**Board of Directors**

October 20, 2020

**District Office Building | 799 SW Columbia | Bend, Oregon**

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To support Governor Brown’s recommendation for social distancing, the Board of Directors conducted the regular board meeting by video.

**View the board meeting via** [**Bend Park and Recreation Facebook page**](https://www.facebook.com/BendParkandRecreationDistrict/)**.**

**BOARD PRESENT**

Nathan Hovekamp, Chair

Ariel Méndez, Vice Chair

Jason Kropf

Deb Schoen

Ted Schoenborn

**STAFF PRESENT**

Don Horton, Executive Director

Michelle Healy, Deputy Executive Director

Julie Brown, Manager of Communications and Community Relations

Lindsey Lombard, Administrative Services Director

Matt Mercer, Director of Recreation

Sheila Reed, Executive Assistant

Brian Hudspeth, Development Manager

Sarah Bodo, Park Planner

Rachel Colten, Park Planner

**5:30 p.m. MEETING CONVENED**

**VISITORS**

None

**WORK SESSION**

1. River Habitat Restoration and Access PlanUpdate *– Sarah Bodo and Rachel Colton*

Ms. Bodo gave an overview of the river plan project and goals. She said the project scope includes 16 parks that are along the Deschutes River. She spoke about the 25 designated river access points and another 94 that have been user created by people and pets, and said they continue to grow in number and size. She said part of the river plan includes exploring how to manage the river access and protect riparian areas. Ms. Bodo remarked that riparian habitat is critical to wildlife, helps prevent erosion and offers an esthetic value too.

Ms. Bodo continued to speak about the plan and that it seeks to balance the needs of the community and district policies. The district comprehensive plan surveys showed that the community desires the following:

* + - * Areas to access the river
* Off-leash dog areas with water access
* Natural area parks

District policies include:

* Take care of what we have
* Invest in the future
* Collaborate and coordinate
* Nurture partnerships
* Enhance access, remove barriers
* Environmental stewardship

Project goals:

* Identify and prioritize projects that balance habitat restoration and user access
* Improve and consolidate existing access points
* Engage diverse stakeholders to inform plan
* Develop fiscally sound implementation plan

Ms. Colton spoke about the progress of the plan since last update. She said the focus group for the plan was made up of a diverse group from the following 14 organizations:

Bend Paddle Trail Alliance Oregon Adaptive Sports

Central Oregon Coalition for Access Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

City of Bend OSU Cascades/COCC

DogPac Tumalo Creek Kayak & Canoe

Latino Outdoors Upper Deschutes Watershed Council

National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance US Fish and wildlife Service

Old Mill District Visit Bend

Ms. Colton said staff hosted six focus group meetings. She said patrons were asked to provide input on projects at 14 river parks and off-leash dog water access areas with the goal of balancing the desires of the community and protection of habitat. In addition, a community survey was completed in February. The district received 712 responses including 20 that were in Spanish. Staff does believe that due to the outreach to the Latino communities, that there was broader Latino representation to the survey, but some Spanish speaking people chose to take the survey in English. Ms. Colton next shared a summary of the community survey:

* Satisfaction with river access: 84% neutral or satisfied, 16% dissatisfied
* 86% of respondents feel that improving wildlife habitat along the Deschutes River is somewhat or very important.
* Top 3 activities – (1) trail walking, running or biking; (2) paddling; (3) floating
* Most used parks for top three activities: Farewell Bend, Riverbend, and Drake
* Top six concerns for river parks – (1) bank erosion (2) number of people (3) litter (4) vegetation trampling (5) parking availability (6) behavior of people.

\*The survey noted that responses to the Spanish survey: lack of trash cans was a top concern. The number of people was a low concern.

Ms. Colton next explained the internal outreach efforts. She said there has been ongoing engagement with district staff and a targeted engagement is scheduled next week asking staff to review focus group suggested projects.

Ms. Bodo said the river plan is a comprehensive level plan for the river parks, the outcomes will be high level conceptual ideas about what should be implemented and where. Once the plan is finalized and approved by the board, it will include a prioritization of projects. Ms. Bodo gave an update on the Riverbend South project that is a river project that is already underway and an example of the type of project that she would like to see as an outcome of the River Habitat Restoration and Access Plan. Ms. Bodo said part of the river upstream from Riverbend Park has been recognized as a site with significant erosion issues and loss of habitat. She explained that this project is being done in conjunction with district partner, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council (UDWC). It is also serving as a pilot project for the communications of the overall river plan. Currently, there are nine undesignated access points that are causing erosion in this section of the river. The Riverbend South Project will include the creation of three river access points, an ADA transfer station, riverbank restoration and interpretive signs. The project is not fully funded, the district has received one grant and is seeking further grant funding. If the funding is successful, the district will move forward with permits and begin construction starting fall 2021.

Ms. Bodo reviewed the project schedule, listing first the research phase. Staff is currently working on identifying of dog off-leash water access areas, project list and prioritization criteria development and internal/external engagement. The last phase will include a draft of the final plan for board approval.

Next steps that require board action:

* January -Project Selection & Prioritization
* February -Summary of Public Input -Project List
* Spring-Draft Plan Review
* Summer -Final Plan Review and Action

The board asked how much of an impact there will be on people’s behaviors by creating the access points. Ms. Bodo responded that the access points will be well developed to direct people to them and the user created access will be managed with fencing and other methods to discourage use. All access points were observed for level of use, staff will use this data to understand the impact to users if access is closed.

The board expressed their appreciation for the public engagement and input that was asked for early in the process. Ms. Bodo said a stakeholder list of about 100 people was also used to get information out to the public and said the next round of public engagement will include surveys in English and Spanish.

The board asked what a dog water access would look like. Ms. Bodo said staff is unsure at this time. She spoke about a private access that is adjacent to district property saying it is only conducive to large and strong dogs. She said staff is looking into ideas. It has been determined that animals have a large impact on habitat, this will be taken into consideration as well. The board asked if DogPac would be interested in partnering to build dog access areas. Ms. Bodo replied that DogPac is involved, but a financial partnership has not been discussed.

Ms. Bodo addressed the board about a letter that Bend Paddle Trail Alliance (BPTA) sent the district regarding the closure of the boat launch at Columbia Park. She informed the board that staff is treating this area as a priority in the river plan project. She said the boat launch was designed for less use, the launch got more use than staff had anticipated and was not sustainable. The district did close the site and has determined that an investment will be required to reopen the it.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Minutes – 10/06/2020

***Director Schoenborn made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Director Méndez seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.***

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

* Executive Director Horton shared that Clare Gordon and Michelle Healy have both earned Certified Park and Recreation Profession (CPRP) certification. Ms. Healy has also been elected to a three-year term to serve as president of ORPA board.
* One new COVID guidance has been issued since the last board meeting, it has been reviewed and the district is already following and will not make any significant changes to the district.
* A few staff attended a People Speak presentation yesterday with a detailed demonstration for engaging the public for public hearings and meetings.
* Larkspur is almost complete and the contractor is working on the punch list, staff is in training, and the district is anticipating opening in January. Executive Director Horton add that it is unfortunate that the COVID guidance does not yet allow the district to open the senior center yet.

**PROJECT REPORT**

**BOARD MEETINGS CALENDAR REVIEW**

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

* Director Kropf said he would like to again encourage the board to invite Lynne McConnell to a board meeting to discuss plans for affordable housing. Executive Director Horton responded that staff is planning to invite her to the next meeting. Director Kropf encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming election.
* Director Méndez said he is looking forward to touring the Larkspur Center. He commended staff and recreation staff for all the work that they have done recognizing the wrench that COVID has put in everyone’s lives. He expressed his appreciation for the work done for Team Up, the high percentage of kids in need that are being served, and keeping up with all the guidelines for COVID. He said it is a tremendous amount of work.
* Director Schoen spoke about her experience with the Central Oregon Decency Project, the program was developed by DA Hummel for restorative justice. This was led by a professional moderator that allowed the perpetrators and victims to have a guided conversation. The district case involved a young woman that vandalized park property with graffiti. Director Schoen said the experience was very moving and said the district needs to do what it can to make it easy for public to voice their concerns and let the public know that the district values the communication.

She thanked staff for looking at the public engagement information and congratulated Ms. Healy to on her election.

* Director Schoenborn congratulated the CPRP certifications and Ms. Healy on her election, he said this continues a long line of people from the district that are involved in leadership at ORPA.
* Director Hovekamp said he has been tuning in to a lot of the candidate forums and SDC fees are being brought up, he said the board will soon be talking about the district SDCs. He added that SDCs are the primary funding system for building parks and the community expects the district to keep up with the growth. He said some candidate comments on SDCs are unintentionally distorted and some are just lying. He remarked that when elected officials or candidates distort the issues around SDCs, it either demonstrates the ignorance of the importance of SDCs to park development and maintaining the beautiful park system or it is deliberate demagoguing of the district to promote windfalls for developers or an agenda the candidate is pursuing. He noted that the district has and will continue with efforts to support affordability and he is proud of the exemptions, abatements and the progressive SDC methodology that the board passed. He commented that the SDC methodology continues to languish on the city’s desk and has yet to be implemented. He pointed out other district contributions to affordable living, including scholarships and subsidies for the community. He said he asks that candidates be more accurate when speaking about SDCs and requested that the board support more accurate and informed public rhetoric on SDCs and more productive civil discord. He said he looks forward to a healthy conversation about SDCs. Executive Director Horton thanked Director Hovekamp for his comments and said there is a board looking at all SDCs and considering what changes could be made for affordability. SDCs are a small cost compared to the cost of land. Executive Director Horton stated that losing SDC money would hurt the park district and commented that he would like the tiered methodology to be implemented by the city. Adding that the district is not the high agency in the state for SDCs.

**ADJOURN** 6:34 pm

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Prepared by,

Sheila Reed

Executive Assistant

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Nathan Hovekamp, Chair Ariel Méndez, Vice-Chair

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Jason Kropf Deb Schoen

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Ted Schoenborn