

DOUGLAS COUNTY PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of Meeting on February 19, 2009

10:00 a.m.

Douglas County Park Department Office

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

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: Jill Talburt, Bill Talburt

Ferber called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: Swartzlender moved for approval of the January 15, 2009 minutes and Swift seconded. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

1. 2009-2010 Budget – Dowd reported that the Board of Commissioners directed all departments in the county to cut 10% of their general fund contribution for the FY 09-10 budget. Dowd met with the BOC on Friday, February 13 to present the Park and Facilities proposed budget for FY 09-10.

The BOC's direction included utilizing partnerships with other government agencies and volunteer groups to better manage and operate facilities and to develop cost allocations for each park. One suggestion was to create efficiencies with Salmon Harbor without losing revenue. Examples would be sharing maintenance, reservation and caretaker duties.

The BOC reported that they want to remove any general fund expenditures from the Mildred Kanipe Park. In order to do this, the paid caretaker position will be cut for the new budget year. They also wanted to look at ways to work with other volunteer groups or agencies to reduce expenses at the park.

Other ideas from the BOC were to investigate and consider long term camping at some County parks such as Windy Cove A, Pass Creek, and Stanton. Concern regarding landlord/tenant relationships in long term stays was expressed. Selling or leasing the Pass Creek Park facility or transferring ownership to State Parks was also a suggestion from the BOC, however, the grants that have been received from the State for the park would need to be repaid if the land was sold.

The draft budget that Dowd handed out to the board showed a decrease in capital outlay due to the lack of projects projected. The budget reflects a 23% decrease in revenue due to lower usage at the parks, no anticipated grant money, and lower RV Licensing income. Materials and services including utilities will go up as well as maintenance to older vehicles and equipment. The department will also cut its cell phones by half to help defray overall costs.

After discussion, the board expressed their concerns regarding the long term picture of what Douglas County Parks will look like. They would like to know the BOC's vision for the parks in light of the continued anticipated cuts in the next few years. They also would like to know what the BOC thinks is the value of parks in the community. The Park Board expressed that recreation is very valuable at this time in our economy. They also expressed that they do not want our coastal parks to be absorbed by Salmon Harbor and that it would need to be a two way street in utilizing efficiencies between both departments.

Other suggestions from the board included: pursuing the movie industry to bring movies to our coastal area to bring in more money; implement parking fees at the coast staging area and south beach jetty parking lot; radically changing the way parks do business and developing a fresh look at the way we budget and govern the parks; increase marketing of parks including recreational passes and website marketing; create partnerships with businesses including asking for private donations of money and vehicles/equipment; create a bigger recreational area to include city parks, museum operation, and the library; and re-market the Adopt-A-Park program.

It was agreed that we need to protect what we have, and attract people into the park by not having too many fees that turn them away.

OFF AGENDA:

Dowd reported that the Equine Campground project at the coast is still moving forward. The Geo-technical work is finished and the report shows that there are no major issues in that area. The next step is to submit the report to the Planning Department along with an animal waste management plan.

The 2009 Sportsmen's Show highlighted Chief Miwaleta Campground, Baker Park, and Half Moon Bay. Dowd reported that many people showed interest in the cabin and campground at Chief Miwaleta Park.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None

NEXT MEETING: The next Park Board meeting will be on March 19, 2009 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