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**COOS BAY  
PARKS COMMISSION MINUTES  
February 27, 2020**

5 Staff Member Dixon opened the works session on the above date in the City of Coos Bay  
6 Conference Room located at 500 Central Ave., at 3:00 p.m.

7 Members Present: Bev Meyers, Patty Scott, Bill Otton, and Bill Davis.

8 Members Absent: Arian Lyons, Sam Crowley, Shaun Gibbs, and Carmen Matthews

9 Staff Present: Operations Administrator, Randy Dixon, and Kelli Burnette

10 Guests Present: Jim Behrends

11 **DISCUSSION REGARDING EMPIRE LAKES MASTER PLAN**

12 Staff Member Dixon provided a recap of the status of the Empire Lakes bridge and explained the  
13 need for a master plan just for Empire Lakes. Staff Member Dixon briefly discussed potential  
14 grants and that development of the master plan could qualify as a grant expense and that part of  
15 this process would be to obtain citizen input, conducting surveys, hiring consultants, etc.  
16

17 A discussion commenced about the original trails being developed by Southwestern Oregon  
18 Community College students back in the 1970s and the fact that John Topits Park land was donated  
19 as natural area.  
20

21 The Commission asked Staff to locate a copy of the deed in order to review restrictions, etc.  
22

23 A discussion commenced regarding the removal of dangerous trees and the Topits family generally  
24 being supportive of thinning trees/bushes out a ground floor, but not of 'clearing'.  
25

26 Staff Member Dixon closed the work session portion of the meeting and called the regular session  
27 to order at 3:30 p.m.

28 **APPROVE THE JANUARY 16, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

29 Approval of the minutes was tabled until the March 19, 2020 meeting.

30 **CITIZEN INPUT**

31 Mr. Behrends stated he is very interest in the development of a master plan for Empire Lakes as  
32 well as the deed. Mr. Behrends stated he has been working the Community Coalition of Empire  
33 and is looking for feedback regarding small scale forestry education demonstration plots in Empire  
34 Lakes that would identify species with identification tags, a possible hydro-power project, and  
35 fishing piers in order to draw more people to Empire Lakes.

36 Mr. Behrends also commented that softball/baseball fields would also be a great addition to Empire  
37 Lakes if allowed by deed.

38 Mr. Behrends requested Staff and/or the Commission to inventory ballfields and what would be  
39 needed to develop a program for tournaments.

40 Staff Member Dixon stated he could try to identify anything that could create development barriers  
41 and that he recalled Mr. Topits wanting to keep the park in its natural state. Staff Member Dixon  
42 also commented that he will be reaching out to Mr. Behrends when the Commission and Staff are  
43 working on the Empire Lakes Master Plan, that he thinks Mr. Behrends has some good ideas.

44 A discussion commenced about making Empire Lakes a place where people feel welcome and  
45 safe.

46 Jim Behrends commented that he feels it has gotten better in the last 18 months and Staff Member  
47 Dixon commented on the partnership the City has with the Coos Forest Patrol in using the park  
48 property for training which involves tree thinning and that major progress has been established  
49 through that partnership in the last three years.

50 **EASTSIDE SRTS TO SCHOOL UPDATE**

51 Staff Member Dixon reported the Eastside SRTS project will be starting in the next few weeks  
52 and that more information will be coming out about project as a whole including traffic controls,  
53 detours, etc.

54 **MINGUS POND FISHING PIER UPDATE**

55 Staff Member Dixon provided a brief recap on the Mingus Pond Fishing Pier and park rehab  
56 project. Staff Member Dixon reported that while the project has been vetted with ODFW that they  
57 do not have the funds this year, which means the City can apply for the grant next year and because  
58 the parks grant was going to be the City's match to the ODFW grant, that both grants will be  
59 applied for next spring when ODFW funding is available and the project will move forward at that  
60 time.

61 **POSSIBLE LOCATION FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT**

62 Staff Member Dixon showed the Commission two potential park development locations, both off  
63 of Ocean Blvd., and that he wants to discuss pros and cons of both locations at the next meeting,  
64 which at that point, he will ask the Commission for a motion should they wish to proceed with one  
65 of these locations.

66 **COMMISSIONER/STAFF CLOSING COMMENTS**

67 A discussion commenced regarding the Mingus Park Fishing Pier and playground rehab project  
68 and the Empire Lakes Master Plan being completed by 2023 when next Parks Master Plan is due.  
69

70 A discussion commenced regarding the Rails to Trails program and that a local group has  
71 mentioned developing a bike trail from Coos Bay to Coquille, which would not likely be supported  
72 by the Port.  
73

74 Staff member Dixon recapped the recent pothole filling for the City and a discussion commenced  
75 about there not being a structural base under the City's infrastructure.

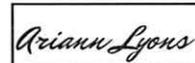
76 **ADJOURNMENT**

77 There being no further business to come before the Parks Commission, by consensus of the Parks  
78 Commission, Staff Member Dixon adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.  
79

80 **APPROVED BY THE PARKS COMMISSION ON THE 20<sup>th</sup> DAY OF AUGUST 2020.**

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82  
83  
84 Attest:

  
Kelli Burnette, Staff

  
dotloop verified  
08/24/20 11:18 AM PDT  
DQEM-SVB8-FPE4-4Y2R

Ariann Lyons, Chair