

April 29, 2020

Commissioner Thurlow, Commissioner Carlson, and Commissioner Mayo were present for a special meeting that was called for at 4:00 p.m.

Ryan Wilson, Clay Center Dispatch, went live on Facebook at 4:02 p.m.

Those in attendance were: Mike Carney, Clay County Park, Dana Rickley, County Health Administrator, Brandy Riggs, Wakefield City Council, Rick James, County Attorney, Chuck Dunn, Sheriff, and Ryan Wilson, Clay Center Dispatch.

Commissioner Thurlow opened the meeting stating that the special meeting was called to clarify what was said Monday in the Commission meeting about extending the date for keeping the Park closed and to end rumors and talk that is going around. Commissioner Thurlow stated that the Wakefield City Council was aware that Brandy and Chris Dumler, Mayor, were attending the County Commissioner meeting on Monday to discuss what the plans were for the opening of the Clay County Park.

Brandy Riggs, Wakefield City Council, stated that the City of Wakefield would like to have a plan in place in case there would be an outbreak of positive COVID-19 within the area. They would like to know the plans for the County and to work closely with them. At the next Council meeting, Ms. Riggs is going to present that the City place hand sanitizer stations at each of the business within the City of Wakefield to help with the opening of the businesses with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Mayo stated that the campers that stay in the park are like a community, they just don't stay one or two nights and leave. They know each other and are friends and have a good time when they camp together. But that is the problem, they all get together in groups larger than 10 individuals and do not do the social distancing that is an Executive Order from the Governor. This was proven a couple of weeks ago when Law Enforcement had to break up a gathering at the Park.

Dana Rickley, County Health Administrator, stated that if the park was to open there would have to be frequent cleaning of the bathrooms and shower houses, a capacity plan with social distancing and no groups larger than 10, and a contact log that could be used if there would be a person test positive that had been or stayed in the park. This contact information is very important for the County Health Officer to be able to track a positive person and who they have been in contact with the previous 14 days.

Commissioner Mayo thought that it would be best to close through May 30th to be safe with the largest camping weekend. There is nothing saying that we couldn't shorten that period and open at an earlier date.

Brandy Riggs, City Council, would like to know how we can safely move forward. Ms. Riggs expressed that all of the feedback that is being said is hateful. It is sad that the campers can't be at the campground but the Council feels a moral obligation to take care of the residence.

Mike Carney, Park Manager, stated that the majority of the campers come in on Friday night and leave on Sunday. Most of them stay at their campers and go out on their boats. Mr. Carney feels that it would be worst for people to come for a night or two and leave. We know the campers that come for the summer where we wouldn't know the one that stay for a night and leave. Mr. Carney is also concerned about putting the courtesy dock in the water for he feels that will create more traffic in town. The Board does not feel that the people will gather at the dock for long periods of time and they have the right to use the dock. Mr. Carney wanted to state for the record that it was not a bon fire that happened two weeks ago it was a 30-inch fire ring that people were standing around.

Commissioner Thurlow shared that an individual from Nebraska that camps at the Park had contacted him concerning the closing of the Park. After Commissioner Thurlow explained their reasoning, the individual stated that he didn't like what was being done but totally understood why they were doing this.

Kayla Wang, County Clerk, stated to Ms. Riggs and the Board of Commissioners that she cannot be calling each of the Commissioners and asking them to make a decision individually. Those decisions need to be made in a meeting with all of them in session. Ms. Riggs stated that she was asking for their permission to ask Mr. Carney to a work session that the City County will be having Monday night to work on a plan for the Park and the City. Ms. Wang stated that you were still asking for them all to make a decision in giving you permission. This cannot be done individually. The Board granted permission for Ms. Riggs to extend an invitation to Mr. Carney and to Ms. Rickley to attend this planning meeting.

Mike Carney, Park Manager, stated that if they would open the Park this weekend, not all campers move in at one time. There would be 30 to 60 campers move in this weekend and then another 30 to 60 campers the next weekend until the Park is full. Everyone is wanting to go fishing and camping and be outdoors.

Dana Rickley, County Health Administrator, when opening the Park recommends starting up slowly so that everyone can work together and be good citizens and care for others.

The Board at this time has made the decision to keep the Park closed through May 30th as the motion that was made on Monday in regular Commission meeting. The Board will revisit this matter on Monday May 4, 2020 after the Governor's plan to re-open Kansas has been announced.

The Board adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

David M. Thurlow, Chairman

Attest: Kayla Wang, County Clerk
May 4th, 2020
Clay Center, Kansas