

MEETING MINUTES

Parks, Open Space and Trails Advisory Board – November 17, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kari Kostka, Chuck Vertrees, Emily Reaves, Helen Carter

ABSENT: Chris Miller, Hilarie Engle,

STAFF PRESENT: Scott Koberg, Mike Edwards, Candy Hahlbeck, Robbie Sosin

OTHER: Commissioner Ryan Davidson

INTRODUCTION:

K. Kostka called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. No conflicts of interest were declared by Advisory Board members. C. Vertrees moved to approve the September 22nd minutes. H. Carter seconded. Motion passed.

R. Sosin introduced himself and explained his new role with Park & Waterways.

SUBCOMITTEE REPORTS:

No report.

OPEN SPACE & TRAILS:

Mike supplied an update to the Board.

Oregon Trail-Mike and his crew have been continuing work on hardening the Ezra Meeker Trail. In October they applied reject sand and went over that with a plate compactor.

Letters were sent out this week to homeowners that moved debris onto the Kelton Trail.

Ada Eagle Bike Park- There was a fire at the Ada/Eagle Bike Park. It burned a lot of trail managed by Ridge to Rivers- REI, Rabbit Run Big Springs etc. In the process of putting out the fire, there were three bulldozers in the area that caused quite a bit of damage. Davey and Mike spent time getting the trails back up and running. Mike showed before and after photos of damage that was done. Due to the fire, there aren't visual blocks of other legs of the trails, so this causes shortcutting. To avoid this, fences will have to be built. Working with the City of Boise, 1000 Bitter and Sage Brush plans were planted during a volunteer day.

Hubbard-There was a partner's meeting to discuss park improvements, restoration and fundraising. They discussed accessibility improvements, bird blinds, picnic benches, enhanced fencing and parking for busses and equestrians. Habitat restoration improvements include riparian, upland and pollinators. M. Edwards went on to say that the pollinators are taking a beating right now. There is Milkweed in this park, but he would like to continue to push for development of pollinator plants. City of Boise has some funding that they are willing to let us tap into in the way of a grant. M. Edwards plans to move forward with writing this grant.

H. Carter inquired about signage for Hubbard. M. Edwards responded that he went out his summer and mapped all the existing trails. He will bring this map to a later meeting. He has 2 or 3 proposed trails he would like to build there especially in the southwest corner. In speaking with SWIMBA he thinks it would be an ADA accessible trail.

The group went on to discuss possibly putting bee boxes at Hubbard and possible contacts the members had regarding bee's and pollinating plants.

K. Kostka inquired if there is a need for more volunteer days to help with the fire restoration. M. Edwards responded that the issue this year is the lack of plans. City of Boise was able to obtain what they could, but we could have used more.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Scott supplied an update to the Board.

S. Koberg and R. Sosin met this week to go over a 14-point work plan. Robbie is working on building a network to develop a pilot educational program among other items.

We have also onboarded 3 other new staff members in addition to Robbie.

This past weekend there was a volunteer effort with the Golden Eagle Audubon Society out at Victory Wetlands to conduct some planting for pollinators, birds and butterflies. Robbie documented it with photos and posted it on Facebook. There is some construction fencing up to protect the plants from kids and off leash dogs.

We hosted a 2-part stakeholder engagement workshop last week for the Barber Pool Master Plan. We are coming to a cohesive vision of what the map looks like with human interaction, no human interaction protection of the corridor for wildlife and perhaps future restoration. He thinks it's a good place to schedule a future site visit.

Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands acquired the former Gregerson property. It has a significant debris field that needed to be cleaned up. They have been working towards toward restoring this property. A year ago, the Foundation asked for a waiver of dumping fees at the Landfill. This request was denied at the time. S. Koberg met with Stephanie with IFPL and the waiver request to the BOCC was again discussed. Scott brought this request to the BOCC with updated information during a staff meeting, giving them some background. The Board asked for a site visit with the Director of the Landfill. After a site visit, the recommendation was made that the fees be waived. The Board agreed and Landfill fees will now be waived. Stephanie is also working with Hardin Sanitation to try and get some of the transport fees waived as well.

The county has received 93 million in America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. This is federal funding having to do with COVID-19 impact. We submitted a proposal under the stormwater category for the Sunroc Greenbelt project. This is a 3-million-dollar project as we are looking at using concrete for the pathway surface. The proposal passed the Technical Committee. It is now moved on to the Prioritization Committee. We will have more proposals for our department. K. Kostka inquired if there is a 5-year timeline on the funding. S. Koberg thought it was less than 5 years.

The fishing pier was added as a contract modification to Idaho Site Works, the contractor that did the Plaza and irrigation project. We were hoping to be in construction this week, but they are having a hard time getting a subcontractor to commit to the concrete component in the river. The costs have gone up significantly since we have signed the contract. We remain in a holding pattern at this time, but our time frame is limited with river flows.

OTHER BUSINESS

K. Kostka inquired about an update on the vacant Board position. S. Koberg responded that the post never came down from the original vacancy. It was reposted recently with a closing date of last Saturday. The applications are being reviewed by the Board and they will recommend specific applicants for interview. Applicants will be interviewed by the Chair, Vice Chair and S. Koberg.

K. Kostka inquired about when a good time would be for a Barber Pool site visit. S. Koberg responded that once the Master Plan is adopted as a cohesive group, this would be the best time to do a site visit. Probably in the spring.

K. Kostka inquired if there were any suggestions on guest speakers. S. Koberg suggested that perhaps R. Sosin had someone in mind. Robbie suggested Alex Brooks from the Foothill Learning Center and Emily Mayhan from the Discovery Center. E. Reaves offered Wendy Irwin from the Botanical Gardens.

ADJOURNMENT

K. Kostka adjourned the meeting at 12:47 p.m.