

**MEETING MINUTES  
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
Thursday, August 20, 2015**

**Lighthouse Marine Park  
811 Marine Drive  
Point Roberts, WA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:06 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Jeffrey Margolis, Janet Boyhan, Kenneth Kiesner, Theresa Sygitowicz and Richard Sturgill,

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Rod Lamb

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. Dorothy Sutton, Pt. Roberts Lighthouse Committee – Lighthouse Marine Park Lighthouse Project** - Ms. Sutton discussed the background, funding, the lighthouse plans, development and construction. A handout discussing these was provided for the Commission along with a structural design developed by Classic Residential Design, Inc. Ms. Sutton requested that the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation approve the construction of the lighthouse at Lighthouse Marine Park, Pt. Roberts, WA.

Paul Woodcock asked the Commission and guests to delay discussion of the Lighthouse Project at this point of the meeting and suggested that the Agenda be amended to add the discussion of the Lighthouse Project.

**B. Arthur Raber – Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Status** – Mr. Raber asked if an update on the dock status could be provided. Mike McFarlane stated that this will be discussed in this meeting's staff reports.

**IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - NONE**

**V. AGENDA**

**A. August 20, 2015 AGENDA**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Richard Sturgill, seconded by Theresa Sygitowicz and passed unanimously to add the discussion of the Lighthouse Marine Park Project under Item IX. New Business, A. Lighthouse Project Discussion.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Jeffrey Margolis, seconded by Kenneth Kiesner and passed unanimously to accept the August 20, 2015 Agenda as amended.

## VI. MINUTES

### A. July 16, 2015 MINUTES

**MOTION:** It was moved by Jeffrey Margolis, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed with a vote of 5 for, to accept the submitted Revised DRAFT 8/17/15, June 18, 2015 Minutes as written. Theresa Sygitowicz abstained as she did not attend the July, 2015 Commission Meeting.

## VII. STAFF REPORTS

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

**1. WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – CHAPTER 9** – Mike discussed that Chapter 9 is still in the process of being revised for approval by the Planning Commission.

He discussed in detail the two issues that are pending; a request from interested parties to add additional language to the policy regarding the county-wide trail system easements and a request by the Planning Commission for a map showing the completed sections of the four major corridor trails to clear up questions regarding trail routes and brandings.

The Planning Commission will meet again on September 9, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Whatcom County Courthouse Council Chambers. At that time it is expected that the Planning Commission will modify and/or approve Chapter 9 and move it forward to County Council. It is anticipated that it will be acted on by County Council after the first of the year.

**2. COMPREHENSIVE PARK AND RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN (CPROSP)** – Mike stated that he and Darla will be working on the final edits and updates of the CPROSP and preparing the SEPA application to move forward to County Council for approval before the end of the year in order to remain grant eligible.

He stated that he will send a copy of the CPROSP to Commission members and asked if they would review for any corrections or overlooked items and report back to him on anything that they feel needs attention.

**ACTION: Mike to provide a copy of the CPROSP to Commission members for review.**

He stated that there have not been any major adjustments since the last review. The changes or additions are minor such as recent land acquisitions or proposed acquisitions that Council has weighed in on and the Chapter 9 revisions, which have not yet been approved by Council. Mike discussed that Chapter 9 could either be left unchanged in the CPROSP or could be presented with the revised version. He felt that it either way could work as Council can ask for changes and then the Department would update the CPROSP to reflect that.

**3. EAST WHATCOM REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER (EWRRC)** – The Opportunity Council is working on a block grant for the addition of a food bank and potentially an indoor recreation area for youth programming to be located at the EWRRC. Because the grant application is a lengthy process, the grant funds are difficult to administer and the Executive office has had previous experience managing these types of funds, the Executive has asked the Opportunity Council to work through his office on this project.

Also, because the Department currently has a full work load Mike has suggested that when the project reaches the construction phase that the Facilities Department oversee the management of the construction, as they did when the building was initially constructed.

It is expected that this will be the pathway for this project however Mike will be meeting with the Executive in the near future to confirm. Updates to the Commission will be forthcoming.

**4. GALBRAITH MOUNTAIN** – Mike discussed that efforts continue on a draft proposal for the use of Galbraith Mountain for public recreation. He discussed the difficulties of pulling together the number of documents required, the insurance liability issues and the various parties involved in the proposal.

Discussions with the City of Bellingham, Polygon, Whatcom Land Trust and Whatcom County continue, however it is a slow process and a complex proposal and is not ready to move forward to County Council for input and/or approval.

Theresa Sygitowicz asked what efforts the Department is taking to reduce fire hazards by possibly closing Galbraith Mountain to the public.

Mike responded that Galbraith Mountain is currently owned by Polygon and that the decision to close the mountain to the public would have to come from them. He discussed that Galbraith Mountain is currently being operated under an agreement between Polygon and the Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition. The Department is currently working on a proposal to preserve the mountain for mountain biking, hiking and public recreation, however a proposal is not in place at this time and therefore the Department would have no authority to make decisions regarding mountain access.

Theresa suggested that during these times of continued dryness and fire hazard a model for closure could be patterned after the logging community in that areas of high fire hazard are shut down for access by anyone after 11:00 AM in order to reduce the possibilities of fire.

Christ Thomsen stated that he will be addressing the Departments efforts in fire hazard mitigation in his staff report.

**5. MID-TERM BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS** – Mike discussed that the County is currently in the process of preparing mid-term budget adjustments for the second half of the two year 2015-2016 budget cycle.

He stated that overall the budget is looking good with the exception of an unexpected reduction in Rifle Range revenues. This will require the Department to spend some time analyzing why the revenues are down and how that can be turned around in order to possibly meet 2015 revenue projections and how it will affect the second half of the budget cycle in 2016 as the same revenue projection were used in the second half as in the first half. Mike will update the Commission as the process progresses.

**6. BIRCH BAY COMMUNITY PARK** – The Department is currently working with the Birch Bay Chamber on a trial basis to allow them to use the site for some of their public events. They have currently had three events to date and have one more scheduled. This arrangement seems to be working well and the site is being well used.

An update on the building demolition will be reviewed in the Operations and Design and Development Staff Reports.

The Blaine Birch Bay Park and Rec District has been providing the funds and has contracted for the mowing on that property for the summer. This is greatly appreciated. The Department is hoping to work with the District on a number of other tasks on that site.

**7. MAPLE FALLS COMMUNITY PARK** – The Maple Falls Park Committee recently had a fund raiser that raised several thousand dollars for the park benefit.

They have tilled up and spent many weekends picking rocks in the lower field hoping to have it leveled, top dressed and seeded this fall. The plan is to use this area for youth sports activities.

The Committee received a \$500.00 grant from the Whatcom Park and Rec Foundation which they plan to apply to building an exercise path around the property.

In terms of the pump track that was previously discussed the department has not had any further contact in that regard but expect to hear something after the summer season slows down.

Mike will update the Commission as the project develops.

**8. LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT** – See Agenda Item IX, A.

**9. DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) ANNEX BUILDING LEASE** – The Department has signed a 5-year lease with DNR to continue occupying the building next to the Park's Headquarters office for their field office.

**10. SUNSET FARM RENTAL HOUSE** – The Sunset Farm Rental House has been leased and is now occupied by a new tenant.

**11. STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE RESERVE** – At the last meeting it was reported that a tree had fallen on a car in the parking lot at this location. This brought to the forefront that the easement on the parking area and the 20 acres that were recently donated were not under the management agreement. The management agreement has been modified to include those two parcels and will be submitted for Council action.

## **B. OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN**

### **1. STAFFING**

**a. Introduction – Light House Marine Park Ranger, Aaron Johnson.** – Christ introduced the recently hired Lighthouse Marine Park Ranger, Aaron Johnson and asked Aaron if he would provide some background information on himself.

Aaron thanked the Commission and stated that he is excited to be here. He stated that for the past five years he has worked at the military recreation site, Jim Creek Recreation Area, before that he received a degree from Western Washington University in Outdoor Recreation and previous to that spend 4 years in the U.S. Navy on the USS Abraham Lincoln. He grew up in New Hampshire and was born in Australia.

He recently purchased a house in Point Roberts and stated that he is really looking forward to revitalizing Lighthouse Marine Park and do what he can to make it a safe and fun place for families to recreate.

Christ stated that in the hiring process of reference and background checks every reference spoke very highly of Aaron. He also did extremely well in the interview and testing process and that the Department is really happy to have him aboard and feel honored to have him working here.

**b. Repair & Maintenance III Position, Electrician Vacancy** – There is one position still vacant in the Maintenance Department. The testing has been completed by one candidate and

negotiations for an offer of employment are in the works. Once this position is filled the Department will be staffed at last year's level.

**c. Extra-Help Staff** – Recruitment for extra-help staff continues as staff come on board and vacate positions. Recruitment for the fall has been revised to include the remainder of the year which has increased interest and is bringing in more applications from a higher level of candidate. Interviews are currently being scheduled for those positions.

**2. PARK ATTENDANCE** – Park attendance this year has been very good. Silver Lake Park is seeing substantial increases; campgrounds are at capacity every weekend and we are seeing an increase going in towards mid-week.

Compliments continue to come in on our renewed maintenance efforts and hope to keep that going well past this year and into the future.

### **3. PROJECTS**

**a. Tennant Lake Tower** – The Tower has needed painting for a number of years. It was determined that it would be cost prohibitive to contract the work and it was therefore decided that the job would be done internally. The job has been completed and the Tower looks good.

**b. Lake Whatcom Park Trailhead** – The Parks Maintenance Department installed a new concrete stairway from the trailhead to the road because this seems to be the predominate access route to the trailhead and involves maneuvering a steep embankment that was experiencing erosion challenges and was not safe for public use. Temporary handrails are currently on site but will be replaced by the permanent handrails once they are returned from being galvanized.

**c. Birch Bay Community Park Building Demolition** – Demolition was halted due to possible cultural resources. A consultant was contracted to conduct a cultural assessment and we are now working with the State and other interested parties to obtain permits to complete the demolition. It is anticipated that the demolition will be completed prior to the end of this year.

**d. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk** – The Department has received and is reviewing three quotes for the demolition of the condemned portion of the boardwalk. Once the review process has been completed an agreement will be developed. It is anticipated that the project will be completed before the end of this year. It was discussed that there were no bids received from any local vendors.

Jeffrey Margolis asked if this job was going to be a salvage operation and if there were any stipulations regarding the materials that are removed.

Christ stated that because the Department could not provide the materials to the public due to safety concern and because it is more cost effective, it was decided that the demo materials would become the property of the contractor who would remove and dispose of or recycle them.

In addition to the boardwalk removal all the structures except for the Orca Center will also be removed. The Orca Center will be retained in order to maintain options should it be decided to repurpose the facility once the remainder of the project has been scoped out.

It was discussed that currently the deck will be removed however there is going to be a phase in the project where the redesign of the boardwalk will be reviewed and a decision will be made whether or not to replace the whole deck or just a portion. This has not been fully scoped and is still in the conceptual phase.

The planned replacement of the removed boardwalk will begin next year when the funding is available.

Theresa Sygitowicz encouraged the Department to meet with the public when designing the new boardwalk in order to get public input.

**e. Range HVAC** – Christ discussed that because the State was slow in getting their budget adopted various State agencies were delayed in relaying the status of the RCO grant but wanted to report that that the project has been funded.

Because of this delay there are currently no contracts in place. It is hoped that this will come through soon as a contractor needs to be in place and the work started before the end of this fiscal year because that is when those funds are allocated.

**f. Hovander House, Drying Shed and Tennant Lake Interpretive Center Roof Replacement Project** – This project is currently published on the County Finance web site for bid through September 1, 2015. The projected completion date for this project is October 31, 2015.

**4. TRAIL STANDARDS** – Work continues on establishing trail standards. The goal is to have that completed and to the Commission for review by the end of August, mid-September with discussion scheduled on the October Agenda.

**5. DEVELOPMENT OF A SIGN MANUAL** – Because there is a large amount of signage needs in the parks, and because there are driving factors that require a sign manual to be in place, the Department is in the process of developing one. At this point time does not allow for the development of a detailed manual but will allow for the inclusion of the basic framework so that field staff can request signs and the design elements etc. are clear.

**6. THE WELCOME SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER** – The Maintenance Department has a goal to make time to inspect different sites on a regular basis and the Welcome Center is one of the more recent sites that staff have spent some time on to complete some painting, clean up and repairs.

**7. PARKS AND TRAILS FIRE DANGER MITIGATION** – The State of WA manages an Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL) web site and posts changes in daily requirements.

The Department monitors the web site on a daily basis from April 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup> and depending on the status of the day and area that maintenance tasks are scheduled to be performed the department is adhering to the posted requirements for safe work windows and performing or rescheduling tasks accordingly.

Department vehicles are outfitted with all of the equipment that is needed to be in compliance for any particular task and if the recommended equipment is not available then the task will not be performed on that day.

Mike discussed that in terms of public access and fire dangers the only area that the Department has closed at this time or in the past is the Canyon Lake Community Forest. This is due to the fact that in order to get to the park a person must go through both state and private forest lands and that the closures are in collaboration with these agencies requirements.

Mike discussed that the Fire Marshall does not consider mountain biking and hiking as high fire risk activities. There was concern around the fourth of July but since there is currently a fire ban

in place that does not allow any open flames such as campfires, etc., that concern is reduced. The Department follows the Fire Marshalls restrictions and at this time the County has not adopted a complete fire ban.

Theresa Sygitowicz commented that recently there was an intentional fire that was started in the Van Zandt Valley that did a considerable amount of damage in a short period of time due to malicious mischief. She stated that she is bringing this forward in light of the heightened danger for management to consider training on-site staff on the steps to take in the case of a forest fire in terms of who to call, what to do and how to address the situation.

Christ stated this is part of the preparation for our work under the IFPL. Daily discussions include those topics in order to prepare for that type of activity and in determining that day's tasks. The Park staff is not trained to fight fires but there are some basic actions that staff have been trained to perform and tools that are kept at the ready.

Additional precautions that are being taken are to educate our visitors on the fire ban. The Fire Marshall is patrolling our parks on a regular basis and enforcing the fire ban and also educating the general public.

Theresa Sygitowicz asked if the Department has considered contacting the Department of Natural Resources to have on-site senior staff red card trained.

Christ stated that this would be part of a larger discussion. The State has changed their red card training process to a rather intensive three week training regimen. In addition there are other County and State resources that have trained fire response staff to handle those activities.

Paul Woodcock commented that red card training would also have to be a budget item for the future. Christ concurred.

Jeffrey Margolis asked what it means to be "red card" trained. Theresa stated that having red card training allows for a person to be actively involved in and perform immediate and emergency response to forest fires. Christ added that a red card is the document that tracks your training record. Initial training involves guard school, which is the first step in basic wildland fire fighting training.

### **C. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT – ROD LAMB**

#### **1. SOUTH FORK PARK TRAILHEAD DEVELOPMENT AND THE SOUTH FORK VALLEY –**

Rod stated that there was a small delay from Planning and Development Services. The permit application was submitted in February of this year. It was discussed at the last Commission meeting that the Hearing Examiner had to postpone the hearing because of a procedural error. As it turns out the hearing had to be postponed again this month because of another procedural error and it is now scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup>.

Rod explained that the delay is due to a problem with the engineering review. The Engineering Department was the last department to review the plans. The submittal was reviewed one time, red lined and given to our consultant team and the Department. Our consultant addressed and corrected the plans and the Department resubmitted to the Engineering Department. The Engineering Department still deems the plans deficient on the storm water front and need to be revised.

Cancelling the Hearing Examiners meetings are very unfortunate as there is no quickly effective way to notify the public of the cancellation as public notices are advertised in the paper several days in advance and then posted on-site. When the first meeting was cancelled there were

several members of the public who made a special trip to attend the meeting and called Rod very upset that there was no notification that the meeting was cancelled. Fortunately when the second meeting was cancelled Rod had previously gotten contact information and was able to call those citizens and notify them of the cancellation.

A meeting has been scheduled with Planning and Development Services, the Engineering Department, Rod and the contracted engineer to discuss the plans and get an understand of the comments so that the corrections can be made to be in compliance with current code.

The resulting meeting is currently schedule for September 16<sup>th</sup>. Rod stated that he will provide the information for the Commissioners.

**ACTION: Rod to contact Commission Members with the pertinent information regarding the upcoming Hearing Examiner's Meeting at South Fork Park.**

**2. SILVER LAKE ROAD AND ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS** – Plans are moving forward for this project. A pre-application meeting was held with Planning and Development Services for the improvements that will take place in the Maple Creek campground. The first phase of the project will be replacing the road, water and electrical systems in that campground.

The SEPA application will be submitted next week and that will begin the permitting process. It appears that this project is outside of the shoreline designation which will simplify the SEPA application. In addition we will apply for a fill and grade permit. As a result this should expedite the permitting process.

It is anticipated that the advertisement for bids will be released this fall or early winter with bids being return by the first part of next year.

In terms of construction sequencing, our consultant is indicating that it's possible that if we secure a contractor by January the job could be completed prior to opening day fishing season in April. Rod stated that he would first like to get a contractor in place and get their input on whether or not this can be achieved.

**3. SAMISH PARK PLAYGROUND** – Rod stated that this project is currently in the permitting phase. The location qualifies for a shoreline exemption and because it is an existing structure that is being replaced will be a much quicker process.

In addition to the new playground structure, a new concrete walkway will be added to increase accessibility, new benches replacing some of the older ones and some landscape work.

Some of the treated wood timber retaining walls will be replaced with poured in place concrete walls. This will be a better long term solution for the environment and safety for park visitors.

It is anticipated that the permit will be in place before Labor Day which is when the work is scheduled to begin. It is anticipated that the project should be completed by the end of September. This was planned as schools will be in session which will reduce the number of children in the park.

The construction area includes most of the areas immediately surrounding the existing playground. This area will be fenced and closed to the public until the project is complete which should not take more than four weeks to finish.



**4. NESSET FARMHOUSE FOUNDATION REPAIR** – Work on this project continues. In addition to the foundation repair concrete piers will be installed to support the existing timbers underneath and provide additional support to the building.

The roofs of the house and out buildings will be replaced to protect the infrastructure that is in place. Because the roof of the machine shed is an old barn style shaker roof that is different from the double saw and shakes that are used in modern buildings, Rod has contacted the National Park Service as they have buildings with this sort of roof. They have agreed to share this information in order to provide good bid specification.

**5. LIGHTHOUSE MARINE PARK DOCK** – On or around July 15<sup>th</sup> the dock was damaged in a weather event. Rod and Christ made a trip to the site and discovered that the damage did not only include the wave attenuation chambers but was more extensive and throughout the whole system.

Upon inspection it was obvious that this presented a hazard and that the dock needed to be removed immediately. The contractor was contacted to schedule the removal which took place on July 25<sup>th</sup>.

The consulting engineer was contacted and pictures of the damage sent. The consulting engineer and Rod visited the site together. The engineer provided a field report of his observations for the general contractor who is meeting with Rod tomorrow to discuss where to proceed from here.

Rod discussed that there are several players in this project. Initially a consulting engineer provided permit and bid documents and created the design specifications. The general contractor provided these specifications to a dock manufacturer to build and install a dock system. The dock manufacturer provided their own engineering analysis which was submitted to the engineering consultant who gave it the go-ahead. There will be continued meetings with all involved to revise the specifications so that the dock will actually perform in the environment that it is placed. Rod expects that this could take several more weeks and a solution could take several months.

**6. LIGHTHOUSE MARINE PARK BOARDWALK DEMOLITION AND RENOVATION** – As previously discussed this project is scheduled for 2016 when the money becomes available.

There are several projects that were being considered for Lighthouse Marine Parks. In addition to renovating the boardwalk one of the other considered projects was to replace the playground. It appeared that there would be a gained value by combining these two projects by co-locating the playground closer to the boardwalk, especially in anticipation of a future lighthouse. All combined this could provide a very interesting public complex.

Rod stated at this point different design concepts are being reviewed. He has contacted material suppliers to look at different materials for the shade structures. There are several 21<sup>st</sup> century materials that are being considered that would require less maintenance than wood structures and might include canvas shade cloth that can be taken down in the winter and put up again in the summer.

The project will begin in 2016 with a possible target completion date set for the fall of 2016 however it is possible that it could go into 2017.

Rod was asked if it might make sense to fast track and build the lighthouse first and then build this project around it. Rod stated that Mike would need to address the lighthouse project. That

the projects he is currently working on are under Council direction and that have been assigned to him. The lighthouse project is currently not one of those projects.

Paul Woodcock interjected that the lighthouse project would be discussed in Agenda Item IX and to please hold those questions until the meeting progresses to that Item.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE PLANNING UPDATE – ROD LAMB**

**1. Reconveyance Trail Planning** – Work continues on the trail plan. Rod met with the Parks Conservation Steward to discuss the comments that were received on the earlier presented alternatives to incorporate changes that community members indicated as desirable in the trails system in terms of trail types and experiences.

The timeline is to have that completed to present as a revised Preferred Alternative at the next public planning presentation in late September or early October. Rod will keep the Commission posted on times and dates for that meeting when determined.

Theresa asked if the community outreach contact list could be expanded. Rod asked Theresa if she could provide a list and she stated she could.

**ACTION: Theresa Sygitowicz to provide additional names and addresses for inclusion into the existing contact list for the Lake Whatcom Reconveyance Public Planning Meetings.**

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. LIGHTHOUSE MARINE PARK LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT - DISCUSSION** – Mike provided copies for the Commission members of what was provided to him by the Point Roberts Lighthouse Society that included a handout on the project design. Mike discussed the plans and handout and provided an update on the project and that the Society is interested in moving the project forward.

He stated that in discussion with the County Executive and Council it was indicated by them that prior to proceeding on the project there are several items that need to be addressed. The total amount of funds required to complete the project would need to be in place as well as possible funding for maintenance and operations of the building would need to be determined. In addition, it was also determined that the plans provided are a conceptual design and could not be used for construction purposes and will need to be further refined.

In addition, because of the size of the project and because the building is being erected on public property this would be considered a Public Works project and would be subject to RCW 39.

It was asked if the structure were built off site and brought onto the site after it was completed would it still be a Public Works project. Mike stated that if this were the case it would be similar to how the Nasset Trust built the caretakers home at South Fork Park in that a prefab building was purchased and transported to the site but that site preparation, the concrete work, etc., was a Public Works project. Mike stated that would be difficult to do in with the lighthouse and that it is an idea to consider but that there were a number of issues that come into play, first is the permitting process and many other considerations that would not be eliminated by building off-site.

Dorothy Sutton, Lighthouse Committee Representative, stated that when a gift of \$500,000.00 is made that those funds should be going to the lighthouse construction and not to inspections and other items, things that Whatcom County should be paying for.

Mike stated that Council previously stated that the County will not be paying for any portion of the project. That the funds for the project would need to include permitting, inspections, utilities, engineering and all the costs that are included in the completion of the project and that if the Society is interested in completing the project it will need to be 100% funded prior to moving forward.

Dorothy asked if building the lighthouse would involve different permits than building a home. Rod stated that a commercial building permit is quite a bit more expensive than a residential permit.

Dorothy asked if Whatcom County Parks is interested in having this project done. Mike stated the Parks Department does not make this decision. The decision to move forward is one that the County Executive and Council would make. Mike stated that he recently again had a brief conversation with the County Executive reiterating what was necessary in order to move forward. It was discussed that there is a formal process for approval and that this project would need to go through that process just like any other project. The project would first need to be approved by the Council, who ultimately makes the decision and the second part would be scheduling it as it moves forward.

Mike discussed the items that would first need to be addressed prior to Council approval were outlined in his last email to the Society. The project's estimated cost can change because as the permitting process proceeds there are a number of requirements that change depending on Planning and Development requirements. Things such as, will the facility meet fire code, will the Planning Department require one restroom or two, etc. In addition the Health Department will need to inspect the septic system to determine if the system will support the increased use. These are a few of the items that would need to be worked out as the process proceeds and funding must be able to meet these costs.

Richard Sturgill stated that when going through the process there is no way to speed it up, that as with any project you will need to go through what it required to complete the project. He shared that he was involved in returning the ferry boat Plover to working condition in Blaine and that it took a total of seven years to complete that project. He encouraged the Society to not get discouraged and that if it is a worthy project to keep going and get through the red tape.

The Chair recognized Darryl Sutton, Lighthouse Society Representative. Darryl stated that after Mike's letter in response to the MOU, the idea to build offsite that was considered. He asked if Mike could speak to this. Mike discussed that the one attorney that stated the project may not be subject to the RCW 39, no longer works for the County and that he originally said it was subject to RCW 39 and then said that maybe there was a way that it would not be subject. That is the background behind one of the emails indicating that it wasn't. Because of this Mike stated that he asked for another review by the County legal staff and it was determined that yes, given all the conditions of this project it would be subject to RCW 39.

Darryl asked Mike if he could provide the Society with contact information at the Planning Department so that they can begin discussions on requirement and begin the process in terms of paperwork and cost estimates.

Rod stated that Planning and Development Services has a pre-application meeting that the Society can request be scheduled. In this meeting the Society would basically describe the project in narrative form. Rod stated that Nick Smith would be a good first contact. That he is

very helpful and could outline a pathway for the Society, be able to identify the commercial building permit requirements and if needed could call Rod if he had any questions about the Parks Department's position on this project.

Darryl stated that he understands that there are a few more steps that need to be taken before the project can be re-submitted for approval and that with the information Rod provided the Society can set up a time with the Planning Department to get the conversation started.

The Chair recognized Janet Boyhan. Janet stated that she would like to thank the Society for the monetary gift, commitment and pledge to this project. She stated that because the community and the Society believe in the project and that there is a rather large monetary pledge that this is a tremendous jump start for the project. However, because this is a government agency and public lands the construction requirements are much different than private construction and that the requirements will need to be met in order to move forward. She commended the Society on the progress that has been made but that it will now be important to create a document that lays out the steps that will need to be taken and the costs of each step.

Janet asked if the funds could be held by the Park's Foundation. Mike stated that they can and that this is just one of the considerations that need to be determined because when the project begins the funds need to be available. The County's concern is that the project starts and there is not enough funding to finish it, or even meet the financial requirements of the interim changes that could change the costs of the project in total.

Mike touched on some of the steps that the County takes to budget and plan projects that can actually be conceptualized one year but not be included into a budget for several years. That each of the Department's projects goes through the permitting and construction process.

After some additional discussion regarding cost, plans and County requirement Dorothy stated that she understood there would need to be additional steps taken and a lot more fund raising to be done before the project could be realized.

Mike added that it is important to understand that the Commission is an advisory committee to the Executive and himself as Park Director and that the Parks Commission does not make these decisions. It can only make a recommendation. The Department can help formulate a presentation and try to second guess what questions the Executive and Council will have based on feedback already received, but ultimately there will come a time when the Society and possibly the Parks Department jointly with the Society, will have to go before the Council for approval to move forward. Mike discussed that formal action is important because Councils and Executive's change but projects may take multiple years and sometimes go beyond the political life of executives and councils. Therefore it is important to have a good concept of the project and a formal decision to move forward.

Darryl stated that there will need to be discussions with the Society, the Executive and the Parks Department in order to understand that this is a gift and that the net of that gift is that there are other benefits that could be enjoyed and that it could be used and also benefited as a commercial property after it were built.

Jeffrey Margolis stated that many of the Commission members on this committee have also gifted the County and gone through the County process, so are empathetic to your frustrations. Jeff discussed that he has experienced the County process as a president of an organization that has managed buildings for the public in a Whatcom County Park and that his advice is that the Society follow procedure, be in for the long range benefits and ensure that the plan is adequate for future use. He discussed the importance of procuring stakeholders and funds and that it

should not be one person's project but to generate community support and stakeholders. He concluded his comments with thanks to the Society for their generosity.

Mike said that he will email contact information.

**ACTION: Mike to email the Lighthouse Society contact information.**

The Commission thanked the Society for their good will, patience and generosity. The Society thanked the Commission for time to hear them out at this meeting.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Theresa Sygitowicz announced that the Western Washington State Fair begins this weekend.

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION**

The September 17, 2015 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will be held at VanZandt Community Hall at 6:00 PM.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director