian, the Director of Linn County Parks, made them profitable. Wayne shared that they were still interested in going as a group. Hersch asked if a tour can be added to the agenda in the summer or early fall; Kevin shared that he would do that.

North Fork and Bear Creek Updates

Kevin shared that as of yesterday, our two parks are finally open. The fee stations are up and running as of yesterday. There is no longer cash accepted. There was a real challenge at Bear Creek, without cell service. There is a Starlink system now, providing internet access. Sixteen people have utilized the fee station since it started up yesterday. Annual passes are now for sale and a temporary pass can be purchased at a kiosk. The temporary pass can then be redeemed at Marion County Public Works, or they can submit a form online to have it mailed to them. Passes can also be purchased directly at the Public Works office.

Earth Day & Volunteer Events

Ryan shared a Marion County Parks Volunteer Events slideshow. Ryan noted that there were 3 major events. Earth Day 2024 was a success with 270 people in attendance, 140 families participated in the educational scavenger hunt, most partners participated than any other event hosted by Marion County Environmental Services, and the Parks birdhouse activity had 20 bird houses completed that will be installed throughout the parks.

There was an event held by Trailkeepers of Oregon, Oregon Parks forever, Solve, and Marion County Parks at North Fork Park on May 4th. 28 volunteers were present to help complete tasks. Volunteers installed trash can arrays, created picnic pads, cleared beach debris, installed signage, and cleared areas for future trails.

Another event was held on May 5th with Trailkeepers of Oregon at Minto Park. Three volunteers were present. Volunteers cleared ground for new trails and extended existing gravel trails that were started during the November 2023 event.

Parkdale Presentation

Kevin shared a Parkdale Project Update slideshow covering Background, Community Feedback, Project Description, Playground, and Estimated Timeline.

Park Naming Policy

Kevin shared that there was a request for a park name change that had already been requested in the past and asked the Parks Commission if they recalled how that conversation went in the past. Wayne shared that he was present for those discussions and that's why they were asked to create the naming policy. He shared that they had attempted to get in contact with the requestee after the policy was created and the county was never able to get ahold of them. Kevin asked for a recommendation from the Commissioners, and they stated they needed time to make a decision. Wayne shared that he does not feel inclined to change the name of the park.

Commissioners Roundtable

Bob shared that he would like an update on the Adopt-a-Park Program. Bob also shared that Marion County still has an Auburn Park page on the website that is no longer needed.

Hersch shared that he would like to see an organizational chart so they can see who oversees what.

Wayne asked to have the guests introduce themselves. Bryan and Dan provided a brief introduction. Kevin asked if there was flexibility for the meeting time, asking for a 2-4 pm meeting time. The commission approved.

Meeting adjourned at 4:42 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 18, 2024 @ 2:00 p.m.