

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, March 16, 2017

Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Administrative Office
3373 Mt. Baker Highway
Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:07 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Kenneth Kiesner, Jeff Margolis, Theresa Sygitowicz, Susan McClendon and Sonja Max.

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Christ Thomsen and Rod Lamb

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Richard Sturgill

GUESTS

Daniel Probst

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. COMMENTS – Daniel Probst, President, Cascade Runners – Daniel reiterated last month’s report for the benefit of the new Commission members. Daniel was asked if the trail plan is in the conceptual stage up to South Fork Park and is there was a plan to extend from South Fork Park to Anderson Park. Daniel confirmed that it was conceptual up to South Fork Park, and that there is not currently a planning process in place for an extension from South Fork to Anderson. There was additional discussion regarding the routes and signage. The timeline is eight years.

B. COMMUNICATIONS – NONE

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - NONE

V. AGENDA

A. March 16, 2017 Agenda

MOTION: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz and seconded by Jeff Margolis to accept the March 16, 2017 agenda as presented. The Chair asked for further discussion and called for the question. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. February 16, 2017 Minutes

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Theresa Sygitowicz to accept the February 16, 2017 minutes as written. The Chair asked for further discussion and called for the question. The motion carried with two abstentions, Paul Woodcock and Sonja Max who were not present at the meeting.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE

Galbraith Mountain Acquisition – Mike provided an update regarding the Galbraith Mountain Acquisition. The project has been turned over to the City of Bellingham. Leslie Bryson is spearheading the negotiations. The County's portion of the financing will be up to 50%, not to exceed \$2,000,000 and moving forward the County's involvement will be de minimis. Mike discussed that he has emailed an update to this effect to the various parties involved.

There was additional discussion regarding the financing and the County's involvement. Mike discussed that at this time the County is waiting for the City's proposal, at which time it will be assessed and a decision or adjustment will be made regarding the County's financial involvement.

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) South Lake Whatcom Park Easement – Fish Hatchery – The easement was approved by County Council. WDFW applied for a temporary use permit at the south end of Lake Whatcom that has also been approved. WDFW has been notified that both the easement and the temporary use permit were approved and will move forward with the permitting process.

Camp Horizon Foundation – The Foundation is moving ahead with the kitchen renovations required to meet the fire code changes. They are currently in the permitting process and plan to complete the project prior to their camp season.

The Northwest Clean Air Agency has clarified that even though there is asbestos present in the range hood area that is being replaced it will not be necessary to remove it as there will not be any disturbance of or exposure to asbestos during the renovation process.

Birch Bay Beach Park – A meeting is scheduled next week on the Birch Bay Beach Park cultural resources in collaborations with Whatcom County Public Works and Lummi Cultural Resources staff to provide clarification in terms of the next steps in park development.

The Blaine/Birch Bay Park and Recreation District has budgeted \$100,000 for park development. They have also indicated that they would entertain a proposal to fund 50% annually toward the costs of ongoing maintenance. The annual maintenance has been estimated at \$100,000-\$109,000. This would not include the berm project.

Annual Lake Whatcom Joint Councils & Commission Meeting — Mike discussed that there will be a joint councils and commissions meeting held on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 from 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM at the City of Bellingham Council Chambers, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham. The meeting will be preceded by a staff Open House starting at 6:00 PM.

Mike discussed that these meetings provide a summary of joint City and County projects and a review of management programs regarding water quality in Lake Whatcom.

Lookout Mountain Army Corps of Engineers Communication Site Agreement – The Department was contacted by the Army Corps of Engineers to renew a communication site agreement that is due to expire this May. The Department is in the process of reviewing and researching the agreement. If a draft renewal is developed it will be placed on the Park Commission agenda for discussion and would ultimately move forward to County Council for approval.

County Metrics Requirements – The County is moving forward with providing performance metrics. The information on departments that piloted steps to provide this information for State reporting requirements can be found on the web site.

In an effort to provide better information for this program the Department is distributing customer surveys for the parks, senior centers and the Plantation Rifle Range. Although the information received in past surveys on our parks and senior centers provided information regarding customer satisfaction with facilities, customer service, etc., the Plantation Rifle Range needed to be revised to gather more conclusive information.

The surveys will be used to document park metrics in a quarterly report and senior centers in an annual report.

B. OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN

Staff Training

Maintenance - Staff training has been scheduled next week with a local nursery on best practice methods for orchard pruning and maintenance at Hovander Park.

Staff Information Sharing – The Department is initiating a staff sharing program in that Administrative (office) staff is joining Operations field staff to become more familiar with the parks and facilities and be able to provide better customer service to our park users. This month was Semiahmoo Park and next month will be Silver Lake Park.

In addition to Semiahmoo this month, accounting Administrative staff joined field staff at Samish Park to provide training on concessions and boat rentals through the software accounting system. This included field-verifying policies and procedures for boat rentals and cash handling, etc.

There was a question whether or not the Department allow gratis use of the rental facilities for community outreach fundraisers. Christ explained that the Department is required to collect fees for rentals on our facilities regardless of the status of an organization.

Weather Events

County Damage Assessment Summary Report - The County has submitted its preliminary damage assessment summary report to the Division of State Emergency Management for this year's winter storm events. The Department's estimated cleanup cost for staff time and equipment is \$78,500. Some parks experienced significantly more damage than others. Costs have been significantly reduced by reusing much of the materials from the cleanup in our parks.

This year saw an excess of chips due to the amount of blow down. Contact has been made with County Public Works to look at how they dispose of their excess chips to determine whether or not it would work for the Department.

Projects

Hovander Maintenance Building – Work continues on the cleanup of the barn demolition and general site. Christ and Rod have begun discussions to select a surveyor to determine the best location on that site to construct the maintenance shop that is planned for this coming fall/next spring.

Lake Whatcom Trails – Department staff met with Planning and Development Services (PDS) to discuss streamlining the permitting process for both trail maintenance and construction and shoreline permitting requirements by developing standard procedures for submitting programmatic permit applications for seasons/annual projects. If successful it could provide for a significant reduction in work delays due to permitting.

Based on the meeting results the Department applied for a programmatic land disturbance permit for trail construction in the water shed and allow work to be completed for the year.

Iron Chink Shelter – The City of Blaine approved the shoreline exemption process but requested some additional design notes. Rod Lamb provided this information and it is anticipated that this will meet all the requirements for construction to proceed.

C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT – ROD LAMB

South Fork Park Trailhead Development – The grant presentation to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) took place on February 28, 2017.

Application has been made for NOVA funding which was recently opened to local agencies. This will help fund the trail connection to Nessel Farm through Department of Natural Resources property.

The Department has been notified by the grant coordinator that both South Fork Park Trailhead Development and Lake Whatcom Park trails submissions were unique when compared to other applications in that they are for trail development as opposed to trail maintenance. They also commented that the level of planning and public involvement in the planning process the Department afforded the projects was much more detailed and at a much higher level than other agencies.

The weather is getting closer to being conducive to paving and Rod will be contacting the contractor to begin work again on that portion of the project.

The land disturbance permit has been submitted for the first section of trail that will include a graveled section that connects the hiking trailhead to the equestrian trailhead.

The next step will be to work on providing an inner trail experience at Galbraith Farm until we get notification on the NOVA grant and can complete the trail connection to Nessel Farm.

Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements – This project is in the process of being re-scoped into an entirely new road improvement project. Rod discussed that after a great deal of work with a contracted engineer it was determined that the initial project scope would exceed the available funding and that unlike most project the scope could not be cut, nor could it be phased. Rod and Christ will continue meet to further define the project.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) required additional information on the screen size for the dry-hydrant that is being installed as a result of fire safety improvements that were required by the Whatcom County Fire Marshall. Rod assured them that it would meet State code.

Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation – The structural drawings will require additional structural notes to be completed before the permitting process can begin. Rod anticipated that he will be able to submit for permit by the end of this week.

Birch Bay Community Park – Rod stated that due to his absence Mike was able to provide an update to County Council on the park master planning process in a slideshow presentation that included progress on the master plan to date, estimated project cost and community planning coordination efforts. Rod will present that slideshow this evening under New Business.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Welcome New Commission Member Sonja Max – Mike introduced and welcomed Sonja Max as a new Commission member to the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission.

He introduced Park staff and touched on their positions in the Department. He invited the other Commission members to introduce themselves which they did.

Sonja discussed her interest in the Park and Recreation Commission in that she loves parks, loves being outside and currently has an opportunity with some extra time to devote to serving the community in a way that benefits outdoor, healthy activities and familiarizing herself with the local government process.

B. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair – Jeff Margolis nominated Paul Woodcock for Chair and Kenn Kiesner nominated Jeff Margolis for Vice-Chair. The nominations were accepted by Paul and Jeff.

MOTION: It was moved by Kenn Kiesner and seconded by Theresa Sygitowicz to close and approve the nominations. The Chair asked for further discussion and called for the question. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

C. Review and Approve Updates to the Commission’s General Business Rules – Mike discussed that as a housekeeping item there have been some required changes that needed to be made to the rules. He provided a copy of the edited General Business Rules showing the changes, and provided background for and discussed each of the changes.

There was a discussion for clarification on the “Meetings” paragraph changes in terms of the parameters of “side meeting” or “gatherings” and public disclosure.

There was additional discussion regarding the districting responsibilities in that there are no specific different responsibilities for each district other than providing a point of contact for district resident concerns and a physical representation for the district.

Motion: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Kenn Kiesner to approve the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission General Business Rules, 3/16/17 changes as presented. The Chair asked for further discussion and called for the question. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

D. Review County Council & County Executive Expectations for Boards & Commissions – Mike provided a copy of the document and discussed that it was adopted in 2013 to standardize the expectations and discuss the code of ethics for the position.

E. Recommend Loan and Restoration of “Iron Chink” to Anchorage Museum for Display Purposes – Mike provided pictures of the two iron chinks that are currently in storage and is asking for a recommendation for the loan and restoration of one surplus item to the Anchorage museum for display purposes. He provided some history on and terms of the request, and asked the Commission for a recommendation.

There was discussion regarding the length of the agreement, the reasons for donating as opposed to gifting the item, shipping requirements, and the conditions for the restoration.

Motion: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz and seconded by Kenn Kiesner to recommend the loan and restoration of the surplus “Iron Chink” to the Anchorage Museum for display purposes. The Chair asked for further discussion and called for the question. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mike stated that he will move the request forward for County Council approval.

F. Recommend Approval of Renewal of Residential Access Easement across Park Property for Janet and Dewey Huston, 3315 North Shore Drive, Bellingham, WA – Mike stated that he does not have a document for Commission review as it is still

with the County's legal staff for review but explained that it is a 30 year driveway easement that is due to expire. The Department's recommendation is that the easement be renewed with shorter renewal terms but that the decision will be dependent upon legal staff findings.

Mike discussed that Department staff has reviewed the location and determined that there is no encroachment and that it will only involve ingress/egress, and that ultimately it will need to be approved by County Council.

Motion: It was moved by Susan McClendon and seconded by Theresa Sygitowicz to renew the easement for Janet and Dewey Huston for the shorter terms, if possible. The Chair asked for further discussion and called for the question. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

G. Update on the Birch Bay Community Park Conceptual Plan – Rod provided an update presentation for the Commission that was presented to County Council last Tuesday and covered the following information (Printed presentation provided):

- I. Introduction
 - Description of Site
 - Planning process
 - Inventory/Analysis
 - Public Involvement
 - Design
- II. Proposed Master Plan – Flexible site design that will accommodate a variety of parks functions:
 - Identify key design characteristics
 - Parking area location/bluff
 - Previous pavement to maximize the available area for park use
 - Site circulation / anticipate users form the berm trail
 - Design elements
 - Restrooms
 - Parking
 - Beach access
 - Multi-use pavilion
 - Nature play
 - Picnic areas
- III. Development Costs
 - Phased construction
 - Initial construction (Phase 1, 2 & 3)
 - Yearly maintenance (Phase 1, 2 & 3)
- IV. Conclusion & Questions

There was additional discussion regarding the elements of the multi-use pavilion in terms of utility management, whether or not there would be a concession area and where this could be located, and public use amenities such as picnic tables and grills.

Also discussed were the materials that will be used for the parking lot in terms of storm water treatment and management.

It was shared that this presentation is available for public review on the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation website.

There was some general budget discussion in that any changes that are made to the General Fund budget would not affect the Parks and Recreation budget for this budget cycle, the State grants that the Department has applied for and the funding allocations. In terms of the Birch Bay Community Park there is no commitment on the development side of the project of either County funds or State grant funds.

H. Update on the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center Building #2 and Covered Sports Court - Mike discussed that there will be a meeting with the Resource Center steering committee to discuss upcoming financial considerations.

It has been determined that there is insufficient fire flow at the hydrant that needs to be addressed and that that the building will need to have sprinklers installed. The installation of sprinklers will allow for sufficient water pressure to continue in the community system to provide for the surrounding residents and businesses if there is a fire at the facility. The installation will add an addition \$25,000.00 to the overall budget.

The initial estimate for the covered sports court, which is the third building in the complex, was approximately \$495,000. After review by Department staff the estimate appears to be closer to \$400,000.

This project is an Opportunity Council project and the challenge that they are facing is that they are coming up considerably short of funds to complete both buildings. Although they have a number of grants, some dedicated state capital funds and a pledge from the County of \$300,000 there is a good chance that sometime in the not too distant future they will be coming back before the Council requesting additional funds.

The upcoming meeting with the steering committee will address all of these elements, where they are in terms of funding and what they will be able to accomplish.

Mike provided some history for the new Commission members on the acquisition and management of the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

VanZandt Community Hall Activities – On March 23, 2017 at 6:00 PM there will be the second of five sessions of the Project Neighborly forums. The focus is Valley residents and local businesses.

On March 31, 2017 is Movie Night. The feature will be a documentary on salmon preservation. This will also be the unveiling of a new screen and sound system for the movie events.

Mt. Baker High School Girls Basketball State Championship – The girls' basketball took the State Championship. There will be a parade for the players. Pre-parade assembly will be at the High School Auditorium this coming Sunday.

Whatcom County Cattleman's Benefit - The benefit was highly successful. Theresa shared this in that this type of event is excellent for any local community fund raisers as well as providing an excellent venue for community meetings.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be held on March 16, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center, 3236 Nielsen Avenue, Ferndale, Washington.

XII. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Mike McFarlane, Parks Department Director