



PIERCE COUNTY PARKS

Citizens' Advisory Board

**March 15, 2022**

**Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by Aaron Bert, Chair, at 6:02 p.m. via Zoom Webinar. A quorum was present. Chair notes that this is an open meeting and is being recorded.

**ROLL CALL:**

CAB Members present: Dean Absher, Derek Barry, Mary Brickle, Robert Buck, Joan Cross, Angela Gallardo, Tom Utterback, Aaron Bert, Caleb Heimlich

Staff members present: Roxanne Miles, Tiffany Odell, Cheryl Saltzman

CAB Member(s) absent: Dean Burke (excused)

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** Chair called for a motion to approve the minutes as amended (to correct date and start time of previous meeting). Board members approved the January 18, 2022, minutes with amendment.

*Motion (Derek Barry) to approve minutes as amended, and seconded (Rob Buck). Minutes are adopted pending amendment.*

**CAB ADMINISTRATION:**

Vote on slate of Officers for Chair and Vice Chair for the 2022 fiscal year. Current Chair and Vice Chair had accepted nominations to serve again. Other nominations were requested, and none were presented.

Chair calls for motion to adopt the slate of officers, Aaron Bert, Chair and Caleb Heimlich, Vice Chair for 2022.

*Motion (Joan Cross) to adopt the current slate of officers, seconded (Angela Gallardo).*

No questions or comments.

Unanimous ayes, motion approved.

**A. Presentations**

1. 2021 Performance Review

Kyle Wintermute presented a PPT slide deck reviewing updated visitor numbers for parks and trails, and how those calculations are made. Also discussed was cost recovery pyramid, equity in programming, and how programming and cost recovery is approached. Golf courses have been very popular, especially during pandemic.

Caleb: Asked to see numbers for golf courses between 2018 and now.

Roxanne: Lake Spanaway Golf Course Cost Recovery was 86% in 2018 with us subsidizing \$500,000 in parks sales tax; that funding has shifted to underwrite the paths and trails fund.

Tom: 70% systemwide cost recovery has been fairly constant, how does that compare to like jurisdictions?

Roxanne: Number is high, and a bit of misnomer. Most systems are 25-50% at best, but those are systems without golf courses, or other specialized facilities. As a county system, we have more of the 'top of the pyramid' activities, so we have some things coming in at

100%, or 70%, or 60% - Spanaway is high because of Fantasy Lights, and Heritage is high as the deficit is split with Puyallup School District, so there's revenue coming in to cut that gap. When we have our biggest expense bases underwritten with revenues, it makes a big difference in overall cost recovery. We're not trying to push that higher, 65-70% is probably the sweet spot. We've also had troubles filling positions, so expenditures were down in 2021 – which isn't sustainable in the long run. We also haven't loaded all our costs into this, for example, natural lands, so it's not a complete picture. Our overall rate is based on the site-specific cost centers listed in the report.

Kyle – we have over 5,200 acres that we take care of, some by responsive maintenance, some active, with daily operations and maintenance. Out of that, the presented numbers are only calculating for the 2,350 acres that are developed, open and actively maintained by staff.

A very large annual report will be coming out to you soon, but this presents a high-level overview.

## 2. Title 14 Final Recommendations

Tiffany Odell – Shared Title 14 Matrix including the changes since May 2022 that was sent out prior to this meeting. Any questions or concerns?

Angela: On the Animals portion, 14.08.070, Sec. 2, if bringing an animal into a park, owner has requirement to bring necessary equipment to remove and dispose of animal's fecal matter – relating to horses, are people expected to have five-gallon buckets and shovels? Not really feasible and would make it impossible for someone to ride a horse in a park and follow the rules.

This led to a discussion on:

- Non-toxicity/deterioration of manure
- Messiness concerns if hikers, walkers, bikers use the same system.
- Options for personal compliance (tail bags)
- Designating equestrian areas that have shared tools or collection areas, and which volunteer equestrian groups help maintain. Other users would know to expect manure to be left to degrade.
- State or other site rules where parking, trailhead areas require clean up, but trails do not.
- See specific commentary at the end of the minutes.\*

Joan Cross has question about trails and rules on trails, specifically about notifying the people ahead of you if you're going to pass them. Wonder how many people are aware of this?

Tiffany: The new trails code is the code of conduct, and these rules would be posted at trail heads so that they should receive the information when they start out on the trail, or somewhere along the trail.

Joan: If you had an activity like bed races that included wheels and people pushing it, would that make a difference to micromobility rules?

Tiffany: I'm not sure, I'm guessing if it was something like a bed race it would

require permitting, and it would come with its own rules. I don't deal with recreational permits, but if bicycles are racing on trails, we'd include allowances and block areas off if the permit authorized breaking general safety/park use rules.

Kyle: We have the ability to apply for a special use permit, and that would detail out what this race looks like and what impacts there might be and then we'd vet that with the requestor to see if it's feasible to put on the trail and would supersede any posted rules due to accommodations for the permit.

Tom: Notes from last May re micromobility – I thought we were talking about 14.2, services and fees, but under here it looks like just the title was amended, but is there no substantive changes to the code under that section?

Tiffany: Great point, Tom. We talked about fees at that last meeting and since then with the annual budget adoption in 2021, we carried that fee portion forward in advance, as part of our annual fee update, so that's already been adopted. This is the rest of the Title that didn't move through that process.

Joan asked if adopt-a-park has been eliminated? Is it put in some other place?

Tiffany: It hasn't been eliminated, we took out adopt a park/adopt a trail language and replaced it with volunteer stewardship, that's what replaces the adopt a trail. That reflects our current park stewardship program. We now have park stewards that can adopt certain areas of parks and follow a stewardship plan, or you can come to volunteer events. We just don't have programs with those titles in the code anymore.

Joan: okay, I'm okay now.

Aaron: Caleb, do you want to repeat the motion you put forward.

*Motion (Heimlich) to recommend Title 14 as presented with the caveat being an opening for addressing horse waste and special carveouts, seconded (Absher).*

Receiving no additional comments. Ayes have it unanimously and motion carries.

### 3. Director's Comments:

Since we are running short on time, the legislature just closed so it's timely to talk about those items.

The special use discussion is not as time sensitive, so I can introduce you a little to what was sent, but we can defer conversation until May. Is that amendable to the Chair so that we can move on to Board comments by 7:20 or so? (Aye).

Highlights of legislative session:

- It was a short session, so not a lot of new issues introduced. The 2021 session authorized a high level of funding, approved over the biennium for recreation and conservation office. We have a lot of grants in, and you'll see in our Capital program next month; you'll see that we are taking full advantage of State funding requests.
- Conservation Futures (CF) is something that is designated to receive a piece of people's property taxes; the county oversees this grant program. Property tax as a whole is capped at one percent growth plus new construction every year. When you don't allow the taxes to collect as much as inflation is growing, and you cap it you get less and less of a share of those dollars. While we're eligible for 62 cents of every 100,000 thousand dollars of assessed value, we only collect only about 38 cents. There was an initiative that some council members were behind and the Trust for Public Lands where they wanted to move CF outside of that cap so that counties would move up to the authorized rate in legislation

and just stay there. It stopped in the process and didn't pass.

- Added funding for Dept of Natural Resource to fund derelict vessel program. When people abandon boats in the water, whoever is the public agent of the shoreline, becomes responsible for salvage. There's a lot of abandoned boats. Every agency can call DNR to help them fund this, but they're out of money long before meeting the need and then it falls on us to figure it out removal costs. They tripled that fund so that a share of the vessel taxes will go toward this issue on an ongoing basis. This will be helpful to us as this is a frequent issue we deal with.
- Active transportation – Parks has always pursued Recreation Grants to build trails; Public Works has active transportation plans. We are working to align our plans so that Public Works is not just planning for in the right of way, but we can see where our projects connect into the right of way and take people off of the right of way into lesser stress environments for commuting. The State passed a huge transportation budget, with a lot of it for active and multimodal transportation, however it is focused on safe routes to schools, RAISE grants and many programs that Public Works divisions can qualify for and are set up to pursue, but not as much on the recreation side. Hard to get trails to qualify, or recreation departments to qualify; but we are collaborating to try to take advantage of these resources to build out the Regional Trail system.
- Climate change solutions introduced a bill to require zero emissions landscape equipment, no gas-powered lawn movers, chainsaws, anything. There was pushback because it doesn't make sense to have electric power tools in firefighting, for example. Also, a concern for the lack of infrastructure to charge that equipment in the field. They started by wanting an additional 10% tax for buying gas-powered equipment and moved to having incentives, trying to make state contracts exclusively zero emissions and putting mandates on public agencies to meet the mandate by 2025, requiring a complete changeover in all equipment. This was revised all the way down to just being a tax incentive (no tax on electric equipment) but it never made it to the final vote. We expect it back next session. We've been looking at making incremental changes, not so much as getting equipment but making sure our trucks and shops are equipped for that infrastructure and doesn't create electrical overload in the process.

## **B. Board Business**

- a. Special Use Policy Statements – Roxanne introduced the policy note document sent to the CAB members. The policy document begins to form directed based on results of the Special Use survey that the CAB took. The statements show where there is clear consensus, but there are many more areas to discuss where results were mixed. We are working on this incrementally, nothing is being advanced yet, but the department does have current inquiries and projects to consider. Some questions about how we choose a site, or should we be open to any and all requests for sites is still on the table. The highest agreement statement in the survey was that a special use needs to be in a master plan, and if not, it should be taken out to public to see if they want it.

The largest mixed views of the CAB were on charging fees at special use facilities.

There are considerations that Parks needs to make related to working with partners. It will be helpful to understand this before we try to make policy statements. For example, there is a different type of agreement and expectation based on Capital – who is building it? Is it low barrier or will it require a big investment? Maintenance and operation costs – what does it take to operate it and what is subject to union contract? Are there risks and who will be responsible for those risks.

Roxanne and Kyle came up with three buckets/categories of the type of relationships the County has in order to partner on special use facilities/activities: User-Self Directed, Primarily User Directed, and Facilitated Access and shared examples of what that looks like, how they were decided upon, the legal implications, and terms. This is still in a notes/development stage.

Aaron: What timeline are you thinking for internal staff process to develop this?

Roxanne: By end of the year, I would like to have the draft policy – not at a place to advance the policy outside of the department before the end of the year but want it to be moving forward and completed by the end of this biennium because Tiffany will be starting PROS plan update in 2024 and we would like this policy/guidance imbedded.

Rob: I have a lot of concerns; a lot of things are convoluted at this point and am curious as to how they will get worked out. I think a lot of the activities, like facilitated access, no issue, but there is a lot of grey area between user self-directed and primarily user directed. What about a community group that raises money to put in a skate park but doesn't have opportunity to do volunteer work? Are we turning down that money?

Roxanne: Nothing in this precludes anyone from giving money, but we need to know who owns and who maintains what is being built.

Rob: I disagree...someone puts in a disc golf course. Once it's in, there's no maintenance needed. Other opportunities, dog parks, skate parks, are there volunteer hours there? I think it's grey between those and how those work.

Roxanne: This was an introduction, and I'm hoping to provide details, but maybe you and I could go over this together. The line we're working against is that we can't gift public resources to anybody. If it was developed with public dollars, we need to make sure the public has access. I can't turn over union work to another group, so those are the things we need to work out in an operating agreement. It is all doable just needs to be structured so we have each of the relationships in the right buckets. There is room for many 'right approaches', just need to understand how the terms all fit together in an agreement.

Rob: Understood. As we move forward, I'm sure we'll have more conversation as we work through this.

### **C. Board Comments**

Caleb: thank you for the vote for vice-chair. I'm honored. Thank you to the staff for being on tonight and the reports are always informative.

Aaron: Next meeting is May 17, in person.

Tom: The agenda mentions the Carbon River Special Meeting, was that going to be calendarized or mentioned?

Tiffany: You all responded to a meeting poll, and I believe the meeting date agreed upon is April 4, but it looks like we won't get the final information from our consultants until the end of the week prior, so you'd have a very small amount of time to review the plan. It's about 60 pages. Would you like more review time? It's a cooperative action plan shared by multiple agencies, parks service, forest service, some private timber service, and us, and will be going to Council for resolution. We are not solely responsible for all the elements but are the coordinator of the efforts.

Aaron: I would suggest sending out an updated meeting availability request for later in April.

Tiffany: Cheryl will send out an updated request for last two weeks in April for a virtual meeting to give you two weeks to review and prepare.

**D. Public Comments**

No public comments.

**E. Citizens Comments**

No citizen comments.

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 17th at ESB**

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

\*Details of Animal Waste Discussion:

Dean Absher: I agree with comment nobody is going to carry bags, and agree some group to pick up might work, but that cleaning up after your horse is not reasonable.

Roxanne: Aaron, we are going to get all sides of this issue. I do see it might be unenforceable. If CAB think we should strike all accountability for horse owners to clean up after their horses and move forward without that we'd need a statement from CAB as we've already gotten and would expect pushback from Council and public process by not asking for people to have that consideration.

Angela: Maybe for that specific site and other sites that have stables nearby, the trail rules sign can have a note saying that this trail is being adopted by this group and while there might be some stuff there, they do try to do regular clean up? Maybe stables can help with language?

Roxanne: That would be a way for them to comply instead of removing it as an expectation in any location.

Tiffany: Horse users on Foothills Trail and are building horse facilities alongside Pipeline Trail from Waller to Canyon, so there is an expectation that we'll have horse riders in those places in addition to Frontier and Orangegate.

Roxanne: Derek has a comment, but Tiffany, in the interest of time, maybe talk about what is the follow-up to this? Is there time for those who didn't read all the way through to send general commentary to you and Aaron, so there can be a determination about a letter or anything that becomes a state that the CAB might be bringing to have attached with this?

Derek: How many equestrian exclusive trails do we have? Maybe if they are exclusive, it's not as much an issue as it is in shared use trails

Tiffany: we don't have any exclusive in our parks system, nor do we plan to. We did discuss it in Orangegate meetings, whether it should be included, but the decision was split, so we came up with a plan to make parks open to more people.

Mary: In shared horse spaces, it's common to pick up poop in publicly shared open spaces, parking lots, sidewalks. That's normal and expected. The trails would be more unexpected in terms of picking up the poop that happens there. In terms of changing the language...something like any open space, parking space, there is a strict you must clean up

after your horses, and out on the trails, it's "do your best reasonable expectation" but not fined if you can't, and in conjunction with a horse group. Maybe some language that horse poop is less toxic than dog poop. Quickly biodegrade and go back into the soil as fertilizer.

Bridle Trails State Park in Bellevue, equestrian and shared use, trails with bikers, runners, and horse riders. They have the model in the parking lot you pick up everything that drops but not on the trails and it seems to be working.

Aaron: Mary, within equestrian community is it a known courtesy that those actions happen in shared spaces, like parking lots, people will take care of those issues?

Mary: Yes, absolutely, even in equestrian-exclusive areas, in the shared areas you pick up droppings, hay, shavings.

Aaron: Would it be possible, Tiffany and Roxanne, to find out how the state parks are maintained?

Tiffany: State parks require an entrance fee, so part of those fees might go towards maintenance. We don't require a maintenance fee, so we could certainly look to the adjacent stable that's a heavy user of the park, but in order to collect something from users that would pay for maintenance, that would be difficult. I think it's easier to get volunteers.

Roxanne: This is worth some follow-up. Tiffany and I will work on this as well. Some of the places you are referencing are equestrian parks and trails, just like there are designated off leash area rules, we could have a separate section for a designated equestrian area and notifying them that equestrians are also utilizing the site and there would be some expectation, and we can work with some groups on getting some volunteers.

Dean: Absher: I agree with moving on but strongly suggest some representatives and better knowledge from the horse community. If you make it unlawful, you will get such pushback from the Council you wouldn't want to see it. The state doesn't charge access fees, none of it that I'm aware of is designated for horse poop cleanup. That would be like expecting someone to walk their bicycle wherever they go. You might want to look at that very carefully.

Roxanne: If you have any other comments or thoughts as you go, please send them to Aaron and Tiffany. If we wind up reworking it, we will send it out the group. If you want a position statement to forward to Council, that can be worked on.

Roxanne: Tiffany, will you be submitting after the meeting or before?

Tiffany: I wanted to submit it next week, after draft meeting minutes for this meeting come out. I can delay it if this group wants to delay for extra review time, but we've been working on it for a couple of years and want to move forward. Roxanne, if you think it's okay to delay action on this until the May meeting, we can.

Roxanne: We will be having an extra meeting regarding Carbon River Corridor Cooperative Action Plan so that could be an agenda item. We can distribute changes then. Thank you all for your input. We can make some recommended changes and then get your feedback in a statement. If it warrants waiting for another meeting, that's fine. If people are satisfied with the changes, being able to forward it with a statement allows Council to make final determination.

Aaron: Wondering maybe we can set a deadline in a week or two weeks for comments, and then if no comments are received then it can continue to move forward. If not, we can take it up at the next interim board meeting. Anybody on the board have issues with that? If you have questions or comments to submit to Tiffany via email and cc: myself. If there's a density of comments, we'll take it up at the next meeting, if not we'll continue to move

forward?

Angela: Was the language going to be updated and you were going to send out a revision, or were you just going to leave it and just focus on specific parks for that issue?

Aaron: sounds like a combination that could be considered. One is adoption of language that would allow for designated areas, exemptions, or to keep language as is, or the other option, pulling it. Unless there was a fourth way?

Angela: Sounded to me like people would like to hear what the final decision is, what direction Tiffany and Roxanne decide to go, and then, I think hearing our feedback, you would figure out something that was workable. I know you have deadlines of when you are taking things to Council, but maybe you can send it out via email, or does it have to be in a meeting?

Aaron: If the board wants to make an official statement about a component of the language as written or recommending a change, that is the reason if we wanted to discuss it at another meeting.

Roxanne: We've got your feedback, we'll figure out how to incorporate that and send it out, but if there's anything requiring a vote it has to be done in a meeting, not via email.

Tiffany: Another option is that if you do want to move this forward and not hear it at a future meeting, you could make a motion today to adopt it with amendments to address horse waste, and then we can agree we're happy to send out that draft language in the next couple of weeks and receive any additional feedback but that would be coming from you as individuals, not as a full board.

Caleb: Were you hoping to have a vote tonight? Was that the original plan?

Tiffany: Yes, there isn't a hard and fast that Council is waiting on, but I have other things on my plate, and I'd like to move this forward.

Caleb: I would be comfortable that we adopt as presented with the opening for a carve out for horse waste.

Aaron: Caleb has put a motion on the table, is there a second? Dean Absher seconds.

Is there any further discussion?