

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, July 20, 2017

Maple Creek Picnic Shelter – Silver Lake Park
9006 Silver Lake Road
Maple Falls, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis Committee Chair at 6:08 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Jeff Margolis, Susan McClendon, Richard Sturgill,
Sonja Max

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Rod Lamb

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Kenneth Kiesner, Theresa Sygitowicz

GUEST(S)

None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Richard Sturgill reported that the interpretive sign at Semiahmoo Park has been fixed.

V. AGENDA

A. July 20, 2017

MOTION: Sonja Max moved to approve the July 20, 2017 Agenda as presented. Richard Sturgill seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. June 15, 2017

MOTION: Susan McClendon moved to approve the June 15, 2017 Minutes as written. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Report

- i. The State Capital Budget** – The State Capital Budget hasn't been approved (they have until midnight, unless the Governor decides to call a special session). The rifle range grant is in the budget and on hold. The grant has been approved, but the funds need to be appropriated for it. The other state capital project that funding has been approved for is \$500,000 for the Food Bank for the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. Historically, if the budget isn't approved, the grants are rolled over into the next grant cycle. Whatcom County Parks can adjust the work schedule (after going to the Council to get money moved around). The resource center plans are about 93% complete and they have applied for a building permit. They would like to break ground before winter, but are still looking to raise more funds. In order to do this, they would need a favorable bid (within budget) and to come up with the remaining funds. The budget shouldn't have too much of an impact on the Senior Program.
- ii. Vacancies** – The Clerk III and Repair Maintenance III were filled by internal applicants from the Master Contract Bargaining Agreement (one from the Sheriff's Office and one from Public Works). A vacancy remains for an Assistant at the Sumas Senior Center and Park Regional Supervisor.
- iii. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center** – Whatcom County Parks reviewed the plans and sent them to the Opportunity Council with comments. The project may be delayed because of funding.
- iv. Lummi Island Parks & Recreation District** – There is a petition to form a Lummi Island Parks & Recreation District. The County Council meets Tuesday to have it put on the ballot for the fall.
- v. Jeff Margolis** advised Rod Lamb arrived.
- vi. Galbraith Mountain** – Galbraith Mountain was purchased by Galbraith Tree Farm. The City of Bellingham has been spearheading discussions on City and County participation.
- vii. Stewart Mountain** – There is a large piece of timberland for sale on Stewart Mountain and there are some Trusts interested in purchasing it. Whatcom County Parks has been contacted as to what the County's interest would be in this land. There may be some sections of the watershed that Whatcom County Parks may be interested in for trail easements. The land goes up for auction in August. A discussion followed about timber harvesting time frames and maintenance requirements of roads on this type of property. Another discussion followed about initiating contact with the potential new owner and ways in which owners allow access to a piece of property like this one.
- viii. Natural Resources Committee** – Michael McFarlane will be meeting with the County Council on August 8th to talk about the farm/animal yard at Hovander. The three options are: do away with it, bring it up to code, or

change it so that the public can feed/contact the animals. The Hovander Bluegrass Festival is September 1-3, 2017 and a portion of the proceeds will go to upgrading the animal contact area at Hovander.

B. Operations Report (reported by Michael McFarlane)

- i. Euclid Park** – Christ Thomsen met with City staff regarding Euclid Park, as neighbors have expressed concern about a number of things. Whatcom County only owns a small area along the shoreline; the rest of the area was transferred to the City of Bellingham many years ago. To help clarify this, the current sign will be changed to read “Euclid Park – City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation in cooperation with Whatcom County Parks & Recreation” and the City of Bellingham logo will be added.
- ii. Vacancies** – The Regional Parks Supervisor position closes July 26, 2017.

C. Planning & Development Report

- i. South Fork Park** – The crew is completing the installation of the signage, fencing, and mowing of a soft surface trail around the main field. Equestrian rules still need to be installed at the parking lot, hitching posts need to be installed at the hiking and equestrian trailheads, and reassurance markers need to be installed along the trail. This portion should be done by July 28, 2017. Whatcom County Parks is still working with DNR on a rerouted trail to Nessel Farm due to some objections from the tribes as to where the creek was being crossed. A conversation followed regarding the loop that is being finished and landscaping of the park. South Fork Construction has started the restoration of the buildings at Nessel Farm and is doing an incredible job. A conversation followed regarding the potential impact of this park if it's planned well and the fact that the park is zoned as an agricultural park that is home to elk, bear, and salmon.
- ii. Lighthouse Marine Park** – The boardwalk renovation went out to bid last month, but the two bids received were above the available funding by a considerable amount (without the playground estimate included). The boardwalk is critical to the functioning of the park because it provides access to the restrooms and shade structures. The thought now is to reduce the footprint of the boardwalk to fit within available funding. Rod is waiting to hear back from the two companies that submitted bids regarding this change (the price of materials has gone up). A conversation followed about bids from Canadian companies. Another conversation followed about the dock and the corrosion of the hardware on the dock.
- iii. Silver Lake Park** – The plan is to reconstruct the entry road at Silver Lake Park all of the way to the lodge so that the asphalt road has proper

shoulders. This will require drainage improvement, storm water improvements, and tree removal. This should help with long term maintenance, as a lot of the current maintenance is fixing the road because park users drive off the road to avoid oncoming traffic. The hope is to get this project ready for bid and construction between opening day and Memorial Day 2018. Rod Lamb is trying to do a 30% design on this initial effort so that there is a really good handle on costs and the project can be broken apart to get it within the budget. In addition to the road improvement, Rod Lamb would like to get rid of the treated wooden timbers at the lodge and improve the pedestrian walkways to the bathhouse/shelter/parking lot.

- iv. **Lummi Island stairs** – The stairs north of the ferry terminal were constructed in the early 1990’s and provide access to the shoreline. The stairs land on a sandstone rock, but are in really bad condition and need to be replaced. The plan is to have the stairs premanufactured by a company like Metalite and then installed by a contractor.
- v. **Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – The geotechnical report has been completed, the services of a structural engineer have been procured, and the different types of bridges have been evaluated for this 60 foot pedestrian/bicycle bridge. Types of bridges considered include: truss, precast concrete, I-beam, galvanized steel, and fiberglass. The challenge with this bridge is that the site is very hard to access. The money for this project expires at the end of the year, so this project is time sensitive.
- vi. **Lake Whatcom Trail** – Reid Parker is doing a great job of executing this project. A contractor is using a mini excavator to do a rough in of the trail and then having volunteer work parties on Saturdays to do the final grading. Michael McFarlane advised they’ve been struggling with the lack of moisture in the soil, so they’ve been hauling water up to the site in order to continue with trail construction. The signage is also being upgraded to comply with the Federal Accessibility guidelines for the outdoors (mileage, trail gradient, trail uses, surface, etc.). A conversation followed regarding different types of trail uses (walkers/runners/bikers/etc.), legal risk, how to keep users safe, reduce accidents, etc. About 6 of the 45 miles of trails associated with Lake Whatcom are finished and “descending only” trails (for bikes) will make up less than 5% of all of the trails at Lake Whatcom.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Whatcom in Bloom** – Discussion about the history of Whatcom in Bloom. The Whatcom Horticultural Society has a 2017 Garden Tour and the City of Blaine

has a Garden of the Week program. Jeff Margolis is interested in Whatcom County Parks & Recreation doing some sort of event/program that provides a place for citizens to showcase their gardens.

- B. Amendment to Communication Tower Site Land Lease – Crown Castle –**
This amendment is going to the Council. Crown Castle is looking to lease a 10' x 8' space on Lookout Mountain for an emergency generator at their tower site (this is an amendment to the existing lease). A discussion followed about how the leasing process works with the wireless companies/tower companies/etc.
- C. Update on Capital Projects –** Rod Lamb already updated on capital projects. Whatcom County Parks is currently trying to get caught up on projects and then will be dealing with new capital projects after the first of the year.
- D. Review June Financials and Visitation Metrics –** Michael McFarlane advised the current status of the budget is where Whatcom County Parks was expected to be with no surprises, though the Plantation Rifle Range revenue is down a little bit. Jeff Margolis requested that this report be given to the Commission prior to the meeting so that the Commission members have time to review it. A discussion followed about the budget and how it works. Another discussion followed about cameras/surveillance in the parks, cost, viability, privacy issues, etc.
- E. Canyon Lake/Canyon Creek Road –** Canyon Creek Road has been closed since 2009 because of a massive landslide. Michael McFarlane has a meeting with DNR & Sierra Pacific next Friday to find out whether or not they will be opening their gate this year. Typically Sierra Pacific opens their gate for bear season (August 1st through August 31st), which allows access to Canyon Lake.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Richard Sturgill** is the Blaine/Birch Bay Park & Recreation District II Commissioner. The Blaine/Birch Bay Park & Recreation District worked with Whatcom Land Trust and purchased 11 acres of property adjacent to the California Creek where the Drayton Harbor Road goes over Dakota Creek on the west side. This land will be conveyed into the District ownership and has saved 11 acres from development.
- B. Jeff Margolis** announced that the South Fork Valley Community Association has their annual Summerfest on August 12, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- C. Michael McFarlane** advised there is still a commissioner opening (District 4)

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on August 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Administrative Offices, 3373 Mount Baker Highway, Bellingham, Washington. There will be a shop tour at 5:30 p.m. if anyone is interested.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director