

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, February 20, 2020

Ferndale Senior Activity Center
1999 Cherry Street
Ferndale, 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, Sonja Max, Brad VanderWerff, Jeff Margolis

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Rod Lamb, Christ Thomsen, Karma Wells (Ferndale Senior Activity Center Manager)

EXCUSED

Commissioners: None

GUESTS

Lisa Friend

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Bill Black (by phone) is a frequent visitor of Hovander Homestead Park and was shocked to see that a bunch of native red osier dogwood had been cut down in the park. The red osier dogwood shaded the only tributary to Tennant Lake and Bill wanted to encourage WC Parks to reassess their practices regarding these streamlets. Christ advised Bill's concern had spurred conversation and education for some folks.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None.

V. AGENDA

A. February 20, 2020

MOTION: Sonja Max moved to approve the February 20, 2020 agenda as written. Brad VanderWerff seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. December 19, 2019

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

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. Fragrance Garden Donation** – WC Parks received the annual \$100 donation from the Garden Club.
- ii. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center** – Mike is meeting with Whatcom County legal staff regarding a subletting agreement between the Opportunity Council and the Foothills Food Bank. Mike is also meeting with the Opportunity Council and the County Executive to discuss Capital Improvements and the operating costs of the EWRRRC. Whatcom County's current rate of financial support for the operation and maintenance of the EWRRRC ends December 31, 2021.
- iii. APA Museum** – Mike shared an article written by Whatcom County Parks Volunteer Sunny Brown about the Alaska Packers Association Museum in Semiahmoo Park and the newly renovated "Iron Chink" machine that is on display.
- iv. Communication Tower Leases** – The remaining two communication tower leases should be completed soon.
- v. Department of Ecology** – A couple of months ago, WC Parks received a request from the Washington State Department of Ecology to install a permanent ground water monitoring well by the Warnick Bridge. The Department of Ecology has found two other sites they prefer to use, so they will not be installing a well on county park property.
- vi. Lake Whatcom Management Program** – Bellingham City Council and Whatcom County Council will be meeting on March 25th regarding the Lake Whatcom Management Program.
- vii. Commission Notes** – There are three vacant Commission positions (Districts 1, 2, and 4). The election of chair will happen at the March meeting.

B. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen

- i. Staffing** – WC Parks remains fully staffed in Operations for regular employees. Recruitment for seasonal parks, trails, and grounds maintenance staff has begun. There is also a part-time year-round position open at the Plantation Rifle Range.
- ii. Semiahmoo Park** – The "Iron Chink" machine was sandblasted and painted and is now on display under a beautiful shelter built by WC Parks staff.
- iii. Super Bowl Storm Update** – Hovander Homestead Park was most affected by the Super Bowl Storm. The bulk of the damage was to the

River Walk Trail, but there was also a lot of fencing that was lost and the playground fall protection was compromised. The Hovander Barn was the only building that didn't get water and sediment in it. The park was closed for the first week to clean sidewalks and bathrooms, gather debris, and install temporary fencing. After that, the park was opened, but the trails remained closed. Since then, the trails have been opened for users to use at their own risk with interim safety repairs, but final repairs will not happen until later in the season. The playgrounds remain closed. The preliminary damage assessment is \$109,000.00.

C. Planning & Development Report – Rod Lamb

- i. **Silver Lake Park** – King Architecture completed the design of the shower/restroom facility at Red Mountain Campground in Silver Lake Park. There was a preapplication meeting with Whatcom County Planning & Development Services on January 2nd where PDS informed WC Parks that a conditional use process was necessary because of the zoning associated with Silver Lake Park. The conditional use process will take several months, but provides an opportunity for WC Parks to present all proposed shower and restroom facilities (Maple Creek Campground, Cedar Campground/Cabins, and Group Camp) under the same conditional use application. The preapplication meeting also revealed that the shower/restroom facility at Cedar Camp/Cabins is in the shoreline, so a substantial shoreline development permit is necessary. Rod is finishing up the bid documents for the installation of the dry hydrant at Silver Lake Park. The work window for that project is May through September and will require the closure of the boat ramp for approximately 10 days.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Review First Draft of Six Year Capital Projects List** – Mike shared two Capital Project Lists. The first list included Capital Projects that WC Parks has already submitted funding for and the second list was a more comprehensive list of Capital Projects that will remain on the list until they are completed. The first draft of the Capital Projects list is due March 31st. The list will receive input from Council Members, WC Parks Staff, and the Executive. Mike asked the Commission for their input to identify projects missing from the list and projects they feel strongly about.
- B. **South Fork Valley Community Association Fund Request (Margolis)** – The playground equipment at Josh VanderYacht Park is aging and does not meet CPSC safety standards, so the South Fork Valley Community Association met with Northwest Playgrounds to find the cost of installing a new playground. The

ballpark figure is around \$30,000. Jeff advised the South Fork Valley Community Association will be doing some fundraising and also contacting the Economic Development Investment Program for assistance. The South Fork Valley Community Association is also working on a restoration project of the Van Zandt Community Hall. The Association has applied for \$150,000 from the State to continue making changes to the hall and will be asking that the county put in \$25,000 and that the community put in \$15,000.

C. Park Properties and Events – Mike asked for feedback from the Commission on the draft policy regarding exclusive use of park properties limited and camping at Hovander Homestead Park restricted.

D. Preliminary Overview of Super Bowl Storm Damage – Covered in Christ Thomsen’s Operations Report.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on March 19, 2020 at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, 8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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