

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

PRIOR TO THE

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' SESSION

ON

THURSDAY, April 6, 2023

AT

10:00 A.M.

Questions, concerns or comments about these items can be directed
to staff or the Commissioners by contacting the Commissioners' office at

(503) 434-7501

OR

BOCINFO@co.yamhill.or.us

From: [Val Blaha](#)
To: [BOC Info](#)
Subject: Public Comment - BOC meeting 4/6/23
Date: Wednesday, April 5, 2023 9:58:34 PM

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Re: BOC appointments to Advisory Parks Board

We have had no response from the BOC regarding why they chose to ignore 2 out of the 3 Parks board recommendations for appointees at their 3/23/23 meeting.

It seems odd that given the clear agenda item at the 3/23 meeting, there was no discussion about disregarding two of the Board's recommended applicants. Why were they not considered, and why was there no discussion about this?

Is it possible the BOC violated Oregon's public meetings rules and discussed and/or made plans regarding the appointments outside of the regular meeting? Or, did they discuss plans in their Executive Session, under a non-specific agenda item, possibly violating https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_192.660

Section 2a: (2) The governing body of a public body may hold an executive session: (a) To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent.)

(7) The exception granted by subsection (2)(a) of this section does not apply to: (b)The filling of a vacancy on any public committee, commission or other advisory group.

It's obvious that either the BOC spontaneously decided to ignore the interview and recommendation process of the Parks Board, or (more likely) they came prepared to put forward their own candidates and to ignore most of the Parks Board recommendations. Which leads to the questions - why did they disregard them, and why did they choose certain other candidates?

Per their comments at the 3/30/23 BOC meeting, the commissioners believe that it's "incredibly insulting" to consider qualifications of applicants to be on the Parks Board, or even to suggest that applicants for such a board should have any qualifications at all.

Despite their protest at the grave insult implied by the mere idea of considering qualifications for contested volunteer positions, it's apparent by their actions (in choosing some applicants over the recommended ones) that the commissioners had some basis for their chosen applicant list.

Based on the actual appointees and/or on other statements the commissioners have made, along with the (dis-)appointment process for other county boards, and in the absence of the BOC actually being transparent about their process, we must assume that the non-"qualifications" on which they based their appointments were the following:

1. donations of money to BOC campaigns or related races or PACs, or otherwise supporting or encouraging current BOC members with goods, services, praise, etc.
2. working in the field of large scale, chemical-based agriculture
3. antipathy and/or fear about adding to current parks and trails within Yamhill

county

4. need for county board experience to pump up resumes for future elections

Furthermore, the following were likely considered disqualifying:

1. being recommended for the open Board seats by the current Parks Board after an interview and deliberation process that considered relevant experience, knowledge and availability
2. being at all associated with any political groups that have voiced opposition to current BOC members or actions

The lone exception to the above was one candidate (recommended by both the Parks Board and the BOC) whose actual qualifications were apparently so overwhelming that even the BOC was forced to hold their noses and get over their dislike of real qualifications.

For all Yamhill county residents who care about transparency and accountability, it's truly a shame that we cannot trust our BOC to be open and honest about their actions, or to listen to viewpoints that differ. It's also extremely disheartening to see the BOC yet again toss away the time and energy spent by volunteers, in favor of a process that is unclear and unfair.

This isn't a question of Republicans vs Democrats, despite BOC attempts to make it seem so. As an independent voter, I don't "hate" Republicans or Democrats when I disagree with them. What I do hate is fascism masquerading as freedom, intolerance hiding behind obfuscation, and ignorance and greed driving decisions which negatively affect our community's health, safety and well-being.

I look forward to the return of rational, reasonable, kind, and open-minded behavior from BOC members, no matter what their party. That change really can't come soon enough.

Sincerely,
Valerie Blaha
McMinnville, OR