

**Parks Advisory Committee
December 11, 2006**

Members Present: Emily Schue, Merle Bottge, Steve Davis, Marie Kennedy, Catherine Koehn and Johnny Medlin

Members Absent: Damien Gilbert

Staff Present: Todd Winter and Christine Johnson

Guests Present: Ollie Snowden, Director, Lane County Public Works, Howard Schuessler, Asst. Director, Lane County Public Works

Johnny Medlin, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

I. Announcements/Agenda Modifications

There were no announcements or agenda modifications.

II. Approval of Minutes – November 13, 2006 Parks Advisory Committee Meetings

Medlin asked that the minutes from the November 13, 2006 meeting be approved. Bottge moved that the minutes be approved. Davis seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

III. Public Comment (Maximum of 20 Minutes)

There was no public comment at this time.

IV. Discussion Regarding the Diversity of the Parks Advisory Committee

Winter said that in the agenda packet mailed to each Committee member there was an overview of the results from the diversity survey that went out to all the Lane County advisory committees. Winter briefly discussed some of the respondent statistics. Tonight the Board and the Diversity Advisory Committee has asked that we discuss several items, as part of Lane County's Diversity Action Plan. The results then would be forwarded back to the Board and the Diversity Advisory Committee.

- What are your thoughts about the information presented about the make-up of your advisory committees, boards and commissions? *Bottge said that we have discussed in the past that we are not well represented regionally – primarily Eugene/Springfield – but we do understand why – it is certainly more convenient for us to attend a meeting.*
- Are the boards/committees adequately representative of the communities they are set up to serve? Are they diverse enough? *Koehn commented regarding the farm board and betting money that not one of them was an organic farmer thus indicating a good example of where diversity would be a great help. Programs that encourage minorities to apply would also be a great help.*
- Is your board/committee diverse enough? *Answered in the first question above.*

- Currently board/commission member positions are voted on through the Consent Calendar process, do you want to continue this? *Davis said that he didn't think that having it any other place than the Consent Calendar was going to make a difference unless you had a more diverse group applying. Right not there isn't a real diverse group applying. We currently have a diverse age group but certainly not a diverse group geographically or racially.*
- Action Item E states: "Hold an annual volunteer appreciation week/day for all County volunteers..." Is this a good way to recognize volunteer efforts? If not, what would help volunteer board/commission members feel appreciated? *This item got inadvertently overlooked.*
- Broader outreach opportunities are needed to recruit a variety of new members for boards/commissions, for example, during agency fairs, roll-out of the County's PR campaign, in newsletters and radio PSA's, etc. What are your ideas? *Schue asked what the current outreach process was. Johnson said that when a vacancy occurs, she notifies the Board office. Snowden then said that information regarding vacancies then goes out in the Board agenda packets, press releases are done, etc. The posting lasts for a 30-day period. Bottge said that she has seen vacancy notices in the Register Guard for the various committees. Davis suggested distributing a flyer to our park users during the busy summer months describing the Parks Advisory Committee and what it does, and if they are interested in serving on the Committee where to call to get on a waiting list for the next opening – hopefully this would attract more park users.*

Snowden stated that some committees will actually go out and recruit people to apply – but this is committee by committee. Davis said he would be somewhat concerned if we as Committee members participate a lot in the outreach, because then you are going to end up with a homogenous group. Medlin agreed – if you recognize that you are not a diverse group and then establish goals regarding a target group, whether it is a certain age group or geographic area or whatever the demographics, certainly the Board can help but feels it is more an agency issue to establish a target to diversify a committee. Medlin also agreed with the comment that people we typically work, play and kick around with may not be that diverse from ourselves so looking for the Committees to do it may be problematic. Koehn added that she agreed with the comment about going to where the people recreate... there are events where we could attend and set up an information table. Kennedy wondered if it was possible to send out vacancy information through school newsletters, which would target a more diverse group of people.

Koehn suggested the county use a network similar to the United Way system for recruiting volunteers – 30 second PSA's, etc. Davis suggested Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs as well as other service groups. River Guides, RVers, moorage holders, reservation lists from campers and picnicker....

- Do you believe incentives for board/commission members would increase recruitment and retention? This could include: counting time spent as education credits; providing food; pointing out that this is good work experience on a resume, etc. *Winter said he was aware of the mileage incentive and Bottge added that we already provide food, but didn't know if that would be a recruitment incentive.*
- Should your meetings be held around the County, particularly in rural areas, once or twice a year? *Bottge said that ideally we should go once or twice a year someplace else if we have an issue in that area.*
- Do members of your committee feel they are effective? *The Committee felt that Winter should answer this question. Winter said that from a staff perspective feels this Committee is very effective, especially when going before the Board and the item has been reviewed and*

recommended by the PAC. But to be honest he feels that sometimes he is not challenged enough by the Committee. Medlin feels the Committee does a good job at being a sounding board for staff – a gauge on how problematic a controversial issue is. As far as a recommendations effect to the Board is – he thinks it’s minimal. Bottge said we are an advisory committee. That in theory we are and advisory committee to the Board but in practice what we have done has been more advisory to the staff. But also feels we are heard – could be more an advocate to the Board at times and occasionally have attended Board meetings and expressed an opinion. But they are looking at other things in addition to what ‘s good for Parks.

- *Are you functioning smoothly as a group? Medlin said maybe too smoothly (referring to previous comments). Davis said that maybe that is part of the diversity issue, maybe if we were a more diverse group there may be more controversy, which is not always a bad thing.*
- *What is working? Davis said a lot of people don’t know the PAC exists. Schue said that our ideas really make a difference and it’s working with staff. You can’t say we, as a Committee, did this, but looking at the property down in Florence that we are selling for example, that’s an advantage for everybody. Now the PAC didn’t dream that up themselves, but we were involved. The only thing is, I don’t think we expected the outcry from the neighbors. Maybe we could have been a little more sophisticated heading that off, but it did work and we were involved. Medlin thinks that one of the things that works well is that this body gives an outlet for citizens to come in and talk in a less threatening venue than the Board. Bottge said we also provide a venue for staff to share some concerns about problems that are happening in the parks, or whatever – we are sounding board as Medlin said, but we can also be a place to vent a little bit.*

Kennedy wonders if a lot of people don’t come to public comment – maybe they feel their comments won’t make a difference or could be a little intimidated. Thinks that we need to have more press about how we are here meeting once a month and let everyone know that. Davis said he thought that, on top of that, at the risk of making this a very political body, it seems like if not only people know we meet, but that they know who the people on the Committee are – maybe the County could hook up members of the Committee to the County’s e-mail where they can remotely log in so that if people have opinions they want to express, then we can truly be representative of the public input that we’re getting. Koehn said that one way around it – for a more extended outreach, would be the example of the OHV group – make meetings more newsworthy to attract both sides of an issue. Kennedy thought it might be a good thing to also solicit a group to a meeting to give a presentation about what their members do – it would educate us as well.

Medlin said he has a little bit of concern about some of the things he’s hearing – some of the things that flashed through his mind is “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.” Another one is that – we don’t want to generate controversy for controversies sake and certainly getting out public information is a good thing but in broadening perspective with diversity and offering that opportunity is a good thing, but at the same time, he’s a little concerned about this Committee, in particular – what the goal would be on this topic – what type of diversity and why are we going for it. What’s the problem we are trying to solve and what emphasis will we be putting on it. If there is a controversial issue out there that we can work with, I think that’s really great, if we can be helpful, but just to search for things that end up being more work for staff and more work for the Committee – he doesn’t understand quite why?

Koehn said that she could counter that – the County does not want the perception that is not being fair and objective and educational about all the opportunities, so she agrees with Medlin in essence, which is we are not the proper venue to generate controversy, just having documentation about what goes on might solve several of the problems – that nobody knows we exist, we need more members, we need support – people might be interested if we told them. So

in the case of the Glenada property thing – meeting challenges up front like inviting people from Florence, in that instance might well have been diffused.

- What needs to change? *Didn't get answered...*
- How can we (the Board and/or the Diversity Advisory Committee) be helpful? *Bottge asked if the County kept a list of people who've expressed interest in serving on various committees or do they just wait until a particular vacancy? Johns said that applications for this committee are kept for a year. Snowden added that some committees may keep them longer. Bottge suggested that they keep them on file for two years and check back with them to see if still interested. Schue said the Board could do, if they decided they wanted to, was once a year have an event maybe that emphasized the need for assistance from the community to serve on advisory committees – have them fill out a form and there would be a file we could all draw from. Medlin said if the Board would from time to time, even at the meetings, emphasize the importance of the committee memberships – they're on TV, there's people that listen. If they just did some verbal outreach, that would be helpful. Bottge said that she thought it was helpful when we have a Commissioner attend our meetings from time to time, especially if that Commissioner is here more to listen and perhaps to answer questions rather than to dominate the meeting.*

V. **Division Manager's Report – Todd Winter, Division Manager**

- **Thank You to Steve Davis:** Winter said that this was Steve Davis' final meeting on the PAC after eight years of service. Winter went on to tell him how much he appreciated his contribution over the years. Davis said he has really enjoyed it and can hardly believe it's been eight years. It's with mixed emotions that he is going to discontinue with this group but feels comfortable that it's heading in a good direction – the Committee is providing good council to Todd and the Commissioners. Hopes we keep moving forward. The parks are good and getting better. Bottge expressed her pleasure with working with Steve over the years.
- **PAC Member Recruitment – Interview Sub-Committee:** Winter said the current posting closed on November 30th and the applications are being forwarded to us from downtown. After the holidays, we will go through the interview process and asked for volunteers from the Committee to sit in on the Interview Sub-Committee. Cathy Koehn, Marie Kennedy and Merle Bottge all volunteered. We will be contacting them after the holidays with the details.
- **Glenada Property – Update:** Winter said that we have received permission from the Board to proceed with the sale before the last two steps are completed, but have been assured from the State that they are okay with this. The last two steps are purchasing the six in-holdings and vacating the roads. We will then start the process again for the other half of the property. The matter that needs to be worked out on the side zoned Rural Residential is the easement issue with property owner, Mr. Rosencrantz. Koehn wanted to make a comment for the record that she felt it was very bad on the County's part to grant this easement and is willing to talk to them about riparian protections and widths of buffer zones, if they are interested at all. She would like to be notified when the meeting is scheduled to discuss this issue. Winter said he hoped to get the first payment from the State by January 30th, 2007.

VI. **Wildish Property Acquisition Overview – Chris Orsinger**

Winter introduced Chris Orsinger, Director of Friends of Buford Park. Mr. Orsinger said he was mainly interested in showing a video to this Committee that illustrates the geography of the Wildish property and the Howard Buford Recreation Area and how these two properties relate to each other. Mr. Orsinger reminded everyone that Wildish presented an offer to the Board on November 2, 2006 to sell 1,200 acres of property adjacent to HBRA to the County for \$26 million. They presented an appraisal that valued the land at \$31.5 million. A task force created

by Lane County to examine the assumptions made in the appraisal is now reviewing the appraisal. The video showed property lines for Mt. Pisgah, the Wildish property, as well as the other properties and owners in this area. Mr. Orsinger also included some slides of upland habitat areas, ponds, etc. Winter had to leave and just wanted to add that we will be working with a number of interested parties, including FBP, through the acquisition process as well as the public process. Winter also added that this would be his last meeting as a Cottage Grove City Councilor – he did not run again for the position – and he will be devoting some of his spare time to the Oregon Parks Association’s Legislative Committee work as well as President Elect to the OPA Board.

Mr. Orsinger continued with his idea of funding requirements. He has talked to a number of Federal, State, and local agencies that could provide funding. The key agencies are the Bonneville Power Administration, Oregon State Parks and OWEB. Locally SDC funds could be available, bond funds from the City of Eugene, Springfield and maybe Willamalane. Once we have a negotiated price then we need to start a campaign to get people invested in the acquisition. Bottge said that she would feel comfortable with this property being acquired by the State for example, as long as it becomes public lands available for public use. Schue asked Snowden if condemnation has been considered. Snowden stated that it has been mentioned several time by Commissioner Dwyer, but Snowden feels that we first need to get the Letter of Interest out to Wildish, which will go out on the 13th, then see where we go with the appraisal review. There is also the possibility of the Legislature tinkering with the whole Measure 37 process to keep in mind. Snowden feels the intent of the Board is to move forward in a good faith effort to see if we can come to a mutually agreeable price – of course if there is a breakdown in the process, then the Board certainly has the option of eminent domain.

Mr. Orsinger added that most of the agencies he has spoken with said that the funds would only be available for a willing seller. Mr. Orsinger’s preference would be to move forward to come to a fair market value.

VII. Good of the Order/Concerns of the Committee

There was nothing presented for the good of the order.

VIII. Adjournment:

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by Christine Johnson, Secretary