

**MINUTES
CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
March 8, 2023**

Hollis Sutherland called the meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. at Carbondale Town Hall on March 8, 2023.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

Members:	Hollis Sutherland, Chair Susan Rhea, Member Drew Sorenson, Member Ashley Hejtmanek, Member Brian Soby, Alternate Misha Logan, Youth Member
Town Staff Present:	Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Center and Programs Manager Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Liaison Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk
Guests:	Becky Moller, 907 Wheel Circle

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Susan Rhea *moved* to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2023, meeting. Ashley Hejtmanek *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

ITEMS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

Becky Moller, 907 Wheel Circle, came before the Commission to inquire if the Friends of the Dog Park can apply wood chips to the trails this spring. She also updated the commission members regarding the Nature Park:

- The Nature Park is experiencing higher use, which is translating into a higher incidence of dog fights and rough play. Although she hasn't personally experienced any negative interactions, there seem to be a lot of anecdotal accounts.
- The Friends of the Dog Park would like to do more improvements and will begin monthly clean-ups in April.

Hollis noted that, although they have had some complaints regarding the Hendrick Dog Park, Becky is the first to relay this information regarding the Nature Park. She asked if there were times of day these negative interactions were occurring.

Becky wasn't sure, but related that the incident where a woman was accosted by another user of the park took place on a Friday morning. She added that the primary complaint seems to be people bringing a large number of dogs – three to five or more – which encourages a pack mentality. She pointed out that when the off-leash rule went into effect, she thought there was a limit of three dogs per person, but that isn't currently listed on the signage.

Susan wondered if another sign would make a difference.

Becky replied that she would like to see a bigger sign, but wasn't sure if people would read it. She also stated that people are not picking up after their dogs, noting that there is at least one town that requires all dogs to be permitted and they perform DNA tests on any dog waste that isn't picked up which then results in a fine. She suggested one option would be to require a pass to enter the park and the pass would be contingent upon dogs being able to follow simple commands, thereby weeding out the bad actors.

Susan asked if some of the Friends of the Dog Park might be willing to volunteer for ad hoc patrols of the park, acknowledging that it might not be possible to get enough participants to adequately cover the times the park is open.

Becky thought there might be some interest, but it was more likely if they were already at the park for a walk.

Eric suggested one strategy might be to flag all the places where people did not pick up their dog's waste – which is what Aspen did on the Smuggler Open Space – providing a visual representation of the issue that can then be photographed and included in a press release.

Luis asked what the penalty was for not cleaning up after your dog and suggested asking the Police Department to spend some time issuing citations. He pointed out that as the Town grows, more people will use the park increasing the potential for conflict and it is another example of a nice place getting loved to death.

Brian asked if there was any data reflecting these problems, adding that decisions shouldn't be made based on anecdotal information.

Becky replied that she has asked for police reports before and thought she could request that information again.

Luis cautioned that not everyone will report a problem and not all conflicts will result in a police report.

Becky reiterated her request to apply wood chips to the trails.

Eric replied that he has been approached by many groups with varied interests regarding the park's usage, noting that he has already received one plan and a budget to update the trails by raising the bed and covering them with crusher fines – acknowledging that this expense is not budgeted for 2023. He related that they broached the Master Plan process during the Board of Trustees work session and whether the Nature Park should be a stand-alone plan or combined with the other parks, and the feedback the Commission received was to consider both options but also realize the limitations of a volunteer advisory group. He didn't think a master plan would be pursued until after the pool project was completed. Eric agreed that if the Friends of the Dog Park can find a good source of wood chips, they can apply them this year.

Becky also asked Eric to inform her of the timeline for the chemical weed mitigation.

Hollis thanked Becky for bringing this issue to the Commission. She commented that the enforcement piece needs to get figured out.

Brian reiterated the need for data because they will then be able to track if situations are getting better or worse and it will back up policy decisions.

Hollis thought that was a good point, referring to CAFCI's desire to gather data about pedestrian issues along Highway 133, and wondered if the Parks & Recreation Commission couldn't do something similar with the dog parks.

Becky agreed to add that request to her email.

Susan suggested also taking a photograph of the situation.

Hollis suggested three to five questions:

- What time
- What day
- What happened
- How many dogs involved
- How many people involved
- What was the outcome

Brian thought it would be better to have appointed observers because if one person takes it upon themselves to report everything they see, it can skew the results.

Hollis asked Brian if he could write up an outline of an observer program to share at an upcoming meeting.

ROARING FORK OUTDOOR VOLUNTEERS 2022 IMPACT REPORT AND 2023 UPCOMING PROJECTS

Becca Schild, representing Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers, shared her screen to provide a recap of RFOV's 2022 season and update the Commission on upcoming 2023 programs and projects. She noted that they engage with volunteers for public land stewardship that supports sustainable recreation, a healthy landscape and fire adaptation. She noted that RFOV recently moved their office to the Third Street Center and also added staff positions. She listed some statistics regarding the 2022 season:

- 140 days were spent in the field
- They engaged with 85 project partners
- They interacted with 1,304 volunteers for a total of 6,534 volunteer hours
- Staff stewardship hours totaled 3,550
- In-kind value of volunteer contributions totaled \$195,693.00

Becca related that specific to Carbondale, RFOV hosted two community projects, 11 small group projects, seven youth projects, one training, and supported four adopt-a-trail groups. She added that RFOV contributed 249 staff hours and volunteers contributed 1,194 hours, for a total stewardship value of \$44,475.00. Becca went on to explain that the two community projects included the C-Line Trail Build – involving partners including the Town of Carbondale, Roaring Fork Mountain Bike Association, Red Hill Council, and Aspen Valley Land Trust which was a huge success -- and Coffman Ranch where RFOV assisted Aspen Valley Land Trust in invasive species management, new trail development and seeding. Becca noted that the 2022 group projects were sponsored by Basalt Bike & Ski, Independence Run & Hike, and Osmia Organics as part of their Adopt-A-Trail program, and added that youth projects involved the Summer Advantage Program, Ross Montessori School and Carbondale Community School among others.

Becca explained that in 2022, RFOV hired a fulltime, seasonal trail crew to facilitate several United States Forest Service backcountry projects that required a longer time commitment and technical expertise to satisfy the USFS requirements and funding. She noted that the trail crew also hosted three wilderness volunteer projects.

Becca described the 2023 upcoming projects:

- Three community projects that are scheduled for Tuesday evenings in May and will include work on the Mushroom Rock and Blue Ribbon trails (the trail crew will contribute four days of work on more technical trail building requirements), a Sutey Ranch fence pull, and more work at Coffman Ranch.
- There are seven Adopt-A-Trail organizations including Backbone Media, Basalt Bike & Ski, Carbondale Community School, Carbondale Rotary Club, Independence Run & Hike, Osmia Organics and Roaring Fork Waldorf School.
- Initiatives will include a volunteer chainsaw sawyer program, training on advanced restoration skills and fire mitigation strategies, and increasing the fulltime trail crew to five members to facilitate backcountry projects in the Maroon Bells and Hunter/Frying Pan Wilderness for three months.

Becca noted the pre-season registration for RFOV's supporters will open on March 20th followed by registration availability for the public on April 3rd. She expressed her appreciation to the Town of Carbondale for being a great partner.

Hollis commented that the valley is very fortunate to have RFOV and their contribution to trails maintenance.

Eric agreed and pointed out that the Town only employs one person for trail maintenance – and they have other responsibilities as well – so without RFOV's assistance, local trails would not be as well maintained as they are.

DEBRIEF BOARD OF TRUSTEE WORK SESSION

Hollis congratulated the commission members on being prepared and present during the Board of Trustees Work Session.

Eric commented that the outgoing Town Clerk said it was one of the best presentations from an advisory board that she had observed.

Susan noted that the BOT recommended a timeline for the Nature Park Master Plan that was sooner than the completion of the aquatics facility.

Hollis pointed out that that is also incumbent upon the group's ability to devote time and energy to the project.

Drew acknowledged Brian's point from the Nature Park discussion and suggested gathering data now so they would have that in-hand for the Master Plan. He suggested forming a subcommittee and volunteered to be a part of it.

Luis referred to the Multi-Modal Mobility and Access Plan that the Bike, Pedestrian and Trails Commission is overseeing and suggested that, similar to that endeavor, the Parks & Recreation Commission might consider allocating money in a future budget to hire a consultant for the Nature Park (or multiple parks) Master Plan. He pointed out that a hired consultant might then be able to identify and procure the data necessary to formulate future strategies.

Ashley agreed with Luis and noted that it's important to find something about the project that would appeal to a consultant and one strategy would be to combine it with another effort – such as the pool – to reach the broader community rather than the just the users of a single park. She wondered if trail counters were available because that would provide a more accurate user count.

Hollis wondered if the park were posted on various webpages and if there was a way to determine how many community users versus visitors there were.

Eric thought they might be able to use an infra-red counter similar to the ones they use at Red Hill. He commented that they work well, but they would need a narrow section of trail as a pass-through because the counter only read six or eight feet.

Ashley suggested counting vehicles, as well, because there might also be greater demand for parking as time goes on. She asked if there was more going on at the park than the Commission is aware of.

Eric explained that he has been hearing from different groups regarding different visions of the park. He referred to Leslie's presentation at the BOT Work Session and thought she summed up the varying, and possibly competing, interests that want to utilize the park.

Ashley pointed out that a final discussion point was regarding fundraising and engaging a foundation, but thought they need to plan for the next step after that.

AQUATIC FACILITY UPDATE: RFP. RECRUITMENT

Eric related that the bids for the Architectural Design Services and Construction Manager at Risk were due yesterday (March 7th). He informed the commission members that they received four responses for the design services and three responses for the Construction Manager at Risk and was happy with the response because it bodes well for a competitive process. He noted that WEMBER will put each response through a decision matrix and develop a recommendation.

Eric also let the commission members know that they interviewed two prospective candidates for the Aquatics Coordinator but didn't find a good fit. He added that they will do more outreach and extend the position advertisement for another month, but pointed out that a coordinator will need to be hired by the end of March in order to open the pool at the beginning of the season.

Susan asked why it isn't possible to phase the construction process, pointing out that responses on recent RFPs have been considerably higher than the anticipated cost. She also asked for clarification on the process for paying off the bond and how much that is costing the Town each month.

Eric responded that each of the aquatic facility components is related, and they all need to be installed at the same time, with the exception of the splash pad. He added that the bond process is complicated, and there isn't a straight-forward answer to Susan's question.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

Hollis acknowledged that she hasn't had any previous experience and through her research, found the Capital Campaign Pros website. She noted that the material included in the packet will be used to guide the discussion. She asked if any of the other commission members have had experience with a capital campaign.

Drew replied that Blue Lake Preschool is currently engaged in a capital campaign, but they were fortunate to have a parent with experience take on the role of capital campaign manager.

Ashley explained that she has assisted with a capital campaign, mostly in the form of support and developing naming protocols.

Luis noted that his role in the Aspen Art Museum capital campaign was similar to Ashley's.

Hollis asked what the commission members thought was their biggest challenge and/or biggest strength for the aquatic's facility capital campaign.

Ashley replied that leadership was the biggest challenge.

Drew agreed with Ashley and pointed out that Blue Lake's capital campaign manager is relying on long-term connections. He asked if there was a specific amount in mind, noting that 75% of campaign funds are raised before it goes public.

Ashley noted that the same names are often seen on a lot of donor lists.

Hollis listed the Commission's perceived weaknesses including limited experience, narrow bandwidth, the short construction timeline and lack of connections. She also listed the Commission's strengths including strong support from the community, Board of Trustees, and Town staff, and that Carbondale is located in a very affluent valley.

Susan asked if Blue Lake's major donors were parents.

Drew replied that most only had a peripheral connection to the school.

Susan commented that she was impressed with how much is involved and how important it is to have connections, noting that Aspen Community Foundation would have provided that. She thought that as much as \$4,000,000.00 might need to be raised.

Hollis replied that one facet is finding people with passion and they need to forge a path forward.

Ashley asked if there was anyone that could take on the role of capital campaign manager.

Drew committed to asking the Blue Lake capital campaign manager her point of view.

Susan asked if there was a mailing list of pool advocates available.

Margaret replied that there is a list of community members with pool memberships as well as those who participated in the survey.

Eric commented that anything on the campaign readiness tool that is a "no" or "not sure" is indicative of what they need to strengthen before they launch a fundraising campaign including:

- An individual that can contribute 25% of the campaign goal
- Well-cultivated and involved donors
- 20 potential sources of lead gifts
- Gift acceptance policy
- Complete capital projections and budget

Eric suggested seeking more information from a consultant for next steps.

Brian suggested stepping back and confer with organizations or fundraising platforms and see what partners they might suggest that can help a government organization leverage the platform for greatest success.

Hollis thought she could reach out to Aspen Community Foundation and see to what tasks they might be able to help with.

Susan wondered if the Board of Trustees might be able to identify those initial donors.

Luis replied that the BOT might be able to help once they get into the feasibility phase. He noted that those large initial donations might come from wealthy residents living in or around Carbondale and added that most community members aren't going to fit into that role. He pointed out that they might need to consider a professional fundraiser because many of the tasks combine for a fulltime job. He added that money might need to be spent to garner the necessary donations.

Hollis asked who might be interested in participating, noting initial tasks include compiling a list of people to participate on the fundraising committee, compiling a list of potential donors, creating information packets and developing a naming protocol.

Brian volunteered to help develop a tracking system.

Luis commented that when the Aspen Art Museum capital campaign kicked off, employees were highly encouraged to contribute.

Ashley suggested using a big up-front donation as a matching fund.

YOUTH PARKS & RECREATION MEMBER DISCUSSION

Hollis explained that Misha asked what he might do to help find a new Youth member.

Misha commented that he planned to announce the vacancy during the weekly school announcements and asked for other suggestions.

Eric noted that regarding the Parks & Recreation request for code changes for onboarding new members, the Town Manager and mayor are reviewing all of the volunteer boards and commissions processes and that discussion is scheduled for the first BOT meeting in April. He thought they should still be able to advertise the vacancies prior to changing the bylaws and noted that, depending upon the timing, Misha could resign and a new Youth member could be appointed in the same meeting without breaking the by-laws.

Hollis suggested that Misha could announce the vacancy at Student Council or at a student assembly.

Susan wondered if he should reach out to schools other than Roaring Fork High School.

Misha thought he could reach out to Colorado Rocky Mountain School – although many of the students are in Carbondale for the summer – and Bridges High School.

Drew suggested investigating whether there is a mock government class because those students might already be interested in government process.

HIGHWAY 133 IRRIGATION RFP INFORMATION

Eric explained that the lowest bid for the Highway 133 irrigation RFP was twice the budgeted amount despite the fact that they purchased the pump in 2022 and the estimated cost was based upon a past project plus 30%. He noted that Grand Junction Pipe had designed the project and they explained that costs have risen more than 45%. He added that they are still discussing the project with the low bidder regarding options and value engineering. Eric referred to the photos in the packet, pointing out that they can still install the pump and irrigate Glassier and the Jail and Cabin History Parks and the greenspace down to the Third Street Center. He explained that the remaining individual islands fronting the residences are challenging because the irrigation heads often get driven over and the best long-term strategy might be to convert those islands to dryscape or artificial turf. He assured the commission

members that a landscape architect would be enlisted to design a visually pleasing and zero maintenance dryscape.

Ashley replied that watering those individual islands isn't the most responsible use of water, but pointed out that whatever is designed it still needs to be able to absorb water.

Eric noted that he will also be meeting with the Environmental Board "Bee Friendly Carbondale" committee next week. He explained his hesitancy to put wildflower gardens in those islands because in his experience it promotes a lot more weed growth compared to turf that chokes many noxious weeds out.

Drew advised avoiding the artificial turf.

REPORT & UPDATES: STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director:

- The Master Plans have been updated on the Parks & Recreation website: <https://www.carbondalerec.com/rec-misc/master-plans/>
- Groups contracting to use play fields include Roaring Fork Soccer Club, Three Rivers Little League, Yewflow Biking Camps, and Ajax Adventure Camp.
- Crystal River Restoration Project received one bid from Redoubt Construction at an acceptable cost. He is finalizing all the paperwork for the grants; Pitkin County Healthy Rivers is going to do a site visit prior to making a decision on funding.
- They have purchased two types of swing wear mats and are testing them out side-by-side.
- Hendricks Playground equipment replacement is scheduled to begin May 15th; the project will take approximately two weeks.
- A concrete pad will be poured on April 19th at the Ramey-Harvey Park prior to installing the benches Carbondale Age-Friendly Community Initiative donated.
- The Memorandum of Understanding for the Wild West Rodeo Series and parking solutions will be presented for consideration at the March 20th Garfield County Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Programs and Facility Manager:

- There were 53 teams registered for Puzzle and Pie night; 51 teams showed. First and second place were separated by three puzzle pieces with finishing times of 55 minutes 34 seconds and 55 minutes 43 seconds, respectively. Third and fourth place were separated by ten puzzle pieces.
- Youth basketball wrapped up last week.
- Broomball also finished and youth hockey was extended for a few weeks. Both ice rinks are now closed.
- Ongoing Rec Center programming includes youth climbing, regular fitness classes, scheduled Blood Drive on the first Wednesday of every month, mobile vaccine clinic also comes every month. Indoor Pickleball, the Pickleball Ladder League and adult volleyball are also ongoing .
- Green is the New Black takes place this week and two Quincenearas are scheduled for May and August. Birthday parties will begin soon, and they have hired two additional Front Desk staff to help with those activities.
- Summer youth hike permits are due to the Forest Service on March 15th.
- The next Older Adult trip is planned for March 12th; it will be a Grand Junction shopping trip.
- Registration for youth baseball and softball will open soon. Youth dodgeball is taking place through March.
- The first weekend in April will be very busy: Spring into Wellness and the Healin' Hoof It 5k will take place on First Friday, and Find My Peeps is scheduled on Saturday, April 8th.

ADJOURNMENT

The March 8, 2023, meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald