

# DOUGLAS COUNTY PARK ADVISORY BOARD

## Minutes of Meeting on November 20, 2008

10:00 a.m.

Douglas County Park Department Office

**PRESENT:** Dennis Acton, Lonnie Ferber, Jon Hill, Don Larson, Dick Swartzlender, Bill Swift, and Jim Dowd

**ABSENT:** None

**GUESTS:** Jill & Bill Talburt, Lois Eagleton

Ferber called the meeting to order.

**MINUTES:** Acton moved for approval of the September 18, 2008 minutes and Larson seconded. Motion carried.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

1. Park Advisory Board Member Resignation – Dowd reported that Dale Christiansen has tendered his resignation from the Park Advisory Board. He will be moving out of the area. Dale was a valuable member of the Park Board and his insight and experience will be missed. The Board wished him well in the future. The Board of Commissioners will advertise for the position and the Park Board expressed their desire to meet the applicants at the December meeting.

2. Baker Wayside Improvements – After an extended construction period, the Baker Wayside improvements have been completed. The project consisted of widening, grading and paving the road and parking areas, drainage improvements, adding foot paths to the picnic areas, placing new picnic tables and adding two information kiosks. The project was funded through the U.S. Scenic Highway and Byway Program and managed by the US Forest Service. The board indicated they would like a ribbon cutting ceremony. Dowd will contact the Board of Commissioners for their direction.

3. Kanipe Grazing Lease – The Park Department has encouraged and allowed the use of a major portion of the Mildred Kanipe Memorial Park to be grazed by livestock to qualified applicants. The current lease is scheduled to expire this month; therefore, the department has advertised and received bids from qualified applicants. The lease was lengthened to three years with two, one year renewal options. There was an option to cut hay in the new lease with the price to be negotiated through the Park Department.

Bids were received from Mr. Banducci and Mr. Thompson. Mr. Banducci bid \$850 per month and Mr. Thompson bid \$625 per month. Staff will be reviewing the bids this week. The responsible and responsive bidder will be determined and awarded the bid.

4. Festival of Lights – The annual Rotary Club event held at River Forks Park is scheduled to open November 23 and will end January 2, 2009. The Park Department provides equipment, labor and facilities in support of this community event. This year the “Holiday Village” portion of the event that is held at the Pitchford Community Center is expanding. The extra dorm room by Helleck Hall will be used to add space for vendors to sell their arts and crafts to the public. In order to make room for the vendors, the bunks and cubbies were removed, the electrical, lighting, plumbing and heat have all been re-established and exterior lighting was re-channeled through an existing outdoor service pole to ease the electrical load on the dorm room.

The Festival of Lights Committee has advertised the use of the village for corporate and private holiday parties and events. Caterer’s and music are available for these special events. Also included in the festivities will be a horse drawn wagon for individuals or groups wishing to take a slow and peaceful tour of the lights.

5. Direction of the Park Department in the Challenging Times Ahead – Dowd re-capped the financial situation facing the Park Department explaining that the reduction in the safety net by 10% for the next four years will impact the department’s reliance on General Fund allocation. He anticipates that the Board of Commissioners will ask department heads to reduce their budgets in some manner. Dowd said revenue from RV registration fees will be lower and he is anticipating loss in camping revenue due to the struggling economy.

If revenues drop as anticipated and the Board of Commissioners require more reductions to the budget, the Park Department will face the possibility of losing more staff, closing more parks and cutting services. He asked the Board for input regarding these issues.

Ideas explored included:

- Providing a value statement of park land and usage history information to give the public a clear picture of what their money is going for in order to get support.
- Evaluating necessary capital improvements and exploring selling park property.
- Selling advertising on the park webpage.
- Soliciting sponsors for individual parks.
- Licensing commercial users and getting more concessionaires.
- Promoting campgrounds through travel networks online.
- Creating a recreation district.
- Charging a transient tax for park users.
- Promoting parks to private businesses.

Dowd encouraged the board to continue to think about creating guidelines for scaling back expenses before we are in a crisis situation.

### **OFF AGENDA:**

Dowd reported that he has been elected to the Oregon Parks Association Board for the year 2009.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Lois Eagleton shared a picture of the finished table at Mildred Kanipe Park in memory of Dixie Hogan. She also announced that her published book "For the Love of the Land" which is a legacy of Mildred Kanipe is available to purchase.

Jill & Bill Talburt reported they had met with Commissioner Robertson in September regarding the Equestrian Campground proposed for the coast. The Talburts asked where the project stands. Dowd said he was informed that the funding from the Board of Commissioners account is no longer there. Dowd is in favor of the project, but without the funding it cannot move forward at this time.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Park Board meeting will be on December 18, 2008, 10:00 a.m. at Park Headquarters.

A motion to adjourn was made by Larson and seconded by Swift. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Wilson, Office Manager  
Douglas County Park Department