

Parks Advisory Committee
February 14, 2011

Members Present: Cat Koehn, Pat Hoover, Carl Stiefbold, and Les Weinstein and Jenny Oberst,

Members Absent: Damien Gilbert and Jennifer Oberst (both excused)

Staff Present: Howard Schussler

Guests Present: Bruce Irwin and Darrell Bowes

Cat Koehn, Chair, called the meeting to order shortly after 5:30 p.m.

I. Announcements/Agenda Modifications

No announcements/agenda modifications.

II. Review and Approve November Minutes

The minutes for the January meeting have been lost. With the resignation of the Parks Manager and the extended leave by the office assistance, staff has been unable to find the recording from the January meeting or to reconstruct summary minutes from any notes.

III. Public Comment (Maximum of 20 Minutes)

Mr. Darrell Bowes provided comment about the significant misuse of Whitely Landing for after hours drinking, likely illegal drug use, and vandalism of the park and neighboring properties.

Bruce Irwin introduced himself to the PAC. He stated that he has been a career park manager and recently moved to Eugene where he currently has a park/grant writing consulting business, has applied for a position with State Parks, and has discussed the possibility of appointment to the PAC as Commissioner Bosievich's representative.

In response to public comment, the PAC elected to add discussion about Whitely Landing to the agenda. Additionally, it appeared that if Commissioner Bosievich does appoint Mr. Irwin, then some PAC members would like to discuss the possibility that the PAC would recommend to the BCC that Mr. Weinstein fill the currently vacant at-large PAC position.

IV. Action Items

1. The PAC discussed the urgency of the misuse problems at Whitely Landing. To summarize the problem, the newspaper carrier opens the park gate every morning and Mr. Bowes closes the gate every evening. The park hours are from sunrise to sunset. Each day or most days, beginning at around 2:30, a group of individuals enter the park and begin drinking and hanging around the park. They leave trash, broken bottles, etc. They bring their dogs and there are frequent dog fights, though I did not hear it suggested that these were sporting dog fights, these were simply unleashed dogs getting in fights with each other. These individuals often stray onto the private property of neighbors and leave trash or cause vandalism related damage.

Staff discussed measures that could be taken, such as seeking BCC authority to change park rules at the park, such as an alcohol ban; working with the Sheriff's Office using enforcement strategies; and using current citation authority to enforce parking/fee payment code violations.

Mr. Stiefbold made a motion to recommend to the BCC that Whitley Landing be made alcohol-free; Ms. Hoover provided the second. The PAC voted unanimously (4-0) to support this action. Staff will combine this PAC recommendation to the BCC with a similar action request for Lane County parks on Dorena Lake and will report back to the PAC on the results/impact of these actions, should the BCC support these changes.

2. Staff discussed three projects, one of which may require some changes to the original project proposals. The Hilltop Restroom project was originally proposed as a large enhancement of current capacity, adding a laundry facility, two showers, and an ADA accessible restroom. This project may be scaled down, depending on the availability of grant match funds. The smaller project would add the ADA restroom and a shower, meeting the minimum requirements for longer tent camping stays and future campground expansion.

Additional project status discussed included the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) pump station project (\$76,000) at Richardson Park, which is progressing as designed and planned. For this project, the OSMB will reimburse the County for all project costs as long as the project is completed on time. Additionally, staff discussed the Richardson Park Marina replacement project (\$900K to \$1 million). Bonds to finance this project will be sold in February, 2011, and this project will be bid and constructed either late summer of 2011 or early spring of 2012.

V. Natural Area Coordinator

Staff discussed the addition of a new staff position in Parks. This position is a part time position responsible for natural area or space coordination. Examples of duties given were, coordinating project work with the Friends of Buford Park (FBP), creating an inventory of park open spaces, providing input for the Parks Master Plan. The new temp may be available to meet PAC members at the next meeting in March.

VI. Staff Report

- Todd Winter, Park Manager since 2004, has resigned. The Office Assistant for the past several years is on an extended leave. As a result there may be a brief interruption of service for the PAC and some other management processes, but this should not last much beyond mid-March. Additionally, a Lead Worker and a journey-level park maintainer have indicated that they'll be retiring. We do not believe this loss of so much experience, history, and our friends will have a great impact on services levels – but we will miss our friends.
- The Master Plan draft is getting closer, but the first review for the PAC could be postponed or deferred until June because of the staff turnover previously mentioned.
- We implemented fee changes in January with the PAC recommendation and BCC support. Given feedback from users, we would like to reconsider just the fee increases for picnic shelters/reservable shelters. Staff proposes to reduce those fees back to previous levels and absorb the losses if our revenues do not cover costs.

- Parks is working with the Sheriff's Office to coordinate a state-wide search and rescue event in the Howard Buford Recreation area in May. The event is scheduled for May 20-22. For the morning of May 22, this will require closure of the entire park with the exception of the Arboretum from sunrise to 1 p.m. Staff will be going to the BCC to request authorization for this closure. The PAC was informed that Parks had discussed this with the Arboretum and that they had no event scheduled at this time so there is currently no apparent scheduling conflict.

VII. Good of the Order/Concerns of the Committee

Next PAC meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2011 at 5:30 pm.

IX. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at around 7 p.m.

Submitted by Howard Schussler