

**MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, April 17, 2014**

**Bay Horizon Park Activity Center
7511 Gemini Street
Blaine, Washington**

PRESENT: Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Gordon Rogers, Jeff Margolis, Richard Sturgill, Kenneth Kiesner, Janet Boyhan, Theresa Sygitowicz

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Rodney Lamb, Tyler Schroeder

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Paul Woodcock at 6:16 PM.

II. AGENDA

A. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: It was moved by Paul Woodcock, seconded by Kenneth Kiesner and passed unanimously to approve the March 20, 2014 Agenda with the following change:

Move Item IX, A. to Item III, A.

III. MINUTES

A. MINUTES APPROVAL

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis, seconded by Gordon Rogers and passed, 6 yeas, 0 nays, one abstention, to approve the March 20, 2014 Minutes as written.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT / COMMUNICATIONS

A. EVALUATE POTENTIAL PARK SITES – BIRCH BAY – Paul Woodcock opened the floor for public input. Paul asked that each speaker be limited to three minutes.

Chair recognized the following individuals who spoke in favor of the north site:
Doralee Booth
Marty Stauffer
Nancy Stull
Pat Jerns
Billy Brown
Pat Alesse

Listed below are the reasons given for supporting acquisition of the north site:

- To provide increased parking
- To provide public restrooms
- To provide affordable community areas
- It is centrally located
- It has a large low tide beach access
- It is close to the site of the beach restoration project that will increase public use

- It will reserve common areas for public recreation
- The property is currently available and there may not be an opportunity to acquire a property of this nature in the future

The Chair recognized the following individuals in support of the south site.

Kelvin Barton

Keith Alesse

Listed below are the reasons given for supporting acquisition of the south site:

- The south site is larger than the north site for relatively the same price
- To provide increased parking
- To provide public restrooms
- It provides good beach access
- The beach is further from the road and provides safe beach use
- There is a boat launch available
- It has a walking and biking area

Paul spoke to the fact that the WCP&R Commission acts only in an advisory capacity.

Michael was asked if he could speak to the properties of each site in terms of management and operations and whether or not he sees one site being stronger than the other.

Michael discussed both sites briefly in terms of development and permitting but because the Parks Department has not done an in-depth analysis of either site he could not speak to the management and operation of the sites. He stated the next step would be to conduct an in-depth site analysis and appraisal, and receive County Council approval for acquisition.

Paul called for Commission discussion.

There were discussions regarding the appropriate/inappropriate methods of information sharing among the Commission members and some of the considerations to be addressed when making a decision.

It was the consensus that the Commission members will each provide a brief presentation of their considerations and recommendation at the May meeting, followed by a round table discussion.

Michael stated that if there is something that Parks staff can provide, an email request to Michael would be appropriate.

There was a request to look at the beach berm project preliminary designs. Michael stated that the information is available on the Public Works web site titled [Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility Project](#).

The timeline for the recommendation was discussed. Tyler Schroeder spoke on behalf of the Executive stating that it is acceptable and appropriate to table the recommendation until the May, 2014 Commission Meeting.

MOTION: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz, seconded by Kenneth Kiesner and passed unanimously to table the Commission's recommendation to the County Executive until the May, 2014 Commission meeting.

B. EMAIL COMMUNICATION REGARDING PARK SITE ACQUISITION IN BIRCH BAY

1. **Laurel Baldwin, Public Works / Weed Control Board – Spotted knapweed** – Michael provided a copy of the email from Laurel Baldwin that discussed the infestation of spotted knapweed on the southern site.

2. **Chris Dautre – Opposition to Acquire Park Land in Birch Bay** – Michael provided a copy of Chris's email listing his reasons for opposing the acquisition of any park lands in Birch Bay.

V. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MICHAEL MCFARLANE**

A. LARRABEE STATE PARK – There are several proposals being considered to better define and adjust the boundaries between Larrabee State Park and Chuckanut Park boundaries. The proposals are currently in rough draft form. There will be two more work sessions prior to the State Parks Commission meeting to adopt a plan.

Michael will provide information to the Commission as it becomes available.

B. NORTHWEST PARK AND REC DISTRICT – Michael met with the NW Park and Rec District to discuss capital projects. Requested projects from the District are:

1. Address the ventilation system in the Activity Center.
2. Add a storage shed to the Activity Center.
3. Remove the double doors and install a shed roof at the main entrance.
4. Install a bike rack.
5. Install landscape drainage.
6. Provide a trail within Bay Horizon Park.

They would also like to move forward with athletic fields. Michael provided preliminary information regarding the wet land delineation, etc., in order to begin the planning process.

C. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE UPDATE – County Council will vote on the Special Revenue Fund and the Parks Improvement Fund at their next meeting.

Confirmation has been received on one of the three tower leases regarding the transition of the leases from DNR to Whatcom County.

There will be a Planning Meeting on April 29, 2014 at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center. Notices have been sent to the WCP&R Commission members.

D. PLATATION RIFLE RANGE – Parks received a grant to purchase ammunition and cover operating costs for a Saturday morning shooting program.

E. Bay Horizon Community Library – An informal request has been made by a local community group to use one of the buildings at Bay Horizon Park for a community library.

It has been confirmed through the National Park Service that the buildings in the park can only be used for parks and recreation purposes. A library does not fall in that category.

F. HOVANDER PARK RIVER DEDICATION – A dedication ceremony will take place at the boat launch area on Saturday, May 17th, 2014 at 10:00 AM. Coffee and donuts will be provided at the Hovander Main Picnic Shelter after the dedication.

Invitation for this event will be sent out in the near future.

G. SILVER LAKE PARK OPENING DAY FISHING – Opening day is Saturday, April 26th. There is a 5:00 AM breakfast in the Day Lodge.

VI. PARK OPERATIONS REPORT – MICHAEL MCFARLANE

A. INTRODUCTIONS – OPERATIONS MANAGER – Michael introduced the new Operations Manager, Christ Thomsen and provided a brief background of his career.

Christ spoke to his career with Dept. of Natural Resources, the State Parks system and his experience with projects management.

B. PARK WATER ISSUES

1. Hovander Park Water Leak – The source of various water leaks has been identified after several months of investigation. The problem was isolated to an area between the Hovander house and the Main Picnic Shelter and repairs have been completed.

2. Plantation Range Water Leak – The source of a water leak at the Range was identified and repaired.

C. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN BIKE STRUCTURES – Park staff has begun removing the unauthorized mountain bike structures on the closed trails. It is anticipated the structures will all be removed by the end of next week.

D. FRAGRANCE GARDEN WORK PARTY – There will be a volunteer work party hosted by the Lions Club at the Fragrance Garden this coming Saturday, April 19th.

VII. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT – RODNEY LAMB

A. HOVANDER

1. Hovander River Walk Mitigation Planting – An Earth Day volunteer planting will take place at Hovander Park this Saturday, April 19th.

2. Picnic Shelter – The Picnic Shelter road re-location plan went before the Hearing Examiner Wednesday, April 16th. The results of the hearing will be sent in the form of a letter in approximately 10 days from the hearing. It is anticipated that the project will be approved.

The Department of Ecology has a 21 day appeal period however, it is not expected that there will be any concerns for appeal.

It is anticipated that the project will be completed prior to the Highland Games.

3. Playground Improvement – This project will wind down to completion with the installation of 3 sand scoop elements. These will be installed in the next week or two after the ground dries out some.

B. SILVER LAKE PARK – There have been several meetings with Erika Miranda, Lead Park Ranger, to coordinate a directional signage upgrade at the park. The signage upgrade includes new signs along Silver Lake Road as well as internal signs that will direct park visitors to various attractions at the park. The project should be completed in the next month or so.

C. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock / Boat Ramp – Rod stated that he working through some challenges with the dock manufacturer regarding permit requirements. Rod discussed what these challenges involve and the plans to rectify the issues.

D. SOUTH FORK PARK – There is a pre-application meeting with Planning and Development Services on May 1st to receive clear direction on environmental reporting and a letter of agreement has been signed with a wetland biologist to identify the critical reporting areas.

Rod updated the Commission on the permitting process, design strategy and project phases.

E. RECONVEYANCE – A great deal of GIS formatted information has been received from the Dept. of Natural Resource (DNR) on site classification, the stand age of on-site timber, critical habitat areas and a road / trail inventory. Staff is identifying unauthorized trails on both sides of the lake with GPS. This information will be available at the Lake Whatcom Planning Meeting on April 29th.

F. STIMPSON NATURE RESERVE RESTROOM INSTALLATION – Negotiations continue with the Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) to install vault toilets at the Reserve. WLT is addressing the permitting process and has submitted permit applications to Planning and Development Services. Rod will be assisting in a project management capacity. The project is being funded by the Rotary Club, WLT and Whatcom County.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. BUSINESS RULES – The Chair opened the floor for discussion.

The requested changes to the draft Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission Business Rules are as follows:

1. Add the ability to change the meeting venue when agenda items and / or circumstances require a change.
2. Change the order of business to reflect the current agenda format with the understanding that the first order of business under Agenda Item: Public Comment / Communications will be reserved for the opportunity and time for the public to address the Commission on issues.

Michael discussed the difference between Roberts Rules of Order and Sturgis Rules of Order and that it is the Commission's prerogative to adopt either format. Sturgis Rules of Order are less rigid in parliamentary procedure and allow for a quicker meeting format.

MOTION: It was moved, seconded and approved unanimously to accept the Business Rules that were distributed at the March, 2014 meeting with the above changes.

ACTION: Michael McFarlane will write up the final draft of the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission Business Rules with the discussed changes and distribute to Commission members.

B. CPROSP UPDATE AND LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) DISCUSSION – Michael asked that the CPROSP and LOS update and discussion be deferred until the May, 2014 Commission meeting, pending information from Planning and Development Services.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. LAKE WHATCOM PARK PLANNING MEETING UPDATE – Michael provided the Planning Meeting Notice for the upcoming meeting on April 29th at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center.

There will be a power point presentation providing an overview in terms of the Reconveyance process and current developments. The Design and Development staff is preparing the graphics for the presentation and the display boards.

There will be an opportunity at the meeting for the attending public to submit their concerns and issues.

B. REVIEW CAPITAL PROJECTS LIST – Michael provided a revised 2015-16 Proposed Capital Projects list and a Department Work Plan Master Capital Improvements List. Michael discussed briefly how the list was constructed and how it will be used in the budget process and the Parks work plan.

Michael asked if the Commission members would review the project list and provide input within the next two weeks on projects that they perceive to be priorities and/or projects that may not have an immediate importance but will remain on the list. He discussed how projects that are not completed are arranged for future consideration.

A final list of requested capital projects must be submitted to the County Executive prior to May 16, 2014 when he will review it and determine which projects he wishes to move forward. It will then move on to Council for input and approval and will finally become part of the two year Parks' operating budget.

There was some discussion regarding the cost thresholds, project descriptions, project designations and funding sources. Also discussed was the importance of playgrounds in parks.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. MAY MEETING

1. Invitation to Attend – An invitation will be extended to Council Member Rud Brown to discuss trails and economic opportunities.

2. Meeting Location – Tennant Lake Interpretive Center / Hovander Homestead Park.

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis, seconded by Kenneth Kiesner and passed unanimously to meet at Tennant Lake Interpretive Center at 6:00 PM for a tour of the Hovander River Trail with the meeting following at 6:30 PM.

3. Deming Log Show – Theresa announced the date for the Deming Log Show is the second week in June. As a matter of information, the Friday prior to the Log Show is a timber tour, hosted by Women in Timber. The contact organization is Great Western Timber.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Kenneth Kiesner, seconded by Richard Sturgill and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director