

**Minutes of Meeting
Parks & Waterways
March 14, 2023
3:00 p.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chair Leslie Duncan, Commissioner Bruce Mattare and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Parks & Waterways (P&W)/Noxious Weeds/Snowgroomers Director Nick Snyder, Community Development Director David Callahan, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Pat Braden, BOCC Communications Coordinator Jonathan Gillham and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Piper Sandler Representative Eric Heringer and Holley Troxel Representative Danielle Quaid. Mr. Braden and Mr. Heringer were present via teleconference.

- A. Call to Order:** Chair Leslie Duncan called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business (Discussion)**

Discussion on Open Space within Kootenai County

Parks & Waterways (P&W)/Noxious Weeds/Snowgroomers Director Nick Snyder reminded those present that he had received direction from the BOCC on August 9, 2022 to prepare a \$50 million bond for Open Space on the coming November ballot. He reviewed the history of the proposal and briefly listed the professionals who would be involved: Piper Sandler Representative Eric Heringer, Holley Troxel Representative Danielle Quaid and Taryn Hecker, who would provide an informational webpage and Facebook page. He predicted that their next step would be providing public education about the project, including the cost to the individual property owner, duration of the bond and how the funds would be used. He said they would also include information related to connection of trail systems, providing open space for public recreation and protection of the aquifer. He remarked that the most important thing to include in the bond language would be the Commissioners' vision of how the project would be pursued, whether as one or multiple spaces and locations on the prairie or the river.

Mr. Snyder called attention to the Workflow Timeline he had included with the Board's packet of documents. He suggested getting the message out to the public by June or July.

Ms. Quaid stated that she worked solely in the area of municipal law and finance, so she was experienced in drafting bond and levy questions. She said the draft language should include how much the bond would be, how the money would be used and how long the term would be. She noted that the difference between an information campaign and an advocacy campaign was critically important and she would be reviewing Ms. Hecker's projects to make sure that the rules were properly observed. She stated that County funds could only be used for information, not advocacy. She described the parameters under which the Commissioners would need to operate.

Mr. Heringer described the options the County would have in accessing the bond funds, should it be passed.

Commissioner Bill Brooks said he agreed that the question should be placed on the ballot so the voters could tell the Board what they want.

Commissioner Bruce Mattare voiced his agreement and his support for the preservation of open spaces.

Chair Duncan said that they had been given options to pursue \$30 million, \$40 million or \$50 million. She asked which the other Commissioners would choose and that, even if they did pass a \$50 million bond, it did not mean they had to spend that money.

Both Commissioner Brooks and Commissioner Mattare voiced preference for the \$50 million.

Kootenai County Resident Jan Wilkins joined the meeting via teleconference at 3:15 p.m.

Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Pat Braden said he did not have anything to add at this point. He said he felt they should move ahead and that he favored the \$50 million amount.

There followed substantial discussion of the mechanics of using the funds to maximum effect, should the bond be approved.

Chair Duncan concluded that the Board's direction would be for work on the draft messaging to proceed.

- D. Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing.

Ms. Wilkins requested clarification on the proposed bond language.

Ms. Quaid stated that the language from the ballot came directly from the State Statute and further explained the purposes to which land bought under such a bond could be used.

Ms. Wilkins asked for more details regarding the actual use of the bond money; whether some of it be set aside to pay the interest on the bond or if it all would be used to purchase property.

Ms. Quaid said the full bond amount would be used for purchase and development of the property. She added that the levy that was authorized by the vote would repay both principle and interest and that State Statute required that the specific information be included on the ballot.

Ms. Wilkins asked whether any part of the funds would be set aside for management or ongoing administration of the land, once they were purchased and developed.

Ms. Quaid replied that the funds had to be used for acquisition and development; tax exempt bonds could not be issued for operational expenses.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chair Duncan adjourned the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JENNIFER LOCKE, CLERK

BOCC SIGNATURE

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk