



BENTON COUNTY Park Board

MEETING MINUTES APRIL 2024

Board Members Present

Dave McNeal, Chair
Robin Emmingham, Vice Chair
Karla Brown, Secretary
Michael LeCompte, Member
Kit McBurney, Member
Frank Cooper, Member
Ismael Mendoza-Jimenez, Member

Benton County Employees

Adam Fyall

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Chair, Dave McNeal called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and the Pledge was recited.

Review & Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the April 9, 2024, meeting was approved by the Board.

Review & Approval of Minutes

The March 2024 minutes were reviewed and approved by the Board.

Chair's Report

Dave McNeal reminded the Board that we talked in the past about pride in our parks, and that the exercise tonight could be a starting point for such an enterprise and a pride in the parks program, would be a good thing to push forward. A "pride in parks" theme would be a way to minimize the liabilities and we have the opportunity to make some of the processes a reality.

Committee/Subcommittee Reports

On April 2nd Adam, Robin and Kit met with Michael Seelinger with the Mid-Columbia Airsoft Club and 3 other members of their club. There is a new attorney on County staff that Adam has been corresponding

with on the topic and the airsoft club will consider becoming an incorporated organization and getting insurance. That would allow them more ownership of the airsoft area, but also create added expenses and responsibilities. Another option might be just making airsoft a specifically *allowed use*, possibly with signage, but no special privileges. There is no hurry to solve the issue and, in the interim, could just describe it as an allowed use. In order to give them a special access area they would need to be incorporated and insured.

Staff Report

Adam sent an earlier email to the Board about “boot brushes” for seed control. The County was awarded a boot brush through a state grant that we will use for one of the trailheads at either Candy or Badger. Adam will buy two more for the other two trailheads.

Life vests were donated to Two Rivers from State Parks’ Boating Program.

The start-up irrigation issues at Two Rivers should be resolved in the next week.

Adam hopes we will finalize the park’s priorities tonight. If we adopt the Plan no later than the June meeting it will start its 6-year cycle on the state July-June calendar.

Business

- Annual Reports to the Board
The Friends of Badger Mountain report to the Board will be rescheduled or we will do it next year.
- 2024 Park Board Meeting Schedule

The 2024 meeting calendar as presented by Adam was reviewed and approved and by the Board.

- Parks Comprehensive Plan – Priority Discussions

Adam reviewed the Board’s park priorities and he saw the “Pride in Parks” as a mission statement as the drive of the document. Adam suggested not to make a huge document but add a sentence or two of what each priority is. Adam didn’t see anything that needed to be moved around or adjusted.

There was discussion regarding the draft consensus park priorities. Mr. Emmingham suggested that Restroom facilities and policies should be moved up to the highest priorities for 2024. Ms. McBurney thinks there have been a lot of comments about Meachum Hall and it should be on the priority list for repairs and upkeep. Adam suggested an audit and overlay of Meachum Hall since it is around 20 years old. It’s used probably 10 times a year, so there is a span of time between each use which means things can get dusty or things stop working. The review might happen later in the year. The priority was added to “ongoing high priorities”.

After discussion the Levee Trail as a high priority, was moved to a second level priority, since it will likely happen without action from Board.

Ms. McBurney would also like to move the Wallula access to the second level priority and several members of the Board agreed, with the following language to implement: “Explore avenues for developing access to Wallula properties” or something similar to that effect.

Mr. Mendoza-Jimenez has been having discussions with his Hispanic Seven-Day Adventist church, to become “friends of Two Rivers” and help the cleanup process. He will talk to the pastor next week and get back to the Board. He feels like the trailer at Two Rivers should be removed. Adam agrees; however, the Board will need to develop a plan for what comes after the trailer.

Ms. McBurney would like to add the continuing discussion with Airsoft to be added under “Ongoing High Priorities” – “Partnerships”.

A motion was made to accept the park priorities as amended tonight and the Board adopted and approved the motion.

Public Comments/Poll of the Board/Adjournment

Public Comment:

Gary Westergaard with the Purple Sage Riders wondered if the Board has considered buying or purchasing the hill at Hover, and Adam replied that he is not aware of that ever occurring.

Cindy Faith with the Purple Sage Riders reminded the Board about the Vicki Clark memorial ride on Sunday. Cindy asked about the Hover parking lot. Adam advised that Robert Blain is going to bid the parking lot by next week so the construction should start in June. She also noted that there are no meeting minutes for 2024 on the website, and Adam advised that he is aware and Glen will start posting those soon.

Carole Schuh works with three horse groups, Purple Sage Riders, Rattlesnake Ridge Riders, and a youth group called Trail Warriors (4H and other kids learning to ride the trail) the three groups had a March 23rd cleanup at Meachum Hall and Horse Camp and did a tumbleweed pickup and the campsites are looking nice right now. They are going to have a campout with some of the trail warriors on Saturday, May 11th.

George Hager with Tri-City Shooting Association advised that the parking lot for Rose Iris has been completed and they are staging equipment at the small range north of the sheriff’s range and construction on that will start next week. Mr. Cooper asked George if there is a time that they could meet out at TCSA to discuss their plans with the archery range, George will get in touch with him.

Michael Seelinger with Mid-Columbia Airsoft Club advised they had a meeting yesterday to discuss what they talked about with the Board, there is some hesitancy with their members to add more responsibilities on their end to become an official organization. However, he got a soft quote on the internet for insurance of about \$3,000. He is hoping they can come together and move forward and be an official partner. They have a game/clean up on the 20th of April scheduled.

Poll of the Board:

Michael LeCompte said it’s great to have the priorities set and it’s good to see the final document.

Robin Emmingham addressed the upcoming issues with the restrooms at Two Rivers only having one port-a-potty; he hopes we can get one at the paddle board spot and two in front of the existing restroom. He's excited for the first time he's been here that we have progressed to have priorities.

Kit McBurney thanked Carol and her volunteers and she appreciates her eyes on the park as well as the rest of the park partners. She thanked Dave, Ishmael, and Robin for facilitating the list for the meeting.

Ismael Mendoza-Jimenez commented that he loved seeing the pictures and hearing about Two Rivers when they were there.

Frank Cooper is looking forward to the priorities and the archery project with TCSA.

Dave McNeal pointed back to the Pride in Parks. Everyone who is involved here tonight is probably on board with making sure we can have Pride in Parks and looks forward to all we can do to make ourselves prideful.

There being no further comments or business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

#