

MINUTES & APPROVED NOTICE OF BOARD ACTION



LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

This document, upon approval in a public meeting by the Board of County Commissioners, serves as official minutes of such meetings as required under the Open Meetings Law, ORS 192.650.

Pursuant to notice made by mailing agendas to news media, a selected list of jurisdictions and individuals in Lane County, a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held.

Questions should be directed to The Board Office Specialist 3, ext. 4203.

April 15, 1997
6:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Public Works Maint. Room
3040 N. Delta Hwy., Eugene

Chair Cindy Weeldreyer presided with Steve Cornacchia, Ellie Dumdi (arrived at 6:40 p.m.), and Peter Sorenson present. Bobby Green, Sr. excused. Vonnie Rainwater, Recording Secretary.

FUTURE OF BROWN'S LANDING

Bob Keefer, Parks Manager, provided background on Brown's Landing indicating that the Parks Advisory Committee and the Brown's Landing Task Force developed options and recommendations on the future of Brown's Landing. Keefer stated that there are three main issues: 1) Site improvements and continued maintenance of Brown's Landing, 2) road access to Brown's Landing, and 3) find a way to maintain the road with County Road Funds. A summary of the Task Force recommendations are attached to these minutes (Attachment 'A').

Keefer showed a video of the site and condition of the road. He distributed a sheet outlining the Parks Advisory Committee's recommendation and the Brown's Landing Task Force's proposal. The main point is that if the Landing is opened as a public facility, need to be sure it can be maintained. One of the Task Force's suggestions is to establish an Adopt-A-Park organization for this facility.

Keefer mentioned that a Down-by-the-River Clean Up is being sponsored by the Parks Division and SOLV on May 17. The Division plans to have a volunteer work party help clean up the site.

Keefer indicated that one of the options is to install a gate and discussed some of the problems with this option; need to decide when and who opens and closes the gate. Keefer mentioned that the park rules will need to be posted. The Task Force stated that the rules must be enforced.

Keefer indicated that one of the recommendations in the original proposal was to bring motor boats back to this site because the State Marine Board would assist with funding any improvements and help fund maintenance of the facility.

Keefer stated that if the access road is legalized, the Task Force recommended 1) retaining 20' road easement along the east-west section, 2) County obtain easement on the north-south section, and 3) the Board make an exception to the road standards and accept the access road into the County Road System. Keefer added that the road can become a public road if the citizens petition the Board to acquire title or interest in the real property as provided under ORS 368.073. He stated that if the Board approves the recommendations from the Task Force and Parks Advisory Committee, he will work on implementing the recommendations.

Sorenson inquired about the 100 foot Corps of Engineers easement and where it starts and ends and how much of the road is within the 100 feet. Keefer replied that the 100 foot easement runs the entire length of the road.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pauline Sandoz stated that she talked to the Corps of Engineers who said when the County put the road in in 1972, they talked to the landowners and they said go ahead and put it in, and if the County were to do it again, they should talk to the landowners, and if the landowners are supportive, so is the Corps.

Louise Peterson inquired about the Corps easement and if it couldn't be used as the access. Keefer replied that the Corps of Engineers has an easement for the 100 feet.

Ben Koon asked how long a road that is open and being used is considered a public road. John Goodson, Public Works Director, replied that normally if the road is used by the public for 10 years or more it's considered a public road.

Jess Koon stated that the road has been open since the revetment was put in about 1937. Weeldreyer opened the public hearing.

Louise Peterson, 1090 Nyssa St., Junction City, commented that this is the most beautiful spot on the Willamette River. She said she hasn't seen any illegal activity nor unwanted vegetation; she likes the blackberries. She added there would be money for the road if money wasn't spent on City of Eugene streets.

Kathy Neeley, 2860 River Rd., stated she supports the Task Force recommendations, and would comment further if the Board doesn't approve them.

Ben Koon, 28586 Kinney Lane, Junction City, stated that he used the boat landing years ago to take logs out of the river. He said it's the best landing along the river, likes to go down and look at the river, and wants to see it kept open. This is one place along the river that you can access during the winter.

Jess Koon, 93510 River Rd., Junction City, said he's used the landing all his life. In the winter he's rescued people from the river and it's the best place to get in when the water is high. He feels the road is wide enough, just needs some grading.

Don Sherman, 1590 Ivy, Junction City, said he came to Junction City in 1941 and has used the landing since then. He picks up garbage around the landing when he puts his boat in and takes it out. It's also a good place to watch the river.

Katherine Wilson, 93323 River Rd., Junction City, stated she lives next to Brown's Landing and knows what the Sheriff and Fire Marshal have on record for this site. She's heard great stories about the landing that occur during the day, but it's another story at night -- meth activity, shotguns fired, arson fires, drug dealings, people camping there that are very scary. She said she's the only one who can actually see Brown's Landing and would like to see the site turned around to make it work. She indicated she's willing to work with the County on certain conditions. If their needs can be met, perhaps it can work. She would like to see the Adopt-A-Park Program and Neighborhood Watch established.

Norbert Heins, 94010 River Rd., Junction City, stated he supports keeping Brown's Landing open and favors legalizing the road access. He would like to see the park hours posted and enforced, and any violators cited and cleared out. He doesn't want all the blackberries taken out, and supports the May 17 Clean Up Day.

Jerry Fisher, 94582 Hwy. 99E, Junction City, commented on Ms. Wilson's change of attitude. He supports keeping the facility open and taking the recommendations from the Parks Advisory Committee and Task Force. He indicated that the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife sent a letter in support of keeping the landing open.

Jim Bauer, 1620 Elkay Dr., Eugene, said he's used the boat landing for 30 years. Looking in the future feels there will be limited access to the river and would like to see this site kept open because it's a nice place to access the river.

Ken Asbra, 4073 Avalon, Eugene, stated he was pleased to see the Task Force working together. He has used the landing since the 70s. He said this is a good place to get to from River Road, Junction City, and Eugene, and an easy access to the river.

Chuck Packnett, 125 Spring Creek Dr., Eugene, commented that people will be looking for more places to go to relieve their stress. He would like to see all the concerns settled so everyone's a winner.

Pauline Sandoz, 947 Greenwood, Junction City, commented that Hayes Landing doesn't have the charm as does Brown's Landing; Brown's Landing is a gem.

Weeldreyer closed the public hearing.

Dumdi stated this is a hard decision to make. She feels the problems can be alleviated by people being present and thinks the Adopt-A-Park concept is a good idea. The road issue is the biggest problem for the Board to deal with and will have to decide whether to make an exception to the standards for accepting roads into the County system.

Sorenson thanked everyone for coming and providing their observations, and thanked Keefer for putting the Task Force together to bring points of view together in resolving the problem. He stated he favors implementing the suggestions from the Parks Advisory Committee and Task Force. He discussed the ability of Parks establishing this as an Adopt-A-Park; that people will support it today but may not be consistent in the years ahead and that's an issue that needs to be dealt with. He feels it's important to have access to the area but doesn't feel it's necessary to make it a 40 foot wide road and supports making an exception.

Cornacchia indicated he supports the effort but expressed concern that some of the expectations may not be realistic. In particular he commented on the suggestion that park rules must be enforced. He discussed the same enforcement problem that occurred with Harvest Landing in Springfield and the vandalism that has occurred there. He supports the access for the public who treat the property properly, but questions whether enforcement can be a reality because enforcement is assigned by priority due to funding and staffing reductions. He stated that the only way this is going to occur is if vigilance is exerted. He indicated that the Task Force needs to push for a definitive answer from the Sheriff if violations of park rules will result in citations. He stated he doesn't want people to feel as though all their answers have been created and the problems resolved; need to work long-term to keep this facility open. He commented that no one wants their children, families, or property damaged, and feels if those supportive of opening Brown's Landing lived in Ms. Wilson's house, they may have a different perspective of the situation.

Weeldreyer indicated she supports the Board position to support the public efforts to keep Brown's Landing open to the public. She supports the Parks Advisory Committee's recommendation and would like to see long-term maintenance agreement of the site to deal with illegal activity.

Cornacchia suggested that staff come back with recommendations and road issue choices on road access and legality.

Sorenson stated that he feels strongly about the public access to the Willamette River and opportunities for access; need to maintain the few remaining accesses and protect as many of these public access sites. He feels this is an important point of the recommendation.

The Board directed staff to report back on May 14 with a recommendation to accept the Task Force's recommendations and options for addressing the road access issues.


Keefer acknowledged the problems at Harvest Landing and reported that the Parks Division has budgeted for a contract with a Sheriff Deputy to patrol around Fern Ridge during the summer season. This officer will be able to respond to the landing if called by dispatch. Keefer also acknowledged that the contract officer is not a cure all for all the illegal problems at the landing. Keefer indicated he will have to work with the Adopt-A-Park group to also help assist with solving these problems.

Weeldreyer commented that the status of the road needs to be worked out with fishing season about to open. Keefer replied that the road is open now and Ms. Wilson is willing to open the gate from dawn to dusk.

Dumdi echoed Comacchia's comments on Harvest Landing and stated that the problem is very much real. She suggested that citizens go down to Brown's Landing on Sunday morning and see first hand what kind of activity may have gone on the night before. She said this will need lots of efforts to make it work.

Mrs. Peterson suggested that a portable toilet may need to be put in. Keefer replied that it may be done seasonally.

There being no further business, this meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.


Vonnice Rainwater
Recording Secretary

FUTURE OF BROWN'S LANDING

Lane County Parks Advisory Committee Primary Recommendation:

"Brown's Landing should remain as a public facility and the County should pursue legal measures to legalize road access to the site."

Brown's Landing Task Force and Park Staff Proposal for re-opening Brown's Landing:

1. If the landing is re-opened, the facility must be adequately maintained and the impacts on the adjoining neighbors must be minimized.
2. Establish a Brown's Landing Adopt a Park organization to assist with:
 - Routine Maintenance such as litter pick up, garbage removal, site surveillance, routine inspections, and reporting problems to authorities;
 - Assist in landing improvements such as installation of park benches, and picnic tables;
 - Assist with site clean up activities such as annual clean up days and trimming back of unwanted vegetation;
3. Install portable toilet and garbage can at the site. Construct enclosure around toilet unit (possibly a Boy Scout project).
4. Survey and identify property line.
5. Construct 6' high cyclone fence along the west and north property line.
6. Consider additional security improvements such as night lighting and a gate. Gate hours will need to be determined along with assigning responsibility for opening and closing of the gate.
7. Install signs to inform visitors of park hours, rules, and to identify the site as a public park.
8. Park rules must be enforced. Law enforcement officers should be encouraged to cite park visitors for park rule violations, and other illegal activities at the park.
9. The Task Force does not recommend any motor boat access improvements.
10. Legal Road Access and Road Maintenance
 - Retain current 20' road easement along the east - west section of the road. Do not expand this width.
 - The County should obtain through negotiation with adjoining neighbors a 20' easement for the north - south section of the road.
 - The Board of County Commissioners should make an exception to the Park Road Standard and support the inclusion of Brown's Landing Road into the County Road System.

If the Board supports these recommendations, the Task Force will be reconvened to work out further details and assign responsibilities for implementing the proposal.