Yamhill County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – Meeting Minutes

Date: March 20, 2024

Time: 5:30-7:00pm

Location: Public Works, Lafayette Avenue, McMinnville

Board Attendance: Jim Culbert (Chair) (phoned in); Carla Chambers (Vice Chair); Neyssa Hays (Secretary) (via Teams); Christy Cooke; Tim Duerfeldt; Mike Firestone; Omega Rodela Garces; Celine Hall; Casey Heesacker; Celine McCarthy; Amanda Melhoff; Robert Molzahn

Board Absences: Glenn Cloyd (unexcused), Rob Molzahn (unexcused)

Staff: Travis Pease (Parks Manager); Mark Lago (Public Works Director)

Visitors: Nick Chasuk, Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District Board; Commissioner Kit Johnston, Parks Liaison

Meeting called to order: 5:31pm by Vice-Chair

A. Review Meeting Agenda

B. Approve Feb. 21 Board Minutes – Unanimous approval

C. Staff Updates – With reappointment of Neyssa and Jim, Travis posted the new Board roster on the county website without including members' home addresses, as was requested.

D. Vice-Chair Updates
   - Recreational Immunity - Passed the State Legislative House 50 to 0 and now awaiting Governor's signature. The only changes are that it now covers both public and private land, both improved and unimproved, and includes walking, biking, and running. Sunsets in 2026, so will need to be made a law during the 2025 Legislative session.
   - Membership re-appointments - Neyssa and Jim reappointed by the Commissioners for 4-year terms ending Feb 29, 2028

E. Chair Updates (added)
   - He’s feeling fine following surgery, no pain, and recovering well.
   - He has added relevant files to the Google Drive archives and encourages Board members to review them. Tim noted that not everyone is accustomed to Google Drive.
   - Submitted recommendations to Travis on revising the county parks web pages and is still encouraging other Board members to review the new pages and provide input. The
most important revision is to set up a standard format for each page.

F. Committee Reports - Parks Promotion Committee

- **West Valley Outreach** – (Amanda reporting)
  - About half of the West Valley letters came back because businesses use P.O. Boxes we did not have, only street addresses. Carla will pursue them again and update our mailing list. We received a super response from the **Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR)**, which expressed interest in participating not only in the West Valley, but across all of the parks in the county. As we get projects going, we’ll contact them to get their input and help as they’re able. Travis is lead, with Casey assisting as Deer Creek Prairie Park liaison.

- **Mennonite Church** - indicated they are interested in helping with Deer Creek Prairie Park. Travis has contacted them to try to set up a meeting.

- Jim noted that we were already working on a plan for a vegetation management plan there by lining up collaborating organizations, but the email address he had for the CTGR keeps bouncing back.

- **Hampton** – Amanda had an onsite visit with Blackwell Park neighbor, Kelly Lay, and Brad Blackwell of Hampton Industries. The neighbor is seeing what he can do on his land to improve the drainage situation (was already doing this before we contacted him). Amanda and husband are talking with contacts. Travis is working with Hampton to get the property line surveyed to see where the culvert is situated. The water is being diverted somewhere. The survey will not cost the county money.

- The committee discussed the concept of signs with business names promoting their involvement in park improvement projects but will also promote this on social media.

- **Summer Parks Quest - May 25-Sept. 2, 2024** – (Amanda reporting)
  - Submitted information to the McMinnville Parks & Recreation (MPR) for their Summer Fun brochure on Monday. Omega translated the material into Spanish. We thought of putting in two full page ads in the MPR summer brochure, but it would have been $1035 per page. Instead, they’ve agreed to two ¼ sheet ads for $235, one in Spanish and one in English.

  - Jim noted that we spent $1823 for this activity last year, including passport
printing, and wants a Board decision on a budget for this activity in 2024.

- **Amanda** is working with a volunteer designer, Gwen Dimmit, to create a window flyer, park signs, and an activity folded page with the instructions. It will have a QR code on the sheet that will send people to the county Parks website for all relevant details. **Neyssa** noted that not everyone in our county has a smartphone and recommended they put the web address on the sheet as well. Christy made a design suggestion that **Amanda and Carla** liked.

- Estimated budget:
  - $235 MPR brochure ads, mailed to McMinnville homes quarterly
  - $250 MPR Summer Fun booklet that they format
  - $70 signage
  - Approx. $300 for prizes
  - **Total $855**
  - Motion was made to approve $1000 budget for the entire activity. Unanimous approval.

- Participants will be able to mail or drop off their forms to Public Works, or take a photo for emailing. **Travis** has set up a “promotions” email address to receive Parks Quest returns from the public at: ParksQuest@yamhillcounty.gov These will automatically be forwarded to his work email.

- CPRD will only promote this activity if we can demonstrate a partnership with them. **Jim** noted that our **Crabtree Park** relationship should be sufficient for them to do this.

- **Proposed Timeline**
  - **May 15** Board Meeting - Signs and flyers distributed to members. Distribution sites will be assigned at the April meeting.
  - **Travis** will handle proper posting on County website, including a potential “header” on the county website home page promoting the campaign
  - **May 25-Sept 2** are the activity dates, with accompanying social media
• **Sept 3**, remove parks signs and pick up plastic stands from distributors

• **Sept 9** deadline to receive participant forms. Travis will confirm that the correct park is listed with the correct letter(s), and then a random drawing of the valid participant forms will be held with a Board member and Travis. Jim will contact the three prize winners, and then prizes obtained that week.

• Jim will invite winners to attend the **Sept 18** Board meeting, or arrangements will be made at some later time

• **Social Media Update** - Casey was able to get administrative access to the Parks Facebook account, and he noted that Instagram is part of Meta when we want to utilize it. He has established the email: YCparkspromotion@gmail.com, which he will used for contacts through his parks promotion and Facebook administration activities.

• **Parks Liaisons** - Two parks still need liaisons: Rogers Landing and Dayton Landing. Celine H. volunteered to cover Rogers Landing, and Kit agreed to cover Dayton Landing.

• Carla noted that it would be helpful for Board members to keep track of any time spent outside of the Board meetings on parks projects. She will develop a form for this purpose. This will be used to show community support for the parks that can be used when they are applying for grants.

G. **New Business**

• **Parks Master Planning RFP** - A subcommittee reviewed 3 responses to our RFP, and recommends DesignWorkshop of Colorado, with an avg. score of 88 out of 100. The average score of other 2 proposals was BerryDunn of Arizona, 77.8, and Healthy Sustainable Communities (HSC) of Wilsonville 62.8. Positives about the DesignWorks submission included: Demonstrating lots of rural parks planning experience; understands the importance of agriculture in the county; covered a balanced environment as it relates to parks and the importance of planning for tourism; promotes a “Take care of what you have first” approach; Community engagement: meet people where they are. They had many good ideas for outreach; practical but visionary; and provided an actionable plan with measurables. They did their homework on their proposal. They stated that they’d read the 2003 plan and identified that it was not actionable (visionary, but without concrete action items). They also discussed that parks organizations can overcome “contention and civic discord” – gave concrete examples of municipalities they have assisted in creating harmony. Finally, they gave us examples of
the ranges of size of populations with the costs of similar projects they’d worked on previously. The one negative is that they are based in Colorado, and that will increase costs to come here.

- **Our reasoning for not recommending the other two firms:**
  - Berry Dunn is predominantly urban experienced. Their examples were not reflective of our parks and our needs. The answers to the questions did not demonstrate that they know very much about Yamhill County, nor did did their homework.
  - HSC got big points for being local, but they don’t seem to have the experience this project will require. They only gave us one example, and the staff assigned do not have backgrounds in rural parks planning. They could be good partners for other municipal infrastructure projects, but this project will require a firm with a lot of knowledge of rural parks.
  - **Kit** noted that we don’t know what they are going to charge us, so there’s no way for us to know whether or not we’ll be choosing them. Mark noted that it’s not legal for the respondents to tell us their price because we are supposed to be choosing the organization based on their proposal, not on their price.
  - **Travis** noted that this firm is working with North Clackamas Parks and Rec; he chatted with them today and they said they chose this firm for the same reason. They felt they would get a specific plan, not a cookie cutter plan.
  - Motion was made to send our recommendation to the Commissioners for their review and approval, with unanimous Board consent.

- **County Fair Booth - Jul 31-Aug 3, 2024 - (Carla reporting)** - the Board indicated last month that we’d like to do it. **Travis** will reserve a place that can be left unstaffed at times, and Board members plan to staff it some of the time. We could give out our current parks brochure, and this might be an opportunity to do a public survey. We could also give out parks stickers or something similar. **Mark** said they might be able to print the stickers in house; he needs to learn how first on new equipment. **Celine H** noted that we could hand out more of the Summer Parks Quest brochures. We still need a Board member to take the lead on this, and it will be discussed further at the Apr Board meeting.

- **Monitoring Emerald Ash Borer and Collecting Park Usage Data - (Omega reporting)** – She visited **Stuart Grenfell Park** and noticed a lot of ash trees. There is an invasive emerald ash borer beetle attacking ash trees across North America. In Stuart Grenfell a
lot of the trees are right next to the riverbank, which means when they become infected we will need to remove those trees. Omega has been working with Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) about what they could do in Sheridan. They are recommending trying to inoculate the trees. So far, the trees that have been inoculated have been well protected. She stated that they have been able to quarantine the infestation in Forest Grove for now, but Nick noted that the way they’re doing it is to cut the ash trees down and burn them. Oregon was the last state to become infected. Neyssa noted that in areas that become infected, 90% of the trees have died within 10 years. Omega stated that right now, the state is offering funds and expertise to help municipalities prepare. The USDA is working with a natural enemy of the insect.

- **Carla** asked what Board members think. **Mike** said he thinks tapping into the state resource would be very important for the park because once the ash trees are gone, they’re gone, and that they are important for many other organisms. General Board consensus is that we would like to have ODF give us a presentation. Travis will also consult with the county vegetation management specialist. **Omega** will contact the state and see when they could put it together. **Carla** requested that **Mike** volunteer to work with **Omega** and he agreed. **Travis** will also consult with the county’s vegetation manager.

- **Parks Usage Data** – **Carla and Omega** suggested that this data would be helpful for future planning.
  - **Jim** stated that we did one a few years ago on two extended holiday weekends (July 4 and Labor Day), using traffic counters. This information has been put in our Google Drive archives in the Planning folder. Understanding the data correctly will take some instructions that he can provide.
  - **Mark** said he can put traffic cameras up and have the engineering intern transfer the pictures into useful information. Traffic counters could also be installed. He said we could do it as often as we need.
  - There was discussion regarding where and when to position the cameras.
  - **Neyssa** noted we should put them up on the highest use times so we know what we need to plan for in future use. **Kit** agreed.

- **Board Bylaws Addition** - There is nothing in the Bylaws about how to cover the minutes and run Board meetings if all officers are absent. There was consensus that this would be a good idea to include, and **Jim** volunteered to write up a draft proposal, and also suggest any other needed updates. **Neyssa** volunteered to help **Jim**, but he said he
didn’t think he’d need it. We will discuss a proposal at the April Board meeting. Commissioners' approval of any changes will be required.

- **Board Officer Elections** - This will be done at the May meeting. Jim noted that all three officer positions are re-filled every year as per the bylaws. There will be an informal nominating process for anyone interested. If someone is interested in taking a position, they can put their name in the hat and Board members will vote at the May meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.**