

**MINUTES
REGULAR CALLED MEETING
LAKES AND LANDS COMMISSION
JULY 17, 2019**

A Regular Called Meeting of the Lakes and Lands Commission was held Wednesday, July 17th, 2019, at the Lawton Public Library, Meeting Room 2 and was called to order by Co-Chairman, Bob Dismuke at 4:15 p.m. Notice of the meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall bulletin board as required by state law.

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Dismuke, Mike Slavin, Richard Campbell, JC Grayson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Duncan, Donald Ryans, Sean Fortenbaugh

STAFF PRESENT: Jack Hanna, Parks and Recreation Director; Keith Neitzke, Parks and Grounds Administrator; Jim Bonnarens, Lakes Maintenance Supervisor; Misty Roberts, Lakes Admin Asst. II;

OTHERS PRESENT: NONE

Dismuke asked for considerations of the minutes from the Regular Called Meeting January 16th 2019. There was no discussion and a motion by **Campbell and a second by Slavin to approve the minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously for the approval of the minutes above mentioned minutes.**

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review, discuss and take action if necessary on the rotation issue at City of Lawton Lakes.

Misty Roberts states that current policy reads that you have to move every 14-21 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day and you cannot occupy the space more than once between those 2 holidays. The code states you have to move, it does not say you have to leave the campground. With the current policy it has created a "rotation" issue. Campers that are coming out for the 14-21 days, they are moving but are rotating spots which are not allowing other campers to move in. This year, we don't know if it is due to other campgrounds being closed because of flooding around the state or that RV camping has taken off but we have had more complaints regarding this issue than any other year that I can remember. In addition we are in an area that offers a place for a lot of tourist that are traveling through visiting Ft. Sill, Medicine Park and the Wildlife Refuge. I have looked on-line and talked to other campgrounds about their policies and procedures. During their prime camping season many campgrounds will not allow you to stay more than 14 days/nights. Examples: ALL STATE PARKS, you may stay in the same campsite for up to 14 days. If campers want to stay longer the extension must be approved and is based on the season and availability. Lake Chickasha, max stay is 10 days, no reservations. Corps of Engineers lakes, camping at one or more campsites at any one water resource project for a period of longer than 14 days during any 30-day consecutive day period is prohibited without the

written permission of the District Commander. Lake Humphreys, Lake Duncan, Clear Creek Lake and Lake Fuqua, overnight camping units are not allowed to occupy a camping space for a continuous period of more than 21 days. At the end of the 21 days or lesser continuous time, camper may relocate to another camping space in another camping area, if approved by the Lakes Superintendent if adequate space is available. Otherwise, the camper shall leave City of Duncan owned property of a period of not less than 7 days. No exception to the intent of this rule is permitted. Liberty Lake and Lake Guthrie max is 7 days. You must be gone for 48 hours. Any camping equipment left longer than the 7 days will be removed and disposed of. Campsites cannot be reserved or "saved" for campers arriving later. Lake Arcadia, 14 days, no reservations, first come first serve.

Grayson stated that it sounded like we need to end the rotation and follow what the state and other campgrounds do.

Hanna stated that when Misty brought this issue up and said she had been researching other parks and what they do thought it would be a good idea for us to follow their lead. Hanna states that whatever it is that we set the days to that we don't automatically say you don't come back to the location but let them know we do have other campgrounds that they are welcomed to go and camp at.

Campbell asked how many campsites we have.

Roberts stated that at Lake Lawtonka East Campground – 43 electrical sites and you can double up on those and during the holiday's most do. Ponds – primitive camping area 29 sites and we ask that they put no more than 2 tents at each numbered site. We have another primitive camping site between the group use areas that will hold multiple primitive campers. Robinsons Landing we have 28 sites. Lake Ellsworth: 4 at Edgewater, 4 at Chandler Creek, 16 at Ralphs Resort, 4 East of the Dam and 9 at Colliers Landing.

Slavin asked if the problem was mainly at Lake Lawtonka?

Roberts stated yes.

Bonnarens stated that the issue that comes up is when East Camp Ground is full and Lawtonka East Campground users come out and complain that it is full, want spots, see that no one is there during the weekdays, pitch their tents to hold spots, and don't pay. Sonya and Misty both try to accommodate them and suggest Robinsons Landing or Lake Ellsworth, they don't want to go there.

Grayson asked if both of the campgrounds are full right now.

Roberts stated East campground yes. Robinsons Landing no. But by the time the weekend rolls around Robinsons Landing will be full. Between Memorial Day and Fourth of July, the East Campground will stay full and after the Fourth we will mainly start seeing our vacation/weekend campers. One of the complaints that I have from people coming in is seeing all the spots that are full but no campers.

Grayson stated that he has been out during the weekdays and noticed that also.

Dismuke asked how many days are they allowed to stay.

Roberts stated 14-21 nights then you have to move.

Slavin asked how hard it to police all of this is.

Roberts stated that she only does this twice a week on Tuesday and Wednesday when Sonya is off or on weekends when Sonya takes off. Roberts stated that Sonya is good at what she does and stays on top of where and when campers have been. But there are times even when Sonya gets overwhelmed with the complaining and the rotation of the campers. They will come up to her and complain that all the people who are in rotation are going to move on a certain day at

5:00 but they don't get off work until 7:00 and then they won't have a place to go to. Sonya or I again will tell that individual there are other campgrounds but they do not want that, they want to stay on the East Campground.

Dismuke asked the Lakes staff what they are recommended as far as the procedure of ending the rotation.

Roberts stated that no matter what it is, it is going to be the double edge sword. Either way it will make a lot of people happy and a lot of people mad because they do not like change but the recommendation would be to follow what the state does.

Dismuke asked how many days? 14?

Roberts responded yes I think it would be sufficient. After their 14 days are up they are more than welcome to visit any of our other campgrounds then after a certain amount of days they can come back but not to the same spots because then we would be right back where we started from and they would just switch spots continuously locking other people out of their opportunities.

Campbell stated that he understands where we are coming from but also understands the camper's point of view that stay out there. When they get a chance to move they can move closer to the lake and have their chance.

Bonnarens stated that at KOA or other private campgrounds that may not be an issue. But these have become lake cabins for people all summer. They pull the RV's out there then leave. Today there was one person on all of East Campground and he is retired and stays out there a majority of the time. And again we have people coming in during the weekday and see no people "camping" but all the spots taken. Come Friday they all come out again, then they leave and leave all of their stuff. They go home, go to work or whatever so this has become their lake cabin not a "campground." The people traveling through, they mostly only stay a week or so and then move on.

Grayson asked how much we charge for camping.

Roberts replied preferred sites are going to be \$20.00 per night per sleeping unit no discount. Non-preferred sites are \$17.00 per night per sleeping unit and on the non-preferred sites you can get a discount if you are 65 or older or a 60% disabled with proof of disability and that cost is \$13.00 per night. This is for the prime camping season. October 1 – February 28 our rates drop and you do not have to move your RV's again until camping season starts up.

Bonnarens stated that is another issue we have. We have 50 year olds who parents bring out their RV's so that their 50 year old can come out and camp for \$13.00 per night, running 2 air conditioners 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Grayson asked what about letting them stay there for a year?

Roberts replied that she thought that it would hurt tourism. Right now Lake Lawtonka is the center for Medicine Park, Wichita Wild Life Refuge and Ft. Sill. When Camp Doris fills up, they send the campers over our direction and many who did not know we are here end up coming back. Today I had two gentleman pull in to Robinsons Landing who have sons stationed at Ft. Sill that are planning to visit with them for a couple of days. When I was out to collect from them they commented on how beautiful this area is and would like to come back in the fall to do some hunting.

Bonnarens stated that it would be nice to make some sites that we could do a few of them full time. Our idea is to take parts of the primitive area and tie them with sewer and water and do something like what Granite Point and Pinnacle Peak. Water meter wise would be an issue with the state on how that works. As long as it is not hard connected. It has to be a quick connect. One meter can serve the park rather than most water meters through the cooperation commission

will designate for one resident. So in theory if you have 30 RV's you better have 30 water meters for each one of them rather than a quick disconnect because of "full time living."

Campbell asked what you can expand.

Bonnarens said the best is the primitive because of the infrastructure. There are other places but primitive would be the best. There is definitely potential.

Campbell asked about how many people are doing this rotation thing?

Roberts stated there are approximately 20-30 that participate in the rotation on the East Campground. When she first started working at the lakes when it was "rotation" time, it was like everyone moved on the same day. Now it seems to be "clicks" of them that do this. This group by the bathroom they are all 21 days so they all stay there. The group in the little cove area 22-28 are all 14 days then 29-31 is another 21 day move so they switch spots and then 32-41 is a 14 day and they will switch.

Bonnarens states that the reason for the clicks is because they all can't get along with each other. One person gets mad and kicks the other out.

Roberts stated that just last week a gentleman approached her and asked what he had to do to get into "rotation" He had spoken to a man that was leaving and he said he could have his spot. The man left and as the other camper was moving in a woman came up to him and said that he could not have that spot because it was a "rotation" spot and she was going to be moving there that evening. So he left and went to Robinsons Landing. Roberts informed him then that it is first come first serve and if it happened again to report it to the office immediately and it would be taken care off. The gentleman then said that he had no problem going over to Robinsons Landing but would like his shot at being able to camp on the East Campground because he has a boat, kids and would like the cleaned out swim spot.

Campbell asked if there was a way to designate a section of the campground for out of towners only. That the only way you would be able to stay in this area is if you lived outside of Comanche County or out of state. Are most of the rotators are locals? If so, we as a committee carve out 20 or so spots and say "no, you can't have these spots they are for people coming through" would that not work?

Dismuke states that there is a need for more campsites.

Neitzke stated that the rotation just needs to end. Because if we have spots that are for just the people coming, out of town people, etc and they are not full the locals will start complaining. Either way they are going to complain anyway.

Dismuke recommends that it needs to be either the 14 or 21 days.

Bonnarens states that even if we do this for a year and see that it is not working out or we are losing revenue we can change it back. But does not foresee that happening because we turn to many people away throughout the summer months.

Hanna states that we have the 14 days preferred and the 21 non-preferred but believes that there needs to be a single number, not the 14 and 21.

Roberts states that the State Parks are 14.

Grayson states the recommendation to be 14 days/nights. After that time period is over the campers can move to another campground.

Dismuke asked if everyone agreed for the 2 weeks on 2 weeks off and can't revisit the same spot twice during the prime camping season.

Grayson makes a motion that campers can stay 14 days/nights and after their time is up they have to move to another campground and be gone for no less than 14 days/nights and

not return to the same spot twice during the prime camping season. Dismuke seconds the motion.

AYES: Dismuke, Slavin, Campbell, Grayson. NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED

2. Review, discuss and take action if necessary on wearing life jackets on paddleboards.

Roberts states that this was brought up by Lt. Brad Davis. He had asked this item to be put on the agenda, after the agenda was submitted to the city clerk's office he did find it in code.

Campbell asked what the code is.

Roberts stated that you have to wear your lifejackets while on a paddleboard.

All commission members agreed and there was no further discussion.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE:

A. Reports from Parks and Grounds Director, Jack Hanna

Reports that the general capital outlay that has been discussed for the Lakes Division was funded \$42,000.00 for asphalt for road improvement. Jim plus the crew spent a lot of time on the Ralphs Project and saved the City about \$70,000.00 just in labor and did a wonderful job. We are now waiting for Oklahoma Fish and Wildlife to see what the refund will be from the bathroom and dock project. The refund generally goes back into the general fund and we are looking to hopefully apply that to another Oklahoma Wildlife project. Hopefully that will be Colliers Landing which is currently in bad shape.

B. Reports from Parks and Grounds Administrator, Keith Neitzke

Reports that they have received an annual report from Fisherman's Cove. The report did not have much change to it. We are going to wave fees so that they can haul what is left of the restaurant off. They have fixed the lift station, installed a couple of electrical sites for camping. They are making progress.

C. Reports from the Lakes Division Supervisor, Jim Bonnarens

Reports that in speaking with Ryan at the Oklahoma Department of Fish and Wildlife that initially Colliers Landing was the first grant we were going to do. Ryan had a packet already together to do that. The crew has ripped up the stretch of road where the old entry pavilion at day use used to be on down to the curve going into day use down, came back and rocked over it and watered it for the 4th of July to help keep the dust down. Drainage is also bad. So hopefully we will have the funds to make some noticeable street repair.

D. Reports from Lake Patrol Staff, Lt. Brad Davis – No report

-COMMENTS/DISCUSSION/ADJOURNMENT

There were no other reports, correspondence, or discussion and the meeting adjourned by unanimous decision of the Commission at 5:15 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY THE
LAKES AND LAND COMMISSION
CHAIRMAN, MARK DUNCAN