

MINUTES

Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission February 3, 2015

Commissioner Sarah Chvilicek called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

1. **Roll Call.**

Members present: Scott Pierson, Janet Davis, Nathan Daniel, Thomas Guinn, Jim Nadeau, Al Sheakley and Ed Harney.

Board of County Commissioners Liaison: Jeanne Herman

Staff present: Eric Crump, Deputy District Attorney Michael Large, Denise Evans, Colleen Barnum-Wallace, Jeff Patterson, Bill Carlos, Cheryl Surface, Dave Solaro and Joanna Schultz

2. **Public Comment**

John Trent, Race Director of Silver State Endurance Run and a long-time resident has been running on the Peavine Mountain for years. The endurance run is a permitted event that brings in 200-300 runners for a 50k trail race. The group works with the Rancho San Rafael Rangers and also collaborates with the Forest Service to develop a use plan that minimizes impact and ensures safety. During last May's race the final two finishers were pinned down by gun fire. When they reached the finish line there were understandably upset. Mr. Trent spoke with them and feels there is something wrong with a statement that has to be preceded with "How did you enjoy the event other than being shot at?" It's of vital importance that we have the conversation about activity on Peavine. Mr. Trent is hopeful this Commission will help find ways to make Peavine safer. There needs to be more education to the public, better enforcement of resources for those charged to keep Peavine safe and regulation that is easy to understand. Mr. Trent is not against firearms, but is against having to be put in a place of asking a runner how they enjoyed the race other than being shot at.

Winnie Dowling is a long-time resident of Reno who also runs on Peavine 2-3 times a week. She has been shot at or near 4-5 times and is very scary and unsettling. Ms. Dowling is not against firearms but would appreciate if there was a shooting area or signage. There are a lot of people on the trails especially when the weather is warm and is hoping the Commission can help find a solution.

Ben Tedore is a Reno resident and runner, mountain biker and father that hikes on Peavine regularly. One January 11, 2015 he went to meet a friend for a run. During their run he heard gunfire, though not uncommon on Peavine and they continued running. He heard birdshot all around him, immediately got out of the way and run up the hill. He confronted the shooters to tell them they were shooting in an illegal area. They said they didn't know this and left. It is very close to residential areas and he feels very nervous about being there or bringing his children with him.

Pat Fager is a long-time resident of Northwest Reno who has hiked Peavine for many years. Ms. Fager has progressed to wearing a bright orange shirt and carrying a whistle because she had too many incidents where she heard shots close to her, but was not aware of where they were coming from so she quit going in the spring of 2013. The County promotes Peavine Trails

as a recreational opportunity and it is a great recreational opportunity. Ms. Fager would like to access the trails on Peavine but not willing to dodge bullets. If she wanted to go shooting she would think she could because the signage is unclear and confusing, numerous shooters there on a regular basis and there are numerous target areas and piles of bullet casings. Looking at a County map she can't tell where it is ok to shoot and where it is not. Ms. Fager feels there is a need to expand the shooting area, have better signage, more public education and enforcement.

Jennifer Haltom lives at the base of Peavine and is happy to see there is a movement to help the shooting issue. There are cars and motorcycles constantly going up the trails day and night and they are marked with signs that say no motorized vehicles access or firearms. When they go hiking her children think it's their job to take a bag to collect bullet casings. There is a lot of litter from the shooting and she says it is very scary and unsafe.

Mac Rossi is a resident of Reno and has been working with the US Forest Service over the destruction of the 7th Street pit area by off-road vehicles. The Forest Service has done their very best by posting signs, but people have been taking the signs and the posts. Mr. Rossi takes pictures of the offenders and sends them to the Forest Service. About three months ago one of the bikers pulled a gun on him when he addressed him about his activities. The destruction caused by the motorized vehicles is absolutely terrible.

3. Approval of the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting January 6, 2015

Motion by Commissioner Daniel to approve the Agenda for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting January 6, 2015. Second by Commissioner Harney. Motion carried.

4. Presentation by Eagle Scout Ryan Lunt on the improvements to Mariana's Pavilion at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park

Eagle Scout Ryan Lunt unable to attend the meeting.

5. Presentation by Eagle Scout Andrew Berthelson on Colonnade Roofing Project at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park

Denise Evans, Volunteer Coordinator introduced Eagle Scout Andrew Berthelson.

Eagle Scout Andrew Berthelson gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding the number of people assisting on the project and hours on the project, Mr. Berthelson said 20 people and 324 hours.

6. Presentation by Eagle Scout James Christian Harney on a trail rehabilitation project at Lazy 5 Regional Park

Jeff Patterson, Park Ranger introduced James Harney.

Eagle Scout James Harney gave a presentation.

Cheryl Surface, Park Planner said we will be using part of the project as a match on a trails grant. She thanked Mr. Harney for his project.

Commissioner Nadeau also thanked Eagle Scout Harney saying it's another great project and thanked the scouts and their parents for supporting their scouts.

7. Presentation by City of Reno with an update on the Sierra Vista Park (formerly Northgate Golf Course) Master Plan

Jeff Mann, City of Reno Parks and Recreation gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Pierson regarding the type of trail, Mr. Mann said a multi-use trail and they are looking at a natural surface that will be ADA accessible.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding pump track, Mr. Mann said it is a bicycle skills course for off road bikes.

8. Presentation by the Promoting Safety on Peavine Trails Group

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director said Mr. Kent Ervin gave public comment on this subject at the last Parks Commission meeting. Mr. Crump, Commissioner Herman and other County staff took a tour of Peavine led by the Sheriff's office. The type of use on Peavine is a complex issue and ultimately, if any action were to take place, it would require a code change from the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Crump is not sure of the role this commission will take with any potential changes at this time.

Marilee Wintz, Reno resident and small business owner thanked the Commission for including Promoting Safety on Peavine Trails on the agenda. This is an issue that needs attention now. Based on public comment she hopes this Commission understands the urgency to resolve the illegal and dangerous shooting on Peavine.

On her way back from a hike in February 2014 she had bullets fly over her head on Stagecoach Trail. During the tour with the Sheriff and Parks' staff they pointed out the location where shots came from and where she was on the trail. The sheriff confirmed that not only was it illegal, but not a safe place to shoot. Ms. Wintz sees unsafe shooting every week on Peavine and knows her story is not unique. There are stories from the community with similar stories and this is unacceptable.

Confusing and out of date boundaries are a big part of the problem. Today Kent Ervin is presenting an action plan they believe will be the first step in solving these problems and time is of the essence. Ms. Wintz is doing this so not another person is shot at and yet everyday there are reports of bullets coming down around recreational users. There is no cost to recreate new boundaries where trails are separated from legal shooting areas. The cost of doing nothing is likely human lives, so this is why she is motivated to promote safety on Peavine.

Safe recreational shooting is a legitimate activity on public land, but hiking, biking, running and shooting on the trails is a deadly mix. Mr. Ervin has created a well-rounded and thought out plan and urged Commissioners to pay close attention to steps that can be taken now to create safety for all on Peavine.

Kent Ervin, Promoting Safety on Peavine Trails said he has been hiking and biking on Peavine out of the northwest neighborhood for 25 years. Over the years he has had various incidents with the latest couple of incidents being a catalyst to speak out.

Mr. Ervin gave a presentation.

Commissioner Nadeau thanked Mr. Ervin for his presentation.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding does the Board of County Commissioners having the authority to change the border on federal lands, Mr. Crump said it is Forest Service land, but the County determines the congested area without regards to property ownership.

In response to Commissioner Daniel regarding the Sheriff patrolling on federal land or just County, Mr. Crump said there is an interlocal agreement that gives them the ability to go on federal land and enforce County regulations. He is not certain if they patrol on a regular basis.

Public Comment:

Mac Rossi addressed Commissioner Daniels' question on the Sheriff patrolling on federal land. There is one Ranger on duty taking care of most of Northern Nevada and part of Tahoe and it just can't be done.

David Von Seggern Reno resident since the 90s and has spent a lot of time hiking up Peavine and can tell many personal stories that would add to this. He is speaking today for the Sierra Club that organizes a lot of outings with hundreds of participants any given year. Most of the complaints they receive are about shooting on Peavine. He continues to hike knowing there is a risk doing this. When he is out with the Sierra Club they are trained to think about safety. Most of their safety thoughts are about natural conditions and now he has to take this into consideration when he takes a group out. Mr. Von Seggern would like to see more attention to enforcement and education. The map he downloaded is hard to follow and fails miserably for enforcement, users and shooters. He recommends taking sections and designating areas for shooting. A lot of people carry smart phones now, why couldn't there be an app to show them if they're in a shooting zone.

Bill von Phul is a volunteer for Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful (KTMB) cleaning up illegal dumpsites. Not all illegal dumpsites are shooting areas but it seems as though all the shooting areas turn into a dumpsite. People take out TVs and other trash and use them as targets. This is a dilemma, in searching for a solution Mr. von Phul contacted the National Rifle Association (NRA). He received a response from their Western Regional Director who said what needs to be done is to work with the Sheriff's office and identify the areas that would be safe and legal to shoot. Then improve those areas with shooting stands etc. and advertise it in areas such as at gun shops. According to the NRA, if there is a little improvement with semi-formal areas, they don't get trashed. They have had success with it and Mr. von Phul hopes this is pursued with the NRA, as they have assisted communities in doing this. People will continue to shoot in open space and we just need to direct them to safe areas.

Kevin Joell, trail volunteer on Peavine said last year he did over 40 days of volunteer work on Peavine mostly through the Poedunks Trail Group. They've put in about six miles of additional track in the last 15 months and have taken truckloads of trash off the mountain. Mr. Joell is also the promoter of the Battleborn Enduro, largest fully permitted event on Peavine and the

only event that puts all proceeds back into Peavine. Last year's event enabled them to fund two miles of trail construction and create under the implementation of the Poedunks, over 100 sign posts and trail markers. Mr. Joell is a recreational user who also legally target shoots on Peavine. Citizens have a right to use public lands in a safe and legal manner. Rather than targeting the small remaining non congested area of Peavine where citizens recreationally shoot, he believes efforts would be better focused on enforcing the current laws. There is no disputing that there is a problem on Peavine, there is a large amount of illegal shooting as well as dumping that need solutions. Mr. Joell has been to the Facebook page of the Peavine safety group. The focus needs to be on making the current congested areas safe instead of increasing the size of the area that needs enforcement until we can successfully manage the area where it is currently illegal to shoot. Better signage would help and Mr. Joell agrees with Mr. von Phul in creating a safe area for the public to shoot. Mr. Joell has offered his assistance to the Peavine safety group with education, signage and working towards a cost share agreement where the County could fund a Forest Service Ranger, only if we could not pursue additional regulation and did not hear back. As far as this Commission's recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners he hopes we can work towards solving the problem, but not further reduce the areas where legal recreation shooters can practice their recreation just because it interferes with others.

Dick Benoit, a Reno resident, said that the recreational use on Peavine is exploding. In the past year the Keystone Trailhead is full fairly regularly. With the apartments being built up there we're going to see a lot more activity at Peavine. One of the things that's going to come up is parking on the south side. It's going to be a challenge in the next year or two. He volunteers with Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful to cleanup on Peavine. The same areas year after year are cleaned up and new areas come up too. It would be nice to see some enforcement and the people who shoot clean up their own mess for a change. There are two areas with paper target sitting literally within 10-15 feet of the trails.

Dennis Wilson, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited thanked all of the presenters. The issues of safety, illegal shooting, habitat destruction and littering are intolerable. These are not what sportsmen/women/youth support. This kind of activity is truly criminal, not only for people, but for the environment and wildlife on Peavine. Nevada Bighorns Unlimited will support the efforts to control illegal and unethical activity, however, keep in mind. as we've all spoken of multiple use we would like to maintain ethical, responsible hunting opportunity on Peavine in particular. It is a fantastic resource and needs to be maintained responsibly.

J Merriman, Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful said they do a great community cleanup every year. What they see at most of the dumpsites, is not only shotgun shells, but also TVs and other items used for target shooting. This makes it difficult to clean up. Most of the people use public lands responsibly with just a small fraction of people who illegally dump and shoot. There are so many more people who show up for a cleanup than go out and illegal dump and shoot. There is a lot of this type of activity on Peavine and KTMB is hoping any solutions could be transferred to similar areas in the community. Peavine is a perpetual cleanup area for KTMB even with the work of the Poedunks and other groups/organizations/volunteers it is still has a lot of dumpsites. Peavine is one of the reasons KTMB expanded their roadway-adopt-a-spot program to include open space areas. They are working with the Forest Service to make it adoptable and hoping to provide assistance to agencies that do not have the staff to control or monitor those areas. Adopters can monitor those spots, have signage, education and not only will the adopters have more ability to report to the Sheriff's office, but also have

more reporting ability with the Forest Service, BLM, or whichever agency that has the adoption.

Commissioner Nadeau said this is not an action item so the Commission can't make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. All of the information will be forwarded to the County Commission for their review, consideration and direction.

Commissioner Nadeau also thanked Mr. Ervin for his presentation.

Dave Solaro, Director of Community Services Department said any recommendation made by this Commission will be directed to staff or Sheriff's office for direction from the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Crump added we also have our Parks Commission Liaison who can speak to the conversation that was had in this meeting. If there is anything formal this Commission would like to submit to the Board of County Commissioners it can be done through the Chair, or at the Commissioner's Comment item.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding is most of the activity on the south side of Keystone where most of those who have made public comment have mentioned, Mr. Ervin said the farther one goes away from the trailhead the less it gets. A lot of the activity is in the illegal congested areas and that is where we need education and enforcement. One picture shown in the presentation was just over the boundary with a sign stating no longer in a congested area. On the tour several places where just after the boundary there is a pull off, no back drop, can't see over the ridge but there's a pile of shells there.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding are the Poedunks coordinating with the Forest Service on trails being built on Peavine, Mr. Joell said they do a multi-year scoping and have a volunteer service agreement with the Forest Service and Washoe County.

In response to Commissioner Davis regarding signage, Mr. Crump said currently the Washoe County Sheriff's office has been replacing them. Through code the County Engineer has that responsibility and can delegate it, which is what has been done. Mr. Joell added that the congested area signs don't meet Forest Service regulations for trail signs and seems as though there is no coordination.

Commissioner Guinn said he was born and raised here has been up Peavine quite a bit. When he was little his grandfather showed him how to respect firearms and shoot up there. He appreciates everyone saying there are responsible shooters and is hoping the majority are. He thinks there are some ways we could help through signage and will request staff bring this back at item #13. As far as mapping he is not sure how you would read a map like this, looks almost like a fault on a mountain. Commissioner Guinn feels mapping could be something that could be changed but the problem could be it's a give and take. You have to be very careful about what you're asking for. When you talk about hole, there is a reason they want people firing in that hole, typical so bullets don't go outside of that hole. There are a lot of trails in that hole so for the immediate would be to do signage, coordination for enforcement and better mapping. Recreation in Nevada is hiking, biking, shooting, jogging/running, picnicking etc. and we all need to keep that in mind.

Commissioner Daniel said things have changed since the last time boundaries were done for single track trails. Areas that are congested a lot of people use them and the boundaries need to be looked at and readjusted especially in the area called the hole. This item should be

brought back in item #13 should be so that the Parks Commission can make a motion to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Daniel would like to see it come back on the next agenda.

9. Presentation on the Level II Arboretum Accreditation

Bill Carlos, Horticulturist gave a presentation.

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director said he did not have much involvement with this, this is truly Bill's world. He has done a great job and has taken the Arboretum to another level.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding number of levels of accreditation, Mr. Carlos said IV Levels. They are currently working on Level III and Level IV will require a little more effort but getting closer.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding how to build in sustainability so this accreditation can continue through the years, Mr. Carlos said in March of 2013 the May Arboretum Endowment Fund was established. One of the goals is to raise \$2 million for the endowment which would allow funding some of the programs and hopefully funding staff as well. The ultimate goal for the endowment fund is \$21 million. It is an aggressive goal but if the economy is good we can actually look having \$1 million donated from it a year.

10. Presentation on Program of the Month featuring Washoe County School District Volunteers

Denise Evans, Volunteer Coordinator gave a presentation.

In response to Commissioner Guinn regarding are they looking to build on this and add additional schools, Ms. Evans said they started going to the South Valleys Library and asked if they could start going to South Valleys Regional Park. Since then we told them if there was an interest in going to other parks to let us know and we were happy to work with them.

11. Park Reports

Eric Crump, Operations Division Director handed out an updated Park District report then highlighted reports.

12. Director's Report

Dave Solaro, Director of Community Services said the Community Services Department and other departments heads are working with the Board of County Commissioners on setting new goals and objectives for Washoe County's Strategic Plan and tying the plan to the budget. The budgeting process has started and should have a report out next month on some of the activities. Last year's budget one of the two above base requests made was for seasonal workers and infrastructure preservation. This year we are also asking for additional infrastructure preservation funding for two parks.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding a budget workshop, Mr. Solaro said if this is something the Commission would like we can schedule one. Commissioner Nadeau said it was beneficial and requested a budget workshop.

In response to Commissioner Nadeau regarding the Stateline to Stateline Byway construction, Cheryl Surface, Park Planner, said currently it is in the design phase. Construction is expected to start this summer on segment between the Ponderosa Ranch and Tunnel Creek Road. Construction will be on the segment that goes behind Tunnel Creek Café to the Tunnel Creek Road. In addition to that mile segment there will be a 30-space parking facility adjacent to SR-28.

13. Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Guinn asked staff to bring back the Peavine mapping and signage program. What currently exists now and how we can improve that. Include the process of rerouting pathways.

Commissioner Daniel clarified that it's the path of congestion boundaries. He would like it to be an action item.

Commissioner Nadeau clarified that this Commission is asking for direction from the Board of County Commissioners.

Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney, said the Commission can ask staff to look at signage that community members want improvement on. If this Commission is going to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners with regards to whether or not you want them to adopt a recommendation for the signage.

Commissioner Guinn said he was thinking about going to the Board of County Commissioners on what staff recommends to this Commission.

Commissioner Nadeau added looking at the conflicting signage between agencies.

Mr. Crump suggested staff would bring back a report on jurisdictional issues, who it falls under for County Code change and how that happens and leave it as an action item.

Mr. Crump added that there is very little County Parks land on Peavine so he is not sure what role this Commission will play in all of this.

Commissioner Pierson would like representatives from Forest Service to speak about what they are doing moving forward in this process. Mr. Crump will reach out to the Carson Ranger District of the Forest Service and the Washoe County Sheriff's Office.

14. Public Comment

Mac Rossi said he lives in a developed area that was part of Peavine Mountain. He has neighbors who would say they used to go up with their parent on motorcycles and shoot and looked at what has happened to the area. Things have changed. He was a boat enthusiast and it would be convenient if he could put his boat in the water from the side of his yard but you have to go to a designated area and it should be for a lot of other activities too. Nevada is a big state, a lot is going on and the times are changing.

Adjournment

Chairman Nadeau adjourned the meeting at 4:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Schultz