

**DRAFT**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, December 15, 2016**

**Roeder Home**  
**2600 Sunset Drive, Bellingham, WA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT

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

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Christ Thomsen and Don Hunger

EXCUSED

Richard Sturgill, Janet Boyhan and Theresa Sygitowicz

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. COMMENTS – NONE**

**B. COMMUNICATIONS** – Email from Larry Davis to Parks requesting assistance with a public records request to the Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation District.

Mike responded to Mr. Davis that since the election was certified on November 29, 2016 all questions are being referred to Rebecca Boonstra.

**IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

**A. Vern Yadon – Kendall Columbia Valley Connectivity Planning Association –**

Vern stated that two preliminary estimates have been received for trail construction. He discussed the bids in terms of materials, routes and design. The bid ranges were \$11,735,462.00 to \$13,169,220.00. This is for 3 miles of trail. Meetings continue to review the bids and determine the scope of work.

There was some discussion regarding trail construction, materials options and financing procedures. It was also discussed that Washington Department of Transportation has declined to act as applicant sponsor for the project and that the next obvious requested applicant sponsor would be Whatcom County.

**B. Kenneth Kiesner** – Ken asked for clarification on the flowering rush control efforts being taken at Silver Lake Park. Mike stated that it is very close to being eradicated at Silver Lake through aquatic herbicide treatments by Whatcom County Public Works

Department. Ken asked if it would be possible for Public Works to provide an update on their efforts. Mike stated that he would put in a request for an update by Public Works.

Ken also asked for an update on the goose problems at Silver Lake Park. Mike stated that it will not be known until spring whether or not this will be a problem this coming year.

Jeff Margolis commented that he is against pesticide or herbicide application in any form or for any reason.

## V. **AGENDA**

### A. **December 15, 2016 Agenda**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Kenneth Kiesner to amend the agenda to add Discussion Items 12/15/16 – Jeff Margolis (see attached list provided) to New Business. Motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Vern Yadon and seconded by Kenneth Kiesner to accept the December 15, 2016 Agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

## VI. **MINUTES**

### A. **November 17, 2016 Minutes**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Jeff Margolis and seconded by Vern Yadon to accept the November 17, 2016 minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously.

## VII. **STAFF REPORTS**

### A. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE**

**1. South Fork Park Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Trail Lease** – The easement and payment has been completed by the County Executive's office and is being hand delivered to DNR. Mike discussed the procedures going forward. Once completed work will begin on the connecting trail in terms of required permits and planning.

**2. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center** – The plans are in a second review draft for the food bank and covered recreational area. This will be a contracted project. Mike discussed the additions in terms of construction, cost and financing.

He stated that the permitting requests have been submitted to County Planning and Development Services for review. Construction is scheduled for 2017.

**3. Galbraith Mountain** – The City of Bellingham continues with the Galbraith Mountain acquisition project. It is anticipated that the project will take more time than first anticipated as a result of funding. The County has committed funds and is prepared to have them available when the project moves forward.

**4. Pt Robert's Advisory Committee** – The Department received a letter from the Committee regarding the Lighthouse Marine Park dock, Lighthouse project and the Cedar Point Trail, in terms of “can do” as opposed to “can't do”.

In terms of the dock installation, Mike discussed the reasons behind project timelines, the funding, weather related problems and project wildlife limitations. Mike responded that given all of these variables it is fortunate that a dock was able to be installed at all.

He stated that the Lighthouse project has been returned to the Lighthouse Committee after meeting with Planning and Development Services, with a request to alter the plans to include only the bare minimum to provide an observation tower, as opposed to Committee desires for a more formal structure to serve as an events venue. He discussed all the requirements involved in meeting those desires, in terms of restrooms, etc. would require at least double the current pledge of \$500,000.00.

Mike discussed that the Cedar Point Trail is currently closed due to a trail collapse. When this trail was installed it was clear that due to the geology would have a limited life span. The Department will continue to observe the trail, and if it is determined that repairs cannot be made the trail will be decommissioned.

**5. Hovander Bluegrass Festival** – As a result of last year Festival, the Department received a \$400.00 donation to be applied to the animal contact area and recovered \$2,600.00 toward event related expenses.

The event is planned to repeat in 2017. The plan is to allow three years to evaluate the event. Last year's event was considered a success and was well received by the public.

## **B. OPERATIONS' REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN**

**1. Staffing** – Christ introduced Don Hunger, West Region, Lead Ranger. Don provided the Commission with a history of his professional background and education.

The additional FTE for the Park Attendant was approved in the budget and the Department will begin recruitment. The position will be assigned to the Plantation Rifle Range, the Plantation Ranger position will be moved out into West Region, putting a Ranger in the West Region, mainland, Point Roberts and Silver Lake Park.

**2. Silver Lake Park – Larrabee Cabin Renovation** - The renovation is complete and the cabin is reserved for this coming Saturday.

**3. Next Year** – Next year will be an exciting year. Essentially everything that was requested in the budget was approved, to include updating our undersized and aging equipment prior to getting started on the summer season projects.

## **C. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT – Reported by Rod Lamb, presented by Mike McFarlane.**

**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.

Parks & DNR have agreed to the terms of the trail easement. DNR is finishing the paperwork and will forward it on to the County for final recording.

It is anticipated that the trail dedication will take place in June 2017.

**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'll put the campground improvements on hold and identify smaller project that can be accomplished and will provide benefit to the overall Silver Lake Park experience.

**3. Reconveyance Planning** – Council approved the recreational trail plan. The final version is available on the website. We look forward to implementing the initial phase next year.

**4. Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation** – Progress has been made on the renovation design. The Department has contracted with Kingworks Consulting Engineers to provide engineering assistance. At this point we are looking at a smaller boardwalk footprint constructed of composite decking, and the replaced portions of the boardwalk with concrete paving. Design should be completed by February 2017, permitting in the spring and construction next summer/fall.

**6. Birch Bay Community Park** – The consultant is completing the plan and developing an initial cost estimate and phasing plan. The plan should be completed in January or early February, and go before council for approval shortly thereafter.

We do not currently have funding to take the next step but we will have a good plan that the community has bought into so we can begin identifying funding sources.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. 2017-18 Budget Recap** – The budget was brought before the Council for vote at the last budget meeting. At that time three Council members voted to consolidate the Parks and Recreation Department. Mike will arrange meetings with the council members to discuss the concerns that they have. The County Executive does not support this initiative. The Council meeting is available to listen to online for those that are interested. There was some discussion regarding the motivation behind Council interest in consolidating the Department and the numerous cons of this consideration.

The Parks Department's portion of the budget passed without any changes to the requests. Mike credited this to the staff for the great deal of work that went into the budget process. Mike and Christ spoke to the requested items in detail.

There was discussion regarding the ages of the current Silver Lake Park utilities, and the plans for the upcoming upgrades.

**B. 2017 Open Commission Positions and Redistricting** – Mike provided the Commission with the 4/20/16 Final Plan maps detailing the County Council redistricting changes, and discussed those changes as they affect the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission.

After reviewing the Park Commission current terms, expiration of terms and district representation, the Executive provided a district transition proposal. Mike provided a written copy of the proposal for Commission review and discussed the recommended transition changes.

There was some discussion to clarify the district boundaries and map legend, the current terms and term expirations and the open positions. Going into 2017 there will be one vacancy in District #2 and one At-Large vacancy. Applications / re-applications for these positions should be submitted as soon as possible. Mike stated that the Executive's office will be generating letters to Commissioners this coming January indicating District appointments.

Mike said to please give him a call if there are any questions.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Request for Easement – Glacier Substation** – Mike explained that PSE is requesting an easement in perpetuity in the area that the existing temporary easement sits. This would allow for battery equipment to be brought in to redistribute power during an extended outage and alleviate the need to apply for a temporary easement each time this were required. There is one major change in the easement conditions in that PSE is requesting that the County not construct any structures within the easement area.

The request will be considered in an upcoming meeting with the Executive and Mike asked the Commission for any feedback on the request. There was discussion for clarification of the easement area that this is a rather large request in that the easement will encumber County property in perpetuity, and that even though this will not currently affect the existing trail or County property, this could change in the future. Mike discussed that instead of an easement the County could grant a land license for use that would provide them access for a defined period of time and could be renewed as appropriate. There was discussion that this is a situation that would benefit the entire community and that cooperation with PSE would be recommended, either through an easement or land license.

**B. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Notification of Lake Louise Work** – Mike stated that he doesn't have anything information from PSE at this time regarding Lake Louise. It is not clear if they will need an easement or if the work can be done within the existing right-of-way. Rod Lamb is currently working with PSE to determine this.

**C. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Request for Deed Restriction – Little Squaticum Park** – A request was made to the EPA for information on any deed restrictions that may exist. Mike state that he assumed that he would have heard from them but to date they have not replied. When this information is received the item will be placed on the Commission Agenda for discussion.

**D. Review 2016 Projects** – Mike asked that this item be deferred to the January meeting as Rod was going to provide this information and was unable to attend this month's meeting.

**E. Discussion Items 12/15/16 – Jeff Margolis** – Jeff commented that the County would need to re-imagine what can be done in terms of recreational employment. That in the big picture the Executive would need to determine what the Commission's involvement would be and how to keep revenue at the Department level. There was a great deal of discussion on how this could be accomplished through engagement of the public, recreation partners and the youth element and some of the steps that could be taken to accomplish a cooperative coalition.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A. Assumption Church Concert – Sunday, December 18, 2016 at 3:00 PM** – Christmas music.

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION**

The next Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be held on January 19, 2016, at 6:00 PM at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, 315 Halleck Street, Bellingham, Washington.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Kenneth Kiesner and seconded by Jeff Margolis to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Mike McFarlane, Parks Department Director