

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, December 17, 2015

Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, WA

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 7:10 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Janet Boyhan, Jeff Margolis, Kenneth Kiesner and Vern Yadon

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Rod Lamb and Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED:

Commission: Richard Sturgill and Theresa Sygitowicz

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. DANIEL PROBST – Daniel thanked the Commission for supporting the proposal to Council to add the Bellingham-Mt. Baker Trail to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

Daniel reported that funds received through donations for trail development now total \$13,700.00.

He stated that he had a meeting with Public Works Commission Council to discuss the ongoing project Lost Cedar Trail which is a proposed connector trail between Pine and Cedar Lakes Trail that would provide for a 5-6 mile multi-use trail loop. He provided background on the project development and costs and asked for Commission support for this project.

B. JACKIE YEREANCE – Jackie stated that she represents a group of back country horsemen and supports the trail connector between Pine and Cedar Lakes and the Lost Lake Trail. She discussed that this would provide a 5-6 mile loop that would be more durable and suitable for equestrian, biking and hiking activity. She stated that the current route that connects this area is very steep and narrow and is not suitable for back country horsemen or biking activity.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - NONE

V. AGENDA

A. DECEMBER 17, 2015 AGENDA

MOTION: It was moved by Ken Kiesner and seconded by Vern Yadon to approve the December 17, 2015 Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MINUTES

A. NOVEMBER 19, 2015 MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Vern Yadon to approve the November 19, 2015 Minutes as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. DIRECTORS REPORT – MICHAEL MCFARLANE

1. Whatcom County Planning Commission Request to Restore Policies and Trails Map to Chapter 9 of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan - The Whatcom County Planning Commission voted 7-1 to restore Policies 9C-24-27 and Map 9-2 showing Proposed Trail Corridors to Chapter 9 Recreation of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. The decision will be forwarded for Whatcom County Council action after the public comment closes on January 8, 2016.

2. Budget Review – Mike discussed that because it has been decided to move approval for or the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) forward sooner that is typical he will be asking the Commission to review the Department's six year CIP in February.

In addition the expenditures and revenues for the 2016 projects that were moved into project budgets and new projects that the Executive, Department and County Council would like to move forward with during that time frame will need to be reviewed to make sure that they line up with the budget.

3. Whatcom County Parks and Recreation 20 Year Plan – As part of the CIP the Department will be updating the Parks 20 Year Plan. Mike will also be bringing that forward in February for Commission Review.

4. Lighthouse Society – On December 8, 2015 the Lighthouse Society appeared before County Council to inform them that the donor has indicated that they are considering presenting the funds as a gift (pledge) to the Lighthouse Society as opposed to the prior indication that it would be a loan.

The ongoing concerns are that the pledge amount will not provide the sufficient amount of funds required to complete the project, that there are currently no dedicated funds from the County or available funds from the Lighthouse Society to make up the difference, and that there is not an exact determination on the total cost of the project.

Also discussed was the involvement of the Coast Guard in that they would donate the light and provide information regarding the ongoing operating costs, moving requirements, permits, etc., but they would have no financial involvement the project.

There was some discussion regarding the additional costs and alternatives for cost reductions, exactly what the light would provide in terms of navigational aid, what the facility would provide in terms of community use and what the next steps would be to move the project forward.

5. Phillips 66 Pledge – Phillips 66 has pledged \$700,000.00 to Whatcom Sports to install two lighted artificial turf fields at the Northwest Soccer Fields on Smith and Northwest.

The agreement with Whatcom Sports is being revised to meet requirements for grant funding. In addition Phillips 66, in light of the donation, would like to change name the fields to the Phillips 66 Soccer Park. The agreement will go forward to Council at the second meeting in January, 2016.

6. Anchorage Museum Request – The Department was contacted by the Anchorage Museum. They are interested in a loan of one of the two iron chinks for a permanent exhibit that they are building. The Department will be sending them the item specifications next week for their decision on which one will best meet their needs. They have indicated that they will do the required restoration for their display and are interested in a long term loan agreement. If an agreement is reached it will require County Council approval.

7. Parks and Recreation Employee Staff Retreat – The Department provided a staff retreat at the Roeder Home on Tuesday, December 15, 2015.

Staff was asked to weigh in on several areas of the Department budget and programing. Management will review these suggestions throughout the year and if applicable, incorporate them into the planning process.

8. Lummi Island Heritage Trust – The conservation easement has not yet been returned from the County Legal staff. After the easement has been returned from the legal staff the purchase and sale agreement will need to be drafted. Once the purchase and sale agreement has been signed the Department should be able to close on that transaction fairly soon after.

The Trust continues to raise private donations for the matching funds. They have been awarded a number of grant program funds that will be used for site clean-up restoration and they have a bridge loan in place that will carry them through to the end of January, 2016.

9. Birch Bay Berm and Pedestrian Project – The Department received a request from the County Public Works Department to stage materials at three of our park properties during the off season that will provide a huge savings in their project costs.

The Birch Bay Community Parks is one of the properties that have been requested for materials staging. The Department has indicated that for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons this will work, however the Department will be applying for grant funds for park development in 2017 and if awarded, construction on the park could begin in the 2018-19 season and could then not be available to them.

10. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center – There is a Community Development Block Grant that is sponsored by the County and will pass through to the Opportunity Council to build a food bank distribution center at that location.

Mike discussed that he will be working with the County Facilities Department to draft a construction contract that will allow the Opportunity Council to build the structure, with the approvals of the County. The Facilities Department will oversee the construction and the Parks Department will draft the agreement.

The project is a \$1.5 million project. The Opportunity Council currently have Block Grant funds, plus County awarded funds for a total of approximately \$1 million. Construction will begin once all the funds have been raised.

There was some discussion regarding refrigeration and the responsibility of the ensuing increased energy bills as well as the capacity, cost and effectiveness of the existing back-up generator.

11. Galbraith Mountain – The Department continues to work on this proposal. The property is in the process of being re-appraised. The City of Bellingham will be managing the property appraisal and the Department will be managing the timber appraisal. It is anticipated that the appraisals should take approximately 3-4 months to complete. Once the appraisals been completed and the information compiled there will be a proposal to both the City and County Councils for approval.

B. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT – ROD LAMB

1. South Fork Trailhead Project – A contract amendment was drafted for Reichhardt & Ebe Engineers that extends the consulting services agreement and adds a few additional scope items not included in the original contract.

The plan is to prepare the final bid documents and begin Health Department permit approval for the vault toilets that will be located at the proposed trailhead facility.

2. Silver Lake Road and Electrical Improvements – The Department is reviewing comments provided from Planning and Development services on the initial campground improvements submittal and are proposing some modifications to their desired buffer mitigation. We expect to complete our review in the next two weeks and then re-submit the drawing for final approval.

3. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Project – The engineer's modification to the wave attenuation chamber has been sent to the contractor and he has solicited quotes for the fabrication of the new device. The proposal was also shared with the manufacturer who is also evaluating the proposal to determine that it will work with the design of the dock substructure, and not cause damaging stresses to occur elsewhere in the structure.

4. Samish Park Playground – The project is 99% complete. There are couple of items left, one is to install appropriate signage that will be provided from the manufacturer and install some benches around the perimeter. These were received last week and it is anticipated that our maintenance staff will install those in the very near future.

5. Nessel Farm Foundation – The engineer's estimate has been submitted and additional clarification have been made to the scope of work for the bid documents. The project will be bid later this spring, and constructed next year, given the short work window remaining in this year.

C. OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN

1. National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Permit – NPDES is a pollution permit that is focused primarily on water quality. Whatcom County's lead entity for the NPDES is the County Public Works Department.

The County's Health Dept. and Parks Dept. are meeting regularly with Public Works to discuss the permit and how the requirements will impact Department activities, particularly in the water shed and throughout the County.

Chris discussed that one of the benefits the Department will realize is training opportunities. Beginning next week staff will begin training in spill response and illicit discharge. This will benefit staff in that if and when an incident happens they will be able to respond appropriately, know who to report the incident to and be prepared with equipment-on-hand to mitigate impacts

on the environment. In addition, during ongoing, on-site inspections if a spill is identified staff will be able to respond and report.

2. Projects

a. Birch Bay Community Park Building Demolition – The buildings have been removed and the project is substantially complete.

There are some items that still need to be addressed. These include determining the best way to remove an old fence on the front of the property and add to and repair the boundary fencing to control public access.

b. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk Demo – The contractor has completed the demolition and other than staff completing some minor on-site clean-up, the project is complete.

There was some discussion regarding the sections that were demoed and upcoming plans for developing that site. It was shared that this is a capital project and is scheduled for development in 2016.

c. Hovander Park Roofing Project. – The project continues with the completion of the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center roof. The contract expires 12/22/15 and will be extended until 1/31/16 to cover any delays that may have resulted from project shut down due to flooding.

d. Headquarters Flooring Project – This project has evolved to include flooring, painting and the installation of a wall monitor in the conference room. This project is slated to be completed by the end of the week.

2. Vehicle Fleet – Whatcom County Council has approved the replacement of three Parks Maintenance vehicles. Two of the vehicles will be a replacement in-kind and the third will include minor upgrades in order to meet the demands of the job. This vehicle will have a diesel engine and a higher towing capacity to be able to access the steeper roads within the watershed.

There was a discussion regarding the disposal process of the vehicles that were replaced and the selection process for the replacement vehicles. All vehicles are returned to Public Works Department who makes a determination of disposal and replacement. They have a process for disposal based on the vehicle condition and criteria for replacement purchases.

3. 12/15/15 Staff Retreat – All of the Lead Rangers and Management personnel provided a Power Point presentation on their “year in review” discussing the successes and challenges that each department has experienced. The presentations will be consolidated and if it fits into the Commission’s January Agenda, would like to provide that as a presentation for the Commission.

It was the consensus of the Commission to include the presentation on the January 2016 agenda.

3. Department of Natural Resources Baker to Bellingham Recreation Planning Process Press Release – The press releases had an error in the location as published. This has been updated and was received by the Department late today. After review, the information will be shared with the Commission.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE PLANNING UPDATE – ROD LAMB – The last round of comments has been consolidated. Technically the comment period ended on

November 29th however there was a request to extend the comment period. Because it is not a formal Federal or State process there was no reason not to extend the comment period and therefore have accepted comments that were received after the close date and included them in the summary which will be posted on-line in the next few days for public review.

B. LETTER TO WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL SUPPORTING THE INCLUSION OF THE BELLINGHAM-MT BAKER TRAIL CORRIDOR IN THE WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, CHAPTER 9

– Paul stated that he received communication suggesting that if it were being requested to include the Bellingham Mt. Baker Trail into the Comprehensive Plan, might it also be wise to request that it be included on the map in Chapter 9 that shows the trails.

Mike stated that this discussion did come up at the Planning Commission meeting and it was decided that the trails that would be included in the map would be multimodal trails. Multimodal trails are primarily trails that are used for all forms of recreation, are generally wider, are level and have no more than an 8% grade, meet a construction standard for ADA accessibility and can be used for commuting in that they connect communities or population centers and large attractions.

It was decided that the recreational trails, which are many, include trails in the City of Bellingham and the National Forest Service, etc., would not be included. That including those trails would make for a network of many, many trails and would change the original intent of the map. The Bellingham-Mt. Baker Trail fits in this category and would therefore not be an appropriate fit for the map.

MOTION: It was moved by Vern Yadon and seconded by Jeff Margolis to accept the letter to Whatcom County Council supporting the inclusion of the Bellingham-Mt. Baker Trail Corridor in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 9, as written and to forward the letter on to Whatcom County Council. Motion Carried.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. NOOKSACK RIVER CASINO – It was suggested that since the Casino has closed if the County were ever interested in an indoor recreation/pool complex, to consider this location for that purpose.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS – NONE

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The January, 2016 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting date and time will be January 21, 2016 at 6:00 PM. The meeting location will be the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Headquarters Building, 3373 Mount Baker Highway, Bellingham, WA.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Vern Yadon, seconded by Kenn Kiesner to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director