

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, July 19, 2018

Lighthouse Marine Park
811 Marine Drive
Point Roberts, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis Committee Chair at 6:33 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Sonja Max, Richard Sturgill, Susan McClendon, Jeff Margolis

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Rod Lamb

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Brad VanderWerff

GUEST(S)

None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Jeff Margolis commented on how there continues to be issues in the South Fork Valley related to river usage. He wishes Whatcom County would address this problem with signage, but they don't. Jeff posts signs that tell people where they can get in and out of the river, as well as information on controlling trash, keeping the water clean, and respecting private property and wildlife. He has tried for a long time to make a difference, but is giving up making a big deal about it because it's not working and he feels it is a civic/public/governmental responsibility to manage the use of aquatic resources by human beings in the summer.

V. AGENDA

A. July 19, 2018

MOTION: Richard Sturgill moved to approve the July 19, 2018 agenda as presented. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. June 21, 2018

MOTION: Susan McClendon moved to approve the June 21, 2018 Minutes as written. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. Budget** – The 2019-20 Budget is due August 1st. WC Parks is requesting three Park Attendants (entry level positions) to help out with maintenance and customer service. WC Parks is also recommending wage increases for seasonal extra help to aid in the recruitment and retention of these employees. A 3% increase is being recommended to the Council for the Senior Centers (3% total for the 2019-20 budget cycle, not 3% each year). The Executive and Council will decide which Capital Projects to fund from the list submitted by Parks. The approved projects will be shared with the Commission. WC Parks is going to start managing its small engines, boats, and small motorized equipment. The maintenance and replacement of these items will be budgeted for on an annual basis in the Parks Budget instead of being managed by Public Works (ER&R). The Budget should be available for review at the October Parks Commission meeting, as it is set to come out earlier that day.
- ii. Commission Positions** – There are two vacant Commission positions, District 1 and District 4.
- iii. Tower Leases** – Work continues on the communication tower leases. Mike and legal staff had a conference call with Parallel Communications, who may propose a different lease format (a pay structure). This format will be considered.
- iv. High Water at Silver Lake** – A number of complaints have come in this spring about the beaver dams and resulting high water levels at Silver Lake. The water levels have since dropped, but this is an issue that needs to be resolved, as the water levels will be back up in the fall. There are at least five beaver dams on Silver Lake, one of which is on park property. If the dam on park property is removed, it should drop the water levels 2-3 feet. WCPR will work on permitting for this in the next month or two.
- v. DNR Baker to Bellingham Plan** – DNR is having open houses on July 31st (6:30pm – 8:00pm) at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center and August 1st (6:30pm – 8:00pm) at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal.

B. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen

- i. Visitor Surveys** – Visitors have completed a lot of online surveys, with the majority coming from Silver Lake, Lighthouse, Plantation Rifle Range, Samish, Lake Whatcom Park, and Hovander, respectively. The surveys are confidential and come via an email. All surveys are seen by Mike,

Christ, and Shannon and are also forwarded to the respective Rangers and Regional Park Supervisors. The three main themes expressed in the surveys are enjoyment of the parks, general support/approval of the condition of the parks, and the lack of restroom cleanliness/presentation. Silver Lake Park is getting the most complaints about the restrooms, which is likely the result of a dramatic increase in visitation and being shorthanded in staffing. To help keep Silver Lake's restroom facilities clean while continuing to recruit for seasonal extra help, a full time Repair Maintenance III and an Outdoor Worker Program crew have been assigned to Silver Lake Park.

- ii. **Staff Updates** – The struggle continues in hiring seasonal employees and a lot of time is being spent on recruitment and interviewing. Three seasonal employees have been hired, two for the Plantation Rifle Range and one for Silver Lake. Two interviews were held for the Maintenance and Construction Supervisor position and those two candidates are returning for a second interview and testing. Human Resources has provided WCPR with a list of about 15 applicants for the Regional Park Supervisor position.
- iii. **Current Operations** – The focus at this point in the season is to keep the parks running, maintained, and clean. There were three water line breaks in the span of one week, which makes keeping up on these regular operations more challenging. As far as Capital Projects, Silver Lake Park is complete and Maple Falls Community Park and the fence line at South Fork Park are active.

C. Planning & Development Report (Rodney Lamb)

- i. **Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements** – Oceanside Construction, the contractor for the Silver Lake Park project, submitted his final pay request, but the contract needs to be amended because there were some material overages that exceeded bid quantities. Rod is working with Finance to wrap this project up. The parking lot and road were striped by a subcontractor who did a fabulous job. There was a lot of work that was left undone on this project because of budget struggles. The WCPR crew mobilized and did a great job of completing these undone tasks by adding fill material, putting down wood chip mulch, and planting grass. As a result of their extra efforts, this project is really looking nice.
- ii. **Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – The contractor backfilled the eastern abutment and made the trail connection on the east side of the bridge. The WCPR crew is doing the backfill and trail connection on the western abutment and expect to be done early next week. The park should be open by the end of next week. Rod is working with Emily, the special projects employee, to create trail signage similar to that used on the Chanterelle Trail which includes what users can expect on the trail

(distance, elevation, grade, width, cross slope, surface, etc.). A rules sign will also be installed. Mitigation planting, further trail cutting, and boardwalk work will be done in the fall.

- iii. **Lighthouse Marine Park** – Remaining projects include: pouring concrete under the picnic shelters, installing the playground, and replacing some of the barbecues. Jeff Margolis is concerned about people going off the edge of the boardwalk and the steps.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Lighthouse Marine Park Playground Funding & Completion – Originally the plan was to restore the old playground, but after inspecting the structure, it was determined it should be replaced. Because the playground was part of a Capital Project, the Council will need to amend the ordinance and approve a budget supplemental request. This is supported by Executive Louws, but is ultimately approved by the Council.

B. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Issues – There have been some structural concerns with the dock in the last couple of weeks and as a result, it will be removed next Wednesday. Once the dock has been examined and possible fixes are identified, the County Executive and Council will have to decide if it will be fixed or removed completely.

C. Situational Awareness – Jeff Margolis brought up the topic of situational awareness, as a woman was accosted in the Chuckanuts. She had spray and a cell phone and was able to defend herself and call the Sheriff. Jeff suggested signs in the parks and/or information on our website promoting situational awareness to park users. A discussion ensued about vehicle prowls in trailhead parking lots.

D. South Fork Park Vehicle Access – There have been problems with people driving into the agricultural field, so a fence/guardrail is going to be installed. It will run along Mosquito Lake Road, the paved parking lot, and the gravel road, before connecting to the existing gate in the agricultural field. It will then run beyond the gate to the south end of the equestrian parking area.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

NONE

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on August 16, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at Samish Park, 673 North Lake Samish Drive, Bellingham, Washington.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director