

**MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, December 18, 2014**

**Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, Washington**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis, Vice-Chair at 6:08 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Jeff Margolis, Janet Boyhan, Kenneth Kiesner, Theresa Sygitowicz, Richard Sturgill and Gordon Rogers (early departure)

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Rodney Lamb

GUESTS

Matt Aamot, Senior Planner, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services. (PDS)
Daniel Probst

EXCUSED

Paul Woodcock

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. DANIEL PROBST – Daniel provided a brief background of his involvement in marathon races and trail route planning. He spoke to the Commission about his goal to build a trails system to accommodate marathon activities and more, what has been accomplished do date, future proposed routes and how to move forward to complete the system.

Jeff thanked Daniel for his input. He asked that Daniel provide a memo to the Commission outlining his vision.

B. COMMUNICATION: Mike shared the following public communications:

1. THANK YOU FROM DORALEE BOOTH – BIRCH BAY – Mike shared an email communication from Doralee Booth, thanking the Commission for their support on the recent Birch Bay property acquisition.

2. INVITATION TO FERNDAL SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER 40TH ANNIVERSARY – Mike shared an invitation to an open-house to celebrate the Ferndale Senior Center's 40th Anniversary. The event will be held at the Ferndale Senior Center, 1999 Cherry Street, Ferndale, Washington on Saturday, December 20, 2014 from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS – There were no Commissioner comments.

V. **AGENDA**

A. **DECEMBER 18, 2014 AGENDA APPROVAL**

MOTION: It was moved by Gordon Rogers, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed unanimously to approve the December 18, 2014 Agenda as written.

VI. **MINUTES**

A. **NOVEMBER 20, 2014 MINUTES APPROVAL**

MOTION: It was moved by Gordon Rogers, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed unanimously to approve the November 20, 2014 Minutes with the following corrections:

1. Add Theresa Sygitowicz to those present.
2. Correct typo page 6 – messiah.
3. Add the following motion to Section VIII., A.: Jeff Margolis moved that recreational programs be included as a goal in the comprehensive plan. The motion was not seconded. Motion failed.

VII. **STAFF REPORTS**

A. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE**

1. **Galbraith Property** – It is anticipated that a decision regarding this property will be reached during the first quarter of 2015. The majority of the legal questions and documents have been reviewed.
2. **Maple Falls Community Park** – Closing for this property is set for December 30, 2015.
3. **Birch Bay Property** – Meetings were held with Whatcom County Public Works Department. There will be a proposal coming forward to look at staging in the park area for the berm project that could have some long-term benefits for park development. Once the proposal is received from Public Works, staff will review it and arrangements discussed.

After the first of the year the Department will meet with the Blaine/Birch Bay Parks and Recreation District (District) to discuss property maintenance. It is the expectation of the County Executive and County Council that the Department will partner with the District for property maintenance.

B. **OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN**

1. **Staffing**

a. **Conservation Park Steward Position** - The interview process for this position continues. There were a total of 36 applicants, 31 made it through the first review and five were selected for interviews. There will be a written test for those candidates and second interview may follow.

2. **Budget** – On December 15, 2014 there was 1.67% of the operating discretionary budget remaining. This is extremely tight.

a. **Extra Help** – It is anticipated that we will finish out the year at less than 4% of the allocated hours. These hours will be used to make park improvements.

b. Revenues – Based on current reports it appears that the parks have met final revenue targets for 2014.

3. Park Security – A security fence is being installed around the Silver Lake Park maintenance shop. This will provide a more secure area to store tools and equipment as well as boat storage during the winter months.

4. Incidents – There were no incidents to report.

C. DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT REPORT – ROD LAMB

1. Lighthouse Dock Renovation – The boarding float sections were received on 12/4/14. The units are as specified and are quite nice.

Rod stated that he has been in touch with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regarding modifying the permit conditions to allow pile driving activities during low tides and outside the prescribed work window. The USACE is still in the review process and has not arrived at a formal decision yet. It is hoped that a decision will be reached soon after the first of the year to allow in-water work to be scheduled during the spring/summer months as these months have the most favorable minus tides.

There was some discussion regarding the design specifications of the dock and staging requirements.

2. South Fork Park – The trail alignment connecting Galbraith to the Overby farm has been flagged and the route has been captured with a hand held GPS unit. This information has been transmitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with a follow up phone call to the DNR Recreation Specialist. A response has not been received from DNR to date. Updates will be forthcoming.

It was asked if Rod could provide Commission members with a map of the flagged route. Rod stated that he could.

ACTION: Rod to provide Commission members with a map of the flagged trail alignment route connecting Galbraith Mountain to Overby Farm.

It was discussed that because this is a construction year for the park and that the parks will not be open to the public, restroom installation was not included in the current budget. The following year's budget will support the design and development phase which does allow for restroom facilities to be installed.

Rod discussed the trail head design requirements in terms of materials and the landscape footprint. Also discussed were the numbers of parking stalls per trailhead.

3. Nessel Farm Building Restoration – The bid documents need to be finalized for the foundation repair. Permits are expected to be submitted by early 2015.

4. Silver Lake

a. Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements – The primary portion of the project at this phase is to complete engineering designs and develop a phasing plan.

Rod met with Pacific Survey Engineering. A preliminary design was presented for the Maple Creek Campground. The design vehicle is based on accommodating a larger motor home through the campground and to the existing parking lot. The plan calls for widening the road to 18 feet with 2 foot shoulders. Rod discussed the campsite route in terms of how these accommodations would improve the traffic flow and ability to navigate previously tight spots.

The project will require extensive earth work. The old road system is not salvageable and will require excavation, an application of base rock and a new chip seal surface. The surface materials require some more research however chip seal seems to be the most appropriate design and cost material to use.

b. Maintenance Shop Security Fence - Rod touched on the security fence that was discussed in the Operations Report in terms of design, materials and security benefits. He also discussed the project timelines.

There was some discussion of the pros and cons to security cameras.

c. Signage – New signage for Silver Lake Park has been delivered. Included are way-finding signage with the new campground and facility names on them and directions to the office, boat launch, etc.

He also discussed project timelines for installation.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (WCCP) CHAPTER 9 – Matt Aamot provided an updated copy of the December 2014 Pre-Draft of Chapter 9 that includes the Commission recommended changes that were discussed in the November 2014 Commission meeting, highlighted in yellow for easy identification.

Also included were two maps identifying the Plan Recommendations and the Shoreline Access Opportunities for the WCCP and Whatcom County Park and Recreation Open Space Plan. It was pointed out that the maps are slightly outdated and will be reviewed and updated to reflect any park name changes and all parks that have been added since the maps were developed.

It was discussed that not receiving documents for discussion prior to the meeting does not allow time for review outside of the meeting. If document were received as soon as possible before the meeting it could reduce the meeting length and make better use of Commission member's time.

MOTION: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz and seconded by Jeff Margolis to table the discussion and approval of the WCCP Chapter 9 Pre-Draft until the January Commission meeting to allow for greater review time. After discussion was called for the motion passed unanimously.

Mike discussed that there will also be a public process in the development of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan.

B. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE PLANNING UPDATE – Mike discussed that because there were several projects and year-end administrative housekeeping items that needed to be completed, the planning process has been minimal. However, a trail user work group met to formulate a trail proposal that will be presented at the next public meeting for public reaction and comment.

Those groups that were represented in the work session consisted of the ski club, hiking club, mountain bikers, runners, equestrian users and local community trail organizations. There will be additional meetings with the user groups prior to the next public meeting in order to provide a refined and completed proposal that will include the input from the last trail work group meeting and groups that have yet to meet.

The proposal that will be shared at the upcoming public meeting will include all the conceptual trails. The public will then be invited to make comments and suggestions on the proposal. This information will be used to develop a couple of alternative proposals for public review and comment.

It was asked if an announcement could be provided to the Commission members in advance of the meetings in order to provide time for public outreach. Mike stated that could be done.

There was discussion on various ways to advertise upcoming public planning meetings.

Mike briefly discussed the timeline of the acquisition, Council and Executive approval and budget allocation to begin the planning process. It is hoped that there will be a proposal to Council by late spring, early summer however, this will depend on how the public process progresses. He stated that he will update Commission members on work sessions and public meeting activities.

There was some discussion regarding resource lists for trail inventory and development priority. Mike explained that the Department does not have priorities in terms of developing trails but instead have projects that are brought forward and approved by the Executive and Council and assigned priority based on funding.

Daniel Probst provided a brief synopsis of the trail user groups meeting and their wishes in terms of trail design, etc. Mike and Rod discussed their interpretation of the meeting and items for consideration in the proposal, such as trail design, number and total length of trails, existing road involvement and the actual use of the trails.

Mike stated that when all the data is gathered from the work group meetings the Department will be assembling a synopsis of the community desires and then include input from Department regarding any habitat restrictions, etc. The Department has also asked the groups to provide information on overlooks and other public viewing interests that can be taken advantage of based on the trail use. This information will provide for better planning in terms of easements, etc., during the development process.

Mike encouraged Commission Members to join the work groups but would keep Commission members informed.

There was some discussion regarding marketing and possible tourism tax revenues for parks.

Also discussed was the protocol for outside communications with Commission members. The recently adopted Commission business rules and public record responsibilities in terms of communications were reviewed.

Jeff Margolis asked that for the record it be noted that he contacted Mike McFarlane earlier in the week because he was contacted by a respectable source that there was some clandestine trail building activities going on. Mike stated that the Department did look into the report and that the area in question is an existing trail on the south end of Lookout Mountain that goes through private property, state trust lands, private timber lands and across County property. It is one of those areas that the Department has flagged for potential improvement to provide a loop into the Glenhaven Lakes community as opposed to eliminating it. Mike thanked Jeff for the call.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2013 SENIOR CENTER PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS – Mike provided the 2013 Senior Center Participant Survey results report for Commission review.

B. LUMMI ISLAND QUARRY PROJECT – Mike discussed that the Lummi Island Trust is attempting to acquire the island quarry through grant funding. The Trust approached the County and asked if the County would sponsor a grant. After discussion with the Executive we've indicated that this would not be an option. The Executive has tentatively committed to \$400,000.00 toward the purchase should the Trust be able to finance a purchase agreement, all contingent upon Council approval. The County's interest would be public access to the water front through an easement.

C. 2015 MEETING DATES – Mike provided the commission with a 2015 meeting date calendar and asked for input to change any dates and/or a motion adopt the calendar.

MOTION: It was moved by Kenneth Kiesner, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed unanimously to change the January meeting date from the third Thursday to the fourth Thursday of the month and accept the remaining calendar dates as presented.

D. REVIEW OF 2014 PARK PROJECTS – It was the consensus of the Commission to defer this topic to the January, 2015 meeting.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. JANUARY MEETING DATE, TIME AND LOCATION - The January 22, 2015 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will be held at the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Administrative office.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director