



MARION COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 21, 2020, 3:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

PRESENT: Members: Josh Faulkner, Marty Heyen, Alton Hoover, Ryan Mann, Wayne Rawlins, Kyleen Zimber
Staff: Brian May, Russ Dilley, Stephanie Rosentrater
Public: Kathy Rogers
ABSENT: Member: None

ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)

Call to Order: 3:00 p.m.

Wayne called the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves.

Public Input

Kathy Rogers, a member of the East Salem community, also introduced herself. Kathy lives near Parkdale Park and wants to help get information to and feedback from her neighbors on any changes/improvements that will be made at Parkdale Park.

PARKS UPDATE

On March 26th, the County decided to close all of the parks with the exception of St. Louis Ponds. All playgrounds were closed and fenced off. The restrooms were closed, per the Governor's order, as the County was not able to provide hand sanitizer or soap and water. The entrances were closed and locked as well.

A few weeks later, Parks staff had a Management Update session with the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to discuss potential reopening of the parks. The BOC advised that the County start fee collection on North Fork Road on May 15 as scheduled to not confuse visitors or break the routine. The BOC was only able to continue to fund three of the regular eight seasonal employees. The three that the program ended up with are all returning from last year. They have a good understanding of the processes, the parks, and the work that needs to be done. The Bear Creek host, Eric, has returned and is getting the park ready for reopening.

On May 15, all other parks were reopened, excluding Bear Creek. The restrooms all have hand sanitizer and social distancing and COVID-19 symptoms signage has been placed at all parks in English and Spanish. Bear Creek will be reopened when the issue with radio traffic is fixed. Staff does not want to reopen when there is no way for the host to communicate emergencies. Fee collection also began on May 15 and the fee tubes are being pulled every night. The three seasonal employees and Steve are working hard to manage vegetation and maintain trails in all of the parks. BLM and Forest Service sites are not yet reopened, but the County continues to work with them regarding management of the North Fork Corridor. Due to the change in funding, Brian reported that this year would not see any major improvement projects.

Kyleen asked about the Macleay/Auburn Conversion Project. Due to COVID-19, this project has been put on hold. The next step in the process was to have a public meeting to gather community input, which cannot be

held under current restrictions. Brian added that the Parks program cannot apply for any grant funding until the money from the sale of Auburn Park is reinvested in a park, so staff is eager to get this project started. As soon as restrictions are lifted, the County will move forward with the project.

Josh wanted to know when the campground at Bear Creek would reopen. Due to the radio issue and social distancing, there is some planning to do to figure out how to reopen the park. State Parks are scheduled to reopen on June 9, so the County may follow that model. The park being closed has provided opportunity to make some improvements.

Approval of January 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Marty motioned to approve the minutes. Alton seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous. Minutes approved.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Ryan wanted to know how staff will enforce social distancing going forward and if seasonal staff put in a position where they have to enforce it. Russ reported that if people are doing things they aren't supposed to, staff just asks them not to. The Sheriff is doing the same. The County will not put their employees in an unsafe position. Alton asked if the County is liable if people in their parks are not abiding by the COVID-19 guidelines. Brian reported that it is a concern and that if too much of this is seen, the only option will be to shut the parks back down. Alton suggested messaging surrounding this, to educate the public that their parks being open is up to them following guidelines.

All Parks Commissioners expressed gratitude to the Parks staff and the program. They are glad that the parks are reopened because they're important to the community. Those who have visited any of the parks reported that they look great.

FUTURE TOPICS / EMERGING ISSUES / OTHER BUSINESS

Upcoming Topics/Future Business

Wayne would like to have a discussion about Parks funding and the hit that it is taking. He wants to know if there is anything that the Parks Commission can look at or do to help.

Kyleen wanted be sure to discuss development of the Macleay land at a future meeting.

Other Business

None.

ADJOURN: 3:59 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: July 16, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. At this point, we will plan on holding the meeting over Zoom.