



**COUNTY PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 10, 2020**

- I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Natrona County Parks Board brought to order at 5:30p.m. By Chairman Roy Buck. This meeting was held via Zoom.
- II. ROLL CALL:** Those in attendance were Parks Board Members Roy Buck, Dave North, Jim Miller, Stuart Hill and Tina Kruse, and Parks Director Mike Haigler. Commissioner Brook Kaufman (Liaison) was absent.
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. APPROVAL:** Stuart Hill motioned for approval of the November 12, 2020 minutes. Dave North seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- V. REPORTS- Park Director:** Roy Buck approved the Directors Report as written with no objections.

**A. MOUNTAIN PARKS UPDATE:**

**1. Mountain well/water system:**

Mike Haigler: Reported that the power system is ready and available and the sewer is hooked up and he hopes to have water soon.

Roy Buck: Asked if there was anything that they could do to get a temporary water supply in the mean time.

Mike Haigler: Replied that there wouldn't be a way to do that, that would meet the DEQ regulations and it would most likely freeze. That it would be more trouble than it's worth.

Jim Miller: Asked if they were going to put any of the old furniture in there and if there was going to be an entry rug because of the hardwood floors.

Mike Haigler: Reported that they do have all the furniture so he will leave it up to the groups to decide what they want in there, chairs and an area rug, some tables can be set up if they are needed.

Jim Miller: Stated that he noticed that the web cam was hooked up in both the front and back. He asked if it was ready to go once electricity was up and running.

Mike Haigler: Responded that that is correct.

Stuart Hill: Asked if December 18<sup>th</sup> was still the date for Rocky Mountain Power to get in there.

Mike Haigler: Stated that that is when the electrician will be in to set the box and meter back in. As long as everything ships like it is supposed to.

#### **B. PATHFINDER/ALCOVA UPDATE:**

Mike Haigler: Reported that he was doing a walk through at Alcova on the gravel project and then they will be moving into the cabin areas.

Roy Buck: Asked what time the walk through would take place at Black Beach.

Mike Haigler: Responded that it would be at 8 a.m.

Mike Haigler: Reported that that was all the changes he had.

Roy Buck: Went back to the temporary lodge topic and asked if there was anything else they needed with the exception of furniture.

Mike Haigler: Replied that no it has everything it needs in there. He reported that it is limited as far as what you can do with the area. They have talked about giving keys out to the necessary people who would be in there and will operate it that way.

Jim Miller: Reported that he was up there earlier that day and they are moving along installing the overhead lights, fixtures, and fan.

Mike Haigler: Reported that they did an aerial survey. He spoke with Worthington Lenhart and it is almost finished. It will move forward to Lyle Murtha to set that new building.

Jim Miller: Reported that Keith Tyler is representing an interest group and Friends of the Bridal Trail; he was wondering who authorized the rocks that were put up that stopped the trail from going into Christman's place.

Mike Haigler: Reported that he did that; he went up to re-establish the fence that was tore out due to the fire. He understood that they built a new trail and they were going to discontinue using the road. He put the fence back across where it had been cut and there were about three boulders there already so they pulled those up to discontinue the trail. Mike reported that he was up there this week and it's been disrupted, the fence was cut and he doesn't know what to do about that. He reported that people still want to go that way but it's going onto private property and he was under the impression that people were going to use the new trail. He stated that he would take the blame for that.

Jim Miller: Replied that he knows that once spring hits Mike can get back up there and they will be putting up some steps on the upper part. He wasn't sure if they were planning on putting a railing up on the steep part so people can hang on to it or not.

Mike Haigler: Replied that it would depend on the steps that go in there. He envisioned about three steps and a terrace turn so to speak with 8x8 green timber so they will have a decent platform to come down on. Mike reported that he walked that when it was done and there hasn't been enough moisture in the base gravel so it hasn't set up so it's like marbles under your feet. He thinks steps will definitely cure that. He spoke with 71 Construction because they were involved with a lot of those improvements. Steve Loftin said he will take a look at doing that.

Roy Buck: Asked if Rotary Park was still non-functional. He asked if the electric gate was working.

Mike Haigler: Responded that no, it's locked open. That they have been locked open for some time because they don't work. He reported that once the snow gets in there people can't go very far in there. He believed they put the barriers up after the first snow because it was very slick down in there but people can get into that turn around right now until there is more snow and that will eliminate that.

Stuart Hill: Asked if they intend on using that gate up there at all.

Mike Haigler: Replied that no, it's had a lot of issues. It would stay part way open and it's just not the right gate for that area. He stated that if they decide to have a gate there in the future it probably needs to lift up vertically and is out of the way verses the two swing gates.

Roy Buck: Stated that they don't have a way to shut off access and people will be using that trails through the winter.

Mike Haigler: Replied that they have never been able to curtail that so if they decide that they are going to close that off it's still going to be potentially accessible by the public if they want to enter at their own risk. They can shut and lock those gates they just can't make them work automatically. Some of the neighbors up there have helped when they weren't working but people have messed with them and tore up the electrical part of them. It's wide open; it's set up for the Fire Department to be able to get in there if they need to. Mike stated that there is just a lot of moving parts on those gates.

Roy Buck: Asked if the water well is something they can continue to work on as far as putting in the bladder tank and the building or are they going to have to wait until weather clears for that?

Mike Haigler: Replied no they are in the process of pulling everything. They have to pull the pipe out of the well, put a new pump in and new pipe in. He has to raise the pipe that is inside the structure, it's a little well house, he has to raise the casing and reseal and do some electrical work that needs to be done. The new apparatus will go in this building. They have to cut the line to the lodge and to Beartrap Meadow, and then re-establish the one to the lodge then it should work.

Roy Buck: Stated that getting the water over to the lodge might be the biggest hurdle at this point. He asked if the pipe that runs from the supply line that runs from the well to the Nordic Lodge meets the DEQ requirements.

Mike Haigler: Responded that it does however, it is just black plastic pipe but in the future, it will probably need to be replaced. They have had trouble with it freezing under the county road if they don't plow it and leave some snow, then the line freezes. He stated that it just isn't deep enough but they will cure that in the future. When the new lodge is established, they will run new pipe at that time.

Roy Buck: Stated that he would like to thank Mike again. That it is a breath of fresh air that these projects are taken care of with everything else Mike has going on. Roy stated that it was impressive and thanked Mike again.

Mike Haigler: Replied that it has actually been enjoyable.

Jim Miller: Informed Dave North that there is no wood in Ponderosa, that there is some scrap wood but if they want to build a fire to warm up, there is no wood in there so he might want to let the Snow Gypsies know that they probably need to load it up.

Dave North: Replied that he hasn't been back in there for a while but he would get ahold of them. He knows that they had stocked some wood but isn't sure where but he will get ahold of them and get that taken care of.

Mike Haigler: Responded that he understood that they had filled that log bin outside that closes up. The one that's built into the hill.

Dave North: Replied that that is where they usually put it but they have it locked from time to time so he isn't sure but he will talk to them.

Stuart Hill: Stated that he knew that Lyle had talked about presenting everything in front of the Commissioners and was wondering if they could present in front of the Advisory Board first before it gets to the Commissioners for public vetting. That is one of the purposes of the board.

Mike Haigler: Replied that he doesn't know why that couldn't happen.

Dave North: Stated that he agreed. That is the reason for the Parks Board to at least have that open setting and hear things out. He knows that it hasn't always happened in the past but he agrees with him.

Stuart Hill: Stated that the Lodge is going to be the keystone to everything they do on the mountain and thinks it would be nice to have the public involved in it a little more so they can see why they are doing what they are doing and the thoughts behind it.

Jim Miller: Stated that once Joe or Marvin start grooming up there; there is a lot of foot traffic on what was groomed the other day, but thinks that there needs to be some sort of signage when the grooming does start that says there is no foot traffic on the groomed trails. Jim Miller stated that it's ok for snowshoes but not for walking and running on because it is tearing it up.

Mike Haigler: Replied that he will talk to Joe about that.

Jim Miller: Stated that people are concerned about Elk Creek with the thaw and freezing at night but he thinks that it's just what happens when you have this sort of weather.

Stuart Hill: Reported that he helped in the clean-up at Alcova. He wanted to thank Mike and his crew for all their help. He reported that there were a lot of things on the lake bed that needed cleaned up so he just wanted to thank everyone and asked if they really believe the water level will be back up by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mike Haigler: Replied that they sent a letter out saying it would be. It goes up faster than going down.

Jim Miller: Asked if they were going to start filling it this weekend.

Mike Haigler: Reported that it will start the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Stuart Hill: Asked about the Rules and Regulations.

Mike Haigler: Responded that, as they know, they will have to be presented to the County Commissioners for approval. They are currently in the lawyer's office.

Dave North: Asked if they had started the review process on those.

Mike Haigler: Responded that he doesn't know.

Roy Buck: Stated that he believes it has to come out of the Attorney's office then they will start the 45-day review process after the new officials are sworn in.

Dave North: Replied that he believes he is correct on that and he knows how busy the County Attorney has been.

Tina Kruse: Reported that she was having computer issues and is now reporting on the phone.

Roy Buck: Asked if there were any more questions for Mike. There were no further questions.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Roy Buck: Asked the public members to please state their names and come forward.

Andrew Schneider: Approached the microphone as a Casper Mountain resident. Mr. Schneider thanked Mr. Haigler for the transparency in having these minutes put on the website and the County for having them online allowing the public to view them. He stated that it makes it easier for the community on the mountain to be able to follow along. Mr. Schneider reported that on the Trails Center process, as far as the public engagement, that some people missed out on some of the round table discussions and have said they would like to participate. He stated that he would also like to follow along and participate. He believes this is important because it's such a large venture and is so new. He stated that in one of the reports a consultant has been either selected or hired to perform a trail plan process. He knows some

residents as well as himself would love to support that process. He stated that he has 36 years of experience on the mountain and would love to bring whatever experience he can. He believes the public is curious about what their opportunities to engage in that would be. He would like to see the master plan, East End Road, and an access trail to Ponderosa Park in the land use plan. He believes there might be safety concerns because of the snowmobilers going through there. It would be nice to see signs that show that that is a snowmobile trail in the winter and to include that access in the master plan.

Mike Haigler: Responded that the County doesn't manage the snowmobile trails. The State does. He can take these comments to the State about the signage. Mike Haigler reported that it is difficult because when the County plows East End Road they give it to the state to put on the south side of that trail. It's difficult to keep up on signs because of the plowing but he believes there are some areas that can accommodate that and they can look at it as they are looking at trails in conjunction with the state.

Mr. Schneider: Commented that he has seen some trails in Minnesota that are designated snowmobile trails that intersect with the roads but it then comes away from the road. He believes that planning and communication is an asset to the mountain community.

Roy Buck: Asked if Mr. Schneider felt that the online meetings were adequate.

Mr. Schneider: Stated that if he were able to join remotely that he would have. He stated that he believed that the Casper Area MPO had a meeting today about the transit Master Plan redo and they were able to do a Microsoft Teams meeting to field. He stated that it would save him an hour in a half and some people don't want to drive after dark. It allows him to stay engaged.

Roy Buck: Replied that they don't have a lot of feedback on this system so he appreciates his comments. He believes this is something they can look into and talk to IT about. Roy Buck also stated that the State does maintain the snowmobile trails but he believes there is a KLJ master plan on the website. He stated that they might have to dig for it but there is some information in there regarding the interface

between multi-use trails and snowmobile access and thanked Mr. Schneider for his comments.

Stuart Hill: Asked for any more public comments. There were no further public comments.

## **VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**

Dave North: Commented that he has enjoyed working with the board members for the last couple of years. He appreciates everything Mike has done since he taken over the direction of the Parks and everything that has been accomplished. He thinks they are moving in the right direction. He stated that it is nice to see things getting done and done in a positive manner. He would like to see that continue and to make the County a place that people want to come visit.

Roy Buck: Commented that he has enjoyed working with Dave and that he brings a lot of knowledge and experience to the projects.

Stuart Hill: Commented that he has enjoyed working with Dave and he has brought along some other people and got them engaged in the process. He hopes to see him quite a bit. The State Line #7 meeting was very interesting to see the process. To listen to the public on how they are using the mountain and how they see it being used is very good to sit on the Parks board and have some learning experiences. A year ago they had no movement but thanked Mike for the progress.

Jim Miller: Thanked Dave and wished him luck. He asked if anyone can get online at anytime and ask questions without coming to a meeting.

Mike Haigler: Replied that they can get on Parks on the website and send an email.

Jim Miller: Commented that things are moving forward and that's great.

Tina Kruse: Commented that Mike is doing a great job. She stated that Dave will be missed and knows he will continue to support the County Parks.

Roy Buck: Asked Mike Haigler if he had any comments for good of the order with it being the last meeting of 2020.

Mike Haigler: Commented that everyone has had their difficulties with COVID. It's been tough on meetings and emotions but we have all gotten through it and he's enjoyed working with all the board members. He said he started off with a lot on his plate but he's made a lot of progress. He is glad the weather hasn't been difficult because the snow would have messed with the lodge.

Roy Buck: Commented for the public listeners they are working through the beginning stages of this Nordic Lodge project. Identifying needs and priorities for the new structure. It is one of the first things that you see when going up the mountain. There is a lot that can be done with this project but one of the problems they will run into is funding this project that could be as high as \$2 to 2 ½ million. He said that that is doable but it's going to require some work and a lot of backing from the community. They are going to have to have community involvement. Roy stated that he loved Stuarts comment about having Lyle Murtha come in to present this to the Parks Board where the community has the opportunity to come in and make some unofficial comments so the board can get some more input. They are going to look at a public-private partnership and working with the community in order to get the lodge built in a reasonable amount of time. Roy Buck also thanked all the board members for all their work this last year. He felt like it has been a difficult year but this year feels as though they made some progress.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Parks Board, Chairman Roy Buck adjourned the meeting at 6:12p.m.

