



Spokane County

PARKS, RECREATION AND GOLF
Doug Chase, Director

(Draft) MEETING MINUTES
SPOKANE COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)
Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at 3:00 PM
404 N. Havana, Spokane WA, 99202

Present: Eric Johnson – Chair, Doug Kelley, Eric Sawyer

Absent: Dave Schaub, Tom MacKenzie

Staff: Doug Chase – Director, Paul Knowles, Kris Krohn, Lynn Smith, Melissa Parker

I) Call Meeting to Order (Chair, Eric Johnson): 3:03 pm

- A. Additions to the Agenda
 - None
- B. Welcome / Introduce Lynn Smith - Spokane County's new (Aquatics) Recreation Program Manager
- C. Review and consider PAC Minutes from the Wednesday, December 8th regular meeting.
 - Minutes were approved unanimously

II) Member Reports: (Chair, Eric Johnson):

- A. Park Advisory Committee Members are encouraged to provide a brief report

Mr. Kelley wanted to remind the PAC why the golf courses raised their fees. The minimum wage increase and course improvements were significant factors. However, Spokane County's fees are still below the City of Spokane's fees.

Mr. Sawyer asked about a "No Trespassing" sign in a small parking area near Hangman Valley Golf Course. It is a convenient area to park to cross country ski and snowshoe onto the golf course. It was determined (by the Scout website) that the parking area Mr. Sawyer described is privately owned. Mr. Sawyer asked about the policy for being on the courses during the winter? Mr. Chase stated that it's up to the course superintendent to determine whether winter public access can be allowed.

III) Parks Advisory Sub-Committee Assignments: (Chair, Eric Johnson, Doug Chase)

- A. Report to PAC on open positions and sub-committees

Mr. Ordner resigned from the PAC (and Vice-Chair position) due to responsibilities associated with starting a new job.

The committee itself has four vacancies in voting members and one vacant youth-at-large voting member. Mr. Chase shared that a very wise PAC Member suggested this would be an opportune time to consider reducing the total number of members on the PAC, which is currently nine in favor of a smaller number of board members to increase participation, resulting in a more meaningful experience. Mr. Sawyer stated that the trends are showing boards are shrinking in size, which reflects the time people have to volunteer but also is a reflection on engagement. Mr. Sawyer stated that studies have shown that having fewer members may mean more engaged members.

Mr. Sawyer asked if the PAC had a required number of committee members. Mr. Chase stated yes, there is a resolution that establishes number of members and terms.

Mr. Sawyer made a motion to advise the Director to work with and bring forth to the Board of County Commissioners a proposal to reduce the Parks Advisory Committee to seven members with the seventh member being a youth-at-large voting member.

Second: Mr. Kelley
Motion unanimously approved

B. Action Item: Elections by PAC to fill certain positions and sub-committee assignments

Mr. Sawyer nominated himself to become Vice-Chair
Nomination was unanimously approved.

Mr. Sawyer was nominated as a liaison to the Spokane County Land Evaluation Committee. Mr. MacKenzie was nominated for the “Rotating Position” on the Spokane County Land Evaluation Committee.
Both nominations were unanimously approved.

IV) Director’s Report:

A. Recreation Program Updates: (*Doug Chase*) Rules, Internal Training Procedures, Code of Conduct and Appeals Process

Mr. Chase has been working with the recreation division to update internal training and conduct policies along with the appeals process. Late last year, Spokane County Parks had to test its appeal process. Right now, a random number generator is used to choose coaches to be a part of the appeal process. The challenge was finding coaches who were available and able to meet quickly. Mr. Chase stated it would be helpful if there was a dedicated committee for an appeal. He found examples where it was common to have members of a “Park Board” to serve as pool of members, ready and available to pull from on short notice to form three (3) member appeals

committee/board. This new approach would replace the need to rely on tracking down volunteer coaches to serve in such role.

PAC members present stated the PAC would be willing to serve as members on an appeal committee or board (decision making role) as needed. Updates to the appeal process shall incorporate this change.

B. Parks Planning and Capital Program Update. (*Doug Chase, Paul Knowles, Kris Krohn*)

1. Aquatic Facility Enhancements (*Kris Krohn*)

Prairie View – Original bids were rejected because they exceeded the budget available for the project. The project will be going back out to bid with a longer construction timeline in hopes that the change will help reduce the cost of the project.

2. Bidwell Park Phases 2 & 3 (*Kris Krohn*)

Spokane County Public Works is supportive of a crosswalk on Hatch Road. Mr. Johnson asked what the speed limit on Hatch was. Staff responded that it's like 35 mph because it's an arterial. Mr. Sawyer suggested changing the speed limit to 20 mph similar to a school zones.

A second playground is evolving in Phase 3. It will be located near the central parking area on the east side of the park. This playground is more nature-based (“nature play”) and more of an explorative experience. It is a different experience from traditional playgrounds, which tend to dictate how kids use the playground.

Timeline to bid out the project is within the next three weeks.

3. Plante’s Ferry Sports Complex Renovation Research / Concept Update (*Doug Chase*)

i. *Partnership Concept*

Mr. Chase stated they spent quite some time researching, visiting other facilities and running numbers. The original plan called for artificial turf infields and re-grading of the softball fields along with two soccer fields, lights, expanded parking and more. The revised plan based on feedback from Spokane Valley Junior Soccer Association includes grading all 13 soccer because several of the fields are no longer used because they don't meet current soccer standards for sanctioned play. That has increased the estimated costs of the project from \$10 million to \$12-16 million.

Mr. Chase will be approaching the Board of County Commissioners with four options that range from funding it all internally to partnering with the City of Spokane Valley to implement and fund the improvements. The latter model could involve the City annexing Plante’s Ferry Sports Complex into city limits. 73% of the economic benefit realized by the renovated complex would benefit the City of Spokane Valley directly.

Mr. Sawyer added that the business plan developed by Mr. Chase and staff to operate the facility is well done. The whole “build it and they will come” mantra isn’t possible without a plan in place to maintain, operate and market the facility effectively.

ii. ***Irrigation water increase – impacts to SPVJSA***

Spokane County Parks has had an agreement with the Spokane Valley Junior Soccer Association since late 1990’s. They maintain and schedule the soccer portion of the facility which includes covering the cost of water. The water district has imposed their water rate increase which led to an unexpected \$39,000 increase in the water bill. Spokane County Parks will likely be asking for assistance from the Board of County Commissioner’s (BOCC) to help cover these costs.

4. Park Plan and Regional Trail Plan 2020 update (***Paul Knowles***)

Mr. Knowles is in the process of updating the Park Plan and Regional Trail Plan, both of which were updated in 2014. These have to be updated approximately every six years to stay eligible for grants from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. He will be meeting with stakeholders to get their suggestions and input on both of these plans.

5. Grant Applications (***Kris Krohn***)

The Department of Ecology suggested Spokane County Parks apply for a grant for Hangman Valley Golf Course as part of a broader effort to improve water quality in the Hangman Creek watershed through established riparian buffers. Ecology’s hope is this would encourage private property owners (e.g. farmers) to apply for similar grants to help with the creek’s restoration. Spokane County Parks is applying for a \$15,000 riparian grant and partnering with the Lands Council to implement the project.

Mr. Krohn traveled to Olympia to present a NOVA grant asking to fund a master plan for the Airway Heights ORV Park. Spokane County Parks is asking for \$40,000 from RCO. Spokane County Parks also has \$30,000 in donated match from the park operator.

C. Conservation Futures Program Update (***Paul Knowles***)

1. Acquisition Projects (Etter Ranch)

The 2016 Land Evaluation Committee reviewed and ranked this property #3 on the Conservation Futures list. After acquiring Mica Peak North (#1) and the Flying L Ranch (#2), this is the new #1 ranked property on the acquisition list. This property is south of and adjacent to Antoine Peak. The BoCC agreed that Spokane County Parks could move forward on the purchase of the 231-acre property. One of its highlights is a future trail system that’ll provide a valley floor to summit experience.

2. M&O Projects;

i. Phillips Creek Trailhead Design Meeting/Open House (*Paul Knowles*)

There is an open house scheduled on March 7, 2019 at Ponderosa Elementary which just happens to be two blocks from the future trailhead site. Mr. Knowles showed the PAC some renderings he will be bringing to the open house.

ii. C.F. Community Survey – User feedback (E-bikes, hunting pilot project, forest management practices, etc.)

Mr. Knowles and Mr. Chase are working on a community advisory survey that would poll the public on a variety of maintenance and operations (M&O) related questions, from hunting to dogs off-leash. They recently briefed the BoCC on the survey and it should be going live any day. The results are intended to advise staff on how to approach these management questions.

iii. Trailhead Webcams

The webcams at Glenrose and Stevens Creek are officially up and running. Mr. Knowles had them up for a little while first to make sure they were working properly before issuing a press release. These cameras will hopefully work as a passive traffic management tool so people can know before they go how busy a trailhead is. If it looks really busy, perhaps they'll choose a less busy trailhead. Spokane County Parks is working to get more trailhead webcams up at other sites.

iv. Seasonal Trail Restrictions

Staff have witnessed permanent trail damage to trails – especially at valley locations that are clay soils – caused by trail use, particularly horses and bikes. Last year, in response to an unprecedented number of complaints received, equestrian trail restrictions were put into place from approximately March 15th through May 15th. The equestrian community felt singled out and unfairly treated by the restrictions. Mr. Knowles and Mr. Krohn convened a meeting with Washington Trails Association, Evergreen East and Backcountry Horsemen (Ponderosa and Inland Empire chapters) to discuss 2019's approach. The solution the different user groups agreed upon was that trails would be closed when muddy. If a mark made by anyone is more than 1" deep, they should not be on the trail. Everyone involved agreed they would all meet in January 2020 again and see how this approach worked.

IV) Adjourn Meeting. (Chair, Eric Johnson) 4:26pm

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, April 10th, 2019. 3:00 p.m.; Location: 404 N. Havana St.

***Purpose:** The purpose of the Parks Advisory Committee, (PAC) referred to, as the “Park Board” is to make recommendations to and advise the Parks and Recreation Director on matters concerning the operation and maintenance of the Spokane County park system.*

Spokane County Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

“The mission of the Parks, Recreation and Golf Department is to enhance the general quality of life for the residents of Spokane County by providing the highest quality and quantity of parks, recreation, open space, and related cultural opportunities given the available resources.”