

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, July 16, 2015

Welcome Senior Center
5103 Mosquito Lake Road
Deming, WA

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:01 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Jeffrey Margolis, Richard Sturgill, Janet Boyhan,

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Mark Personius, Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Guest: Daniel Probst – Cascade Mountain Runners

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS - NONE

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - NONE

V. AGENDA

A. July 16, 2015 AGENDA

MOTION: It was moved by Jeffrey Margolis, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed unanimously to accept the July 16, 2015 Agenda.

VI. MINUTES

A. June 18, 2015 MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Jeffrey Margolis, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed unanimously to accept the submitted DRAFT June 18, 2015 Minutes as written.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE

1. Stimpson Family Nature Reserve – Mike provided background on the genesis of the reserve in that, when the park was set up Western Washington donated a parcel after the agreement for public access with Whatcom Land Trust was signed and this past year the Stimpson Family donated an additional 20 acres. As a result, Whatcom Land Trust and the Department are drafting a new public access easement for those two parcels in order to bring the paperwork up to date.

2. Semiahmoo Park - Mike met with the Semiahmoo Yacht Club to discuss their using the Semiahmoo Day Lodge for their annual board and regular monthly meetings. They also expressed interest in booking the facilities at regular rates for three of their major events. It remains to be determined if the facilities and parking space will provide adequate space for their needs and level of use.

In addition to using the Day Lodge, there was a discussion on potentially remodeling the restroom building to provide more open space for meetings. Currently the building is divided into three smaller rooms. The Yacht Club did indicate that there could be funds available to put forward towards the remodel if it were viable for them.

Mike stated that discussions will continue to determine the potential use of the restroom building if it were remodeled. Some of the benefits considered were room for additional programs and displays, provide a meeting spot with the ability for break-out sessions and provide overflow for conferences being held at nearby facilities.

Mike will continue to update the Commission as this proposal develops.

3. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Fees - Executive Louws has approved the Department to ask for public donations when using the Lighthouse Marine Park dock. It was determined that it would be more cost effective in terms of staff time to collect and process fees and could actually produce more revenue.

4. Whatcom County Phone System Upgrade – The County is in the process of upgrading the phone system. As of January 1, 2016 the switch to the new numbers will be complete and the old numbers will no longer work. The Parks Department is scheduled to switch over the first week of September.

5. Whatcom County Website – Mike asked that, as the Department goes through updating the Park's web page if the Commissioners notice any corrections, errors or typos to please contact the office with that information.

6. Galbraith Mountain / Polygon Proposal – Mike discussed that this proposal is currently not ready to be presented to the councils, the Mayor and Executive Louws. Mike stated he will provide updates as they become available.

7. Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation – Tuesday, August 4th at 6:00 PM the Foundation, City of Bellingham Parks and Whatcom County Parks will host a tour of the trees at Broadway Park. The tour will begin and conclude at the Roeder Home.

Mike extended an invitation to the Commission to come along for a good walk, learn more about the trees and the Roeder Home.

8. Hovander Home Docent Program – The Hovander Home has not been opened to the public on a number of weekends this season. The Whatcom Volunteer Center is under a paid contract to provide volunteers and coordinate the volunteer program, which includes docents at the Hovander Home. The Whatcom Volunteer Center was contacted when it was learned that there was a shortage of volunteers available to provide the coverage. The Volunteer Center recently informed the Department that they have located an appropriate number of volunteers to cover the House and it will be opened as scheduled for the remainder of the season.

9. Silver Lake Park Flowering Rush – The Whatcom County Public Works Department will continue treating Silver Lake for flowering rush. This season the scheduled treatment site is at

the opposite end of the lake. The treatment location is an indication that Public Works is getting flower rush under control at Silver Lake.

The Park will have postings that these activities are taking place. There are some restrictions with water consumption that go along with the treatment but will not impact the parks as it is on a well.

Jeff Margolis asked that it be noted that he is voicing formal opposition to chemical herbicide management of Flower Rush in Silver Lake.

10. Lighthouse Marine Park Lighthouse Project – Mike discussed that the organization that is spearheading this project has a tentative commitment for \$500,000.00. From the Department's estimate that amount will not cover the costs.

The County Council has required that prior to the project moving forward, that a firm commitment for funding to cover the project costs and future building maintenance is in place, that a project budget is developed and that there is assurance that the funds are accessible through a foundation or similar avenue for the project.

11. Hovander Homestead Park - Senior Day in the Park – August 12th is Senior Day in the Park. This event is hosted by the Whatcom County Council on Aging (WCCOA) for all the Senior Centers in Whatcom County. Activities include bocce ball tournaments, vendors and a picnic lunch provided by WCCOA. The event is held in the Hovander Main Picnic Shelter from 11:00 AM – 1:30 PM.

B. OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN

1. Staffing

a. Introduction – Shamash Campbell, Maintenance and Construction Supervisor – Christ introduced Shamash (Shami) Campbell to the Commission. Shami has been with the Department almost seven weeks now. Shami provided the Commission with a brief synopsis of his background, work experience and personal hobbies.

b. Hiring Update – Christ reported that at the most recent All Staff meeting there were four new staff members attending their first meeting. That included the new Silver Lake Park Ranger, Lighthouse Marine Park Ranger, Maintenance and Construction Supervisor and the Maintenance Worker III. This brings our staff up to minus one journeyman electrician. Recruitment for this position continues.

2. Unseasonal Weather – Due to unseasonal dryness the Whatcom County Fire Marshall implemented a high level county-wide burn ban just prior to the July 4th weekend. This required the Operations/Maintenance staff to move quickly to get this information out to the public. It is anticipated that the burn ban will be in effect throughout the summer season and into the fall.

The parks have experienced a few very small fires that were easily controlled and extinguished.

Christ discussed the difference in agency burn bans from a state, county and federal level, how the County's burn ban relates to these and how it effects the day to day operations of the parks that border federal and state lands. Many of the bans' requirements restrict the equipment that can be used.

As a result, Operations has changed the focus of the additional extra-help staff this year to include duties that can be completed in the good weather and to where the public is primarily

using the parks. The Lake Whatcom Trail Head bathroom has been painted inside and out and all the bathrooms at Silver Lake Park have been painted on the inside, with the outside on the schedule for paint. Based on the positive comments received from the public the work is providing a more pleasant experience in our parks.

3. Projects

a. Birch Bay Community Park Building Demolition – Christ discussed that there is a minor hold on the project. Because the building demolition required ground disturbance the Lummi tribe was contacted. The Lummi tribe requested that the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation be contacted for input. The Department of Archaeology was contacted and they recommended that an archaeological assessment of the area be completed prior to any ground disturbance.

The archaeological assessment is in progress and once that is completed and their report received, the report will be forwarded to the State who will issue a removal permit. The permit has a 30 day comment period which will bring the project delay to a total of 45 to 60 days.

b. Hovander House and Drying Shed and Tennant Lake Interpretive Center Roof Replacement – A draft contract is in review and once completed the project will proceed to the bid process.

c. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk – This project was delayed until a decision was made regarding the shade shelters and Orca Center.

It has been decided to remove the condemned portion of boardwalk and shade structures. Christ discussed that the shade structures will need to be removed in order to remove that portion of the boardwalk. The Orca Center will remain.

Discussions will be scheduled with the Point Roberts Advisory Committee for input on what uses the community would like to see preserved and enhanced.

There was discussion regarding the possible inclusion of interpretive panels that display the local history and historical activities.

C. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT – Rod Lamb

1. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk - Rod discussed the initial phase of the design plans, materials and budget. The initial phase of the project will include the boardwalk removal, repair of the remaining boardwalk and installation of a playground. The budgeted for the initial phase \$225,000. The sight plan is scheduled to be complete in 2016.

2. South Fork Park Trailhead Development – The shoreline application was submitted in February 2015 and the Department has since been notified by Planning and Development Services that there was a procedural error in processing our application, in that the public notice in the Bellingham Herald was never advertised, nor were the adjacent property owners within 1,000 ft. of the property notified of the project.

This caused a delay in scheduling the Hearing Examiner and will push the construction into 2016. Fortunately this project is classified as a project budget which allows the funds to carry forward into the next budget cycle as long as progress is being made.

The hearing takes place August 12th. The plans are pending comments from the Engineering Department but the hearing can take place without these comments, with the condition that they are received and acted on prior to the permit being issued. Once the permit has been approved the project will go out to bid and to Council for approval and a contract can be in place by November or December.

3. Silver Lake Road and Electrical Improvements – The contract with Pacific Survey & Engineering has been modified to identify the first phase to focus on Maple Creek Campground.

This phase is well defined, fits into the current available budget and will make the biggest impact and improvement on the park. It will include replacing the roads, water and electrical. In addition some campsite upgrades will be completed in terms of parking realignment and camping pads.

Meetings continue with the contractor to begin the preliminary designs for permit submittal. The submittal not only includes local permits but forest practices permits as several trees will need to be removed to widen the roads. This will also define accepted practices in removing trees in a manner that will preserve a healthy forest.

The contractor has indicated that with good luck, good weather and good work practices that this portion of the project can be completed prior to next fishing season opening day.

4. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Renovation – Rod discussed that there are a few items that need to be addressed on the project, to include signage, a donation box and final permit approval on the completed job.

5. Samish Park Playground – While researching the permit process for this project Rod interpreted the codes to state that the project would require an exemption permit, not a shoreline development permit. Discussions took place with the shoreline supervisor to make sure that the Department was correct in this interpretation and how to make sure that he was efficient with this completion of the application.

The permit application was submitted this past Monday. Rod has since received an email confirming that an exemption permit has been received and distributed to the watershed, health and flood divisions and that the initial review looks to be concurrent with code and that it should receive timely approval.

Permit approval is pivotal as this project has a very short window of completion because it is not a project budget and funds will not carry forward into the new year. In addition, the soil cannot be disturbed after October 1st.

The project is scheduled to begin with the earth disturbance and equipment mobilization after the school season begins. School begins before Labor Day this year so the earth work is scheduled to begin the first week of September and last through the end of September. Installation of the playground equipment is scheduled for October. Installation does not involve any earth disturbance. The project is expected to be completed before the winter weather begins.

6. Nessel Farm House Foundation Repair – The engineer's estimate has been completed. While waiting on the engineer's estimate Rod stated that he had time to reevaluate the scope of work and has decided that some revisions and clarifications need to be added prior to releasing the project for bid. Rod and Shami will work together to detail and clarify the scope of work.

7. Stimpson Family Nature Reserve – Rod discussed that a correction needed to be made on the kiosk narrative that the Whatcom Land Trust provided in terms of the quantity of the acreage and missing pieces in the sequence of parcel acquisitions.

The revised panel has been sent to the sign manufacturer and a corrected version has been received and installed. With additional panel install and the site identification added to the kiosk the project is now complete.

Christ discussed that new and different kiosk materials have been used on this kiosk and asks that if the Commissioners are on site to please take note of the changes and let the Department know their opinions on them.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE PLANNING UPDATE – ROD LAMB

Rod discussed that all public comments that have been received to-date have been posted on the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation website in the form of a report. The report is organized into sections of the reconveyance area, Lookout Mountain Park and Lake Whatcom Park.

The next portion of the process will be to identify the major milestones between now and the end of the year and move forward on the preferred alternative, incorporate any additional community comments received, schedule the fall and subsequent follow-up community meeting, present the plan to Council for approval and wrap up by the end of the year.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. PRESENTATION: BELLINGHAM MT. BAKER TRAIL – DANIEL PROBST

Daniel Probst, founder of Cascade Mountain Runners provided a presentation of his vision for the proposed Bellingham Mount Baker Trail and to resurrect the 1911 Mt. Baker Marathon. Daniel provided maps that show the current trail route and the proposed trail route. He discussed the proposed changes in the trail route and the reasons for the changes.

Daniel updated the Commission on the trail development and the permission/permitting process in terms of what has been completed to date and what is left to accomplish.

Daniel discussed that the plan is to fund the trail project with proceeds from the marathon. There was some additional discussion on event/race/trail promotion and fund raising.

At the end of the presentation he provided a question and answer period for the Commission.

Additional discussion included clarification on portions of the route and property ownership and the permission/permits process on these portions of the trail.

He discussed that he will request that Council approve by resolution the inclusion of the trail into the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 9, Recreation.

Daniel thanked the Commission for the time on the Agenda and asked that if and when the Council resolution for inclusion is brought forward that the Commission provide a letter of support for the project.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jeff Margolis announced that the upcoming Summer Fest at the Josh Vander Yacht Memorial Park is taking place on August 8th from 1:00 PM to dusk. There will be pony rides and vendors,

the annual reading of the names ceremony of those on the memorial stones, a potluck at 4:00 PM and Van Zandt at 5:00 PM.

Mike informed the Commission that Recreation Northwest was unable to provide their presentation at this time due to scheduling conflicts but are interested in providing the presentation later in the fall. Mike will contact them then to make arrangements for that presentation.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The August 20, 2015 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will be held at Lighthouse Marine Park at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be preceded with a tour of park properties in the Point Roberts area.

There will be a carpool to Point Roberts leaving from the Planning and Development west parking lot on Smith and Northwest Roads at 1:00 PM.

PLEASE BRING APPROPRIATE IDENTIFICATION FOR BORDER CROSSING.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Richard Sturgill, seconded by Janet Boyhan and passed unanimously to adjourn the July 16, 2015 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director