



## MARION COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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**August 20, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.**

**5155 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, Oregon in the North Santiam Room**

**PRESENT:** Scott Anderson, Sandy Grulkey, Marty Heyen, George Moeller, Wayne Rawlins, Ben Williams

**STAFF:** Russ Dilley, Jolene Bray

**MARION COUNTY BOC LIAISON:** Commissioner Sam Brentano

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS: 9:02 a.m.**

George opened the meeting and the group introduced themselves.

**APPROVAL OF MAY 21, 2015 MEETING MINUTES**

Scott made a motion to approve the May 21, 2015 meeting minutes. Ben seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**PARKS COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

George said he saw a news article about Marion County Parks that quoted Russ and said the parks program is getting a boost in funding. He shared article and said it was good attention to parks.

Sandy said she had intended to look into having a county parks booth at Salem Saturday Market but didn't get an opportunity to visit and wouldn't in September either. She attended the Marion County Fair but couldn't find booths for the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District or other county departments and found it to be unsupportive of community. She asked for suggestions on other outreach ideas. Marty said if the commission still wants a booth to share parks information, the Salem Saturday Market has a non-profit area. She said she doesn't know if there's an opening but there is a place to have information. George said he hoped the commission could think about this for the next cycle.

Sandy asked about the protocol for thanking volunteers. She said although the past county volunteer coordinator sent thank you letters to all volunteers, that position is now vacant. She said she wanted to write a letter to her local newspaper thanking a local volunteer for his painting at the Scotts Mills Park. There was discussion about if these types of letters should come from individual commissioners or the entire commission. Sandy said for now she will make this an individual thank you from her as a citizen but wants to think of ways the commission can thank those who volunteer at parks. Marty said her only concern is that the commission recognizes all volunteers and not just some individuals. Ben asked if there is formal structure for recruiting, managing, and organizing volunteers county-wide. Russ said the previous volunteer coordinator left the county but the position is being refilled. He said Cascade High School takes care of Aumsville Ponds, Bonesteele Park gets a lot of students from Chemeketa Community College (CCC), and there are also individual Eagle Scout projects. Russ said there is no set core group because a lot of the parks projects are sporadic. George said the parks website has good information but a new volunteer coordinator is needed. Wayne said he's more concerned about sending a letter to someone who deserves recognition than worrying about someone not receiving one. He said Sandy has a nice suggestion and the commission should do what they can. Sandy asked if

there's any prohibition against speaking for herself while also identifying herself as a parks commissioner when writing the letter. Commissioner Brentano said its easier to make a motion and recognize this individual on behalf of the whole commission, then ask Jolene to process a letter from everyone. He said its fine to write letter from an individual commissioner but it diminishes the gesture. Sandy said she thought for this situation she'd write the letter as a private citizen.

Sandy shared LED grant opportunities through PGE and asked if would be applicable to parks. Russ will research this.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Follow-up on Old Business**

Marty said there was also an article in the NW Senior & Boomer News for which she was interviewed. She shared a copy of the publication with the group. She said most of the information came from the parks website or from her interview where she spoke about a recent parks tour.

Ben spoke about the Butteville landing. He said there has been no action there given community sensitivity on the part of a couple of residents. He said a decision was made to place paddle docks at the landing and they arrived three weeks ago. He said they now need to find people to install. Ben said the target is to have them in by August 1, so they are running behind. He said the docks are the best point of departure to open a discussion about the property. He said he thought it important to approach maintenance of the path because nature hates a vacuum and the pathway is becoming an overgrown jungle. Russ said the maintenance issue should be taken to Public Works to see if operations crews can do anything since it's not parks property. Ben said the access to right-of-way is greatly improved because of the paving project in north Marion County.

George asked if staff have received any news from the disc golf organization that wanted to build a course at Spong's Landing Park. Russ said he has not been contacted by them since their presentation to the commission.

### **Scotts Mills Dam Discussion**

George said it has been some time since the commission heard from the Pudding River Watershed Council (PRWC) representative. Sandy said the only thing she has heard about the dam removal plan is that it is proceeding. She said the effort is being coordinated by the PRWC but other agencies also seem to realize that for public safety and environmental reasons it should be removed. Ben asked about jurisdictional issues and funding. Sandy said this is very complicated and that Anna Rankin of PRWC could give an update. There was discussion about her absence from today's meeting and her status on the draft plan she said she would write and share with the commission. Commissioner Brentano said the board of commissioners has not received any information about this matter outside of the parks commission meeting minutes. He asked if the commission had taken a position on this matter. George said they had not because they were waiting for more information. Sandy said she would try to talk to Anna Rankin and invite her to the next meeting.

Commissioner Brentano said the board of commissioners would not take any action until someone brings this issue to them. He said if the parks commission wants to present a request or recommendation to the board, this would result in dialog. George said the commission had not approved Sandy's previous recommendation regarding the dam removal. Sandy said in her opinion the parks commission didn't take a strong enough stand for public safety and three deaths that have occurred in recent years warrants more scrutiny. She said she is okay with setting this matter aside for now until the commission has more information. Marty said her impression was that people were jumping off cliffs by the dam into the river so removing the dam wouldn't fix that. Sandy said that is her understanding also but people use the dam to cross the river, which is crumbling into the river, making it more dangerous. George said the parks commission supports public safety and it's also in their bylaws.

### **Bonesteel Park Work Plans – Scott Anderson**

Scott said they are almost done with the survey at Bonesteel Park and expects they will finish later this month because the last of the perennials are blooming. He said he previously indicated when done with the survey he would make some recommendations about the park going forward in terms of significance of forbs currently at the park, as well as maintenance. He said he's sensitive to the fact that when a body like the parks commission receives a recommendation they have to do something and he doesn't want to put the commission in a difficult position. He said he will have a discussion with Jeff and Russ about practicality and will probably come to the November meeting with a preliminary recommendation that can be modified through discussion. Marty asked if commissioners can receive the recommendation before that meeting so they have an opportunity to read. Scott said he would provide it prior to the meeting and commissioners can call him with questions. He said although it's interesting to see so many species in this significant forb community, the invasives are winning. He said his primary worry is scotch broom and Himalayan black berry but they can be kept under control by mowing or burning, but the problem that's surfaced is bracken fern which is native. He said it has pretty much taken over the western portion of the uplands. He said the uplands pretty much have no significance because it's a mix of species. Scott said the lower 6 acres are getting heavily infested in bracken fern which will choke out other species. He said fire and pesticides don't eradicate it and thinks the response may be to not put a lot of money into the site but possibly to commit to mowing 1-2 times a year. Scott said he is getting recommendations from experts, which includes mowing with a mulching mower but isn't sure what public works equipment is and doesn't want to choke out native forbs. He said the area isn't heavily utilized except by Chemeketa Community College (CCC), with occasional use of the restroom area, and doesn't think the park will ever be heavily used as a natural heritage park. Scott said he will provide a preliminary recommendation at the next meeting.

Scott said there is an amendment to the parks master plan that covers natural heritage parks but it has some things the commission needs to review including some out of date thinking regarding the restoration of sites to pre-European settlement conditions, which has gone by the wayside. He said the natural heritage parks plan has some interesting recommendations such as acquiring Stout Mountain which is a great property but questionable as a park property. George said this needs to be added to a future agenda.

Commissioner Brentano said the board of commissioners has placed an increased emphasis on parks and wants to make sure the program has enough funding in their budget for staff and support, but probably want to also talk about the natural heritage parks. He said he will make other commissioners aware of issues the parks commission is working on. George asked the commissioner to let the parks commission know if there is any project or issue he would like them to undertake.

### **STAFF UPDATES**

- Russ said they have discovered who was dumping wood chips at Bonesteel Park. He said a person who parked their motorhome at Bonesteel Park during the day called him and said R & R Tree Service was dumping chips at the park. Russ called their office about this and they said they would pick them up.
- Scott asked if the county still planned to gate Bonesteel Park. Russ said yes. Scott said the county might want to think about opening the gate April 1 because people interested in native wildflowers may want to start viewing them in April. There was some discussion about parking outside the gate and walking in if locked. Russ said it's possible a decision may be made to change the gate location or open it in April. He said he and Jeff are also discussing gating Joryville Park because of inappropriate activity.
- Russ said the board of commissioners has approved the funding for new playground equipment at Spong's Landing Park.
- Russ said there was a drowning at Salmon Falls Park in June. He said a witness went all the way to Highway 22 to call for help not knowing that cell service starts about 5 miles away from the park. He said there is also an emergency phone at the Elkhorn Fire Station that is 2 miles from the park. Russ said the

county put up signs that told people there is an emergency phone at the fire station. He said the county emergency manager also looked into having a phone installed at the park and the phone carrier agreed to place one at the entrance of park that can be used to call 911. Wayne said at state parks some carriers installed cell phone towers that provide service at the parks. Ben said the same thing was done at Champoeg State Park. Russ said staff has researched this but it's very expensive.

- Commissioner Brentano said the mother of the drowning victim spoke at a board meeting about placing a stand with life preservers at the park. He said by having this onsite, the county acknowledges a risk and if you don't keep up the stand or life preservers, the county takes on liability. He said he knows this is a good cause but is concerned about the county tending it and being responsible if it's not up to standards. Commissioner Brentano said Washington County is being sued over a similar issue with similar circumstances.
- Russ said North Fork Park was closed twice during the summer. The first time a juvenile work crew was doing clean up and one youth saw a black bear and cubs. He said he put out a press release that the park was closed and called ODFW, who recommended pulling the garbage cans. He said the park was closed for 3 or 4 days for safety reasons.
- Russ said North Fork Park was closed again because there was a fire two Saturdays ago. He said there are signs in the park that say, "No burning. No campfires. No smoking." Russ said even with these signs a man lit a charcoal barbecue on the beach and others asked him to put it out. He said the barbecue was tipped over and caught the trees on fire. Russ said they evacuated the park and he collected items left behind by park goers and brought it to public works. He said they cut down 8 big Douglas Fir trees and cut the timber into log length pieces. Russ said they lease the land from BLM so these are BLM trees. He said the park is closed until the trees are gone and it might be for the season. He said they never caught the person with the barbecue because he left during the evacuation and didn't return.
- Russ said the county needs to replace the entrance signs for Salmon Falls, Packsaddle, Niagara, and Minto parks, which are currently made of wood. He said Jeff wanted to know if the commission wants to replace with wood again or with metal, which is what is used for signs at all other county parks. Wayne asked for a staff recommendation. Russ said either would work because the juvenile department can make wood signs or the public works sign shop can make metal signs. Ben asked the cost of each. Russ said a metal sign costs about \$400 and wood is more expensive. Marty asked the life cycle of each. Russ said metal would last much longer. Wayne said his only recommendation is to keep them common with each other so when the public sees the signs, they recognize them as parks signs. The commission said they left this decision in staff's hands.

**NEXT MEETING: December 1, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the North Santiam Room at Public Works**

**ADJOURN: 10:03 a.m.**