

DOUGLAS COUNTY PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of Meeting on January 15, 2009

10:00 a.m.

Douglas County Park Department Office

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

ABSENT: Jon Hill (excused)

GUESTS: Jill Talburt, Francis Eatherington, Celia Scott and Mike Burke

Ferber called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: Larson moved for approval of the December 18, 2008 minutes and Swift seconded. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) – Dowd reported on the State of Oregon's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) that reflects the future trends in recreation throughout the state. The plan is used by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to provide guidance for state grant applications and is required by the federal government as a guide for any Land and Water Conservation Grant Programs.

In years past, the plan outlined the recreation needs of each county which were typically new recreational facilities, improvements to existing recreation facilities and acquisition of new park land and green space. In 2008 SCORP changed its focus from what could be termed tangible items (playgrounds, restrooms, pavilions, etc.) to a completely different concept of what the needs of recreational users are. The four major sections of the plan are:

1. A rapidly aging Oregon population.
2. Fewer youth learning outdoor skills.
3. An increasingly diverse Oregon population.
4. Oregon's physical activity crisis.

Local recommendations include: Providing greater priority for trail systems, funding for innovative park designs that connect youth with nature, promoting higher priority for group-day use facilities, trails, and close to home camping, and developing a regional marketing plan to reach under represented populations.

Dowd reported that the plan will lower the possibility of recreation grants being allocated to counties and stated that the Douglas County Park system may have to rely on our own means in the future to develop, operate and maintain our recreational facilities.

Acton commented that with the *No Child Left Behind* program, physical education in youth has decreased. Swartzlender commented that the State needs better coordination within as they have made it more difficult to use the park systems because of added user fees and yet they want to get more people outdoors with the SCORP plan. Peterson shared that recreation is shifting from fishing and camping to ATV use. His recommendation was to partner with other programs to help youth get involved in the park system. Eatherington mentioned incorporating the Global Positioning System (GPS) into recreational games to get youth outdoors.

2. Future Funding Strategies for the Park Department – Dowd revisited the list of ideas that the Park Board had previously discussed regarding ideas to help raise revenue and reduce expenditures. Of the previous ideas explored, Dowd will look into whether we can sell advertising on the park webpage, getting concessionaires and/or licensing commercial users at local parks, the possibility of charging a transient room tax for park users and presenting a pie graph of revenues and expenditures to give the public a clear picture of what their money is going toward.

Acton inquired whether we can incorporate an occupancy tax. Swift mentioned adding an active voluntary donation to park users. He also suggested that the Board of Commissioners look at how they want to portray to the public the ‘color of the county’ based on what condition is seen at the county parks.

A historical usage report was looked at to see the overall trend in park users. Dowd also handed out a report showing the decline in RV registration fees that is distributed to the various counties in the state.

3. 2009-2010 Budget Preparations – The budget process for the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year is in the planning stages. Although the park department has not received direction from the Board of Commissioners yet, it is anticipated that there will be changes in our general fund allocation. As we move through the process, Dowd will keep the Park Board informed and will also seek advice down the road.

OFF AGENDA: Dowd reported that Commissioner Robertson has directed to move forward with the development of the Equine Campground at the coast. A soil study from GeoScience is currently underway. The funding is coming from the Commissioners account.

Dowd informed the board that one of our tractors ended up in the river at Hestnes Landing while crew was cleaning the boat ramp after the recent high water. The Sheriff’s department and Public Works helped to pull it out. Crew is assessing the damage and will make necessary repairs.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Celia Scott reported that The Friends of Mildred Kanipe Park will be holding a Living History Day at the Mildred Kanipe park to celebrate Oregon’s 150th birthday. The Park Department is sponsoring the event which will be held on May 16th, 2009. There will be historical activities such as butter churning candle making, sheep shearing, wool spinning, flint-knapping, quilting, music, dances and songs of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. The Douglas County Museum staff will set up a tent featuring children’s activities of the

period, and local teachers, students, musicians, and craftspeople will give the public a peek into life of the time.

Francis Eatherington welcomed Jim Peterson to the Park Advisory Board. She encouraged that the next time the board chooses a member to keep in mind diversity. She stated that there is an appearance of discrimination as the board is comprised of all white males. Eatherington suggested the next time the board should try to correct the imbalance. Dowd reported that of the six people who applied, one was a female and the vote had come to a tie between her and Peterson. A second vote had to be taken to break the tie.

Jill Talburt thanked Dowd for his efforts on moving the Equine Campground forward. She also requested that as the Park Department works on the budget they try not to cut any personnel.

NEXT MEETING: The next Park Board meeting will be on February 19, 2009 10:00 a.m. at Park Headquarters.

A motion to adjourn was made by Swift and seconded by Swartzlender. The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Wilson, Office Manager
Douglas County Park Department