

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
March 21, 2013
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center
8251 Kendall Road
Maple Falls, WA 98266

Present: Commissioners: Gordon Rogers, Paul Woodcock, Jeffrey Margolis, Janet Boyhan and Kenn Kiesner

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Erik Axelson, Rod Lamb, and Erika Miranda

Absent: Theresa Sygitowicz

Guests: Nancy Boschma, Opportunity Council and Melissa, Americorp Volunteer Program

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Rogers at 6:15 p.m.

I. AGENDA

A. March 21, 2013 Agenda Approval: A motion was made to approve the agenda by Commissioner Kiesner, seconded by Commissioner Margolis and passed unanimously.

II. MINUTES

A. February 21, 2013 Meeting Minutes Approval: A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes by Commissioner Woodcock, seconded by Commissioner Boyhan and passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC INPUT/COMMUNICATIONS

A. None.

IV. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael McFarlane

A. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRRC): The meeting was preceded by a tour of the EWRRRC conducted by Nancy Boschma and other staff from Opportunity Council programs. Michael McFarlane noted that operation of the center has been a successful collaboration between the Opportunity Council and the community. We have had positive feedback from the community members, involved organizations and building users. Whatcom County Parks and Recreation serves as the contract administrator with the Opportunity Council. A few mechanical issues with the building are being addressed by the Whatcom County Facilities Department which oversaw the construction.

B. Canyon Lake Community Forest: A map of the proposed Canyon Lake Community Forest Access Route was handed out. The proposal would involve agreements with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) and Sierra Pacific. Whatcom County Parks and Recreation talked with WLT about building an alternate route coming up the North Fork to Canyon Lake Community Forest. We are looking at more sustainable road costs. DNR engineers have said that the CL-1000 road is viable for public use. The end of the route is owned by Sierra Pacific and we will need to talk to them about an easement. In the past, they have proposed a road maintenance

agreement based upon use. We are expecting that there will be some kind of road maintenance fees.

- C. Budget Reductions Due to Elimination of Closure Days:** Michael McFarlane provided a detailed report of the proposed budget reductions requested by the Whatcom County Executive Office due to the elimination of closure days. These proposed reductions include; a wage difference in the Lead Park Ranger's position at Silver Lake Park, printing, tools and equipment, postage, telephone, gas, electric and repairs and maintenance. Whatcom County Executive Louws will present the proposal to the Whatcom County Council at the March 26th meeting.
- D. Lake Whatcom Reconveyance:** The Lake Whatcom Reconveyance package which includes the resolution, the SCORP (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan) assessment and the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan went to DNR for review. The Board of Natural Resources will have to approve the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance. If approved, they will begin the paperwork for the reassignment of leases, real estate documentation and the land survey. Whatcom County Parks and Recreation may do the land survey for economical reasons. We expect all the transactions to be completed for the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance transfer by November or December 2013.
- E. Dorothy Copp Property:** Dorothy Copp built her house and garage partly on Whatcom County Park property along the Bay to Baker Trail. The Whatcom County Property Management Committee has approved selling her that parcel for \$12,487. We have retained a trail easement on the parcel. She is reviewing the offer with her attorney and if she accepts we will take it before the Whatcom County Council for approval.
- F. Lummi Island Property:** The Scenic Estates attorney contacted Whatcom County Parks and Recreation. In the Articles of Incorporation it states that when the 25-year limit expired the marina and park lands would be transferred to the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation. It includes 56.6 acres of upland property and another 2.5 acres on the beach. Currently, there is a class action lawsuit regarding the community club and property owners. We are researching more about this agreement from 1965.

V. OPERATIONS REPORT – Erik Axelson

A. East Region:

- **Lead Park Ranger Introduction:** Erika Miranda, new Lead Park Ranger for the East Region was introduced to the Commission and spoke briefly about her previous service in Snohomish County, South Dakota and New York, as well as her interest in working with the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation team to improve the East Region and enhance customer service.
- **Renovation Projects:** The Silver Lake Overnight Lodge was recently repainted and cleaned and looks almost new.
- **Advertising:** A draft of a craigslist ad for the Silver Lake Overnight Lodge was distributed and discussed. Commissioners like the idea of expanding our marketing, and want to make sure we use online photos that fairly represent the facility. Our plan is to post these ads weekly in the craigslist.org listings for Bellingham, Seattle and Vancouver.

- **Satellite Service:** We are currently researching the possibility of bringing “Wild Blue” multi-satellite internet services to the Silver Lake Park office and the Overnight Lodge. Improved internet speed would enhance reservations and also provide a desirable amenity for the lodge.
- **Silver Lake Park Entrance:** We have completed limbing up and other clearing at the entrance to the park and along the roads; this will improve access for larger recreational vehicles as well as open the park up to more light.
- **Maple Falls Park:** We are removing debris from Maple Falls Park, one of our undeveloped facilities.
- **Josh VanderYacht Park:** In a few days we will be posting a new routed entry sign at Josh VanderYacht Park. In addition, a fundraising campaign by the VanderYacht family to raise money for an additional memorial boulder is getting started. Erik Axelson stated that maintenance staff will assess two potentially hazardous trees recently reported by Commissioner Margolis, and will remove these if necessary.

B. Southwest Region:

- **Hovander Park:** Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation has received a grant from an anonymous donor to improve ventilation and other conditions in the historic Hovander house. In recent weeks, the Lead Park Ranger and maintenance staff have excluded bats and other pests from the attic, and installed lights and an electronic repeller device. The next step is to install an exhaust fan system, which will draw dust and moisture out through the existing hatch in the rooftop. Other ventilation improvements such as period fans on the main floor and a portable dehumidifier will make conditions for visitors, volunteers, and staff much more comfortable.
- **Tennant Lake Interpretive Center:** This Saturday we will be hosting a Master Gardener Fruit Tree Grafting Clinic.

C. Lily Point Marine Park: Trail and other improvements are nearly complete. Erik Axelson showed several pictures of Lily Point Marine Park including the new dog kiosks encouraging use of attached MuttMitt dispensers. The signage and kiosks were designed in-house and fabricated and installed by our maintenance staff. We continue to work to decommission a pirate trail that is very hazardous due to its proximity to the eroding bluff; additional signage and barriers to deter illicit use of the trail are to be installed in the next few weeks. A 36-inch-diameter Douglas fir tree was blown down this week across the new beach trail, and it will be removed tomorrow, March 22nd by the Lead Park Ranger and maintenance staff.

D. Seasonal Extra-Help Staff: We are in the process of hiring seasonal extra-help staff and have a number of returning staff. Some seasonal positions will begin in April with part-time service, ramping up to full-time in the summer. Mandatory training for all seasonal staff will be held on May 7th.

VI. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT – Rod Lamb

A. Lighthouse Dock Renovation: The bid documents are almost completed and we will advertise the project in a week or two. We have obtained all of the regulatory permits with the exception of a final building permit. Once the general contractor is hired, he will get us the structural drawings and then we will submit them to Whatcom County Planning and Development Services (PDS) to get the final building permit.

- B. **Hovander River Trail:** The Whatcom County Council has re-appropriated funding for 2013. We were not able to start construction in 2012 because of permitting complications. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is reviewing the approved submittal to PDS and will evaluate whether we will need a hydraulic project approval. Once that process is completed we will get the bid documents out. Tony Idczak, Maintenance/Construction Supervisor III along with the Outside Worker crew will do the mitigation planting.
- C. **Samish Docks:** HDB Marine wrapped up their welding inspections so we will receive delivery of those docks probably in the next month. That project is scheduled for summer construction.
- D. **Lookout Mountain Trailhead:** The bid documents went out last week. The bids are due April 2nd.
- E. **Silver Lake Park Playground:** A Substantial Shoreline Development permit was submitted to PDS on February 11th. PDS approved the application and scheduled a hearing with the Hearing Examiner on April 10, 2013. Rod Lamb is working on the final construction drawings. This will be a summer project.
- F. **Lily Point Marine Park:** Rod Lamb brought several signs to show the Commission that will be installed March 22nd. The signs included: Hazardous Bluff Areas, Trail Closure and interpretive panels. We will coordinate with the tribes on the sign installation due to the cultural sensitivity of the site.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- A. **None.**

VIII. NEW BUSINESS - Michael McFarlane

- A. **Review 2008 Survey and Charrette/Workshop List for Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan:** Michael McFarlane provided a 2008 survey and asked the Commission for direction. He would like to pare the list of questions down because of the cost of the survey and our limited budget, and would like to add some state survey assessment questions. The state is moving toward collecting good GIS (Geographical Information Systems) based survey results to use as an evaluation system for comparing various agencies and amenities across the state. Michael McFarlane would like to use this assessment to validate Whatcom County trends.

A discussion followed regarding the survey selection process and whether the current questions were relevant. Commissioner Rogers suggested that Michael McFarlane make a list of the questions that he thinks should be deleted from the list. The Commission will review the list, agree or disagree and make suggestions.

- B. **Radio Coverage on the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance:** Commissioner Margolis suggested that the Commission consider using a local radio station to inform, and educate the public about the issues surrounding the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance. After discussion, it was decided that the issues had been covered extensively and that additional coverage is unnecessary.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Next Meeting: April 18, 2013

Location: Welcome Senior Center
5103 Mosquito Lake Road
Deming, WA 98244

Time: 6:00 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m. by Commission Chair, Rogers.

Transcribed by: Daisy C. Hansen, WC Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, WC Parks & Recreation Director