



Clackamas County Parks and Forest Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, June 20, 2023

**Barton Park**  
**6pm**

Members Present: Rob Smoot, Justin Ostrander, Bill Street, Dan Green, Louise Lopes, Walter Hull, Tom Hester, Mike Ferrell

Members Absent: Dana Hindman, Eric Pfeiffer-Robinson, Molly McKnight, Jim Rice, Morgan Parks, Don Morgan, Brent Keller, Chad Parker

Staff Present: Tom Riggs, Mark Shaw, Sandy Weijland, Thomas Gray, Chris Dannenbring, Andrew Dobmeier, Lisa Harman, Dan Johnson

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Mark Shull and Guest

**I. Call To Order**

Justin Ostrander called the meeting to order at 6:11pm

**II. Community Input**

None, but Tom Riggs reports mostly positive feedback from our “Happy or Not” email surveys, and a noted a feature article in the *ClackCo* magazine regarding new campsites at Metzler Park, the new disc golf course at Metzler, and the new parking passes.

**III. Meeting Minutes**

Justin called for a motion to approve the minutes from previous meetings. The Forestry Advisory Board did not have a quorum to approve minutes. There was a correction noted on the Parks Advisory Board’s minutes about a property discussion, per Dan Johnson, that did not make it into the minutes. The minutes will be edited and approved at the next Parks Advisory Board Meeting. No minutes were approved.

**IV. Joint Board Discussion Topics – Tom Riggs**

Parks and Forestry Division Structure Ideas and Goals – At the basic level, Parks and Forestry is one division and helps each other across division lines, but also when it comes to organizational charts and budgets there is crossover. There are nine people to oversee 4,200 acres of land, and over 200 campsites. It is a small and hardworking team and appreciative of board input. Last fall, the Dump Stoppers Program Coordinator resigned. The position was filled with a long-time Parks’ employee, but the financial outlook of the program has not been good. Forestry has been subsidizing Dump Stoppers with about \$70,000 of in-kind administrative support per season, and very little of the work to clean –up dump sites was actually being done on county land. There were struggles with grants and funding deficits to operate the program for a 10-month season, so the decision was made to shut down the program. Dan Johnson added – We lost federal funding support, but we have a county-wide contract with Rapid Response to contract for dump clean-ups, and there will still be people available to clean-up dumps on county owned lands. Tom Riggs – The Sustainability and Solid Waste division will still fund clean-ups only on county lands going forward. Sustainability has been providing a portion of the total program funding for Dump Stoppers for many years. Forestry- Sena vacated her Engineering Tech position last fall, and Andrew wanted to leave the position vacant and hire summer interns instead to help defray costs and influence future forestry professionals. Parks – Shifted to a Ranger Coordinator and a full-time Park Ranger in both the north and south areas of the county in order to provide better coverage at all of our park properties. This was done after two full-time Ranger Coordinators retired last year. The goal being to have 4 permanent full-time field staff, rather than the three person structure we’d had for

years. There was a question regarding whether interns will earn school credit. Andrew Dobmeier – yes the experience will help them graduate; one is a Mt. Hood Community College student. Tom Riggs explained the organizational chart is circular to represent the importance of team members delivering services. Although Parks and Forestry are separate divisions, there is a lot of crossover. Forestry also subsidizes parks around \$30,000 of in-kind labor annually, some of which is Andrew's forestry expertise on dealing with hazard and diseased trees in the Parks. It can cost \$10,000 to hire a contractor to take down one tree, so Andrew saves Parks money. Andrew takes care of hazard trees and maintains forest health within our parks. Parks and Forestry also share equipment as needed for jobs. Teaming up saves money for both divisions. Forestry provides financial support from net proceeds of timber sales, via an inter-fund transfer between budgets. This fiscal year there is a \$400,000 transfer from Forestry's budget to Park's budget to support capital expenditures and operations and maintenance work. Financial support is critical. Stone Creek's bonded construction debt was paid partially by an accelerated timber harvest executed by Forestry division staff. Tom's and Chris' salaries are split between the divisions to spread their administrative costs across both budgets. A comment was made that this seems to be working and staff is doing a really good job. Commissioner Shull asked if we could sustain that kind of money from Forestry and Andrew responded yes. Chris added that the amount budgeted this year is not typical, in that amount ebbs and flows based on the need within County Parks' budget. We look for grants to pay for capital projects, but the grants need matching funds, and sometimes that match comes from Forestry. Andrew Dobmeier – The last timber sale was revenue into the program for 2 years, so the next budgets might not have as large of a transfer amount. Dan Johnson – Transferring money to County Parks FY '24 budget was done to execute public outreach in order to activate funding from Metro of 5.3 million allocated to County Parks from the 2019 Natural Areas Bond. Question – Is that money designated? Tom Riggs – Yes as of 2019 bond it is designated to parks. Parks plans to utilize the Metro money but must complete more public outreach on the projects designated to receive the funding, before Metro will approve the projects and release the funds. We are working with a consultant through the County's Public and Government Affairs office to complete public outreach for specific projects identified in our capital improvement plan as priorities. Next fiscal year we will have forestry money to leverage – primary focus will be the Feyrer Park roadway improvements and the other project is the development of Barton Park following the approved 2018 master plan. With the public outreach we want to make sure the public approves of how we will be spending the Metro funding. Land acquisition is another possibility for the money. Question – If they knew we had a 180 acre plot to be developed would metro approve of that? Tom Riggs – Yes that is another possibility.

Roles of Forest Advisory Board, Parks Advisory Board, and Timber Sale Advisory Committee– Tom Riggs -Forest Advisory Board and Parks Advisory Board differences – Forestry Advisory Board you must have professional forestry experience to qualify to serve on the board. To be a Parks Board member it is simply any county citizen with an interest in parks. Forestry is small but there is a lot of deep technical knowledge needed. The Parks Advisory Board has 12 positions and all are filled. Their role is to provide citizen perspective on management decisions. The Timber Sale Advisory Committee (TSAC) advises only when there is a proposed timber sale to consider. That committee is comprised of two Parks Advisory Board members, two Forest Advisory Board Members, and one citizen member from the area where the timber harvest will take place. The TSAC provides feedback on the harvest plan following a public input period, and considers any public comments or concerns related to the harvest plan.

## Future of Parks and Forestry –

What would Advisory Board members like to see?

- More money
- Acquisition of more forest land
- Enhanced risk mitigation – over our lifetime threats have changed from natural threats to social threats. For forestry, the tree we plant tomorrow will have to be able to survive in a climate 40 years from now that might be different than the climate today. Andrew noted it is a challenge to consider how to deliver long-term revenues. In forestry practice we think in 50 year increments. Bill added that we may need to consider the possibility of sourcing seedlings from more heat tolerant areas. The bigger question is do you change species? Andrew Dobmeier – Douglas fir has a very wide range of growth and is very adaptable to climate change – usually we plant seed sourced from the same elevation that we are planting in. Douglas fir will grow anywhere including out of rocky ground. We will be looking at fir that is more adaptable for the future. The cedar we planted recently is having a harder time surviving because cold winters are not killing off the beetles. We have not had those freezing temperatures in the last 5 years. We need to think and analyze our practices and are thinking long-term, even 200 years out into the future.
- Justin Ostrander – How can we diversify the board to represent the people of Clackamas County better, and establish community partnerships to achieve the goals of representation?
- Louise Lopes Question – North Clackamas is separate yes? Tom Riggs – Yes, and we do share ideas and used to have a joint services agreement where we shared an Operations Supervisor and a Planner. We interact with them but not in any official capacity. Resource sharing is more complicated and requires a more formal agreement.
- Dan Johnson – Are we surveying people coming to the parks at all? Tom Riggs – Yes. We have recently calculated 21% of visitors were from out of state. I recently had a company show me a product that can show on a map where people were coming from. That map data showed people are coming from all across the Portland metro area, as well as out of state.
- Tom - Some goals for County Parks are to install electric vehicle charging stations, complete some additional marketing (particularly the new campsites at Metzler (have brought in \$440 so far)). The Metzler sites are getting booked well so far, and the focus at Barton will be to develop additional revenue producing facilities per the master plan.
- Question – Can we promote low usage times at a discount to generate more revenue?
- Dan Green said he'd like to see Dump Stoppers come back. People from the county are the ones that are dumping on BLM and USFS land and if we don't get the program back in a few years then we will be back where we started 20 years ago, which is why Dump Stoppers was created.
- Comment - Can we build some yurts at some of the parks? Would that attract newer people or people living in apartments who don't have a lot of camping gear?
- Bill – Is there a different recreation demand on the parks from the urban vs. rural population that needs considered? We must cut trees to buy more land to grow more trees – fiber is revenue for Parks and Forestry. Urbanized populations view what we do very differently than rural populations.
- Justin Ostrander and Tom Riggs – Conversation with residents is important.
- Tom Riggs – We are implementing new parking fees, and Barton area 6 will have picnic tables with shade umbrellas instead of the tent.,

## **V. Accomplishments – Chris Dannenbring**

Parks and Forestry have been busy with capital projects this last year. At Barton we completed the East Campground paving project which was 50% funded through an OR Parks & Recreation Dept. County Opportunity Grant. The asphalt crack seal at Barton boat launch was 75% funded through the Oregon St. Marine Board. We installed new septic systems at the In-holder property at Barton, as well as Eagle Fern Park. Mark added the septic system will last 50 years at Eagle Fern. We are wrapping up the Boones Ferry boarding dock replacement project which was also funded with grants from the OR State Marine Board and OR Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, along with County Parks' matching funds of \$37,000

and the balance from ARPA Loss Revenues received in 2022. This project was over \$300,000 in total with 75% coming via grants. Tom worked with County Tourism to gain just under \$25,000 in funding to develop 15 primitive sites at Metzler that are now open. Forestry got the Wild Trout timber sale moved forward to contract and we received the first deposit and are expecting the second before June 30. The sale bid came in over what Andrew's estimates, and we will see approximately \$1.1 million in revenue over the next 2 years from that sale. We lost Dave and Sena last fall, so Andrew has worked  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the year on his own. We executed spraying and pre-commercial thinning contracts for our forestry plantations and started on the spraying work.

FY 2024 Budget – Budgets for Parks & Forestry were both approved – The County Parks budget is approximately \$3.4M, and includes the Feyrer Park roadway improvement project. The Feyrer project is 50% funded through Oregon State Parks County Opportunity Grant program and we expect the other 50% to be approved for funding under the Metro 2019 bond funding. Forestry's budget is 5 million including possible land sales of timber holdings that no longer fit our portfolio. Wild Trout sale will bring an estimated \$594,000 in revenue, and a \$400,000 transfer to Parks to support O&M and capital is budgeted. The Forestry program's budget is not real complex; mostly timber sales, tree maintenance and tree planting. Question from Bill – Are we are looking for more forestland? Chris – We do have funds in our budget to purchase property if we find some that fits into our program well. Dan Green – Forestry purchases are not annual but periodic and you must be set up to move when the market allows Mike Ferrell – Dump Stoppers – are there penalties? Is there enforcement? Chris Dannenbring – It is hard to catch people, sometimes we have used cameras to get a plate number. It can be hard to identify who is doing the dumping. Dan Green – Dump Stoppers used to have a deputy, and he tracked the citations, and then they were put through the court system, but often we were not able to get money from them. Andrew Dobmeier – People are shooting on Clackamas County property when they can't get to the USFS shooting areas. Tree tops are being shot off which damages growth, and people are even shooting through trees and knocking over larger trees. People are also brining out appliances to shoot at and not picking up their trash. Justin – Awareness is key and making people invested in the land is a more sustainable solution.

## **VI. Forestry Operational Updates – Andrew Dobmeier**

A Pole buyer bought the Wild Trout sale which gives us more value for the trees, so we did well. We are finishing up salvaging last year's hazard trees. Salvage doesn't make a whole lot of money, but gets things cleaned up and is used for a purpose, and prevents danger to the public. We have contracts in place for spraying 177 acres due to Riverside and Beachie Creek fires – certain species of plants that come back with a vengeance after a fire, like scotch broom, are all over in our plantations. We need to take care of scotch broom and blackberries to protect the young trees. We are pre-commercial thinning 139 acres of trees between 12-15 years old; spacing will give the trees more sunlight to grow. We can thin them again in 50 years and let them grow to 80 to 100 years old. We are also doing some Alder and Cherry hardwood releases. They grow really fast the first 20 years and they can shade out the rest of the trees. If we take them out at 5 years it gives the conifers a better chance to thrive. PGE had salvage in an area adjacent to the County's Clackamas Quarry, and requested an access agreement to cross our land to get to theirs. We will now have a shared contract with PGE and they will haul our trees to the mill under the contract at no cost to the County. We hired two Mt. Hood Community College interns, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year forestry program students, as summer interns this year. They will be doing stocking surveys. We had some issues with tree survival due to the trees having too much vegetation growth and not enough root growth. We lost about 90% of our most recently planted trees. Interns will complete stand exams – timber cruising, roadside brushing, construction stuff to do as well. Andrew has a drone and will have interns fly it to get some updated photos. We will also be working to reforest the Clackamas Quarry area as well as spraying weeds

**VII. Parks Operations Update – Mark Shaw**

Trail Keepers of Oregon – had a campout and brought out people for a work party and finished .5 miles of trail in one weekend at Metzler. We will likely have another event like that, and it was low impact on the park. The new camping area at Metzler turned out very nice. Had room to space out the primitive campsites and it is very pretty with some sites having the creek in the back area. New docks at Boones Ferry are in! Should last for 30+ years. Staffing in the upper 60% low 70% at this time. We made some changes in recruitment that helped to get people on board but are still tight for staffing. Much better numbers this year than the last two. We have almost finalized new hire for our Parks Maintenance Coordinator position. Mobile payment options – we are going to use Flowbird so people can pay their fees through their phones. It will be low impact for staff and will be easier to enforce things and encourage payment. Andrew Dobmeier – Will fees be passed on to customer? Sandy Weijland – We will not lose money on fees. Question – How did we pick them? Tom Riggs – They are our current vendor, so we already have a contract with Flowbird. Sandy Weijland – They have an app option or pay by text which is what we are implementing.

**VIII. Good of the Order Called by Justin Ostrander**

Louise – Dan’s name is spelled “Don.” Justin Ostrander – Appreciates getting both groups together and is wondering if we can share meeting minutes with both groups so that we can read through both? Commissioner Shull – 1.8 billion countywide budget – this Thursday will be final approval and no changes are expected. Courthouse is coming along. Tolling – Commissioners are still fighting tolling. Portland Water Bureau plant – Portland wants to put it in on farm land which is a problem. I will promote parks more and contact leaders in Portland to remind minority groups that Clackamas County has great parks. I appreciate what everyone in Parks and Forestry does.

**IX. Adjournment – Justin called for an adjournment at 7:57pm.**