

Parks & Recreation

4177 Ben Durrance Road
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PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

POLK COUNTY LAKES ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Polk County Lakes Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) convened Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 3:03 p.m. at the Polk County Parks and Natural Resources, 4177 Ben Durrance Road, Bartow.

Members Present: Tom Palmer, Adam Bass, Chad Allison, Bob Sheffield, Larry Johnson, and Cannon Kirby

Members Absent: Pablo Sologaistoa (with notice), Greg Watts (with notice), Paul Thomas, and Arlene Ledbetter (with notice)

Parks and Natural Resources: Mike Callender, Tracy Mullins, Brandy Gray

CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Larry Johnson called the meeting to order.
Larry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Approve May 11, 2021 minutes.
Mover: Tom Palmer
Seconder: Chad Allison
Result: Approved unanimously (6-0)

FISH HATCHERY TOUR

Staff at the fish hatchery have approved the committee to take a tour and hold a meeting on January 11, 2022 unless there are changes with COVID. The tour could be an additional meeting for the 2022 calendar or it can act as the first meeting of 2022; however, County staff have to know ahead of time so enough public notice is given.

Motion: Attend the Fish Hatchery in January as the first regular meeting of 2022.

Mover: Adam Bass

Seconder: Bob Sheffield

Result: Approved unanimously (6-0)

2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

Motion: Keep the same format and schedule. Meetings would be January 11, May 10, and September 13, 2022.

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PROJECT UPDATES

Mike Callender gave update on Lake Buffum. The design and permitting scope is done and the firm has been chosen. Hopeful to have the design done in Fiscal Year 2022 and be bidding for construction by the end of the year. Plan to use a Tedder boat ramp system.

Mike also mentioned that having boat ramps open twenty-four (24) hours a day requires a Level 4 Review, which requires the Planning Commission and Board approval. If / when that time comes, the committee may be asked to assist with a letter of support.

Department of Transportation plans to have a meeting to discuss possibly closing the unofficial ramp area people use to launch boats into Lake Hancock off Winter Lake Road between Circle B and Waste and Recycling. It is not County right-of-way; however, we have been helping to main it. County staff is in support of closing the area but anticipate push back from the public.

Legoland has been doing extensive work on the old canal system that goes by the property. Legoland is a private entity but some of the property is conservation and County property. Because of that, the County still has some oversight to ensure that covenants of their agreement are being upheld. One of those is that they touch base with the County when doing improvements in those areas. Legoland is having seawalls installed / updated, with plans to start electronic boat tours. The State, DEP, and possibly FWC still have to determine if this portion is considered private or public.

OTHER BUSINESS

Bob Sheffield mentioned that there is a property for sale on Lake Ruby. Currently, there is no public boat ramp on this lake. He offered to check to see if there is a willing seller. Motion: Authorize staff to investigate the possibility of acquiring property on Lake Ruby.

Mover: Tom Palmer

Seconder: Chad Allison

Adam Bass clarified that the property is actually on Lake Bess.

Motion Amended: Authorize staff to investigate the possibility of acquiring property on Lake Bess.

Result: Approved unanimously (6-0)

Lake Mattie – Larry Johnson asked for some information regarding the old public access to Lake Mattie. Mike stated that the County used to have a right-of-way;

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however, when Canker hit, people were no longer allowed access for fear of spreading the citrus disease. The right-of-way remained closed for a few years. When we attempted to reopen it, the County Attorney determined that since the right-of-way went unmaintained for several years, that it resorted back to private ownership. County Attorney is looking back into this matter because the right-of-way was being used by other landowners to access their properties. If they are unable to use the right-of-way, their land will become landlocked.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Adjourn meeting at 4:17 p.m.

Mover: Adam Bass

Secunder: Bob Sheffield

Result: Approved unanimously (6-0)