

MINUTES
CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
April 14, 2021

Hollis Sutherland called the virtual meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 14, 2021.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

Members:	Hollis Sutherland, Chair Rose Rossello, Vice Chair John Williams, Member Kathleen Wanatowicz, Member Becky Moller, Member Ashley Hejtmanek, Member Tracy Wilson, Member Brian Soby, Alternate Celeste Fullerton, Youth Member
Town Staff Present:	Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director Jessi Rochel, Recreation Center & Recreation Programs Manager Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Liaison Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Tracy *moved* to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2021 meeting. Rose *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND SPECIAL EVENT CALENDAR CHANGES

Eric updated the commission members on Rec Center newsletter items:

- Where My Peeps Scavenger Hunt had 23 teams with 106 participants. The scavenger hunt led the teams through the Town of Carbondale parks, including several of the lesser-known parks,
- 5Point Earth Day Pop-Up Show is coming up on April 22 and 23. It will be set up as a drive-in theater at Roaring Fork High School,
- Upcoming youth classes include Early Release tennis and pickleball in May, and youth climbing in April and May (April classes are full),
- The next Blood Drive is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28th from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm,
- The Parks & Recreation Department is hiring a parks seasonal employee, and Margaret is hiring lifeguards and swim instructors,
- A new class—Introduction to Gardening—will be offered through Demeter’s Garden. It is free and will be bilingual.

Eric noted that since the BOT approved the Special Events calendar in January, there have been quite a few changes. He urged the commission members to review the updated calendar included in the meetings’ packet and highlighted some of the changes including:

- Festival Las Americas, Pedaleando, and the Bonedale Skate Revival have cancelled their events,
- Because so many events are shifting to September and October, Celtic Fest and Oktoberfest were cancelled to free up room on the calendar,
- The Garden Concert Series will host three events at Thompson Park,
- Tri for the Sun is a sprint triathlon that is scheduled for early June,
- Dance Initiative Dance Performance has also scheduled a performance at the Thompson House in August.

Questions/Comments:

Luis asked if the sponsors of the Garden Concert Series were aware of the upcoming construction at the Thompson Park subdivision. Eric indicated that the sponsors were aware of the issue and added that construction activities must end by 7 pm, so the concerts are scheduled to begin after that time.

Rose asked how the current Covid dial will apply to the upcoming events. Eric noted that under Level Yellow there can be up to 175 people in an outdoor, unseated event; Level Blue expands that number significantly. He also noted that on April 16th, Covid protocols revert to local control and it is possible protocols may be lifted entirely.

ITEMS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

Margaret Mathers (116 8th Street, Carbondale) lives near Sopris Park and has noted a lot of dogs in the park despite the presence of numerous signs informing the public that dogs aren't allowed in the park. She asked the commission members if there was some way to achieve a better result such as humorous signs or an education campaign that included articles in the paper explaining why dogs aren't allowed in some parks.

Tracy asked if there was any signage that directed people to the Carbondale Nature Park.

Hollis agreed with Margaret and noted that she has also observed numerous dogs and occasionally confrontational owners as she walks through Sopris Park.

Becky noted that there are similar issues with Carbondale Nature Park, which she intends on addressing later in the meeting—and that there needs to be a discussion about enforcement.

Kathleen asked if this was something that needs to be brought to the attention of other TOC departments, especially if there is an education campaign. She added that she prefers the separation between parks that do and don't allow dogs.

Rose pointed out that she has counted at least 17 various signs in Sopris Park. She agreed with Kathleen and suggested the topic be added to a later agenda for a more in-depth discussion.

Brian asked whether there was "traceability" to the original requirement and the problems it was intended to address with the original rules.

Becky noted that the primary reason was for public health issues and that dogs were never allowed in Town of Carbondale parks until the Carbondale Nature Park and Hendricks dog parks were created.

Eric added that Sopris Park hosts a lot of large public events and many of the parks have youth-oriented athletic fields which aren't compatible with dogs. He added that that is what drove the creation of the Carbondale Nature Park.

Luis suggested bringing the topic up during the Parks & Recreation Work Session with the BOT. He also suggested trying education first and if that doesn't work, then bring in law enforcement.

Eric noted that there are 37 regulatory signs in and around Sopris Park.

Rose suggested a "Scoop your Poop" campaign.

Tracy thought this would be a good agenda item for next month's meeting. She also prefers having some "no dog" parks and pointed out that a "Scoop your Poop" campaign would be a lot of work. She noted that in the past it took very specific action by the police department to reduce the dog presence in TOC parks and added that the inventory of parks for dogs has increased.

Brian suggested trying to mitigate very specific negative effects through the enforcement of universally accepted norms like picking up poop and keeping dogs on leashes.

Ashley noted she shared Margaret's perspective that education is important. She pointed out that oftentimes signage is visible clutter, and she suggested the use of temporary yard signs that are more visible and can be changed frequently.

John suggested a fine for not picking up after your dog. He agreed that education is the solution and suggested tying in where dogs are allowed and addressing aggressive dogs.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SECTION 7 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE FOR PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Hollis explained to the commission members that her thoughts and language changes are included in the packet item for this topic. She stated that her goal was to try to clearly state the process. She took out the youth member terms and alternate member voting privileges in the first paragraph and moved the length of terms to a later paragraph. She wondered if it was necessary to state the term length for the youth commissioner and questioned if it really needed to be different than the other commission terms. She added that she spoke with the Capstone director and the Capstone timeframe may be more fluid than the commission appointment. Hollis also noted that because the Secretary seemed like an unnecessary position, she eliminated references to it. She also asked for opinions on term limits for the Chair.

Questions/Comments:

Tracy noted that having the youth commissioner position available for a Capstone project is helpful, but thought it was important to state the term length. She advocated for a one-year term because three years is a longtime for a high school student to commit. She thought that the Parks & Recreation Commission could do a better job marketing the position. She agreed that term limits for the Chair would be helpful to encourage fresh perspectives.

Ashley thought that the proposed changes were well-stated, and she supports the changes.

John also liked the changes and thought that a one-year term for the youth commissioner would be a good idea. He thought that two consecutive terms for the Chair was a good time frame and thought that even though it might not be necessary to have a secretary, it should be stated somewhere who is doing the secretary's job. John suggested that if there are two alternates, it could be specified that one alternate votes on odd months and the other on even months, if needed.

Hollis noted that everyone seems to agree it is important to state the length of the youth commissioner term and that a one-year term is the consensus.

Eric wondered if that would hamstring the capstone process.

Hollis tended to agree and explained that the Capstone director indicated there are two ways that the student could use their experience on the Parks & Recreation Commission: 1) the student's experience on the Commission enhances their capstone project, or 2) the skills learned by participating on the Commission enhances their project.

Celeste pointed out that proposals for their Capstone project are due in April/May of their Junior year and they present their projects in May of their Senior year.

Tracy reiterated Celeste's comment concerning the Capstone planning/presentation schedule. She also suggested that Trustee Liaison be used consistently and should replace "ex officio."

Brian suggested that before promoting term limits, commission members should be cognizant of recruiting challenges and should therefore couch terms as favorably as possible to encourage participation.

Becky wondered why term limits were being proposed.

Hollis explained that in her experience people won't challenge someone who has been in a leadership role or on a commission for a long time. She added that the Town Manager was hoping to encourage more people to develop skills necessary to serve on not only advisory commissions, but the Board of Trustees, as well. Term limits on the Chair would facilitate more people gaining those skills.

Rose agreed with Brian and stated that she is against term limits for the Chair--she noted it takes a long time to figure out the process. She agreed that the Commission could do a better job advertising for positions.

Kathleen asked what specifically was being decided.

Eric stated that he was hoping to have some changes that could be discussed at next week's BOT Work Session.

Hollis noted that the meeting was running behind schedule and suggested coming back to this topic if there is time.

OUTLINE FOR TRUSTEE 2021 WORK SESSION REVIEW SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 20TH

Eric is planning a comprehensive overview of the Parks and Recreation Department work plan and budget goals specific to maintenance needs, potential grants, and master plan goals. He will also add the concerns about dogs in town parks to the presentation. Eric invited all commission members that are available to attend.

Hollis asked if Eric could present the Parks and Recreation Commission Master Calendar, as well.

RV PARK MASTER PLAN

Eric noted that Kathleen had asked for this topic to be placed on the agenda to look at the language in the RV Park Master Plan. He noted that the plan was approved eight years ago, and it is a thorough plan with good content and intent.

Kathleen explained that she has been thinking about ways to create revenue for the pool and with camping having grown exponentially in the last year, she wondered if the RV Park might be transferred to a vendor to increase revenues.

Eric added that the Master Plan, in combination with the Colorado Parks & Wildlife easement for the boat launch, stipulates permitted activities and restrictions. He pointed out that the GOCO legacy grant (which funded 47% of the purchase price) also encumbers how the property is managed. He went on to explain that there are other ways to increase revenue such as charging a fee to use the boat ramp if the user doesn't have an active CPW fishing license, but the costs to hire someone to collect the fees would probably offset any revenue gains. Eric's final point was that the RV Park is currently breaking even and as the Town catches up with the deferred maintenance, it will become the enterprise fund as envisioned.

Questions/Comments:

Brian noted that he spent time as a camper at the RV Park and has spent time in many other RV Parks across the country. In his perspective the Town could double the rates of camping spaces and not lose many reservations—largely because camping opportunities are extremely limited in the valley and the RV Park is close to Carbondale, the Rio Grande Trail, and the Roaring Fork River among other selling points. He thought that challenges to booking were the two-week stay maximum—which should be maintained—and the necessity of booking six months in advance because it is so popular. He added that the Town could face some backlash if a fee is charged for using the boat launch.

Tracy commented that the RV Park is a work in progress, and it would be foolish to hand it over to a vendor; however, it might be a good exercise to study the costs of hiring a vendor. She thought Brian's point about increasing the charge for a reservation should be considered.

Kathleen noted that she was not advocating the sale of the RV Park, but also agreed with Brian's points to bring the RV Park into position to contribute to the Enterprise Fund.

Becky pointed out that the Enterprise Fund has always been the goal and the conversation the Commission should be having is how to increase revenues.

Luis also thought it would be a good idea to raise rates and wondered if it was too late to raise them for the upcoming season.

Eric responded that raising rates would have to go through a benchmarking process, so any rate increase would

be for 2022. He also noted that reservations have been made for the last six months and it would be difficult on staff to make changes with the RV Park set to open on May 1st.

P & R COMMISSION 2021 WORKING MASTER CALENDAR

This topic was tabled until the May meeting.

REPORT & UPDATES: STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director: All current work is listed on the 30/60/90-day calendar and he urged commission members to review the calendar and contact him with any questions.

Jessi Rochel, Recreation Center & Recreation Programs Manager: Jessi noted that the Rec Center updates were presented earlier in the meeting.

Becky Moller, Parks & Recreation Commission Member: Becky and Ashley Garan conducted an informal survey for ten days at the Carbondale Nature Park. Repeated topics gleaned from the survey:

- There is one dog that has had repeated aggressive interactions with numerous other dogs. There have been attempts to educate the owners and Becky is hoping they are making headway because she saw them picking up after their dog one day,
- 45% of surveyed dog owners would be interested in a free dog etiquette class,
- Safety is the number one concern; Becky suggested moving the picnic table away from the park entrance to help cut down on the number of negative interactions,
- Muddy trails are also a concern.

The Friends of the Dog Park would like to undertake an education campaign to raise awareness concerning dog etiquette and safety. She has discussed this with the Two Rivers Community Foundation, and they have agreed to act as the fiscal agent, so the Friends of the Dog Park doesn't have to apply for 501(c)3 status. The Friends of the Dog Park would like to build a kiosk and undertake a fun PR campaign. She would also like to add this topic to the next meeting's agenda to revisit dog policies and get some commitment from the police department on enforcement.

Rose Rossello, Parks & Recreation Commission Vice-Chair: Rose pointed out that the swings are still not fixed, and she would really like the Parks & Recreation Department maintenance staff to address this issue. Eric pointed out that the swing set is from 1982 and certain parts are no longer available. He has also had internal conversations about this issue and the swings are to code, but he will make a point of trying to get them fixed.

ADJOURNMENT

The April 14, 2021, regular meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald