

Lane County Parks Advisory Committee

May 11, 2020
Meeting Summary

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The recorded minutes are available by request.

Members Present: Jim Mayo, Kevin Shanley, Wayne Lemler, Greg Hyde, Carl Stiefbold, Mike Allen
Members Absent: Ashley Adelman
Staff Present: Brett Henry, Charlie Conrad, Michelle Hunt, Cynthia Schlegel
Guests Present: None

Co-Chair Jim Mayo filled in for Chair who was absent and called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

00:02:28 **Introductions**

00:03:25 **Public Comment** – None

00:03:32 **Assignment Review** – None

00:03:50 **Review of March 2020 Meeting Summary**

- Approved as written; Lemler motioned, Hyde seconded, motion passed unanimously.

00:04:56 **Staff Updates/Reports**

- COVID – 19 Impacts to Maintenance & Operations – Henry reported that on March 23rd the Parks Division closed Armitage and Harbor Vista Campgrounds per the Governor’s Executive Order. Bathrooms, shelters, fee machines, play structures and the Armitage dog Park were also closed. Passive recreational sites where social distancing could be followed remained open and reader boards and signage were put in place for reminders at Howard Buford Recreation Area. Seasonal employees were not hired and cuts to expense and maintenance budgets were reduced to half for the remainder of this FY.
- COVID – 19 Impacts to Revenue & Revenue Forecasting – Henry presented a spreadsheet with an overview of budget scenarios going forward into the next fiscal year since Parks relies heavily on funding sources that will now be reduced or unavailable. Henry reported to date Parks has canceled 613 reservations and the moorage season began a month later than normal due to low water levels. Currently, Parks is operating about 600 to 900k in the red and is not structurally balanced. Plans are being made to balance the budget going in to next fiscal year. This will require the use of reserves and some capital funds. Henry presented three options ranging from best, middle, worst case budget scenarios. The current

assumption is that Parks will operate within the middle scenario if able to open the campgrounds in May. Hyde inquired if there was any discussion of getting some help from the State or Federal government to provide local recreational facilities to limit travel. Henry stated thus far there has not been. Henry stated that Parks does have the ability to take out a loan if needed. To avoid a loan, Henry stated that getting the campgrounds opened up is critical.

- Framework for Reopening Campgrounds – Henry stated the goal is to begin phase one of opening campgrounds on May 18 and is hopeful that will become a reality. Campgrounds would be open following specific safety and health guidance. This includes that social distancing requirements can be met. Best practices will be used for keeping distances and sanitation guidance in place. During phase 1, Parks would only open campsites that provide distancing and no tent or group sites will open. Richardson Campground will only be open for camping in Loop A while showers and gathering places will remain closed. Camp Lane is closed for the season. Some seasonal staffing will be hired to be ambassadors that provide a presence at the campgrounds and remind patrons of the rules. Additionally one or two seasonal staff will be hired for the Call Center to take reservations. Phase Two won't begin until the state moves to Phase Two with gathering restrictions lifted, likely in early June. Lemler inquired if Parks was included in the letter the Commissioners submitted to the State to re-open the County. Henry stated yes, and Parks is preparing to open the campgrounds so they are ready to go when able to open. Henry stated the Governor was expected to be amending the Executive Order very soon and that it would include the ability to open campgrounds. Henry stated getting approval from the Health Authority would be a quick process. Lemler inquired if Parks expected the amendment to allow Parks to open on May 18th, Henry stated yes. Henry stated with campgrounds, it is easier to monitor and keep physical distance because campers are enclosed in an RV. Some sites are too close together and Parks will close off space in between the sites where people can gather. Shanley inquired if Parks anticipates filling up available campsites and Henry replied yes, they are in high demand and will fill up quickly. Henry stated another reason Parks is not able to fully open at this time is due to low staffing levels to keep up with cleaning requirements and that reservations would only be made for 30 day periods to avoid the possibility of having to issues another round of refunds.
- Parks Funding Task Force Update – Henry reported the first meeting was held in February and was very productive in listing funding priorities and discussing the budget structure and constraints. Henry spoke with Bob Keefer regarding amending his service contract to postpone meetings until September and he agreed. Henry stated the importance of continuing with the Task Force and that Parks needs to regroup and refocus priorities due to the impacts of overreliance on fees.
- Facilities Condition Assessment Update – Henry reported that Faithful and Gould scored highest on the RFP for the Facilities Condition Assessment. They provided comprehensive answers to questions at the recent interview. Their response to assessing the underground infrastructure was helpful to understand their methodology. The project will be deferred to September to allow maintenance staff to be more available as the recreation season winds down. The current budget for the FCA is 170k and covered bridges and some parks will be

removed from the assessment to reduce the scope. Mayo inquired if Faithfull & Gould were willing to work with Parks on taking some things off the table, Henry stated they are willing to do that and suggested a phased proposal to allow the project to remain within budget.

- Armitage Campground Expansion Update – Henry reported Parks has \$100k designated for an engineering design and Engineering and Construction Services is assisting Parks with the topographic survey which includes inventory of the existing electrical and water lines to further refine the layout of the campsites. Alverson will inventory tree species to ensure it is carefully planned out. The World Track and Field Games suspension allows more time to get ready for the event if it does occur. Shanley inquired if the revenue loss will affect the Armitage Campground expansion. Henry stated funding may need to be reallocated and transferred over for other use and that it is unclear at this time what or if any grant funding will be available through the state grant program.
- Hendricks Bridge Project Update – The Hendricks Bridge project is funded by the Oregon State Marine Board and a contract was awarded and signed by Delta Construction. Public Works' Engineering and Construction Services Division will assume the role of project manager which includes procurement and inspections. This assistance will fall within the \$60,000 match requirement. Parks has secured both State and Federal permits and has approval to postpone the on-site mitigation requirements to 2021. A pre-construction meeting will be held on May 21st and an outline for the projected timeframe of the project will be provided to the PAC at the next meeting.

00:36:30 Old Business

- MRDC Lease – County Council is drafting a 99-year lease by the McKenzie Discovery Center for the Old McKenzie Fish Hatchery property. Two issues were resolved with one being the public parking at the wayside lot. The Roads Division agreed to relinquish the maintenance rights to the new tenant.
- Master Plan Action Plan – Henry stated the next meeting for the workgroup would be on May 27th and the group would need to re-focus criteria due to the budget shortfall from the COVID-19 impact. He expects just one or two more meetings would suffice to come up with some good criteria to score strategies. Hyde clarified the next meeting will be in the GoTo Meeting format.

00:41:45 New Business

- Volunteer Program – Hunt has been working through challenges with the volunteer program due to COVID-19, but is staying active with working with Friends groups and focusing on refining the internal management plan for volunteers. She is also working on creating stewards but is not ready for the Adopt-a-Park program. The steward program is designed to have one individual volunteer in a capacity of interest to them in one organized effort in one park. Hunt is assisting with fielding calls from the public and is working on keeping our website and social media updated. She has refined the protocol for handling tools and working together while allowing for physical distancing. Hunt joined in with two work parties with the Friends group to clean up Orchard Point marina over the past month.

- Natural Areas Program – Hunt presented for Alverson and provided a report for March and April 2020. Shanley asked about the priority of invasive plants at the greater Mt. Pisgah area. Hunt will have Alverson send out the list. Mayo inquired about the landscape architecture design plans around the summit of Mt. Pisgah completed by the University of Oregon landscape architecture students. Hunt stated they took photos and will share them with the PAC. Henry stated the students were going to put together a packet and Parks was going to compensate them, but will wait and see if the budget will allow for that after the recreation season. Henry stated he will stay in touch with Bart Johnson and Shanley suggested Bart put all the presentations in a PDQ and give it to Parks before the students graduate and potentially move on. Henry stated Alverson already requested that and will share with the PAC when it is compiled.

01:02:50 **Open**

- Allen requested re-visiting the framework for reopening campgrounds as it pertains to the use of face masks. He feels that all people out in the public should be wearing masks and suggested re-writing the guidance to state all shall wear a mask when in close proximity of staff or another person. Henry stated it is the County's recommendation and he doesn't have the authority to make changes to the guidance.
- Allen also inquired about when the next public meeting for the North Jetty would occur. Conrad stated the Department of State Lands is considering writing a two year maintenance agreement. Conrad stated this would allow more time to seek public input and address infrastructure concerns and that Parks would not take on the roadway or parking lot.
- Shanley questioned if the McKenzie River Discover Center has secured funding. Henry stated they have some, and need to acquire through a capital campaign.
- Shanley inquired if Henry had talked to Bob Keefer about having remote meetings for the Parks Funding Task Force during the summer. Henry stated that he has but currently Parks cannot afford to pay him as a consultant. Stiefbold seconded Allen's comments regarding the use of face masks.

01:14:25 **Operations Report**

- Shanley inquired if all fee machines are closed due to COVID-19. Henry stated the first machines that went back online were credit card only and now cash only machines are online as cash handling procedures are in place for safety of staff.

01:16:12 **Meeting Wrap-up/Assignments**

- Henry and Hunt will look at the guidance given to volunteers based on the PAC's concerns in this meeting. Allen inquired about remote meetings and how to be recognized if a member is on the phone only with no video and requested to be able to be recognized during meeting instead of waiting until waiting to open forum.

Adjourn – Meeting ended at 7:19 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2020.