

DOUGLAS COUNTY PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of Meeting on September 18, 2008

10:00 a.m.

Douglas County Park Department Office

PRESENT: Dennis Acton, Dale Christiansen, Lonnie Ferber, Jon Hill, Don Larson, Dick Swartzlender, and Jim Dowd

ABSENT: Bill Swift (excused)

GUESTS: Jill & Bill Talburt, John Robertson, Robb Paul, Chuck Jones, Lois Eagleton, Celia Scott, Mike Burke, Debra Gray and Francis Eatherington

Ferber called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: Larson moved for approval of the August 21, 2008 minutes and Acton seconded. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Kanipe Trust Meeting – Commissioner Robertson and staff met with Mr. Stephen Mountainspring, the legal representative of the trustee regarding the Mildred Kanipe will. Mr. Mountainspring indicated that he had not had an opportunity to discuss the County's questions with the trust. He did ask for additional information including the estimate of repairs to the school house and the ranch house.

The Friends of Mildred Kanipe Park had a local contractor provide them with a preliminary estimate of repair costs. The total stabilization costs for the house is \$17,960 and the school house is \$21,045. The estimate is not intended to use for restoration purposes. The stabilization figures may help the trustees to understand the need for funds generated from the natural resources produced on the ranch to be used on the ranch as it was implied in the will. The estimate will be sent to Mr. Mountainspring who will share the information with the trustees.

2. Whistler's Bend Campground closure – Due to budget constraints and falling revenues, staff has made the decision to close Whistler's Bend Campground from November through March. The paid caretaker position will be eliminated beginning November 1, 2008 and a volunteer caretaker will be sought for the park. The campground will open again April 1, 2009 and continue through October. At this time, the day use area, disc golf, yurts and group camping will be still be available through the winter.

3. Herbert's Pond Engineering Report – Dowd reported that the official report on the dam safety project is not available yet; however the following items are included in the report: Trees on the dam will need to be removed and grubbed which includes removing the root wad. Nutria holes will have to be excavated and filled along with the root wad excavations. The dam walls will need to be stabilized and filled. The embankment on the spillway will need to be rebuilt.

Robb Paul, Public Works Director was at the meeting to explain the project. Paul explained that the County is currently building a way to get to the spillway to rebuild it. This includes taking out vegetation in order to get to the spillway. The water level in the pond has been lowered in order to gain access to the spillway and to relieve pressure on the dam. \$100,000 has been allocated in the 2008-09 fiscal year for this project. Total estimated costs for the project are around \$300,000.

There was a strong consensus of the board that it would be in the best interest economically to consider other options of recreation at the park rather than spend the \$300,000 plus to fix the dam only to have more repairs necessary down the road. Other considerations included creating a wetland area for bird watching, filling in the pond to create diversified recreational opportunities such as ball fields, and keeping the pond but making it smaller in order to create wetlands in addition to the pond. Paul explained that if it were to become a wetland, the County could make money by selling the wetland credits as mitigation land.

The Board directed Dowd to convey their request to look at other options at Herbert's Pond to the Board of Commissioners before spending any more money. The Board expressed that the money allocated to the dam restoration could be used to keep parks open and not have to lay off staff.

4. Chief Miwaleta Campground Opening – Dowd reported that the grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony for the Chief Miwaleta Campground was well received. Dowd gave a brief history of the campground at the ceremony and Commissioner Robertson gave a brief speech in support of the work that has been done. Heaven on Earth restaurant provided refreshments and there were campers lined up after the ceremony to pull into the campground. A tent area will be developed in the future for campers wishing to tent camp.

OFF AGENDA:

Mildred Kanipe Grazing Lease – More discussion was had regarding the grazing lease that expires in November. The concerns included expanding the lease to include cutting hay, increasing the number of cattle, expanding the grazing area, and maintaining the exterior fences. If the grazing area is expanded, the issue of developing a water source would need to be looked at. Dowd will review the current lease and report back to the Board regarding these issues.

Oregon Parks Association Meeting – Dowd reported on the OPA meeting he attended in Bend this month. The topic of increased revenue generation and cost savings was most interesting to Dowd in light of recent budget cuts. Other counties in Oregon are finding ways to generate income and reduce costs through parking fees, closure of parks in the winter, marketing, and using timber harvesting for capital improvements for Parks. Dowd also reported that the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) has changed its focus to include diversity, obesity, youth and aging. SCORP provides guidance for Oregon Parks and Recreation administered grant programs in determining grant monies given to Counties. This will change the focus for the Park Department in applying and receiving grant money from OPRD.

Other – Lois Eagleton passed around a “before and after” picture of the restored buggy at Mildred Kanipe Park. She also reported that there is a proposal to build a nature walk at the park in the near future. Francis Eatherington shared information from a newsletter from the Winchester Bay Rural Fire Protection agency regarding their disapproval of ATV’s allowed in town during Dune Fest this year.

NEXT MEETING: The next Park Board meeting will be on October 16, 2008, 10:00 a.m. at Park Headquarters.

A motion to adjourn was made by Hill and seconded by Acton. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Wilson, Office Manager
Douglas County Park Department