



BENTON COUNTY PARK BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
Benton County Justice Center
Kennewick, WA 99336

Meeting provided by Video (via Zoom)

Board Members Present

Laauli Faamausili, Chair
Dave McNeal, Vice Chair
Karla Brown, Secretary
Yessica Rosas, Member
Richard Nordness, Member
Diana Ruff, Member
Robin Emmingham, Member

Benton County Employees

Adam Fyall
Robert Blain
Peggy Brown

Board Members Absent

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Board Chair, Laauli Faamausili, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., and Dick McGrew recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approval of Agenda

The March 9th agenda was approved as submitted.

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of February 9, 2021 were approved as submitted.

Monthly Reports to the Board

Chair's Report

There was no report at this time.

Committee/Subcommittee Reports

The Horn Rapids Signage Subcommittee deferred their report to the relevant business item later in the agenda.

Staff Report Update

Discussion ensued regarding in person meetings. Benton County is in "Phase 2" of re-opening. In "Phase 2" in person meetings can be held at 25% capacity. The Board felt at this time to continue meeting via Zoom so that more people can join the meetings. The Board is aiming for June to be able to meet in person for the annual outdoor meeting at Two Rivers Park. Regarding Two Rivers, Adam mentioned that the new park caretaker had accepted the job offer and was in the onboarding process. Other Facilities and Parks staff are filling-in at the park as best they can in the absence of a full-time onsite caretaker.

Business

- **Water Stargrass-guest presentation, contract discussion:**
 - The discussion led by Rachel Little from the Benton Conservation District was about the native plant, Water Stargrass, and its effect on the Yakima River.
 - Water Stargrass has a negative effect on the Yakima River by displacing the surface elevation of the river by 3 feet; consumes oxygen which causes low dissolved oxygen levels; and slows water movement causing disruption to irrigation use.
 - The volume of growth keeps the salmon from spawning in the river, encourages more mosquitos due to slower water movement, and discourages river recreation use.
 - The Conservation District was able to get funds with help from WA Dept of Commerce for an aquatic plant removal machine that pulls/cuts the grass and takes it out of the river for easier clean-up.
 - The focus for the upcoming summer is to get the grasses removed from the river in Benton City, Horn Rapids, and the Confluence since these areas are conducive for easy access.

- The Benton Conservation District would like to enter an interlocal agreement with Benton County to put the wet grass at the back of the Horn Rapids park area to dry and be disposed of. The Park Board approved this motion, and Adam will bring a resolution before the Benton County Commissioners for this agreement to be enacted.
- **Horn Rapids Park Signage:**
 - The Park Board would like to get the signage updated before the camping season begins. Adam mentioned that there would be access to a work crew to help with this project.
 - Signage short term goals: remove the obvious old signage; update the information on the bulletin boards; paint the bollards; re-do the gates; and add signage to the horse camp, including a tribute to Linda Smith.
 - The Board would like to review the style guide for new signage to the entrance of the park to make it all uniform and respectable to the park.
 - The Board voted unanimously to move forward with getting rid of the old signage at Horn Rapids.
- **Hover Park Parking Lot:**
 - Project is moving slow with Corp of Engineers. Their biggest concern is the historical aspect of the site. It was asked if the Corp of Engineers had a copy of the write-up that was done a couple years ago about the Hover town site. Adam is going to check on that.
 - It was also mentioned about building barriers for E-bikes and other off-road vehicles at the park.

Public Comments/Poll of the Board/Adjournment

The public comment.

Dick McGrew, Miniature Aircraft Association, felt the Stargrass presentation was informative. He's looking forward to meetings at the airplane site.

Dan Chappel enjoyed the Stargrass presentation, said it was interesting. He's looking forward to the signage at Horn Rapids to being updated. He mentioned May 1st as a surprise ride event. He is

concerned if larger vehicles will be able to maneuver in the parking lot at Hover Park.

Cindy Faith, Purple Sage Riders, found the Stargrass presentation interesting. She has concerns with E-bikes on trails with horse riders. Looking forward to the spring clean-up at Hover.

The Board had closing comments.

Robin Emmingham enjoyed the Stargrass presentation. He feels that the Board needs to discuss E-bikes and the impact on the hiking/riding trails.

Dave McNeal appreciated the Stargrass presentation. He wondered if the Youth Ecology Education through Restoration program could be linked with the Stargrass removal efforts.

Diana Ruff wanted to thank Rachel Little for the Stargrass presentation. She mentioned that she'll be participating in the Badger Mt. Challenge and is looking forward to it. Feels the Board should address the issue of E-bikes.

Karla Brown wanted to express thanks for the Stargrass presentation. It was informative. She's glad that the issue is being addressed and clean-up of the river is taking place. She also commented on E-bikes and how to tell the difference between them and regular bikes.

Richard Nordness found the Stargrass presentation to be interesting. He felt the meeting was productive.

Yessica Rojas was impressed with the Stargrass presentation and expressed appreciation for the efforts to keep the river clean of the grass.

Laauli Faamausili wanted to thank the park partners for pushing projects through. He mentioned that he enjoys the park partners being at the Park Board meetings and their comments.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

The next regular meeting will be held on the second Tuesday in April at the Justice Center/Zoom.