

**MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, May 19, 2016**

**Plantation Rifle Range
5109 Samish Highway, Bellingham, WA**

Prior to the meeting Jerry Warren, Whatcom County Lead Ranger, provided the Commission members and staff with a tour of the Plantation Rifle Range.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:23 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Jeff Margolis, Vern Yadon, Paul Woodcock, Theresa Sygitowicz, Kenneth Kiesner

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Rod Lamb and Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED: Janet Boyhan and Richard Sturgill

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. COMMENTS – Jeff Margolis announced that the South Fork Valley Community Association reached the target funds required to replace the roof at the Van Zandt Community Hall.

In addition, he announced that beginning this Sunday KAVZ radio will be broadcasting live on the internet at kvazradio.org.

Vern Yadon shared the petition of support for the formation of the Columbia Park and Recreation District and the Kendall trail comprehensive plan.

B. COMMUNICATIONS – Vern also shared a letter and a petition of support from the Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation District Committee to the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission that provided an update on the local community's efforts to establish the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District, and to request a letter of support for these efforts from the Commission.

Attachments to the memo included a mapping of the proposed district boundaries and the petition to create the District, Initiative #2016-1.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

A. COLUMBIA VALLEY PEDISTRIAN TRAIL – Vern Yadon shared that the WA State Dept. of Transportation (DOT) has since determined that they do not currently have the time in their work schedule to take on this project, therefore the funds have been reassigned to the Council of Governments who has agreed to administer the project.

IV. AGENDA

A. MAY 19, 2016 AGENDA

MOTION: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz and seconded by Ken Kiesner to amend the agenda to add the discussion of a letter of support for the formation of the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District to New Business and approve the May 19, 2016 Agenda as amended.

The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

V. MINUTES

A. APRIL 21, 2016 MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Vern Yadon to approve the April 21, 2016 Minutes as submitted.

The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

A. DIRECTOR AND OPERATIONS REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE

1. Park Districts Taxing – Per the request of Jeff Margolis at the April, 2016 Commission meeting, Mike provided a handout listing the existing Park Districts' individual valuation, levy rate and tax amounts and added that this information is available on line on the County Assessors web site.

There was some discussion regarding how the funds are distributed and configured.

2. Grant Applications – The Department has two projects that grant applications that have been submitted to Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The grants are currently in the technical review stage. The Department will be making grant presentations to RCO in June, 2016.

The grant amounts are:

Birch Bay Community Park Acquisition – \$1.2 million
South Fork Park Trails Development - \$209,000.00

3. Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Update –

Mike provided an update on the May 10, 2016 Whatcom County Council Meeting discussion regarding the Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 9 – Recreation: Chapter 9 will be moving forward for public hearing and then for approval to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. The Department will submit an amendment to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan to include the addition of any Chapter 9 changes and the additions/changes for some minor technical details and corrections.

Chapter – Transportation: This chapter has a number of bicycle, pedestrian and access items that include trails. There was concern as to whether or not the trails belong in this chapter or if they would be better suited in the economic section of the Comprehensive Plan.

On May 26, 2016 the Planning Commission will be meeting to review the six years Capital Improvement Plan. Results of the review will be forwarded to County Council.

All of the changes and additions to the Comprehensive Plan will be coming forward to Council in their next three to four meetings as the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be approved prior to the end of June. The changes and proposals, along with the County Council schedule for each, can be followed on the Planning and Development Services web site

5. Budget Guidelines – Budget guidelines were released. The County Executive is asking for maintenance of effort to focus on the larger Capital Projects.

The Department's budget submission due date is August 1, 2016.

The Council will have a budget meeting the first week of June to discuss their priorities and then at the June Commission meeting we will bring those priorities that the Commission has discussed through the year that we will try to incorporate into the budget.

Mike discussed that there are unresolved budget issues that are on the on fall ballot and how the results of the vote could affect the budget allocation. He stated that the executive has indicated that he will be submitting the budget as though it has not been approved but that if it does get approved there may be additional funds available to offset some operating funds.

7. Dorothy Copp Purchase and Sale – The purchase and sale documents are ready to move forward to escrow and it is anticipated that it will close within 30-60 days.

8. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC) – Meetings will be held with the Opportunity Council the first week in June to renegotiate the current 5 year operating agreement that is coming up for renewal. The Opportunity Council has asked for a longer period of time on the lease and has indicated that they will be requesting additional program operating funds. Included is the request is operating funds for the proposed addition of a food bank. Initially the Executive indicted that this is not a cost that the County would like to assume, and that it will need to be funded by the food bank or the Opportunity Council. Increased costs could include maintenance of the facility in terms of food waste management, and the increased utility costs for freezers and coolers for food storage.

9. Birch Bay Lighthouse Committee – The Department has received an email from the Lighthouse Committee indicating that they would like to continue to see the facility's use to include rentals, concessions, a food prep area, and possibly a restroom if it is determined by Planning and Development Services that it is needed.

They also indicated that they would like to explore the possibility of individuals living in the facility to experience the general upkeep of a functioning lighthouse.

It is thought that this cannot be accomplished on the current budget. The Department will draft a response to their priorities. These include the facility being a functioning lighthouse with an observation platform. They have asked for County participation on some of the items but to date the Executive and County Council have indicated that the County will not participate in funding efforts, that it will need to be private funding.

C. OPERATIONS – CHRIST THOMSEN

1. Chuckanut Park Signage – Christ circulated photos showing the checkpoint signage kiosks that have been installed at Chuckanut Park. Information regarding these checkpoints has been added to the webpage

In addition, interactive, geo-referenced maps have been added to the Chuckanut web page. These will allow a trail user to locate where they are in real time on the map by first downloading a free App called Avenza PDF Maps to a mobile device. The App will download maps over Wi-Fi or cellular network to use on your mobile device anytime, even when offline, as they are saved to your devices memory.

2. Plantation Rifle Range HVAC Project – Five firms have responded to the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design and construction services. The Department is currently reviewing the submissions and will begin interviewing and negotiating with the first of these firms next week.

3. Ferndale Senior Activity Center Roofing Contract – It is anticipated that the Contract will be out to bid prior to the middle of June with the project beginning in July or August, depending on coordination with the Senior Center.

4. Semiahmoo Park “Iron Chink” Display – The Department Maintenance crew will begin construction based on the design that Rod Lamb drafted once permitting and cost estimates are in place. It is believed that this project can be completed prior to the end of summer 2016.

5. Staffing – The Department has received a resignation from the West Regional Lead Ranger, whose last day was 5/13/16. There is also a repair and maintenance specialists on long-term leave. This will put a strain on the summer season in terms of park coverage and maintenance.

There has been some internal interest in the Ranger position by Jill Jacoby who will be temporarily filling that position through mid-July as the Department works through the hiring process

There was some discussion regarding the reasons that the West Regional Lead Ranger resigned. Christ responded that he had been planning on retiring next year in February but was presented with some other opportunities that he wanted to explore sooner.

B. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT – ROD LAMB

1. South Fork Park Trailhead Development – The County attorney is reviewing the draft bid package that was provided by the consulting engineer. The review should be completed by 5/20. The same package has been submitted to the Finance Department to prepare the bid package. It is anticipated that the first advertisement will be June 1 and the second June 8.

There will be a three week bid period with bids opening on June 22nd. Once bids have been received and reviewed, the recommended award will go to Council on July 12, have a contractor able to mobilize the beginning of August, and construction completed by late October, 2016.

Rod submitted the building permit for the new vault toilet that is part of the trailhead development and will be submitting a memo to the Executive requesting approval of the unit. The unit will be purchased on a State contract in which they have negotiated prices, eliminating the need for a County quote process. The Executive Office has the purchasing authority.

The cost of maintenance for the vault toilets was discussed in terms of pumping, pumping frequencies, and typical wear and tear.

Christ relayed that pumping frequency would depend on the volume of use and the amount of effluents present, and that this model typically has 1,000 gallons of storage for each stall. He

discussed the typical pumping schedule for other high use parks and that there is a bid rate set at the beginning of the year so costs can vary from year to year. This year it is approximately \$300.00 per pumping, per unit.

Rod discussed that the total cost of the unit is approximately \$40,000.00 and that these units do not typically wear out in any considerable way as they are constructed of concrete and stand up to wear and vandalism.

2. Nessel Farm House Renovation – The County attorney has completed the contract review. The contracted engineer is making a few minor edits to the drawing and the project will be released for bid in the near future.

There is an access issue with Bake Farms that will need to be resolved prior to the project being advertised. Rod is working on this and anticipates a resolution to the problem.

3. Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements – The approval for the water system has been received from the WA State Department of Health.

Planning and Development Services (PDS) is having concerns regarding some of the more complex critical areas related to getting the proximity to the shoreline jurisdiction of Silver Lake and associated wetlands co-mingled. There is a habitat conservation area and questions whether it may qualify as old growth. Rod stated he has been working very closely with PDS to return the permitting path back on track.

A SEPA threshold determination has been completed and a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued. Rod will meet with critical area staff to work through the problematic areas and come to a common understanding of the regulatory requirements and approval conditions of the project.

It will be advertised for public comments and barring any unforeseen issues the DNS will hold and the project will proceed.

4. Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation – Rod made a site visit with the engineer to evaluate the project and deck structure in order to develop a more complete and detailed scope of work. Once that is completed a contract will be negotiated with Reichhardt and Ebe Engineering and associated project team.

5. Lighthouse Dock Renovation – Council approved the budget supplemental request. A purchase order was issued for the re-manufactured wave attenuation chamber frames. Rod has asked for an updated anticipated schedule but has not heard back from the manufacturer to date. The target for installation for the Department is mid-June.

There was a minor change in the design of the frame. One of the aluminum structural members specified was not readily available, and would have had an unacceptably long lead time. It was replaced with a more common channel dimension. The structural engineer did review the modification and found that the replacement channel was adequate in terms of strength and durability.

6. Birch Bay Community Park – A design services contract has been negotiated with Robert W. Droll Landscape Architects. Rod provided a brief background on the selected firm. The contract will go before Council for approval on 5/31/16. Once approved the design work and community outreach process will commence.

There was some discussion regarding the roles of the Department and the community in terms of the development of the park design and subsequent park development. Rod discussed that the Executive approved funds for a conceptual design in order to provide more concrete costs for the priority items which are a restroom and parking facility. This will also provide an opportunity for the local community to get engaged in the design and development process with a clear understanding of the fundraising needs.

Mike spoke to the funding source and allocation for the acquisition and development.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE PLANNING UPDATE – ROD LAMB – The environmental analysis work is complete. Rod stated that a few minor modifications are needed to complete the plan and that these have been put aside until his current workload lessens and he can dedicate a block of time to it as it cannot be addressed in short intervals.

B. DISCUSSION ON PARK ORDINANCES – RULES REVISION – Mike provided an Ordinance and Rules Review Sheet for the followings park ordinances/rules: Naming Park Areas and Filming Policies.

Naming Park Areas: There is currently not a County policy for naming parks and that this would be a policy/procedure that would need to be approved administratively.

Mike discussed circumstances in which a park's name might change, how a name might come about, the need to establish a formal procedure and policy, and that subsequently County Council has the final authority to change or establish a park name.

Mike spoke to the recommendations to establish a formal procedure and policy and the draft guidelines for selecting a park name.

There was discussion regarding the length of time between a person's death and the subsequent commemorative naming of a park.

MOTION: Theresa Sygitowicz moved to wait 5 years from the time of death before naming a park or facility after the deceased. The motion was seconded by Vern Yadon.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Theresa Sygitowicz, Paul Woodcock, Vern Yadon and Kenneth Kiesner

Nays: Jeff Margolis

Filming Policy: Mike spoke to the fact that there is currently a Filming Policy in place that is based on Washington State Parks Filming Policy (attached). The Recommendation is to review and update the policy as appropriate.

There was a discussion regarding the types of filming that takes place in the park, the fees and damage deposits and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's).

The following recommendations were made:

To post the filming policies and fees on the Park web site.

To increase the fees for filming in the parks and to have the fees based on the activity, i.e., there would be a greater fee for a vehicle commercial as opposed to a private wedding photographer.

In conclusion, Mike asked if there are additional thoughts or recommendations to communicate them to him, preferably through email.

C. HARRIET SPANEL NAMING OPPORTUNITY – Mike stated that there may be a neighborhood group that is working to rename one of the Bellingham Parks. There has been no formal request or activity at this time however; it is thought there may be a development in the works.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Letter in Support for the Formation of a Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District.

MOTION: Theresa Sygitowicz moved to write a letter of support for the formation of a Columbian Valley Parks and Recreation District. The motion was seconded by Kenneth Kiesner.

The Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Theresa Sygitowicz announced that the Deming Logging Show is June 8 & 9, and that the first Saturday in June is the Lynden Farmer's Day parade. Also the Mt. Baker FFA Awards ceremony is May 26, 2016.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The June 16, 2016 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission will be held at Silver Lake Park Lodge at 6:00 PM.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Vern Yadon to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Mike McFarlane, Parks Department Director