



Board of Directors

May 19, 2020

District Office Building | 799 SW Columbia | Bend, Oregon

AGENDA



To support Governor Brown's recommendation for social distancing, the Board of Directors conducted this meeting by video.

The meeting can be viewed via [Bend Park and Recreation Facebook page](#).

BOARD PRESENT

Ted Schoenborn, Chair

Nathan Hovekamp, Vice Chair

Ariel Méndez

Jason Kropf

Deb Schoen

STAFF PRESENT

Don Horton, Executive Director

Michelle Healy, Deputy Executive Director

Julie Brown, Manager of Communications and Community Relations

Matt Mercer, Director of Recreation

Sheila Reed, Executive Assistant

5:30 p.m. CONVENE MEETING

VISITORS: Comments were submitted by email

Justin Gottlieb: Mr. Gottlieb asked the board to support rent controls (due to COVID-19) for the next 18 to 24 months to prevent large numbers of displaced people (homeless) from setting up camp in Bend's parks. He also suggested that consideration be given to toll booths and testing areas on major arterial roads into Deschutes County as a visitor management and finance tool. He added that Bend should use this crisis and budget cycle as an opportunity to chat about how alcohol, tourism, housing and crime are interrelated.

Sarah Mason: Ms. Mason has lived in Bend for over 30 years. She attended a tour through Drake Park with staff to view the trees and areas that will be impacted by the planned Deschutes River Trail. Ms. Mason is primarily concerned about two trees, an old willow that hangs over the river and an ancient Ponderosa. She stated her opposition to either of those trees being at risk during the construction of the path.

Gail Sabbadini: Ms. Sabbadini was also on the Drake Park tour, she said it was important to learn about the future trail plan and the issues of slope and width required to provide an ADA approved trail. She added that she came away from the park meeting with trust that the district will endeavor to save the healthy elder trees that are so valued by the community. She commented about the

importance of tree diversity for beauty and survival from pest species, disease and climate changes in the future. She expressed that every effort should be made to preserve the large willow tree and the stately rare larches.

Marina Ritchie: Ms. Ritchie thanked staff for the opportunity to tour the park and plan. She said she was pleased with our respectful dialogue, and the efforts on the part of Bend Park and Recreation to involve citizens who care about the beloved trees of the park. She asked the board to protect the 46" DBH ponderosa pine at all costs. She stated that she understands that the board and staff also care very much about saving this tree. She added she believes this tree is deserving of heritage tree status and is clearly the same age or older as the others that are officially designated as the Drake Park Ponderosa Pine Grove (see link: <https://oregontic.com/oregon-heritage-trees/drake-ponderosa-pine-grove/>). Ms. Ritchie said she understands, the plan has been approved for the trail through Drake Park, but was pleased to know that tweaks are possible. She stated that future planning for park projects that involve cutting down trees should involve the public.

WORK SESSION

1. Update on Parks – Don Horton and Michelle Healy

Executive Director Horton said that since the last meeting, there has been more information released from the Governor's office; staff will share strategies that are being put in place to reopen recreation programs. He added the importance of keeping parks open during this time and commented that it hasn't come without challenges.

Ms. Healy gave an update on the tremendous increase of use on trails and in parks, she said the community has expressed appreciation for keeping trails and parks open and available. The trail counter data is showing significant increases of trail usage, eclipsing some of the largest summer counts. It is clear that there is a desire for people to be outside and active during this time. The skateparks opened, people are happy to have them open and overall people are doing their best to social distance. Park stewards have placed tape markers to help demonstrate the distancing at the skate parks and are making frequent visits. Park stewards have reported an increase of off leash dogs and will continue working with the Bend police and sheriff's departments on enforcement. The park steward staff has increased with reassigned recreation staff; they are educating and interacting with patrons. The BMX track at Big Sky Park will be opening by reservation and non-contact sport courts are also opening this week. Staff is working on communications to the public on safe usage of the courts.

Ms. Healy reported that staff participated on a conference call to discuss river recreation with the US Forest Service, Oregon State Marine Board, the Old Mill, Central Oregon Visitors Association (COVA), Visit Bend, and Bend Paddle Trail Alliance (BPTA). This call was an effort to prepare for safe practices of river use and allowing access this summer. She said the district is not likely to have a tube concession this summer, but will allow the vendor to have paddle board and kayak rental in Riverbend Park, as well as lifejackets that promote safety. The district does not want to restrict river access and drive people to other areas where property and riparian areas may be destroyed. In addition, the ride the river shuttle will not be operating this summer.

Ms. Healy said some recreation staff have been reassigned work in park services landscaping. These staff members are filling summer positions that the district will need to hire for when reassigned

staff go back to their recreation positions. Staff will begin recruiting volunteers for more individual responsibilities such as Riley Ranch host and goose hazing, and may add some small work groups for restoration and clean up. Some of the challenges the district is facing includes signs being torn down and the removal of playground area tape. The restrooms are heavily used and the custodial staff is managing with extra cleaning. The shop has been operating with stricter procedures for health and safety. The district is planning for the reopening of facilities; the park services division will install plexiglass barriers and manage the ordering of personal protective equipment (PPE) for facilities. District office staff will continue to work from home to comply with the Governor's orders. Construction at Juniper and Larkspur have benefitted from the closures. The staff has adapted and performed well through the closures and reassignments.

The board expressed their appreciation for the prioritization of safety and complying with the Governor's orders.

The board asked about increased safety concerns on the river if pools aren't open and the river use increases. Ms. Healy responded that the river concessions have helped to encourage safer use of the river and the users need to understand that it is a wild river. She added that there would be additional messaging this summer to remind people. Executive Director Horton added that with 250,000 people that float the river each summer, social distancing will be difficult. He spoke to the marine board and others; suggestions included shutting down access, which will send people to riparian areas along the and create new entry points. Visit Bend and COVA are continuing to discourage people from coming to Bend, but there will still be a lot of locals floating. The sheriff's department controls the bodies of water in Oregon through the Marine Board, but they are shorthanded on staff. He said the district will need to do a good job on an education campaign. The Marine Board is looking into ways to provide some support in this unique situation. Executive Director Horton said the river shuttle will not be operating this summer and the district will encourage people to use the park and ride area for parking and suggest that people walk to the floating areas. The board supported the limited vending operation in Riverbend Park for rentals and life jackets.

2. Opening Recreation Programs – *Don Horton and Matt Mercer*

Mr. Mercer said reassigning staff to other jobs is not an easy thing to do. Staff at park services and stewardship have welcomed the recreation staff and it has gone really well. He is working with every department in the district on plans for reopening and commented that staff is really working together better than ever.

Mr. Mercer said the overall guidance comes from the Governor. The district intends to open in phases in accordance to the phases the Governor dictates. The state has been working for several weeks on guidance for school age summer programs. The guidelines direct the entire summer and will allow for programming in phase one. He said this helps the district to plan ahead. Guidance for fitness is limited and he is assuming a phased approach. Pools, hot tubs, steam rooms are not included in phase one. There is no information on phase two from the Governor. Staff is developing detailed operational plans for every facility and activity for phase one and in anticipation of phase two. Starting tomorrow, staff will let people know which programs will be canceled for the summer. These are programs that cannot run under the guidelines from the Governor. This has been very hard on staff to have to cancel programs that they love to provide; however, the district does not want to

run programs that put kids or the community at risk. Announcements confirming programs that the district intends to run will also go out to the community. Staff is working on developing some day camp programs to provide more critical services to the community. Next week, the district is reopening registration, and bringing back some staff; the process will take several weeks.

Mr. Mercer said the district is planning to reopen Juniper by the end of the first week of June. The Pools and childcare will not be open, fitness classes and the exercise rooms will be by registration only to ensure proper capacity. The reservation program is being created internally now. Juniper will operate on limited hours and limited classes; these will continue to build as allowed. Beginning June 15 summer camps and programs start. The district will offer 300 weekly spots for full day camps, which is close to normal. He added there will be half day options and sports camps available as well. Pools and Senior Center are yet to be determined. Pools have been suggested as a phase 2 option, but the Governor's office has not released that information.

The board asked about cleaning protocols for facilities as the public is allowed back in. Mr. Mercer responded that the restrooms will be cleaned throughout the day, all fitness equipment and areas used by the public will be cleaned by staff after each class/use, patrons will be asked to clean the equipment before and after they use it, and facilities will be sanitized each night. Gathering in common areas will be prohibited, people will be asked to wait until their scheduled time to enter the facility and entrances will be strategically used to space patrons coming in and out.

The board inquired about the rental facilities offered by the district. Executive Director Horton remarked that other agencies are not offering rentals for the summer. The reservations the district has for facilities have been mostly cancelled by the renters due to the crowd size restrictions.

The board asked about fields and leagues, Mr. Mercer said adult softball is on hold, but may get in a shorter season. Fields will be open for summer camp programs and outside organizations will be allowed on the fields once the Governor allows for it.

BUSINESS SESSION

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes – 05/05/2020
2. Approve Contract for Fitness Equipment for Larkspur

Director Hovekamp made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Director Schoen seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Staff toured a small group through Drake Park to discuss the plan for the trail project. Members of the tour reached out on social media and organized an email campaign. The district received many emails on concerns about the big ponderosa, the willow and larch trees. He reiterated that staff will do what we can to preserve the trees and will look at reducing the trail width on the connector trail. The plan will consider retaining walls and going around trees where possible. The district cannot make commitments at this time that all trees

will be saved and this is causing some anxiety in the community. He said staff will do all that we can to save the trees.

- Director Schoen commented about the importance of trails through the pandemic. She said it is important to have trails that meet ADA requirements to serve the entire community.
- Director Schoenborn agreed and remarked that he uses the trails and is part of an older generation. Adding that he has noticed that the trail system has been really busy and it is easier to distance on the wider trails over sidewalks.
- Director Hovekamp said that with the intensity of interest on this from the community points to the importance of the trees and appreciates staff's efforts to do all they can to work around them. He said we can have a good trail, accommodate and hopefully preserve the trees.

PROJECT REPORT

BOARD MEETINGS CALENDAR REVIEW

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- Director Schoenborn said the board will receive a packet tomorrow for the Executive Director annual evaluation. The board will meet June 2 and 16 in executive session to conduct the evaluation.
- Director Méndez reminded staff the SDAO has an application for reimbursement that is due this week. He also reminded everyone of the importance of wearing masks and social distancing.

ADJOURN: 7:28 pm



Prepared by,
Sheila Reed
Executive Assistant



Ted Schoenborn, Chair



Nathan Hovekamp, Vice-Chair



Jason Kropf



Ariel Méndez



Deb Schoen

