

**MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, July 21, 2016**

**Josh Vander Yacht Memorial Park
Van Zandt Community Hall
4106 State Route 9, Deming, WA**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Jeff Margolis, Paul Woodcock, Janet Boyhan, Richard Sturgill and Theresa Sygitowicz

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Rod Lamb and Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED: Kenneth Kiesner and Vern Yadon

PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. COMMENTS – NONE

B. COMMUNICATIONS – Mike presented for Commission review the Jet Oldsters 2015 Annual Report for the Ferndale Senior Activity Center.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - NONE

III. AGENDA

A. July 21, 2016 AGENDA

MOTION: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz and seconded by Richard Sturgill to accept the July 21, 2016 Agenda as presented.

The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

IV. MINUTES

A. June 16, 2016 MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Richard Sturgill to accept the June 16, 2016 minutes as written. The Motion carried with a vote of 4 to approve the minutes as written and 1 abstention. Theresa Sygitowicz abstained as she was not present at the June 16, 2016 meeting.

V. STAFF REPORTS

A. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE

1. Galbraith Mountain – The appraisal on Galbraith Mountain has not been returned from the appraiser to date as there are additional details that need to be considered regarding access and timber appraisal. It is anticipated that these items should be vetted and the appraisal returned within the next two weeks. The City of Bellingham will be administering this contract.

2. Nooksack Tribe Request – The Nooksack Tribe has submitted a request for three engineered log jams on the Nooksack River, in front of the Nessel Farm at South Fork Park.

The Nooksack Tribe is currently in the grant application process for this project. In addition, the plan will need to be approved by Whatcom County River and Flood and the Corps of Engineers.

If the grant is awarded they will then be requesting an agreement for the project.

There was a discussion to clarify the location, and the approvals that would need to be awarded by the various agencies.

3. Upcoming Park and Recreation Grant Presentations – The Department will be making presentations for State grant funding for South Fork Park improvements and the Birch Bay Park acquisition.

Ranking notification and approval status for the funding should be received by summer, 2017.

4. Canyon Lake Community Forest – A date is being coordinated with Whatcom Land Trust, Western Washington University, and Whatcom County Parks to discuss the park access road issues. Mike discussed that this is a stakeholder meeting to discuss options prior to requesting a meeting with Sierra Pacific. Mike will update the Commission as information becomes available.

There was some discussion regarding the current condition of the road and trails.

5. Budget – Mike discussed that staff have been diligently working on the 2017-18 budget which is due for submission July 29th. He discussed that the budget includes requests for an adjustment to the equipment account to upgrade the Department's fleet and purchase new equipment.

Other requests include; reinstating staff positions that were eliminated, an increase in the extra-help rates and a 2.25% increase on the senior services contracts for Lynden, Blaine, Jet Oldsters and the Council on Aging.

The Department will be assuming the complete oversight of the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center and will be requesting an increase to cover contract increases and items that are not in the contract but that are the County's responsibility.

A major focus for the budget is the Department's revenue. Mike provided a handout that highlights the proposed changes to the Department's fees and charges. He discussed the changes and the reasoning behind them and that the goal is to simplify the fees, increase those items that were out of date, price wise and eliminate those items that are no longer relevant.

Mike explained that once the budget is submitted to the Executive for his review a budget meeting will be schedule for the first part of August to discuss the proposed changes.

The final budget will be released in October, and subsequently reviewed by County Council for input and/or approval.

Mike invited the Commission to feel free to call or email him if they need clarification on any items or would like to submit suggestions.

6. Little Squalicum Park – The City of Bellingham continues work on the parks estuary that will provide connectivity to the stream and salt water. They are currently in the permitting phase of the project.

7. Dorothy Copp Property Encroachment Sale – The Department recently closed on the sale of this property.

8. Silver Lake Park-Flower Rush – Two sections of the Lake were targeted for treatment this year for flowering rush. The treatment will take place next week and will be conducted by the Whatcom County Public Works Noxious Weed Division.

B. OPERATIONS' REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN

1. Staffing – The Department is currently fully staffed for seasonal extra-help.

The West Region Lead Ranger position is once again vacant. The incumbent has returned to their previous position as Ranger. External recruitment for the position was initiated this past Monday and will run concurrent with internal recruitment. It is expected the position will be filled near the end of September. In the interim the Plantation Rifle Range ranger, the current Lighthouse Marine Park ranger and the ranger that vacated the lead ranger position will manage the West Region.

2. Projects

Pine and Cedar and Chuckanut Mountain Park Signage Improvements – The new signage on all of the remaining trail intersection at these parks will be completed by tomorrow and will be consistent with all existing intersection signage.

Plantation Rifle Range HVAC Replacement – Meetings were held over the past month with the preferred consultant to discuss the project's scope and services. The consultant presented a project scope and task and fee schedule, negotiations ensued and a consensus was reached. A contract was developed, signed by the contractor and forwarded to the Executive's Office for placement on the Council consent agenda for Tuesday, July 26th.

The contractor will be completing both the design and construction related services and will certify the work at the end of the project.

Ferndale Senior Activity Center Roof Replacement – The project is out to bid. A pre-bid walkthrough was held today. During the walkthrough it became apparent that additional specifications needed to be added to the bid documents. An addendum to the bid was issued today. Included in the addendum was a one week bid opening extension. Bids are to be opened on August 2, 2016.

Semiahmoo Park – Iron Chink Shelter – Christ stated he was able to get a construction budget estimate from the plans for the project of about \$5,900.00 - \$6,000.00. There are no substantive changes to the design and the Department will continue to look at this summer for construction, however due to the staffing constraints the building permit has not been applied for to date.

There was some discussion regarding donations for this project, and how they would be distributed to the project if obtained.

C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT – ROD LAMB

1. South Fork Park

Trailhead Development – The construction bid opening was held on June 21st, and ten bids were received. The bid amounts ranged from \$315,000.00 - \$564,000.00. The qualified lowest bidder was Dirt Works Bellingham. The contract is scheduled to go before County Council next Tuesday for approval. It is expected that if approved, they will mobilize on site in the next few weeks and begin construction shortly thereafter. There was some discussion on the bidding and comparison process of the bid responses to the scope of work, the set of specifications and the standard bid form.

Neset Farm House and Outbuilding Stabilization Project – The structural repair and building stabilization construction bid opening was held on July 13th, and 3 bids were received. The bid amounts ranged from \$183,000.00 - \$272,000.00. Rod is currently in the process of evaluating those bids.

It was discussed that both projects will be initiated this year. It is expected that the trailhead development project will be completed this year. The building stabilization project is anticipated to be completed this year but could run longer than anticipated because it is a historic building and the materials that are being used are not readily available and could pose a problem in manufacturing lead time.

2. Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements – The final permit approval was received from Whatcom County Planning & Development Services. The final plans and storm water report have been stamped and the permit will be issued in the very near future.

The Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) report from the WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is still pending. Rod met with the biologist in the field to discuss a few minor issues related to the dry hydrant requirements. During the field survey the biologist requested additional information and stated that once this has been submitted he will release approval.

The final permit approval needed is the Forest Practice Approval (FPA). A sign off is required from the County Critical Areas prior to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issuing a permit, therefore the Department will be submitting this application as soon as possible.

It is anticipated that construction will begin the first part of October and be completed by April, 2017.

3. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Renovation – The new frames were delivered and installed on the floating docks the week of June 27th. Everything was going as planned until it was discovered at installation that the newly fabricated legs would not accommodate the wave attenuation chambers due to an error in the manufacturer's shop drawings. The dimension on the shop drawings was 33 ¾" and the actual dimensions are closer to 33 15/16". This difference was more than enough to prevent the chambers from slipping into the newly fabricated frames.

Rod stated that he worked with the engineer, contractor and manufacturer to once again resolve an issue that should never have occurred. A total of at least 6 modification alternatives were proposed, each of which had pros and cons related to cost, durability and delay. In the end it was agreed that the best to select the most durable option.

The most durable option was to cut off one end of each chamber, reducing its length to the appropriate size and weld on a new end. This involves 30 ends. Rod engaged the manufacturer

and asked that they consider discounting the cost of modifying the salvaged chamber by the amount of the additional expense, to which they agreed.

A local shop currently has the chambers and projected a completion time for the end of next week or early the week after, at which time they will be re-installed by the first week of August, completing this project.

The manufacturer has agreed to keep the warranty in place despite the modifications.

There was additional discussion on the process to assure that the modifications meet the specifications, the order of magnitude, and how much more sturdy these would be. The Engineer assured that these would have at least 25 times more compression strength and 17 times more tensile strength, and that the fatigue analysis revealed that the dock could experience a wave that would essentially drop it from a height of 5 feet onto a point load at least one million times and remain stable.

4. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk Renovation – Rod stated that there is no update on the boardwalk renovation this month due to other priorities.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE TRAIL PLANNING UPDATE – ROD LAMB – A meeting was held today and the final edits to the recreational trail plan are expected to be completed by the end of the month. The SEPA checklist will be completed and the threshold determination will be submitted with Whatcom County Planning and Development Services prior to bringing the plan before the Whatcom County Council Natural Resources Committee for review on September 13th.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Birch Bay Community Park Planning – Rod provided a copy of the July 20, 2016 Press Release that invites the public to help plan the Birch Bay Community Park through community meetings and workshops. The Press Release also lists meeting dates, topics and contact information.

Rod discussed that at the first meeting the contracted landscape architect will have a site inventory and a site analysis diagram to kick-off the project, obtain community ideas and wishes on the potential improvements and identify the main components of the development, which are parking, restrooms and a large flexible open space that can accommodate community events.

B. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center-Opportunity Council Contract Amendment No. 3 – Mike provided a copy of the amendment to the Opportunity Council's East Whatcom Regional Resource Center Lease & Operations Agreement, Whatcom County Contract #201109006, for Commission review.

Mike discussed that the changes include; changes to language that required clarification, a change in the amount of the County's annual contribution from \$98,700.00 to \$105,412.00 and a consideration for additional staffing.

There was some discussion regarding the proposed addition of a building to house a food bank. Mike reiterated the County's stance is that this project will not be operated with County funds. The Opportunity Council is exploring other funding sources.

The Amendment will be presented to Council at this coming Tuesday's Council meeting.

C. Redistricting Impact – Mike discussed that during the last election the voters agreed to redistrict the County and add two districts. This affects several of the County Commissions including the Parks and Recreation Commission, and will require some reorganization. The Ordinance will be presented to County Council this coming Tuesday evening for approval.

Mike discussed that ultimately the Commission members will need to be reassigned to represent the correct districts as adjusted. Mike presented a printout listing the draft recommendation for re-appointment based on term expirations and locations.

There was discussion on the possible scenarios that the Executive could recommend, the district boundaries, and that one of the Commission members in District 3 or 4 would need to be eliminated due to residency.

All positions will remain the intact until January 31, 2017 when three Commission Member's terms expire and at that time the Executive will make appointments.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Theresa Sygitowicz – Theresa announced that she is changing her email address and will email the Park's Administrative office her new one.

She would also like to suggest that when the Park's Department considers recruitment for the Ranger position that the statewide ecology budget is going to be cut by 95%, resulting is an increase in individuals looking for work in this field.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The August 18, 2016 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission will be held at Hovander Homestead Park, Main Picnic Shelter, 5299 Nielsen Avenue, Ferndale, Washington at 6:00 PM.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz and seconded by Richard Sturgill to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Mike McFarlane, Parks Department Director