

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, June 20, 2019

Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Committee Vice-Chair Sonja Max at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Richard Sturgill, Susan McClendon, Brad VanderWerff, Sonja Max
Staff: Rod Lamb, Christ Thomsen, Michael McFarlane

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Jeff Margolis

GUEST(S)

None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None

V. AGENDA

A. June 20, 2019

MOTION: Richard Sturgill moved to approve the June 20, 2019 agenda as written. Brad VanderWerff seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. May 16, 2019

MOTION: Richard Sturgill moved to approve the May 16, 2019 Minutes as written. Brad VanderWerff seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. **Bellingham Senior Activity Center Parking Lot** – The County Council approved the agreements for the parking lot lease at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center. That agreement is good for 5 years.
- ii. **Bay Horizon Park** – Don Webster, the President of the Lions Camp Horizon Foundation, facilitated the replacement of the walkways at Bay Horizon Park with volunteers and AmeriCorps. The broken up concrete from the old walkways will be picked up by WC Parks staff sometime this summer.
- iii. **Natural Resources Committee** – The County Council’s Natural Resources Committee is looking at banning two-stroke engines and restricting wake boarding and waterskiing on Lake Samish. It’s not expected that anything will happen this season, but an ordinance may be introduced in the future.
- iv. **East Whatcom Regional Resource Center** – The Opportunity Council is short on funding for the Food Bank building and as a result, there is not enough money to build the covered sports court. The community was really hoping for the sports court, as it would be a full size covered basketball court that could be used year round for Farmer’s Markets, community events, etc. Mike is looking into other options to obtain funding for it.
- v. **Open Positions** – WC Parks and Recreation has three full-time positions open for recruitment.
- vi. **Commission Vacancies** – There are two vacant Commission positions (District 1 and District 4).

B. Planning & Development Report – Rod Lamb

- i. **Lighthouse Marine Park Playground** – The Lighthouse Marine Park Playground is under construction (Rod shared photos with the Commission of project layout, excavation, and concrete pouring). The fall protection will be installed next week. The target is to have this completed by the end of June so that it is open for the holiday weekend. After the playground is completed, WC Parks Crew will be re-siding the restroom building and chow hut, installing windscreens on the picnic shelters, and replacing the drinking fountain on the restroom.
- ii. **Maple Creek Campground** – Williamson Construction has continued to make good progress on the Maple Creek Campground renovation. Trenches were dug at the individual campsites for new utilities and after being inspected by L&I, whose trenches were backfilled. Puget Sound Energy installed the conduit necessary for increased electrical capacity and that trench was backfilled and finished Wednesday. Next steps include pulling electrical wire through the conduit, importing crushed surfacing in preparation for laying asphalt, building fire rings, and putting down wood chips. Contractually, the last working day with Williamson

Construction is August 15th, but they have scheduled themselves to be done a few days earlier. The first camping reservations are August 29th.

C. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen

- i. Staffing** – The seasonal positions are still completely filled in Parks Operations. Recruitment is underway for 1-2 part-time positions at the Plantation Rifle Range. The Outside Maintenance Coordinator position is open to internal recruitment until June 28th. The job description and salary for the Maintenance and Construction Supervisor position was reviewed by HR and that position will be posted in the next couple of days. There has been difficulty getting applicants for the Repair Maintenance III Carpenter position; the current posting closes June 27th. These vacancies have created challenges in keeping up with regular maintenance activities, but have also allowed the administration to reevaluate maintenance patterns and make changes to increase efficiency. The surveys have also been very helpful, as they have allowed staff to take care of complaints and issues very quickly.
- ii. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock** – The dock at Lighthouse Marine Park has been returned to the administrative office.
- iii. Silver Lake Water Level Update** – The water level at Silver Lake has been lowered by about 12.5 inches at the weir because of beaver dam management. Levels around the lake haven't seen as much of a decrease. Some beaver dams have been identified further downstream that aren't in the original permit, so WC Parks is asking for amendments to the permit to include those. Some of the community members continue to express interest in lowering the water level substantially more than the current permit targets, so WC Parks will be meeting with them in mid-July to look at possible collaborative efforts. A beaver management plan will be part of the long term permit with WDFW.
- iv. Maple Creek Park** – Last year Rod and his staff worked on a sign plan for Maple Creek Park. Signs were ordered and have arrived. East Region Staff is preparing to install the signs, so wayfinding signage will be on the Maple Creek Park trail system in the very near future.
- v. Park Signage** – Whatcom County Park Rules signs have been installed at a number of the more remote WC Parks and seven new kiosks are being constructed for installation in other parks. A Parks Rules sign and a map of Hovander will be installed at the main entrance between the barn and the house to help direct visitors to the different picnic areas.
- vi. Lake Whatcom Trail Construction** – Lake Whatcom Trail Construction began on National Trails Day (June 2nd) and the contractor started earthwork on June 10th.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for plaque at South Fork Park recognizing first homesteaders –

The Chief Whatcom Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution contacted Mike about placing a plaque at South Fork Park to recognize some of the early homesteaders (Galbraith). The three farms at South Fork Park are Galbraith, Overby, and Nessel. WC Parks is currently working on interpretive signage for the entrance to the park to complement the map and park rules. WC Parks would also like to tell the story of the park's history and the people that were influential to the property by interpretive signage throughout the park and other interpretive materials such as fliers, guides, and signs on the trails.

B. Proposed Lake Whatcom Stormwater Utility Fee –

The County Council is looking at a Stormwater Utility Fee for the lands in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. At this point, the Council is still figuring out how fees will be assessed and whether or not there will be tax breaks for properties that are already managing phosphorus. The Council should have an ordinance completed by the end of July or August.

C. Boys & Girls Club Lease Extension –

The Boys & Girls Club has four baseball diamonds and an outfield next to the soccer fields on Northwest. The Boys & Girls Club has asked to renew this lease, which allows them to use the diamonds and outfield in exchange for maintaining the grounds and providing insurance. The Boys & Girls Club has done a great job of managing this well-used facility and Mike expects the lease extension to be to the County Council late July or early August.

D. Canyon Lake Community Forest access & estimated road costs –

Mike is continuing to work on getting an easement/agreement with DNR and Sierra Pacific for access to the Canyon Lake Community Forest. The road that was originally used for access when the forest was first acquired has a long history of failure and there is no longer a ledge for the road to be constructed on. DNR has provided a figure of \$7,500 per year for road maintenance costs for the road portion located on DNR land. Canyon Lake is jointly owned by Whatcom County and Western Washington University, with the Whatcom Land Trust having a conservation easement on the forest. The challenge has been trying to get a commitment from Sierra Pacific for an easement of approximately 300 yards that was left out of a legal description. As a group, Whatcom County, WWU, and WLT are almost ready to put forth a proposal to Sierra Pacific.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on July 18, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center, 5236 Nielsen Road, Ferndale, Washington.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director