

**MARION COUNTY
Parks Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, July 17, 2025
Time: 2:00pm – 4:00 pm
Location: Teams or Willamette Conference Room at Public Works, 5155 Silverton Road NE

Present: **Members:** Herschel Sangster, Tabitha Henricksen and Bryan Hall (Teams)

Staff: Kevin Thompson, Whitney Ned and Toni Whitler – Boards Office (Teams)

Guests: Kathy Rogers – Hayesville neighborhood; Frank Staley – Aumsville Ponds wildlife concern; Mackayla Fithian – Pudding River Watershed Council; Amanda Arthurs – appointment pending (Teams); Waye Rawlins – appointment pending (Teams)

Absent: **Excused:** Alton Hoover

Unexcused: Steve Staten

Quorum: **Yes**

ADMINISTRATIVE (Information/Discussion/Action)

Hersch Sangster called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

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

Attendance/Roll Call: Done.

Agenda Changes: None.

Approval of May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Tabitha made a motion to accept minutes. Bryan seconded.

Discussion: None

Result: A voice vote is unanimous – motion passes.

Approval of June 4, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes

Motion: Tabitha made a motion to accept minutes. Bryan seconded.

Discussion: None

Result: A voice vote is unanimous – motion passes.

Public Comment:

Frank Staley presented his concerns about dogs interfering with wildlife at Aumsville Ponds Park and stated that the current signage is ineffective. The Commission and staff acknowledged his concerns and Whitney got his contact information for Hersch to set up a potential meeting at the park to assess concerns. Frank

expressed an interest in joining the Parks Commission.

Kathy Rogers provided some feedback about Parkdale Park, mostly positive in regards to the path and playground, though motorcycles and ATVs have been using the path. Signage and enforcement options were discussed along with some concerns about graffiti and lack of fencing near private properties. The official ribbon cutting ceremony for the park is scheduled for July 29.

Linn County Tour Debrief

Commissioners who participated in the Linn County tour back on May 20th shared the following observations:

- Linn County utilizes their employees' skillsets beyond maintenance work, creating a sense of pride and level of excellence in what they're building, with an emphasis on practical design.
- It has taken Linn County decades to develop their system and become a self-sufficient Parks and Recreation district.

Parks Membership Update/Recruitment

Whitney shared that recruitment for the Parks Commission remains a challenge due to limited current members and Parks staff. The Commission discussed different outreach opportunities through neighborhood associations, schools and community events.

Parking/Camping Fees Update

Kevin stated that so far this season, over 6,300 parking passes have been sold. Camping reservations at North Santiam have increased from a total of 178 nights stayed last year to 287 nights stayed/reservations made so far this year. Note the extension of the season from May through September last year to April through October this year.

Scotts Mill

Scotts Mills requested assistance from Marion County Parks and Sherriff's Office regarding the ongoing issues with parking and overcrowding. Park's recommendation is to expand the parking lot.

PIER Funding Update

\$1 million in PIER funding and potentially \$500,000 in a matching grant for restoration projects at Salmon Falls and Bear Creek.

Parks Projects Update

- Parkdale is still officially closed as it is an ongoing construction project, and the timeline is contingent upon the contractors.
- ODOT grant for bike racks have been completed and installed at Parkdale, Eola Rogers and Stayton. Additional funds were used for a bike repair station at Rogers Wayside.
- OWEB (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board) completed two grant funded projects in the canyon—planting and invasive control—over the last three years. We applied for another round of funds and were denied.
- Salmon Falls Wetland construction is done, adding some log jams and good habitat structures. Oregon Parks Forever donated \$40,000 that will go towards planting efforts.
- ORPA (Oregon Recreation and Park Association) has an upcoming workshop on September 10, 2025 about fire recovery in the Little North Fork Santiam Canyon.

Parks Memorial Program Subcommittee

Hersch provided an update from the subcommittee meeting, held just before the regular meeting. Memorial opportunities discussed were benches, trees, bricks, walking paths, picnic shelters and boat ramps. A shared document is in progress.

Commissioners' Roundtable

Hersch promoted the upcoming Great Oregon Steam-Up event July 26-27 and August 2-3 at Powerland Heritage Park in Brooks. Tabitha shared her interest in reviewing the parks categorized as “natural areas” in the Master Plan, specifically the dog policy for Aumsville Ponds. Wayne, guest, asked about the timeline for his re-appointment, which is expected to be official before the next regular meeting in September. Toni from the Board’s office expressed support for investments to the Canyon and grant work.

Meeting adjourned at 3:37 pm

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 18, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m.