

Town of Lyons, Colorado
Board of Trustees
BOT Agenda Cover Sheet
Agenda Item No: XII.2.
Meeting Date: 2/22/2022

TO: Mayor Angelo and Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: David Cosgrove, Director of Parks and Public Works
DATE: Feb 17, 2022
ITEM: Discussion / Direction Regarding 2022 Parks Operations

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- ORDINANCE
 - MOTION / RESOLUTION
 - INFORMATION
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- I. **REQUEST OR ISSUE:** Presentation on 2022 Parks Operations and receive direction from the Board on a couple of items. .
- II. **RECOMMENDED ACTION / NEXT STEP:** Staff is requesting confirmation that the plans presented are acceptable and to receive direction on a couple of items as identified in the materials.
- III. **FISCAL IMPACT:** Decisions made regarding parks operations can have a fiscal impact on the budget.
- IV. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** In preparation for the 2022 spring and summer seasons, Town staff has been reviewing and refining policies on park entrance, capacities, reservations, and rules and enforcement measures, among others. Traditionally Lyons parks have experienced heavy peak season visitation and have seen much regional use. With continued population growth across the front range and the increasing popularity of our post-flood park facilities, geographic location, and natural amenities, we continue to see more visitors enjoying our parks and open spaces on a seasonal basis. Lisa Ramsey has been appointed as the Parks and Recreation Coordinator as of January 2022.

Each year concerns over impacts due to overcrowding, parking, and how best to utilize overall resources are discussed. Staffing and budgeting constraints and realities become ever-more apparent. Discussions on how best to utilize resources and to ensure proper enforcement are at the forefront. To date, sales tax and revenues generated from parks continue to meet projections and offset operations and maintenance expenditures.

Beginning in the spring of the 2021 season, the Town of Lyons began implementing occupancy limits for its major parks. Working in conjunction with local emergency services and the building department, these capacity limits put a cap on how many people can be present in a park at any given time. The occupancy limit for LaVern M. Johnson Park was set at 1,596 and the limit for Bohn Park was set for 855 for the area along the river (Phase I) and 5,985 for the entirety of the park which comprises the southern portion with the inclusion of the ball fields, multi-purpose fields, dirt jump bike park, and dog park (Phase II).

These limits were set using a per acre number while also considering each of the park's facilities and amenities. Gate attendants tracked the number of visitors entering the park for day use (on weekends and holidays) and with the help of staff and park hosts, other user numbers were tracked through the reservation of campers, shelter rentals, and other uses. This system better allows staff to plan and prepare during the peak season for the staffing, operational, and maintenance needs of our parks. It allows for staff to prepare for the eventual halting of visitors from gaining entrance once capacity has been met and helps to guide users to other parks or facilities to combat overcrowding. This creates a safer and more enjoyable environment for all users, and, in the case of emergency, allows for better emergency access.

In 2021, apart from festivals and special events, the capacity limits at LMJ park were never exceeded. The closest date the park came to capacity was on Labor Day, September 6, 2021, when capacity rose to 1,436 visitors. The second highest date for visitation was on August 29, 2021, with a total number of 1,285 visitors. Father's Day, June 20, 2021, saw the third-highest capacity at 1,150. A spreadsheet tracking weekend and holiday visitation/occupancy numbers from the 2021 peak season is attached for your review. Staff is recommending the occupancy numbers stay in place for the 2022 season and that the gate attendant continue to monitor these numbers working in conjunction with staff, park hosts, third party security, Boulder County Sheriff, and Lyons Fire.

There will once again be two sets of park hosts to help serve guests in LaVern Johnson Park. One set is currently there from last season and will be departing on 4/15/22, with the others scheduled to be onsite on 4/15/22 and 5/23/22. The Park Hosts for LaVern Johnson Park will be new this year, Karen and Corey Ragland and Tracy Kroupa.

The current Park Hosts for LMJ will be moving to Bohn Park for the summer season, set to arrive mid-May. We are still looking to hire a Bohn Park Gate Attendant and a Ballfield Preparation position. A third-party security company will be contracted and scheduled to assist again this season with staff patrolling LaVern, Bohn, Black Bear, and Lyons Valley River Park areas. An RFP for security services is currently posted. The staff has been in contact with Sgt. Crist and Boulder County Sheriff about extra duty/weekend possibilities and it is our hope additional extra duty support for weekends and holidays will be available as has been in the past. The goal of the staff is to schedule an orientation meeting with all parties at the start of the season to discuss roles, duties, protocol, communication, and expectations.

In addition to setting occupancy numbers and working with staff on first-contact enforcement measures, there has also been an increase in the number of reservable spaces in Lyons parks. Starting in 2021, picnic tables reservations became available on weekends and holidays in LaVern Johnson Park. The town has numbered the tables and added slots for reservation slips. A list of Picnic table rules and regulations is listed below. The tables are available online on Reserve America, the same site that handles our camping reservations. Reservations are

available Friday – Sunday and holidays from Memorial weekend through Labor Day weekend. There is a \$10 fee required to reserve the tables. A small nonrefundable fee is charged to encourage actual use of the tables and to prevent users from making reservations to simply hold the tables. Users must arrive by 11 am or their reservation may be forfeited. Any tables not reserved are available to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis. This system has worked well to prevent the early morning overcrowding and rush issues, scheduling and usage problems, and allowed for staff to better prepare and provide for maintenance. Depending on demand, this system can be activated for Bohn Park on Reserve America as well. There are sixteen total picnic sites/tables in Bohn Park and seventeen in LMJ.

Picnic Table Rules & Regulations:

- o Picnic table reservations are valid from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the day of the reservation.
- o Maximum of 8 (eight) people per table.
- o Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance.
- o Pop-up tents may not be staked down - only water weights Shade tents are allowed and encouraged (up to 10'x10'). Please note staking of any kind is not permitted; please plan to use water weights or sandbags for shade tents.
- o Campfires and charcoal or propane camp stoves are NOT allowed. Users may bring charcoal for the on-site grills.
- o Alcohol is not permitted.
- o Reservations must vacate their site by 8:00 p.m. of the expiration date listed on the
- o No refunds for no-shows. No refunds for early departure.
- o Paid parking is still required for picnic table reservations. Parking is \$3 per hour on weekends and holidays and \$2 per hour on weekdays.

Staff will have completed by the start of the 2022 season the expansion of three more tent camping sites and five additional dry RV camping sites in LMJ park to better serve the increased demand for camping. This will bring the total number of tent camping sites in LMJ to twenty, fifteen RV sites with full hookups, and five dry RV camping sites.

Parking along the rear access drive will be reorganized on weekends and holidays and will be reserved parking for campers and loading and unloading for shelter reservations only. It will be closed to traffic on weekends and holidays. Park Hosts and gate attendants will assist with helping to monitor and assist campers and those with shelter rentals. The rear access drive will be open for public parking during the week and paid parking will be facilitated via the rear parking kiosk.

Ray's River Rentals has requested to run services once again in LMJ Park for the 2022 season out of the concession stand. Ray Mees, owner/operator has submitted an updated proposal and staff is working to update his agreement to present to the Board. He is proposing to be open the weekend of May 21 through September 7, daily from 10 am to 6 pm with rentals due back by 6 pm. Rentals will only be available when river flows are between 250cfs and 40cfs, weather permitting.

2022 parking passes for LaVern Johnson and Bohn Park are available to residents of the Town of Lyons (utility billing customers only). One free resident parking pass per household, a second pass may be obtained for \$40, and the third is \$50. Golf carts are considered vehicles and the one free parking pass may be used for a golf cart. Golf carts should park in designated spaces and vehicles are not allowed on trails per town code. Non-residents may purchase a season parking pass for a flat rate of \$80 per vehicle. The parking fee for 2022 is currently set at \$2 per hour on weekdays and off-season weekends, and \$3 per hour on peak-season weekends. Parking fees can be paid at the kiosks located throughout the parks, placing the receipt on the windshield. Parking fees are enforced. Sign up for your 2022 resident parking pass: www.townoflyons.com/parkingpass . There are 207 parking spaces in Bohn Park, 112 in LMJ and there will be 18 at the Black Bear Hole and 115 at the 2nd Avenue Parking Trailhead.

Staff will be continuing to facilitate reservations for facilities and special uses. This includes tent and RV camping, all facilities, special events, and special-use requests for any event for groups over the size of 30. Two new facilities will be available for rental/reservation in 2022 in Bohn Park, the Multi-Use Sport Court, and the Riverside Picnic Area (circular picnic area with larger grill and multiple picnic tables). Staff is looking into how to better facilitate and monitor all reservations, permitting, and communications with on-site park staff members. While the Town continues the implementation of occupancy limits for the parks, communication with maintenance staff and on-site staff will continue to be an area of focus.

Messaging and education are other key components to aiding in summertime crowd control and setting expectations for park usage. Posting information about new park regulations, including occupancy limits and the need for reservations during the busiest days, on social media and in local newspapers such as the Redstone Review, the Daily Camera, and the Longmont Times-Call will help to spread the word about changes for our parks this summer. It is also a good way to advertise that the Bohn Park construction is completed, and the park is ready for use which could help ease crowding at LaVern Johnson Park. Please see the attached 2021 Town of Lyons press release and an article that was included in the Longmont Times-Call in May of 2021 as examples. Gate attendants and Park Hosts will continue to provide users with informative handouts and maps to help guide them to facilities and make them aware of park rules. An example of those used in the 2021 season for both LMJ and Bohn Park are attached and will be updated based on changes for the 2022 season. Town code section 11.4.50 regarding Park Rules and User Fees is also attached for your review.

Signage is another key form of messaging and education that helps inform and guide the public. A Variable Message Sign (VMS) will once again be placed on the Town of Lyons ROW on the east entrance of town to inform visitors of the park, event, and other Town information. Unfortunately, we are unable to place one near the entrance of LMJ per CDOT. We will be using other signs and information for guests at the LMJ, letting them know once the park has reached capacity, if parking is full, and other park information. Town staff will also be including additional signage for the expanded camping, rentable facilities, and some of the recent improvements through flood recovery.

It has been requested that additional signs and enforcement regarding no motorized vehicles be added to the interior trails of all parks. Issues with golf carts, and in some cases, ATVs, dirt bikes, and even instances of vehicles, particularly during peak seasons have created the potential for safety issues and impacts to facilities/amenities. I have attached the Town code Section 8.3.10 and 8.3.20 regarding Neighborhood Electric Vehicles and Golf Carts and

Unlawful Operation of All-Terrain Vehicles for your review. Number nine states “No person shall operate a golf car or LSEV on a Town-owned or maintained trail, except as permitted and posted by the Town.”.

One area staff would like specific guidance from the board or, as a discussion/recommendation with the Parks and Recreation Commission if directed, is on Lyons town park hours of operation. I have attached the current Town code Section 11.4.20-Park Hours, which states “The parks within the Town shall be opened daily to the public from 5:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.”

During COVID, the Town implemented several iterations of restrictions and guidelines regarding parks, one of those was changing park hours from 8 am to 8 pm. Park Hosts continued to implement these changes to hours during the 2021 season and this did cause some confusion with guests, park hosts, and what is listed on existing signage. Park Hosts and other staff believe there is value in discussing a possible change in park hours of operation per the existing code as the altering of hours during COVID did offer many positive outcomes. These included allowing for park hosts and staff to help clear visitors from park areas and facilities prior to dark, completing required cleaning prior to dark, clearing/emptying of trash and other maintenance for the next day of operation before dark, and simply making for fewer potential incidents or altercations with late-night users.

The GOCO Black Bear Hole and 2nd Avenue Trailhead Parking Improvement Project have begun and are slated to be completed by Memorial Day. Improvements to the Black Bear Hole include new decking on the pedestrian bridge, improvements to the parking lot and paid parking kiosk, trail improvements and connections, stream bank improvements upstream of the pedestrian bridge, landscape and irrigation, and site amenities. Improvements at the 2nd Avenue Trailhead Parking area include a new restroom facility, structured parking lot, landscape and irrigation, trailhead and trail improvements, and site amenities.

Staff is working on preparing requests for first and second-quarter CIP projects. Parks and Public Works staff hope to obtain proposals or quotes for the Bohn Park Dirt Jump Park renovations/repairs in March/April, Recycle Center Fencing in March and have been working up configurations on small dog park fencing to best utilize existing infrastructure and reduce cost.

V. LEGAL ISSUES: None known at this time.

VI. CONFLICTS OR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: Unknown.

VII. SUMMARY AND ALTERNATIVES: Staff is requesting discussion on the 2022 Parks Operation Plan, park hours, vehicles on trails and other items considered, as well as direction on adjusting any items the Board deems appropriate.

PROPOSED MOTION: “I move to direct staff to adjust their parks operations plan by”

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) LMJ Visitation-Weekends and Holidays-2021
- 2) Town of Lyons Visitor Plan 2021 Press Release
- 3) Times-Call Article 2021
- 4) Lyons LMJ Park Map and Rules 2021
- 5) Lyons Bohn Park Map and Rules 2021
- 6) Lyons Town Code-Section 11.4.50-Park Rules and User Fees

- 7) Lyons Town Code-Section 8.3.10-Operation of Neighborhood Electric Vehicles, Golf Carts
- 8) Lyons Town Code-Section 8.3.20-Unlawful Operation of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV's)
- 9) Lyons Tow Code-Section 11.4.20-Park Hours