



**BENTON COUNTY PARK BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

May 11, 2021, 6:00 p.m.  
Benton County Justice Center  
Kennewick, WA 99336  
Meeting conducted via video (Zoom)

**Board Members Present**

Laauli Faamausili, Chair  
Dave McNeal, Vice Chair  
Robin Emmingham, Member  
Richard Nordness, Member (joined at 7:05)  
Yessica Rosas, Member  
Diana Ruff, Member

**Benton County Employees**

Adam J. Fyall  
Robert Blain

**Board Members Absent**

Karla Brown, Member

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call**

Board Chair, Laauli Faamausili, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Review & Approval of Agenda**

With one addition made by staff, the agenda was approved as amended 5-0.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes of April 13, 2021 were approved with one revision related to the ebikes discussion offered by Member McNeal. After a motion by Emmingham and a second from Ruff, the minutes were approved 5-0.

## Monthly Reports to the Board

### Chair's Report

There was no report at this time.

### Committee/Subcommittee Reports

There was no report at this time.

### Staff Report Update

Adam presented his written Staff Report and highlighted a few items with additional verbal comment.

## Business

- **Energy Northwest Interpretive Sign Proposal:** Susan Fillifer and Kelly Rae from Energy Northwest, and Sharon Grant from Friends of Badger Mountain, joined Adam to present an idea for a new sign for Badger Mountain that would serve as a locator/interpretive sign focusing on areas to the north/northwest of the Preserve. Adam talked about the sign being the first of four that would each serve a quadrant of the compass. After going through the proposal in detail, the group sought the Board's general approval for moving forward with the concept. The Board gave its endorsement of the concept. Adam said he would provide a revised draft at or before the June meeting seeking further Board concurrence. At the point, the hope was to have the final signage draft completed, if not the sign fabrication completed, by the end of June. The other three signs are not a part of the Energy Northwest project and would follow at a later time.
- **Horn Rapids Park Wanawish Area:** Adam began the discussion noting that while there has been some favorable feedback to the ideas floated by the Board regarding restricting vehicular access into the Wanawish area, that feedback has come from all of the predictable places. It has been hard to bring wider spread attention to the topic. Mr. McNeal mentioned the differences between an education approach versus regulatory/physical approaches. Mr. Emmingham restated the three big impacts that we are trying to address - camping, off-roading, litter/dumping - and how these are very difficult to address without barriers and/or restrictions. He also talked about different approaches to fencing, such as along the internal road that leads to the river access sites which would allow people to drive to those sites.

Ms. Ruff described how we may need to "go big or go home" in that incremental steps or half-measures have a high likelihood of failure in this situation. After some further discussion during which Adam brought up the topic of using the Parks Ordinance as a tool for this issue and for others, it was decided to create a separate subcommittee to explore this further. Adam said he would get information to the Board and build on work Diana previously did on the ordinance. A motion to create a Park Ordinance Subcommittee that would address Wanawish among other things and that would be comprised of McNeal, Nordness, and Ruff was passed 6-0.

- **Electric Bicycles:** After the larger public workshop on the ebikes topic of April, the Board summarized that meeting and reflected on it. Ms Ruff noted that as good as the April meeting was, there didn't seem to be representation from groups such as Fun Fit & Over Fifty and the InterMountain Alpine Club, and that a little more outreach would be good. Mr. Emmingham noted his surprise in that Friends of Badger Mountain didn't seem more alarmed by what is going on with ebikes. Mr. McNeal inquired about any existing ordinance language and suggested this might be another topic for consideration in that forthcoming discussion. Visitor Dan Chappell noted that there is new legislation that addresses ebikes and that certain state agencies have or are developing guidance on ebikes. Chair Faamausili urged the County to watch what Richland does over the next few months and see how that process plays out. He asked if the Park Ordinance Subcommittee could take on this issue as well, to which Diana responded that the ebikes discussion might be a cause for some fresh recruits for a dedicated ebikes subcommittee. A motion for a separate Ebikes Subcommittee consisting of Brown, Emmingham, and Ruff was passed 6-0.
- **Park Board Meetings:** The Board briefly reviewed the meeting calendar for the remainder of the year. The decision was made to return to Two Rivers Park for the traditional June meeting, making it the first in-person meeting the Board will have since March 2020. Decisions going forward will be made on a month-by-month basis depending on circumstances, but the assumption is for a return to the Justice Center in July.

Also, Chair Faamausili asked about elections, wondering if it was time to reset the officers. Adam did not have the By-Laws handy and said he would check on that question and get back to the Board.

## Public Comments / Poll of the Board / Adjournment

### Public Comments

Cindy Faith (Purple Sage Riders) reprised the ebikes discussion, emphasizing the importance of education across all user groups.

Dan Chappell (Rattlesnake Ridge Riders) recapped the "Surprise Ride" event of May 1, made mention of dump sites at Horn Rapids Park, and wanted to offer appreciate for the work HRP Caretaker Mark Finkbeiner did in the lead-up to the Surprise Ride, including extra trash detail and preparing the parking lot.

George Hager (Tri-Cities Shooting Association) mentioned that the grant to support paving around the Rose-Iris Range and the future Silhouette Range received tentative approval, and that the recently-paved Canyon Road is holding-up very nicely.

### Poll of the Board

David McNeal observed how busy Linda Smith was in preparations for and putting on the Surprise Ride event and how nothing seems to slow her down.

Robin Emmingham expressed his continued interest in the ebikes discussion as it unfolds, reiterated the need to protect the Wanawish area at Horn Rapids, and lamented the slow progress of the Corps at Hover Park but understanding that process takes time.

Dick Nordness thanked Adam for his presentation to the Kiwanis Club of Horse Heaven Hills and mentioned how it was good exposure for the parks system and Benton County.

Yessica Rosas apologized for missing the April meeting and thanked the group for continued good discussions.

Diana Ruff mentioned how despite the low moisture the wildflowers on Badger Mountain and elsewhere have been great; and also appreciated the interpretive sign presentation and partnership.

Chair Laauli Faamausili congratulated TCSA on their most recent grant success and thanked all of the evening's attendees.

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

The next regular meeting will be held on the second Tuesday in June at Two Rivers Park.

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