

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, November 21, 2019

Samish Park
673 N. Lake Samish Drive
Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Jeff Margolis at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

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

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Sonja Max

GUEST(S)

Linda Hughes, Steve Wolff, Stephen Falk

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Linda Hughes, Steve Wolff, and Stephen Falk shared their concerns regarding dwindling Whatcom County Park's services in Point Roberts (reduced boardwalk size, the removal of the dock, the washed out trail, etc.). They would like to be involved when decisions are being made regarding County parks in Point Roberts because it affects their community and quality of life so greatly.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Jeff Margolis thanked Michael McFarlane for taking the time to look at the pedestrian safety issue that resulted from the highway work done in Van Zandt.

V. AGENDA

A. November 21, 2019

MOTION: Richard Sturgill moved to approve the November 21, 2019 agenda as written. Brad VanderWerff seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. September 19, 2019

MOTION: Brad VanderWerff moved to approve the September 19, 2019 Minutes as written. Richard Sturgill seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Planning & Development Report – Rod Lamb

- i. Red Mountain Campground** – King Architecture is designing the shower/restroom facility and septic at Red Mountain Campground in Silver Lake Park. The facility chosen houses two buildings under a single roof with the men’s restroom in one building and the women’s restroom in the other building. The buildings are separated by an open breezeway with exterior entrances to five unisex showers. This design allows for the restrooms to remain open while the showers are being cleaned and vice versa. Once King Architecture has completed the facility plans for Red Mountain Campground, they will be submitted to Planning and Development Services for permitting, and then the project will go out to bid. WC Parks would like to break ground as soon as possible in 2020. If the Silver Lake Park Improvement schedule continues with the new administration and Council, a similar shower/restroom facility will be constructed in the Maple Creek Campground in 2021.
- ii. Maple Creek Campground** – On October 29th, the WC Parks crew, project engineer, and general contractor winterized the new water system in Maple Creek Campground. The engineer was pleased with how the system mostly gravity drained and the winterization process proved to be much easier than expected. The contractor finished final contract element with the self-registration kiosk and project closeout procedures have begun. The project was completed on schedule and under budget by \$1,000.00 with a final total of \$1,425,672.63.
- iii. Lake Whatcom Park** – Whatcom County Council approved a budget supplemental request of approximately \$350,000 for preliminary design and engineering services for trailhead improvements at Lake Whatcom Park. The improvements include expanded parking capacity, new flush restroom facilities (septic and well), a picnic shelter, security lighting, signage, pedestrian and circulation improvements, and site furnishings.

B. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen

- i. Staffing** – The Repair Maintenance III (Carpenter) started a little over two weeks ago and the newly hired Maintenance and Construction Supervisor will start December 9th. The Outside Maintenance Coordinator position (vacant from a retirement) was filled by the South Region Park Attendant. The South Region Park Attendant vacancy was filled by the Bellingham Senior Activity Center Maintenance Worker II. The BSAC Maintenance Worker II position is currently in recruitment. The newly budgeted 2020

West Region Park Attendant position was posted for recruitment, as was the Point Roberts Ranger position that resulted when the current Ranger took a position in Wenatchee. WC Parks is pushing to fill all of these positions by the end of the year.

- ii. **Lighthouse Marine Park** – The playground at Lighthouse Marine Park was finished this past summer. The Chow Hut and restroom have been resided and painted and the new drinking fountain was installed. Materials have been purchased to install new windscreens on the picnic shelters and the ceilings will also be refinished.
- iii. **Maple Creek Park** – A map of the trail system has been installed at the entrance to the park and trail orientation signage has been installed throughout.
- iv. **Hovander Homestead House and Tennant Lake Interpretive Center.** – The Hovander Homestead House and Tennant Lake Interpretive Center have been repainted and all of the windows have been reglazed.
- v. **Silver Lake Water Levels** – Staff have been working diligently on dam management to maintain appropriate water levels. The interim water level is 22 inches below the top of the weir and the current level is 29 inches.
- vi. **Silver Lake Ranger Residence and Employee Cabins** – WC Parks received authorization from the County Council to dispose of the Silver Lake Ranger Residence and employee cabins. The Ranger Residence will go to auction and the employee cabins will be demolished. This needs to be done before the end of the year.
- vii. **Lake Whatcom Park** – Construction of the second leg of the Chanterelle Trail was completed and opened to the public at the end of October. WC Parks received \$100,000.00 to continue trail construction in Lake Whatcom Park to connect the Chanterelle Trail to the Hertz Trail.
- viii. **Semiahmoo Park** – In 2020, all of the buildings at Semiahmoo Park will be painted and a shelter will be constructed over the Iron Chink.
- ix. **Other Projects** – The crew is currently working on routine maintenance activities and the winterizing of park properties.

C. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. **Mid-Biennium Budgets Adjustments** – The County Council dealt with the mid-biennium budget adjustments that were accepted by the Executive. There was a discussion about mountain biking and erosion in Lake Whatcom Park, but the \$100,000.00 budget adjustment was passed on a 4-2 vote. The labor fund adjustment for extra hours for the Senior Program and the adjustments to ER&R were deferred to the December 3rd meeting.
- ii. **Ostrom Conservation Site** – The lease agreement between the Nooksack Valley School District and Whatcom County Parks for the Ostrom Conservation Site has been signed by the District. The Ostrom

Conservation Site is a conservancy property in the northeast corner of the county that has trails and a parking area used by the School District as an outdoor education site. The School District is responsible for managing and maintaining the property.

- iii. **Crown Castle Tower Agreement** – The Crown Castle Tower Agreement was approved by the County Council on November 19th.
- iv. **Staffing** – WC Parks is currently interviewing for a Clerk III position for the park office.
- v. **Birch Bay Drive & Pedestrian Facility** – The purpose of the Birch Bay Drive & Pedestrian Facility Project is to restore the natural shoreline, protect the roadway from storm damage, and support pedestrian safety with a separated berm that runs from the mouth of Terrell Creek to Cedar Avenue along the beach in Birch Bay. The contractor for the project and WC Public Works will be staging in the WC Parks Birch Bay Beach Park, so it will not be available for public use for at least two years.
- vi. **Department of Ecology** – Michael McFarlane met with the Washington State Department of Ecology about installing a ground monitoring well at the Warnick Bridge and will draft an easement for that purpose.
- vii. **Plantation Rifle Range HVAC** – WC Parks is not going to meet the December 15th deadline for the Plantation Rifle Range HVAC. Staff is working to transfer the funds to 2020.
- viii. **New County Executive** – Michael McFarlane will be meeting with the County Executive Elect and Jack Louws in December.
- ix. **2020 Reservations** – December 2nd is the opening day for facility and campground reservations for 2020.
- x. **Grants and Budget** – WC Parks Staff will be very busy in 2020 applying for RCO grants and putting together the 2021/2022 operating budget.
- xi. **Festival of Trees** – The Whatcom Council on Aging is hosting a Festival of Trees at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center on December 7th at 5:30 p.m.

VIII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. **Review 2020 Special Event Application** – Michael McFarlane passed out the updated Special Event Application. The application has been reviewed by Whatcom County legal staff and will be posted to the parks website soon.
- B. **Review 2020 Rates and Fees** – Michael McFarlane passed out the 2019 Unified Fee Schedule. 2020 rates and fees are not changing and will be reviewed as a part of the budget process in 2020. Shannon, the WC Parks Administrative Supervisor, will create a more user friendly format to post on the parks website.

IX. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Watershed Education Forum presentation regarding South Fork Recreation**
– Whatcom County Parks & Recreation and the Department of Natural Resources were invited by the South Fork Watershed Education Committee to do a presentation on recreation in the Acme Valley. After the presentation, they hosted a question and answer session that generated great conversation and interaction between the community members, WC Parks, and DNR.
- B. 2020 Commission Meeting Dates and Locations** – 2020 Commission meeting locations were determined.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on December 19, 2019 at Roeder Home, 2600 Sunset Drive, Bellingham, WA.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III
Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director