



BENTON COUNTY Park Board

MEETING MINUTES 10 September 2024

Board Members Present

Dave McNeal, Chair
Robin Emmingham, Vice Chair
Michael LeCompte, Secretary
David Cannon
Frank Cooper
Kit McBurney

Benton County Employees

Adam Fyall

Board Members Absent

Ismael Mendoza-Jimenez

The September Park Board meeting was held at the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting facility. The board took a tour of the Law Enforcement Training Area and the Shotgun Range before the meeting at the Shotgun House.

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call:

The business meeting was called to order at 7:14 p.m. and the Pledge was recited.

Review and approval of agenda:

The minutes for August and the agenda for the September meeting were approved as presented.

Chair Report:

Chair McNeal thanked the Tri-Cities Shooting Association for hosting the meeting, the Higgins Field crew for hosting in August and board member Cannon for his comments and suggestions concerning the water situation at Higgins Field.

The board was reminded of the Joint Parks Board dinner on Monday, Sept. 16.

Chair McNeal that he signed the letter from the board to the County's administration concerning the garbage and irrigation at Two Rivers Park and general upkeep of parks facilities.

Committee Report: Staffing Committee

Vice Chair Emmingham reported that the staffing committee has not yet had its second meeting, but that it will be happening shortly.

Staff Report:

Mr. Fyall reported that even with the reduction in camping at Horn Rapids, the campground is on pace to generate around \$20,000 this year which would still be above the historic average. He suggested that reserved and event camping should be reviewed as perhaps the best way to do things for at least the near future.

Several candidates were interviewed for the Communications Coordinator position with the County and Mr. Fyall says the position may be offered to one of the final two candidates in the next few days.

The restroom situation utilizing porta-potties – especially at Two Rivers – while not ideal, is working and can continue for the next year, according to Mr. Fyall. Vice Chair Emmingham mentioned new restrooms being used at Columbia Gardens in Kennewick and suggested that the County take a look at those.

A gentle reminder about conducting official business via email instead of a public meeting was issued.

Mr. Fyall reported on the rogue mountain bike trail on Candy Mountain, the possible environmental and safety concerns associated with a rogue trail, how to address a trail on both private and public land and how to address rogue trail building with partner groups or not.

Mr. Fyall then thanked the MAA for hosting the last meeting and reported that the water problem at Higgins Field should be addressed in the future.

Mr. Fyall then briefly went over the history of the RMSF and how Benton County has no financial obligations to the site, but the TCSA is good at getting state funds and has made upgrades concerning things such as internet, cameras and AEDs on site.

Business:Parks Ordinance Update and Revision

The board reviewed the ordinance for the Horse Heaven Cemetery and saw no need to change it.

The board then reviewed the current Benton County Park Ordinance and agreed that updates/changes needed to be made because the current document contains nothing in regards to issues, such as preservation, volunteers, construction, the use of vehicles and the proper uses of paths, trails and roads.

Board member McBurney mentioned including electric bikes in any new ordinances.

Vice Chair Emmingham said whatever ordinances we decide on need to be made legally enforceable.

Board Member Cannon saw a lot of legal overlap in the existing ordinance and suggested removing what is already illegal under state law.

Chair McNeal brought up how selective enforcement of ordinances can become an issue, especially concerning things such as alcohol consumption in parks.

Mr. Fyall suggested the board look over the ordinance and come back and discuss updates in October at the board's regular meeting or at a special meeting.

Member Cannon suggested a shared document be created so the board can collaboratively work on ordinance updates.

Public Comment:

Mark Monopoli with the TCSA reported that the shotgun range needs to diversify its games and perhaps open the hillside to sporting clays, however, the organization would then run into the problem of needing more volunteers for a bigger area. He mentioned that the funding is there, but that they want to do things right, which means moving slowly. He also mentioned that LED lighting could be a future project.

George Hager with the TCSA said there's always projects that could be undertaken, but that they aren't necessarily priorities, such as paving parking areas. Mr. Hager also reported that the small bore range will be operational by the end of the month.

Dick McGrew with MAA thanked the board for their visit to Higgins Field last month and reported that Huckfest was a success and the organization came out in the black.

Poll of the board:

Vice Chair Emmingham expressed his disappointment that there was still no boardwalk or parking lot completed at Two Rivers, but mentioned that the park does look better now than it has.

Board member McBurney thanked Adam for his lengthy and detailed staff report.

Board member LeCompte thanked the RMSF for hosting the meeting and expressed his excitement for crafting/updating ordinances.

Board member Cooper thanked the RMSF for hosting the board and talked about preparing to give the board's presentation at the joint dinner on Sept. 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

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