



## **BENTON COUNTY PARK BOARD**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

November 15, 2022, 6:30 p.m.  
Benton County Administration Building

#### **Board Members Present**

Laauli Faamausili, Chair  
Dave McNeal, Vice Chair  
Karla Brown, Secretary  
Robin Emmingham, Member  
Kit McBurney, Member  
Sarah Funk, Member

#### **Benton County Employees**

Adam Fyall  
Robert Blain

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

Laauli Faamausili, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and the Pledge was recited.

#### **Review & Approval of Agenda**

The November 15, 2022 agenda was approved as submitted.

#### **Review & Approval of Minutes**

The October 2022 minutes were reviewed and approved with the amendment suggested by Dave McNeal, Vice Chair, which was to omit a sentence under the "Parks Comprehensive Plan- Tom Beckwith". That sentence read "To be able to attend the

virtual Comprehensive Park Plan open house you need an invitation via email." You did not need an invitation via email to attend, you just needed the web link. Minutes were otherwise approved as written.

## **Monthly Reports to the Board**

### **Chair's Report**

There was no report.

### **Committee/Subcommittee Reports**

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, Members, Kit and Robin and the County attorney met with Michael Seelinger, representative of the Airsoft group at Hover Park. They discussed the designated area for the airsoft group activities. The attorney concurred that it was feasible to explore the option further. Michael and the group were tasked to come up with a vision for the designated area, which would include permanent changes to the park and designate when the area is open to the public and when it is closed for events, etc. The City of Richland has an archery range facility that the committee will investigate and find out what the City's agreement is with the range, if any.

### **Staff Reports**

There was nothing to add to the written report.

## **Business**

- **Parks Project Update**

Robert Blain, Director of Operations and Capital Programs presented the board with the County's Capital Project Update.

The Rattlesnake Mt. Shooting Facility is about 90% complete. Along with the range, there is a plan in the works for a classroom on site and the County is working to engage an architect for a proposal of costs and design.

Two Rivers Park Restroom and Boardwalk has passed the federal review process and is now waiting on the local review to get started, which is anticipated to take place in December with construction happening in early Summer 2023.

The paving at Candy Mountain missed the window of opportunity this year, construction will hopefully start in Spring 2023.

The design for the Hover Park parking lot has been submitted. The Army Corp needs to find the funding then they will work on permitting federally and locally and then design review can take place. If the County provides the funding that will help speed up with process.

Mr. Blain shared the 2023-2028 Capital Improvement Plan. The six-year Plan is reviewed every 2 years for budgeting but there is a re-adoption every year. The fiscal year runs January-December. Once the Park Comprehensive Plan is completed, the Plan will be reviewed again.

- **Parks Comprehensive Plan**

Tom Beckwith, assisted by Jennifer Hackett and Jennifer Kiusalaas, shared a survey update with the Board. 903 people completed the 1<sup>st</sup> survey. Email was predominate communication with this group, most had lived in the county 2-16+ years, average household was 2+ people, average age was 26-40 years old and surprisingly to Tom, 61% of survey respondents were male. The big take aways and highest priority items to respondents were to preserve wildlife habitat, develop bike trails and roads, preserve historic resources and develop resource-oriented parks. Needing restrooms and parking at community parks was another high priority item.

The open house survey had 68 respondents. Most respondents lived in city limits, had been residents for over 16 years, ages were 26-55 and were mostly female at 51% but respondents were more evenly balanced than the 1<sup>st</sup> survey. Questions were asked about each individual park except for the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Range and the Miniature Aircraft Association.

The Beckwith Group used the survey results to develop a proposed master plan for each park. For Hover, they have proposed a wading beach, water trails, pull-in day use activities, and boat launch. At Horn Rapids, the Group has proposed a festival or event component with an amphitheater with the potential to accommodate 1,500 people, the RV area to stay where it is but be cleared for events to house food trucks and vendors, parking lot expansion, day use picnic area and another RV/tent area and trail connection East of the

horse camp. There is also 400 feet of Yakima River access that can be improved and advanced.

Mr. Faamausili, Chair, asked Mr. Beckwith if he had seen similar survey results from studies in other municipalities. Tom relayed that in comparison to other outcomes, our survey respondents gave very definite answers and were high in their scoring which is good and unusual. The results will help develop strategies for priorities for funding.

The Beckwith Group will be working on cost estimates and finance strategies to discuss at the next Board meeting in December.

The second open house is tomorrow, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. The link is on the website and Adam will also share the link with everyone via email.

### **Public Comments/Poll of the Board/Adjournment**

#### **Public Comment:**

Dan Chappel from (Rattlesnake Ridge Riders) said he appreciated Tom and Robert's input tonight. He asked if it was still possible to take the survey and Adam responded that the 1<sup>st</sup> survey is closed but he will check to see if the second survey is open and if so, will email to let Dan know.

Cindy Faith (Purple Sage Riders) thought it was a great presentation, she was impressed with the survey process, and it gives hope for the future.

Dick McGrew (Miniature Aircraft Association) and Jennifer McNeal both commented that the survey results and presentation from Beckwith were interesting.

George Hager (TCSA) said that they are working on upgrading security throughout the range. The cultural survey has been completed but they haven't heard back. He is curious how sharing the well situation will work out with the Sheriff's range, as to who will pay for the power, etc. The Lease can write out who pays for what.

Michael from the Airsoft Group is working on the tasks that the committee has assigned to him and his group. His group agrees on needing a permit for signage and having a footbridge. Michael will draw up a kit to be conducted in phases, with signage being top priority.

David Beech (FoB and Bike TC) asked whether a settlement had been reached at Candy regarding the paving. Adam responded that unfortunately there hasn't been an agreement with the neighbors to pay for their portion. However, they have 4-5 months to come around and change their mind. David would like to see a connection of the trail system from Prosser to Wallula and believes the Board should pursue that. He also mentioned that Bike Tri-Cities has been great exposure for the County.

#### **Poll of the Board:**

Karla Brown said it was nice to see the involvement with the Beckwith Group and hadn't anticipated that they would be at every meeting, but it sure is nice that they have been attending and providing project updates at every meeting. Adam agreed that Tom has promised and provided.

Dave McNeal said that the Beckwith proposals are very robust and hopes that the proposal does serve the needs of getting the Park to something we do want, but hopefully not increase the public expectation.

Kit McBurney said she enjoyed the results of the survey.

Robin Emmingham is excited about the boardwalk and restroom finally happening at Two Rivers. He said the additional help from Adam and team has really helped move things forward. At Hover he wondered if whether the parking lot design will impact the airsoft group at all. Robin also wanted to add that in conversations with the County attorney, that the attorney noted that it would be great if the airsoft group was formalized with established officers and bylaws and had insurance.

Laauli Faamausili said it's been a long time coming for most of these projects but hats off to Robert and crew to make them happen.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at: 7:45 PM.

**The next regular meeting will be held December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Administration Building.**