

**MARION COUNTY
Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026
Time: 2:00pm – 4:00 pm
Location: Teams or Willamette Conference Room at Public Works, 5155 Silverton Road NE

Present: **Members:** Alton (Al) Hoover, Wayne Rawlins, Hunter McClure and Amanda Arthurs (Teams)

Staff: Kevin Thompson, Whitney Ned, Toni Whitler – Boards Office

Guests:

Absent: **Excused:** Tabitha Henricksen

Unexcused:

Quorum: **Yes**

ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)

Alton Hoover called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

Introductions: Commission members, staff, and guests were introduced.

Attendance/Roll Call: Done.

Agenda Changes: In Tabitha's absence, Public Information Officer for Public Works, Erin Burt, will present the newsletter update before Parks Projects agenda item.

Approval of March 19, 2026 Meeting Minutes

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

Discussion: None

Result: A voice vote is unanimous – motion passes.

Public Input: None

Parks Tour Debrief

Commission members shared feedback from the recent parks tour.

General observations:

- The tour provided valuable context for future discussions.
- Members appreciated learning the history and unique characteristics of individual parks.
- Visiting sites in person improved understanding of maintenance and planning needs.

The Commission discussed the need for Parks Commissioners and ambassadors to have visible identification when engaging with the public in parks. Members expressed concern that approaching park visitors without official identification could create confusion or discomfort.

Discussion included:

- Branded vests as the preferred option over simple name badges.
- Potential use of existing volunteer vests through Marion County.
- Possibility of self-funding vests if County funding is unavailable.
- Need for consistent branding that can be returned and reused by future commissioners.

Staff agreed that visible identification would improve public engagement and credibility.

Parks Ambassador Reports

AI – Denny Park

Highlights:

- Well-maintained neighborhood park.
- Accessible amenities including playground equipment, picnic tables, and dog facilities.
- Popular with neighborhood families.

Primary concern:

- Increasing graffiti, particularly on trees.

Staff explained:

- Graffiti incidents are documented and reported.
- Information is shared with Code Enforcement and the Sheriff's Office for tracking and potential restitution.

Wayne – Working on more detailed presentation for next meeting.

Hunter – Scotts Mills

Discussion focused on:

- Increasing community ownership and involvement.
- Building stronger relationships with local stakeholders.
- Importance of gathering information rather than making commitments on behalf of the County.

Staff recommended outreach to Scotts Mills leadership as an initial step.

Amanda – Minto, Joryville, Eola Bend

Minto Park discussion included:

- Existing site conditions.
- South-side road slide concerns.
- Potential future campsite development.
- Opportunities to partner with local river guide organizations and recreational groups.

Joryville Park discussion included:

- Wildlife-focused experience.
- Restroom availability.
- History of vandalism.
- Moss and algae creating slippery pavement conditions.
- Beaver activity affecting trails.

Ideas included:

- Promoting the park's tree-ring attraction.
- Listing the attraction on roadside attraction websites.
- Exploring partnerships with 4-H, FFA, and equine therapy organizations to utilize barns and trails.

Eola Bend discussion included:

- Difficulty locating the park due to confusing access directions.
 - Need to improve Google Maps and wayfinding.
- Invasive species management.
 - Volunteer opportunities for invasive species removal.
- Potential installation of a bicycle repair station.
- Collaboration with bird-watching and scouting groups.

Staff noted unhoused community camping issues are currently minimal because of limited accessibility but could increase if access improves.

Parks Newsletter Update

Erin Burt (Public Works Public Information Officer) provided an update on the first quarterly Parks newsletter:

- Approximately 1,400 subscribers
- Strong “open” rate – users opening the email
- Positive engagement through click-through activity – users interacting with email content

Most interest centered on:

- Annual parking passes
- Race registration
- Parks Commission information
- Trail projects

Discussion focused on expanding public awareness through:

- Social media
- QR codes
- Library partnerships
- Website improvements
- Promotional campaigns
- Incentive programs

Several public engagement ideas were proposed, including:

- Park passport/challenge program
- Photo contest featuring visits to County parks
- Prize drawing for annual parking passes
- Social media campaigns targeting recreation groups
- Increased storytelling and educational content

Members agreed these initiatives could increase awareness while providing valuable visitation data.

Potential Parks Projects

Kevin shared conceptual long-term development opportunities for Parks Commission feedback before presenting recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

North Santiam - \$1.5 – \$8 million

Potential improvements:

- Expanded camping
 - Additional drive-up and improve existing walk-in tent sites
 - New RV sites
 - New yurts or cabins
- Additional restrooms
- Additional picnic areas
- Utility upgrades

North Fork Park – cost estimates pending

Potential improvements:

- Expanded parking
- Reduced roadside parking issues
- Additional picnic facilities
- Shade structures

Packsaddle Park - \$1.4 - \$1.7 million

Potential improvements:

- Reconfigure boat launch, entrance road and parking

Minto Park – cost estimates pending

Potential improvements:

- New campgrounds with tent and possibly RV sites

Spong's Landing Park – cost estimates pending

Potential improvements:

- New campground
- Non-motorized boat launch and parking

Parkdale Park

Additional project options:

- Horseshoe pits/cornhole - \$4,000
- Shade structure over playground - \$40,000 - \$100,000
- Half-court basketball court - \$60,000 – \$100,000

Maintenance Option: \$8,000 per year/5 years

- Maintain security services
- Increased maintenance activities

Commissioners were unable to provide a formal recommendation on which projects should get priority, agreeing that each one has merit but funding is limited.

Commissioners' Roundtable

Project Updates agenda item was tabled for the next meeting due to time restraints. No pressing announcements.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 16, 2026 @ 2:00 p.m.