

LARIMER COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 13, 2014, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.,

Bison Room, Natural Resources Administrative Office, 1800 S. County Rd. 31, Loveland CO

The mission of the Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department is to establish, protect, and manage significant regional parks and open lands, providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities and stewardship of natural resource values. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and appreciation for the natural and agricultural heritage of Larimer County for present and future generations.

PRESENT:

Parks Advisory Board members:

Steve Ambrose
Nick Clark
Frank Gillespie
Ron Kainer
Chris Klaas
Rob Harris
Stephanie Van Dyken
Deborah Shulman

Staff:

Gary Buffington
Chris Fleming
Nancy Lathrop
Dan Rieves
Rebecca Smith, Larimer County Planning Department Intern
Steve Johnson, Commissioner

ABSENT:

Mark DeGregorio
Russ Fruits
John Gaffney
David Hattis?
John Tipton

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

TOUR OF PINWOOD RESERVOIR CAMPGROUND

Chris Fleming and Dan Rieves, project managers, gave a guided tour to the Board of the renovated campground facilities. Chris explained that work with the engineers and the public process began in 2012. Then we had the fire on Pinewood Mountain, and after that, the permitting process required through the Corps of Engineers further delayed the project and required significant changes. And then the 2013 Flood happened! When we reconvened in January, 2014, we had to repeat the public process. All the County engineers and project managers were pulled away to work on flood damage throughout the County. So we had to use outside vendors; and by that time, costs had inflated as well. We broke ground in 2014, but decided we needed to collect revenue through the summer before closing the campground for the major renovations. Then in the

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spring of 2015, we experienced extremely wet weather throughout June, which delayed completion. All campgrounds were fully operational by the July 4th weekend, 2015.

Dan explained that with some of our other campground locations, like Horsetooth, the return on investment is obvious. However, Pinewood had been neglected for years. The facilities were “overused but under-utilized.” It had begun to look run down. Pinewood deserved the same attention received by our less remote campgrounds. Then just as the project was nearing completion, it started raining, and raining, and raining. When the rain stopped, water was bubbling out of the ground. We opened, and then we started closing some sites to bolster the soggy footings.

Despite all these setbacks, from June 19 through October 3, 2015, usage at Pinewood has been up over 20% from previous years. Visitors have responded very favorably to the improvements made. Campsites were reduced from 35 to 28, partially to improve the camping experience, and partially due to limitations imposed by the Corps of Engineers. It is better to have a higher occupancy rate on fewer total campsites, and to maximize the quality of the camping experience.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Deborah Shulman: Asked about the recent shooting in a USFS campground, and talk of rebuilding public shooting ranges.

Gary: Four counties, the Division Parks and Wildlife, and the Forest Service have been looking at the issue of shooting ranges for a number of months now. On a lot of Forest Service land, you can shoot anywhere (dispersed camping). Larimer County is a big county. We have an opportunity to be proactive. Due to the public outcry, Boulder County open space will be closed to dispersed shooting. The closures in Larimer County won't be as drastic. Some day, 10 to 15 years from now, Larimer County will have the same problem. Over a million acres, about 20% will be closed. The shooting where the man died, a 30/30 shell fell from above and killed the guy.

Rob Harris: This will not involve the parks?

Gary: Larimer County does not allow guns.

Deborah: Have we considered building berms for shooting areas?

Gary: Pawnee National Grasslands, in Weld County, has about 38 sites to do dispersed shooting. 60 minutes is the accepted travel time to shoot. What we're concerned about is that those closings south of us will send more shooters to Larimer County.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Gary: Board members are encouraged to sign up on the County website to automatically receive board minutes.

Deborah Shulman: November 1, Bison Day. There is an option to take a bus up there. Would we be able to drive up there as well?

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20th Anniversary of our Open Lands Program is next year: The Open Space Sales Tax was passed in 1995 and our program was initiated in 1996. We'll be doing some special events.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Inlet Bay Concession Contract Renewal process

- Both marinas have an automatic 5-year renewal clause in their current 10-year licenses.
- Glen Werth is the contractor for Inlet Bay. He grosses about \$1.3 million annually, second only to Chatfield. They had one of their biggest years ever in 2015. Their rental program generates over \$600,000. We get only 5% of that.
- The most important piece is the contract. Done successfully with Glen. Their mission is profit. Our mission is customer service. All in all our partnership with them has been very good.
- We use the marina fuel system, We'll bring in the fuel, and dump into their system. We will get that in writing in this renewal. The EPA highly watches fuel dispensing on water. Why would we build our own fuel site, when he has his right there? We don't lose dollars on the fuel. Glenn wanted us to consider not charging local tax on fuel. It will save him \$5 or \$6000 per year.
- In the Parks Master Plan, Glenn's #1 priority is to pave the parking lot. We'll consider that. We would fund that.
- The last 10 years have been pretty 'sexy' projects. Now were down to the un-sexy stuff like paving roads. You'll hear that from staff. We'll be talking about citizens' needs.

Stephanie Van Dyken: Does Glen want to stay there when the new 5-year term ends?

Gary: Yes, they are super hard working. They'll bid on it, and will have a pretty good shot.

Dan: If the full term of the license is only five years, it's hard for the marina owners to borrow capital funds. All the infrastructure, the marina concessionaires own it. We meet every year with the concessionaire. If they need to change something, we let them do changes to slips, etc. It's an automatic rebid every 10 years. The only two people who bid last time are the current occupants of both Carter Lake and Inlet Bay.

Gary: The hard part is, the previous marina operator would have to sell his stuff to the new contractor. It's a tough one. One of the items we did at Carter, we scraped and built a new store, and leased it back to the operator. But Glenn owns a building. We would have to buy him out, build another building, and it would be expensive.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

Park District updates and Parks Master Plan Implementation Progress report – Dan Rieves, Carter Lake District Manager; and Mark Caughlan, Horsetooth District Manager

- Getting ready to break ground on the road entrance at South Bay.
- Winterization mode for HT.
- We have taken delivery of our new patrol boats! These were funded by FEMA "alternate project" funds, which can be used for emergency mitigation equipment, like boats. We paid only the 12% local match required.
- These funds were originally authorized for Glade and Forks Park in the Big Thompson Canyon. However, because we are unable to make improvements in the Canyon until the permanent road alignment is determined by CDOT, it was necessary to move the funds to meet the FEMA timeline for getting the funds spent.

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- Negotiations are also underway to determine future management of the various park locations in the Canyon, including the Viestenz-Smith and Cedar Cove locations.
- The Colorado State Forest Service is finishing up some timber work here at Carter Lake.
- For on-call constructions services, 12 construction companies responded. We picked 3 companies with different specialities, so now we have access to on-call design and engineering companies.
- First week of November, Chris, Mark, Travis and Gary are traveling to Northern California, to see different visitor park areas. A lot of the great work, position papers, were coming out of the Bay area. We plan to go out there with an open mind to meet with their on-site managers, listen to them and learn how they do business. Good exercise for us. We have a challenge ahead with th Master Plan and we want to get stimulated to put this together.

Board comment:

Rob Harris: I look forward to the report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Last year was the perfect storm to the good for Larimer County. We made over \$700,000 above projections. For 2015, we are only up about \$850 above our projections (although we're having a great October.) May killed us. Day use is our 'gravy'; bad weather has a big impact on that. Almost no county tax money used for parks. Master Plan ideas can further improve customer services, and thereby improve revenues as well.

Board and staff comments:

Frank Gillespie: More specifics on the strategics of the Master Plan. Is there something I can read?

Gary: The RFP is going out to bid in November or December. We'll have a consultant in here in January or February.

Dan: The Ranch is doing a new Master Plan at the same time, and we are coordinating the consultant search .

Frank: Is that a relatively new development?

Dan: Yes.

Gary: Public Works Division Director, Marc Engemoen, just recently retired unexpectedly. Engineering Director, Mark Peterson, has been appointed as the interim PW Director. There will be a national search.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Lathrop

APPROVED:

Rob Harris, Vice-Chair

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*Next regular meeting: November 10, 2015, Boyd
Lake Room, Larimer County Courthouse Building,
200 W. Oak, Fort Collins CO*

Public can view agenda and minutes at
http://larimer.org/boards/minutes/parks_advisory_board.cfm