

Local

Parks & Rec: Proposal for BMX bike track in the works

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Monday evening the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board met with board members Linda Collins, Gail Duman, Lisa Jacoby, Rick Taylor, Jeff Nelson and Mayor Kim Mosier in attendance.

Mike Clark was absent and staff liaison, Joyce Bornstedt noted that Clark had in essence indicated his departure from the Board in a conversation earlier.

They briefly discussed the Leo Adler Fitness Zone installed along the parkway at Kirkway and "H" Street. "It is completed except for the sponsor sign," Taylor advised the board.

The Baker City Lions sponsored the Fitness Zone. Taylor noted he has heard very positive comments about the space.

Bornstedt advised, "I have had a couple of inquiries about the project cost. There are some other entities that are interested in continuing that on further down the pathway so I need to get that info."

Taylor mentioned the "Adopt a Pathway" project that has had no movement and indicated he would like to see something happen with that in the very near future. He stated he would be drafting some info regarding the project in the next few weeks. The Board then addressed school play equipment.

The proposal is to move play equipment from North Baker School that is no longer being used; however, the issue was raised that it may need to remain as a neighborhood amenity. There was also mention that the play equipment at the high school, used for kindergarten students when kindergarten classes were held there, can't be moved due to safety concerns.

"If there are events like track meets, it is nice to have for younger kids to play on," Bornstedt said.



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Jared Johnson addressed the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

They then discussed the vegetation management plan. It was noted that the plan had been voted on and accepted by the City Council. "We are filling out forms like we were asked and our contractor has been receptive to the changes. I ordered new signs that are more visible," Bornstedt said.

Several Board members said that signs were definitely more visible.

Bornstedt said, "I have received in the mail more information from Ms. De Torre, the main advocate, that I forwarded to Michelle (Owen, Public Works Director) because she has been the one corresponding with her. She also is the only person that had requested to be on the notification list (before spraying is done)."

It was requested that volunteers assist with weed pulling by hand in lieu of spraying but no volunteers stepped forward and so currently there are none.

In an effort to put a positive spin on things Mosier said, "Maybe they are out there doing it on their own."

The board all weighed in saying they had toured the park where the "pilot" no spray initiative was launched and without volunteers the success of the project was unlikely, but they would see what

happens in the spring through the summer. "A big difference" is expected to be seen.

Mosier indicated before and after pictures would have been a good idea in hindsight, and indicated she may go out and take some on the next sunny day. The Board toured city parks recently and all found the tour useful, gaining ideas for improvements and changes.

The new business item on the agenda for conceptual plans came out of the tours. The board then moved on to the new business portion of their agenda. First up the board was addressed by Jared Johnson who is proposing a BMX bike track.

Johnson, owner of Flagstaff on Main Street is also a cyclist and a member of the non-profit organization Baker Loves Bikes.

His proposal is for property that is currently for sale along the Leo Adler parkway at "D" street.

He notes that the area is "very visible and patrolled by the City Police frequently" deterring from unsavory behavior.

He indicated the track would be extremely low maintenance, the use alone would be weed control and inexpensive to create, a bobcat could easily in a matter of hours move around dirt to create the "pump track."

Discussion was had over the property and the board indicated to Johnson that they did not think they could advocate for any new property as it had been directed to them by the citizens of this community that the board was to maintain and improve what they already had plus budget issues also could be an issue.

Johnson suggested that he work with Baker Loves Bikes in an effort to secure a grant to purchase the property.

Bornstedt advised, as was the case with the bandstand, property or projects could be secured by another entity and created then donated to the City and in the case of a BMX bike track little City maintenance would be required. Johnson even tossed out an idea of creating a youth/High School bike organization that would use and maintain the track.

The Board agreed that this was a great idea for our community and supported Johnson's idea directing him to talk with the Baker Loves Bikes board and get back to them with more solid information, once a better picture of the project was developed they could then approach City Council regarding the idea.

The board also suggested he look at property directly across "D" street from where he was proposing as usable space as it was already City-owned property and would be really easy to develop into this project. Johnson said he would consider that option but the property the City owned was really "skinny and might now allow for the turns needed very well."

He indicated that reason as to why the other property he was suggesting was more desirable. Johnson also suggested making a small park-like area along the pathway there to allow for families to stop and enjoy while another family member uses the "pump track."

After Johnson's proposal the board moved on to talk about plans for both Cedar Acres park between Idlewood and Park Streets and River Park by the High School. Jeff Nelson indicated he had heard a great deal of opposition in changing much at River Park.

The Board thought the idea of having a neighborhood BBQ to invite those that would see a direct impact with any changes made to those parks to be a good idea.

More about this idea will be discussed at the next meeting.

Historical books now online

Oregonians and other historians are now able to harvest information about hundreds of historical books and studies in an online History and Archaeology Library created by the Oregon Heritage division of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

"During the past five decades, we have received hundreds of studies and reports about historic and pre-historic places in Oregon," said Chrissy Curran, manager of Oregon Heritage and the deputy state historic preservation officer. "We've worked so that the public can now have easy access to these documents as well as the titles of other books that have been published since the 1950s."

Organized by county, the online History and Archaeology Library also includes links to lists of historic cemeteries and National Register sites in the counties. There are also links to the State Archives location guides to government records in each county.

"We have also included links to digital projects that we have supported with our grant programs," said Kyle Jansson, coordinator of the Oregon Heritage Commission. "For example, we link to the historic photos digitized in a joint project of the Albany Regional Museum and the Albany Public Library. Another link is to historic land survey maps digitized by Baker County."

The History and Archaeology Library also includes listings and links of other regional and statewide resources related to history and archaeology, and history research guides. Oregon Heritage will continue to add studies and book listings to the online library as they are received.

"We want researchers who know about other work to let us know of its existence," said Ian Johnson, manager of the State Historic Preservation Office. "We want researchers to think of this as the first place to go when they are gathering information."

The History and Archaeology Library is located at <http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/RESRCH/pages/histarch.aspx>

The Oregon Heritage division includes the State Historic Preservation Office, the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries, the Oregon Heritage Commission, and the Oregon Main Street Program. Its website is www.oregonheritage.org

Baker City man charged in Grant County wolf shooting

Brennon Witty, 25, of Baker City, confessed to authorities in Grant County last month that he'd accidentally shot a wolf, mistaking it for a coyote while hunting.

Though the incident happened in Grant County, the District Attorney there recused himself to avoid a conflict of interest with the family. The case was moved to Harney County, and this week, Witty was charged with the killing of the wolf, and with hunting with a centerfire rifle without a tag.

Both charges are Class A misdemeanors, and each one punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$6,250 fine.

Though wolves were listed as endangered species at the time of the shooting, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to delist them at the beginning of this month. The change will not affect the penalties involved, as penalties for a wolf kill have remained the same with some commissioners even pushing for stronger penalties.

Witty's arraignment is scheduled for Dec. 2 of this year.

Free Christmas tree permits for children

This year, Smokey Bear and Santa Claus are teaming up to bring some holiday cheer to fourth graders across the country! As part of the national Every Kid in a Park initiative, the U.S. Forest Service is excited to announce that all fourth graders are eligible for a free holiday tree permit from their local national forest.

Every Kid in a Park is a national effort to encourage children to visit national parks, forests, and public lands. In November and December, the Forest Service is promoting winter recreation on national forests, holiday tree permits, and the annual Capitol Christmas Tree campaign.

In order for students to receive a free tree permit, they must present a valid paper voucher printed from the Every Kid in a Park website.

Step 1: Visit www.everykidinapark.gov and follow instructions to obtain the paper voucher. Step 2: Print out the paper voucher. Step 3: Bring the paper voucher to a National Forest office to claim the free permit.

Regular Christmas tree permits for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will be available Friday, November 20 at Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Offices in Baker, La Grande and Joseph, and Wednesday November 25 at several local businesses

Vending machines with maps and Christmas tree permits are available 24 hours at Forest Service offices in Baker City, Joseph and La Grande.

Saint Alphonus Foundation—Baker City
Invites you to . . .

Festival of Trees 2015

Preview Among The Trees

Thursday, December 3, 2015

6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$15 per person

Hors d'oeuvres

No-host Bar

Silent Auction

Gala

Friday, December 4, 2015

5:30 p.m.—11:00 p.m.

Cocktails 5:30 p.m. ~ Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$55 per person

Buffet Sit Down Dinner

No-host Bar

Silent & Live Auction

Following the auction, dance to the live music of "Colorblind"

Events are held at the Baker County Event Center—2600 East Street Baker City, Oregon

☞ Tickets Available at Betty's Books, The Sycamore Tree and Saint Alphonus Medical Center—Baker City

Family Day—Saturday, December 5, 2015

Viewing of the Trees

"Make It, Take It" ~ Sponsored by Crossroads Art Center

Photos with Santa ~ Sponsored by Baker City Kiwanis

For more information contact
Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

 Saint Alphonus
Foundation
BAKER CITY