



Clackamas County Parks Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes, Tuesday October 17, 2023

**Hybrid online or at Development Services
Building, Room 119, Oregon City, OR 97045
@6:00pm**

Members Present Via Zoom: Don Morgan, Chad Parker, Morgan Parks, Eric Pfeiffer-Robinson

Members Present at DSB, 119: Justin Ostrander, Mike Ferrell, Tom Hester, Dana Hindman-Allen, Walter Hull, Louise Lopes, Rob Smoot

Staff Present: Tom Riggs, Chris Dannenbring, Mark Shaw, Barb Guthrie, Thomas Gray, Tim Farrell

BCC Staff Present: Commissioner Mark Shull

Citizens Present: Robert Crusier, Irene James Shultz, Janet Davis, Mitch Williams, Robin Jacobs

I. Call To Order

Justin Ostrander called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm

II. Meeting Minutes

Justin called for a motion to approve the minutes from September 19, 2023. Motion to approve the minutes was called for; Louise motioned; Walter Seconded; minutes were approved.

III. Staff Report on Parking Fees-Tom Riggs

Tom reviewed the background for parking fees at our parks. 1. Process/thinking on expanding the parking fees across all of our properties. 2. What that outcome and approval process entailed. 3. Overview of our county parks system.

We have 16 parks, 4 properties, 961 acres, 1.3 million visitors. The most dollars we have received from the General Fund was \$432,500 (in 2006/07), which has decreased yearly to \$202,934 for this last fiscal year (2022/23). Currently, we receive no General Fund dollars from the County, and have a mandate from our leadership to increase our revenues, to be more self-sufficient. Our fees will be 38% of this year's revenue. We receive monies from the State RV fund which assists with campgrounds that have RV sites. In the past we have received monies from timber sales, which is in decline due to the scaling back of our Forestry Program after the accelerated timber cut for the payoff of the golf course. Over time, our parks were free for parking, but financial pressures led to parking fees at our more developed parks. Initially they were only seasonal parking fees, eventually becoming year round. The next step lead to parking fees at day-use parks that do not have a camping component, but they do incur staff time and maintenance costs.

In 2018/2019 we formed the outlying properties task force committee to look at ways to implement parking fees to assist with operating costs, and making some kind of determination on the overall value of each property with an eye to possibly liquidating some of these properties (those that could not offer any type of revenue, but still costs us to maintain). In January 2020 a new fee structure was reviewed with the PAB, and subsequently approved by the BCC the following month. This new fee structure outlined the parking fees based on the level of service provided at each park. The fees were not implemented at this time. At the time PAB proposed placing donation boxes at less developed parks. The donations were scant. In 2022 we increased the parking fee from \$6 to \$8 and the limited service parking from \$3 to \$4. With the advent of reduction, then elimination of General Funds to Parks, we sought to find a distinction between regular parks (\$8 fee) and limited service parks (\$4) fee. We considered type of parking lots (paved-gravel-dirt) and fixed restrooms (permanent vault toilets virus port a potty). Using that criteria, we have 10 regular fee parks, and 5 limited service fee parks.

Our citizen guests tonight are here to discuss with Park staff and the PAB their concern with the newly implemented parking fees at Barlow Wayside Park. Barlow is 104 acres on the Sandy River with 1.5+ miles of hiking trails, a parking lot, information kiosk, fixed vault toilet and several foot bridges. We have no staff at this park. We are also aware of the ongoing costs; repairs and maintenance/materials for trail repair, parking lot, park signs and interpretive brochures. Our current upcoming projects include fixing signs, footbridges, repainting the restroom floor with an estimated cost of \$4500.

IV. Citizen Input & Correspondence

The staff then invited the citizens attending the meeting to speak to the PAB about not implementing the parking fees at Barlow Wayside Park going from \$0 to \$8. Each citizen guest was called up in turn and given 3 minutes to express their concerns over the parking fee and to state their reasons why there should not be a fee, but if there would be that it would be only at the \$4 level. There were 5 guests and 4 spoke. Each one spoke about the many hours of volunteer work that went into developing the park, the trails and the continued work in the park. They have contributed thousands of hours and do not think that the need for funds equals the amount of staff time to assist with maintenance. They point out that most of the visitors are there to walk trails, there are little to no services for the walkers, and the fact that there is a parking lot and restroom which was provided by the BLM (which brings into question why the \$8 fee based on the permanent restroom criteria for that level of parking fee). They also asked us to consider the lower amount of \$4 in respect to the many senior citizens on fixed incomes in the area that use the park to walk their dogs and or hike around, and discussed the value of the thousands of hours that were volunteered to establish the park and what that value is to the Parks Department. The guests asked the PAB to honor their request and the County's long time commitment to citizen input and involvement.

V. PAB Discussion Topic: Parking Fees

Next followed a time for questions/comments from the PAB with the group of citizens at the meeting. One point of clarification would be the level of parking fee The PAB should consider. They discussed a donation box, but that has not generated much in the way of revenue at Wagon Wheel, etc.-though Wilhoit did receive a fair amount. Parks will need some additional revenue for maintenance/replacement of the bridges over parts of the trail, up-keep of the parking lot and the cleaning and repairs to the restroom. The issue of how to evaluate volunteer hours and how it would equate to dollars is a difficult thing to do. If we allow certain volunteers to park for free, we would have to develop guidelines to determine how many hours per week/month would qualify a volunteer for free parking. It would require staff time/volunteer coordinator position –another hit to the budget. We are working on a volunteer program that could earn the volunteer a parking pass for a certain amount of hours worked. It is in the development stage at this point. Senior Citizen parking fee was mentioned. After further discussion, Rob called for a recommendation/motion to lower the parking fee at Barlow to \$4 and to review the criteria of determining what fee level a park should be assessed at.

The motion passed-yes vote from Rob, Mike, Eric, Chad, Morgan, Dana, Don, Justin, Tom Hester: Louise abstained, Walter voted no. The Citizen guests then departed the meeting. Discussion then turned to look at volunteerism, how to evaluate its value, can parks put a dollar amount on volunteer work for certain areas/parks to offset parking fees. Dana called for a motion to look at volunteer work, Walter seconded the motion, all voted in favor.

VI. & VII. Administrative Updates and Park Updates

These two topics were postponed until next month's meeting due to the length of the park fee discussions with Citizen Guests, PAB Members and Park Staff.

VIII. November and December Meeting Dates

Due to the regular date for November meeting occurring during the week of Thanksgiving, the November meeting date was moved to November 28. The December meeting was canceled for the holidays. Next PAB meeting will be January 16, 2024. Rob called for the motion to adopt the new date for November and the cancellation of the December meeting. Dana second the motion, all were in favor.

IX. Good of the Order

Tom Hester mentioned that the docks at Hebb Park have been removed for the winter season. Mark explained that the company under contract for doing this work is scheduled to remove and install on specific dates each year.

Justin and Mike asked to receive a copy of the associated documents used in the presentation of the background for the parking fee summary discussion that was presented to the PAB and the Citizen Guests.

X. Adjournment Justin called for adjournment at 8:38 pm—Rob so motioned, Tom Hester seconded.