

# **BY-LAWS OF THE BENTON COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION**

Article I: **Name of the Commission**

The name of the organization shall be the Benton County Parks Commission.

Article II: **Vision, Mission and Purpose**

Section 1. Vision:

The vision of the Parks Commission is to create, sustain and preserve excellent parks, trails and open spaces to enhance the lives of current and future generations of Benton County residents.

Section 2. Mission:

The mission of the Parks Commission is to contribute vision, leadership and recommendations to the Benton County Board of Commissioners for the best use and development of Benton County parks, trails and open spaces.

Section 3. Purpose:

The purpose for which this commission is organized shall be to work as a team to:

1. Study and determine the park, recreation and open space needs of the County and serve as an advisory body providing recommendations to the County Commissioners on matters pertaining to the planning, programming, evaluating and funding of park and recreation facilities and programs in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 398.31 to 398.36.
2. Recommend priorities to the County Commissioners, with reference to the Benton County Master Plan for Parks, Trails and Open Space, for the acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of recreation areas, natural areas, facilities and programs.
3. Support the mission of the Benton County Parks Commission.

Article III: **Authorization**

The authorization for the establishment of this commission is set forth under Minnesota Statutes, Section 398.36. Duties are delegated to the Parks Commission by the Benton County Board of Commissioners by Ordinance #355 and power pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 398.31 to 398.36.

Article IV: **Membership**

Section 1. Commission Structure:

The County Parks Commission shall consist of nine members:

1. Two Benton County Commissioners
2. Five citizen members, including one from each County Commissioner's District
3. One Parks & Recreation or Planning Professional
4. One Conservation / Environmental Advocate

All members must be Benton County residents and all shall have equal rights and privileges.

Section 2. Appointment of Members:

a) The County Board of Commissioners shall directly appoint their own Commissioner representation.

b) The remaining members shall apply for the position according to the following procedure:

On-going Membership Application Procedure

1. Any vacancies shall be posted in the official newspaper, and a notice shall be mailed to all cities and townships affected by the vacancy. The membership application will be given to all interested parties. Current members seeking re-appointment are not required to fill out an application but shall submit a letter of interest.

2. All applications shall be submitted at the Courthouse. A minimum of three weeks public notice is required. The Parks Commission members shall review all applications and make a recommendation to the County Board, and the Board shall have final approval over all appointments to the Commission.

Application Form

1. An application form containing the following questions will be sent to all interested new applicants.
  - a. Please tell us why you are interested in applying.
  - b. Please tell us about your work experiences.
  - c. Please tell us about any prior or current civic involvement.
  - d. Please tell us about your educational experiences.
  - e. Please tell us about any "life experiences" that may help you fulfill a board or commission position.
  - f. Please tell us what time commitment you can provide your board or commission beyond regular meetings.
  - g. Please tell us what you think you can contribute.
  - h. Please disclose any affiliations that may be construed as a conflict of interest.

Article V: **Term of Office**

Section 1: **Term and Term Limits:**

The term of the members shall be for three years, and shall be staggered so that no more than three members' terms expire in a given year. All regular terms shall expire December 31<sup>st</sup>. All members shall not serve more than three consecutive three year terms. Upon completion of the terms, a member may be eligible for reappointment after one year of non-membership.

Section 2: **Early Dismissal:**

Any member of the Parks Commission who misses three consecutive meetings per year, or acts in a manner inappropriate to the duties of the Parks Commission is subject to removal at the pleasure of the County Board of Commissioners.

Article VI: **Vacancy**

Any vacancy in the regular membership prior to term expiration shall be filled by the County Board of Commissioners and such appointee shall serve for the unexpired term so filled. Said appointee may serve additional terms pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 and Article V, Section 1.

Article VII: **Officers**

Section 1. **Elections:**

Officers shall be elected at the first regularly scheduled meeting of the new year. The County Parks Commission shall elect from its membership a chair, vice-chair, and a secretary who shall serve for a term of one year and shall have such powers as may be prescribed in the rules of said Commission. Officers shall serve for one year and shall be eligible for re-election.

Section 2. **Duties of Chair:**

The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Parks Commission and shall have the duties normally conferred by parliamentary usage of such officers. The Chair shall work with the Parks Director to establish the agenda for the meetings.

Section 3. **Duties of Vice-Chair:**

The vice-chair shall act for the chair in their absence.

Section 4. **Duties of Secretary:**

The secretary shall keep the minutes and records of the Commission; and with the assistance of staff as is available, arrange proper and legal notice of

hearings when necessary, attend to the correspondence of the Commission and other duties as are normally carried out by a secretary.

Article VIII: **Compensation**

Commission members shall receive per diem and mileage reimbursement for attending their regular monthly meeting. Per diem and mileage for special meetings will be subject to approval by the County Board. Per diem and mileage reimbursement shall be based upon current rates and policies as established by the County Board.

Article IX: **Changing & Amending**

These by-laws may be amended as deemed necessary by the Parks Commission and approved by the County Board. Such amendments shall be in writing and may not be acted upon with less than thirty days prior written notice and must have two-thirds majority vote.

Article X: **Meetings**

1. Meetings will be held on an as needed basis. The meeting will be the first Wednesday of every month, at 6:00 pm. In the event of a conflict with holidays or other events, the Chair may change the date or time with proper notice.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair with proper notice.
3. The Commission may establish and appoint committees. These committees shall meet at the direction of the Commission and shall report back to the Commission.
4. All meetings shall be open to the general public and shall follow Roberts Rules of Order, Simplified and Applied, unless otherwise specified and/or applicable.

Article XI. **Quorum:**

1. A quorum consisting of a majority of duly appointed members shall be present at any meeting in which official action is taken.

As amended December 1, 2009.