

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, November 17, 2016

Samish Park Day Lodge
673 N. Lake Samish Drive, Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Richard Sturgill, Janet Boyhan, Jeff Margolis and Vern Yadon

Staff: Mike McFarlane and Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED

Kenneth Kiesner and Theresa Sygitowicz

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. COMMENTS – Vern Yadon stated that the ballot initiative to establish the Kendall/Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation District passed with a vote of 68%. Once the Park District is formed a list of projects will be established in order to move forward with funding sources.

Vern shared that the Trail Committee of the Kendall/Columbia Valley Connectivity Planning Association is separate from the park.

B. COMMUNICATIONS – NONE

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

V. AGENDA

A. October 20, 2016 Agenda

MOTION: It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Vern Yadon to accept the November 17, 2016 Agenda as presented. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. September 15, 2016 Minutes

MOTION: It was moved by Vern Yadon and seconded by Janet Boyhan to accept the September 15, 2016 minutes as written. The motion carried with two abstentions, Richard Sturgill and Jeff Margolis, who were absent from the meeting.

B. October 20, 2016 Minutes

MOTION: It was moved by Richard Sturgill and seconded by Vern Yadon to accept the October 20, 2016 minutes as written. The motion carried with two abstentions, Janet Boyhan and Paul Woodcock, who were absent from the meeting.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE

1. **Senior Services Surveys** – The 2016 surveys have been distributed to the centers. Surveys are provided online and as hard copies.

2. **Senior Services Contract** – The new contracts for services are completed for submission to the Executive's office and to the individual city councils.

3. **East Whatcom Regional Resource Center** – There was an inspection by the County risk pool auditor. The facility passed with no concerns or items that need to be addressed.

There are some mechanical issues that the Whatcom County Facilities Department is working to correct with the contractor. It is optimal that this is resolved prior to the Park's Department taking over the facility oversight at the first of the year.

The food bank project continues to move forward. The Department submitted a comment that there is a need for additional parking to accommodate the proposed food bank and the outdoor youth activity play area. It is felt that the parking should be included in plan.

4. **South Fork Park Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Easement** – The Department received the easement from DNR to build a connecting trail between the two parcels. DNR is asking for \$7,110.00 for a 30 year easement. The funds for purchase will come from Conservation Futures. The trail completion date is targeted for the end of 2018.

5. **Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation** – Mike will be meeting with the Foundation as they have indicated that they have \$3,000.00 that they would like to donate for the animal contact area at Hovander Park.

The Dittrich Awards will be presented at the Foundation's holiday gathering on December 1st from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Roeder Home. The Commission members are invited to attend. Information about the award can be obtained on their web site.

6. **Bellingham Highland Games** – The Department is working with the County's legal department to collect outstanding funds owing from the 2016 Highland Games.

7. **Facility / Camping Reservations** – The Department will begin taking reservations for 2017 on December 1, 2016.

There was a question raised that could those individuals that do not get reservations in time be referred to the VanZandt Community Hall. Costs for renting the Hall were discussed along with responsibilities for rental. Christ stated that he will discuss the possibility with the Administrative Assistant to see if there are any concerns and, if not, how the logistics would work.

B. OPERATIONS' REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN

1. **Semiahmoo Trash Receptacles** – Christ provided a brochure of the trash cans that are being considered not only for Semiahmoo but other parks as well. There was discussion regarding the construction of the receptacles and the reasoning behind the selection, sizes and costs. It is anticipated that these should be in place in the very near future.
2. **Silver Lake Park Larrabee Cabin Renovation** – Portions of the floor in the Larrabee cabin needed to be replaced. It was decided that because this involved the removal of the cabinets, etc. that other updates would be included in the project. The dry-wall was replaced, new flooring and cabinetry and appliances were installed.
3. **East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC)** – The ramp up for the transition of this facility has begun. Staff has made several site visits to be able to evaluate the staffing and time involved in managing the operations of this facility.
4. **Staffing** – The Department is finally fully staffed with FTEs. The West Region newly hired Lead Ranger, Don Hunger, has been invited to next month's Commission Meeting for introductions.
5. **Anderson Rental – Hovander Homestead Park** – Staff has been completing cosmetic repairs to this building and it is now ready to be placed back on the market for rental.
6. **Bay Horizon Trail** – There have been multiple reports involving graffiti on this trail. This has been evaluated and will be cleaned up in the very near future.
7. **Grants:**
 - South Fork Park Trail** – Recreation and Conservation Office Grant - \$200,000.00 with a 50% match for trail construction.
 - Watershed Trails** – Recreation and Conservation Office Budget Leverage Grant - \$200,000.00 with a 50% matching share for those trails.
 - Plantation Rifle Range HVAC** – FARR Grant - \$149,500.00.

Christ discussed that it was determined that because the replacement HVAC unit is being moved from the roof to the ground it would be a good opportunity to replace the roof. He discussed the modification in the scope of work, the increased budget amounts and the steps that the Department will take to bridge the funding gap.

There was a great deal of discussion regarding the Range operating costs, the current revenue cost recovery, that the Range provides a public service much like a municipal golf course and that it is currently operating within these expectations.

Christ discussed how the new system will provide much improved air quality for the public and employees, and increase maintenance safety by moving the unit from the roof to the ground.
8. **Semiahmoo Iron Chink Update** – Christ reported that the Shoreline Permit has been applied for and that an answer will be issued after the Shoreline Permit Citizen Committee weighs in. In the interim the Department is working on finalizing designs and acquiring materials.

C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT – ROD LAMB

Rod Lamb provided a written Planning and Development Report that was presented by Christ Thomsen.

1. South Fork Park Trailhead Development – Dirt Works continues with construction of the trailhead. We've pushed beyond our reliable construction weather window. The contractor will finish paving and then stabilize the site for winter returning next spring to complete a few minor scope items.

The Department and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have agreed to the terms of a trail easement. DNR is finishing the paperwork and will forward it on to the County for final acceptance and recording.

2. Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements – We are in the process of re-scoping the project. The campground improvements are beyond the levels of available funding. Instead, we will put the campground improvements on hold and identify smaller projects that can be accomplished and provide benefit to the overall park experience.

3. Reconveyance Planning – Council approved the recreational trail plan. The final version should be available on our website this week. We look forward to implementing the initial phase next year pending budget approval.

4. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk Renovation – Progress has been made on the renovation design, and Kingworks Consulting Engineers has been contacted to provide engineering assistance. At this point we are looking at a smaller boardwalk footprint, constructed on composite decking, and replacing portions of the boardwalk with concrete paving. Design should be completed by early 2017, permitting and construction in the spring.

6. Birch Bay Community Park – Our consultant is completing the plan and developing an initial cost estimate and phasing plan. The plan should be completed this year, and go before Council for approval early next year.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Budget Discussion – Mike provided copies of two 2017-2018 Project Budget Additional Service Requests; Lake Whatcom Trail Park Trail Development and Hovander Maintenance Building & Demolition. The requests are in a new format.

Discussed were the background preparations for determining overall project value, the steps that were taken to determine the budget and the timeframe for projects completion.

Mike discussed that during a recent budget meeting Council Member Brenner proposed eliminating the Parks and Recreation Department, that Senior Services could be managed by the Whatcom County Health Department and that Whatcom County Planning and Development Services (PDS) and Public Works could manage the remainder of the park functions. She also proposed allotting \$10,000.00 to each of the Senior Centers to increase senior programs.

There was discussion regarding the proposal in terms of any savings to the County, and that based on other counties that have adopted this model there has not proved to be any savings and in fact there was a reduction in customer service, required many logistical changes and budget modifications to properly allocate funds.

This was previously proposed by Council Member Brenner and at that time the Health Department indicated that there is no relationship for senior services that are currently being provided and the services that they provide. PDS also has no relationship between planning in their mission and park planning/landscape architecture in addition to the host of activities that are covered by the Park Department staff, in terms of customer service and ongoing maintenance issues.

There was no Council action taken on the suggestions nor is this model supported by the County Executive.

Next Tuesday is the final budget meeting, Tuesday evening is the public hearings, and a vote to accept or reject the budget will take place that evening. Mike stated that the Parks Department staff worked really hard on this budget and that there has been no indication that it will not pass as presented.

B. Commission Terms – Mike discussed that there are three Park Commissioners whose terms are coming to a conclusion and that the Executives Office will be mailing a letter regarding Commission terms and renewal.

He discussed that the Parks Commission and the Planning Commission are appointed by the Executive, based on the Council districts, and that with the changes in districts made during the last election there is one Park Commissioner opening in District 2 and one for Commissioner at Large. He discussed that Commissioners that wish to renew are historically re-appointed to a new term.

Mike discussed that he will bring information regarding the district map to the December meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Bay Horizon/Camp Horizon Lease Change – The Birch Bay Park and Recreation District would like to set up a pickle ball court across from the basketball courts at Bay Horizon Park. This area is currently under lease to Camp Horizon and there would need to be a change in the lease agreement to allow that to happen. The Camp Horizon staff is in agreement with allowing this addition by the Birch Bay Park and Recreation District. There is a question on whether or not the current Park District insurance is sufficient to cover these activities. Mike is looking into this.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS - There is an author's showcase at the VanZandt Community Hall on 11/19/16 from 1-3 PM.

On December 4th the Whatcom Chorale will be performing with the Whatcom Symphony at the Mt. Baker Theater.

On December 18th the Whatcom Chorale will be performing music for the season at Assumption Church in Bellingham.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be held on December 15, 2016, at the Roeder Home, 2600 Sunset Drive, Bellingham, Washington.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Vern Yadon and seconded by Janet Boyhan to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Mike McFarlane, Parks Department Director