

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
February 17, 2011
Bellingham Senior Activity Center
315 Halleck Street, Room 1
Bellingham, WA

Present: Commissioners: Gordon Rogers, Walt Lockwood, Jr., Theresa Sygitowicz, Wendy Setter, Patricia Lierman, Dave Wright

Staff: Rod Lamb, Mike McFarlane, Rob Bunnett, Darla Smith,

Guests: Alex Cleanhous, Planning Development Services; Daniel Tepper, WC Parks Foundation; Chris Ellis; South Whatcom Fire & Whatcom County Safe Kids

Others: Dan Taylor, Janet Boyhan, Chris Hatch, Jim Strachila

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Gordon Rogers at 6:35 p.m. A round of introductions was conducted.

I. AGENDA: February 17, 2011 Agenda Approval.

A discussion was held about revising today's agenda. There won't be a presentation by Bob Diehl on the Request for the Rowing Facility on Lake Samish. A decision was made to go to Bloedel Donovan Park and pursue their project with the City of Bellingham.

Proposed Nooksack Loop Trail: Daniel will present at end of agenda. Move up the Comprehensive Plan update and the Senior Services contracts.

There was a motion to approve the agenda as amended by Dave Wright, and seconded by Walt Lockwood. The motion was approved unanimously to accept the February 17, 2011 Agenda as revised.

II. MINUTES: December 16, 2010 Meeting Minutes Approval.

It was moved by Dave Wright to approve, seconded by Patricia Lierman and approved unanimously to accept the December 16, 2010 minutes.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Dave Wright to that Gordon Rogers continue as Chair and Walter Lockwood as Vice Chair, seconded by Teresa Sygitowicz and approved. A discussion followed regarding the vacancy position. It has been posted and advertised.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT/COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Near completion of gym at Bay Horizon. Parks did a lease agreement with the Northwest Park District for the gym at Bay Horizon. They made the improvements and will do an opening tour in the future. They put a substantial amount of money into it to make it

available to the public for league play, rental, etc. It turned out well. Positive comments were received from the public.

B. Chuckanut Trail. The trail will be extended from Raptor Ridge to the Lost Lake Trail. Volunteer organizations have worked on a bulk of the project. Parks has worked on a bridge and made sure it complied.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Introduction of Darla Smith - replacement to Barb Nims.

B. Staff changes. The layoff, bumping and staff changes in December went better than expected. Next staff changes will be at the end of March when 3 of our Senior Coordinators will be laid off or moved into other positions that we have within our dept.

C. Operations Manager position is open. The application period is open and has been posted on the National Recreation & Park Association, the WA Recreation & Park Assoc., International NW Park and Recreation Assoc. and the National Assoc. of County Park & Recreational Officials websites. Many applicants are expected.

D. Extra-Help Staff. There are funds in the Parks & Recreation Foundation that will cover extra-help hours at Tennant Lake Interpretive Center & Fragrance Garden. Other allocations will come from a host of various sources budgeted. We should be in fairly good shape this season in terms of extra-help for routine tasks. In addition to Closure Days we have many senior staff with high leave accruals.

E. South Fork Park. County Council Meeting will be March 1, 2011 at 6 PM. Revised graphics of what is being proposed for the site were reviewed and discussed.

F. Closure Days. Administration will be working and staff will be scheduled to cover operations in our parks.

G. Lighthouse Marine Park. On March 23, 2011, a house will be moved through LMP and barged from Victoria, BC.

H. Lake Whatcom Reconveyance. Will be sharing with the Parks Commission relatively soon. The State is doing the appraisal reviews now. They hired International Forestry consultants to do the appraisal reviews.

I. Roofing of Hovander Barn & Roeder Home Exterior Painting. In the process of putting the bids together. We have funding available to do those major capital maintenance projects.

J. The Park Brochure. We should be getting proofs next week so we are getting close to the end of this project and are hopeful we'll have a finished product.

K. Y Road Lease. We've been asked to manage the Lease Contract with Back County Horsemen. This is Public Works property, and years ago we use to manage the lease for that facility. This is a partnership where they provide the fencing, improvements, monitor it in exchange for using it and it has been very successful. The trail access will remain the same.

VI. **PARK OPERATIONS' REPORT:** Included in the above report for this month.

VII. **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

A. Olson Nature Reserve. There was small problem regarding the WTA bus stop and the drive approach to the parking lot. The parking lot is in the same location where DNR has an existing roadway so we are utilizing that approach for our parking lot. Public Works was concerned that there was a temporary visual obstruction of the bus and wanted Parks to move its approach 500' east. That was counter to the intention of having a transit friendly facility where people could take the bus to the park. We were able to move it 50' to the east. That satisfied Public Works because it is considered a temporary obstruction, and wouldn't be pose a serious safety issue. It is going to require us to put a gravel pad outside of the fog line for the bus to pull in.

The drawings will be revised and resubmitted to the Planning Development Services and reinitiate the permitting process. That project is funded for 2011 and once we have our permits secure we will put it out for bid to construct the parking lot.

B. The Samish Dock Replacement Project is also ongoing. We have our preliminary design complete, we are soliciting consultant teams for structural engineering services for the bulkhead design. We replace the dock and the gangway. That will be permitting in the spring and construction in the summer/fall.

C. Hovander Playground Modifications. The design drawings will be revised to address fill requirements in the flood plain. The original intent was to raise the playground area above the 100 year flood plain. That approach would require sizable amount of fill. Current flood plain restrictions require that no net fill be placed within the flood plain. Any fill required to raise the playground would require removing the same quantity somewhere else within the flood plain. We are looking at ways to reduce the quantity of fill in order to reduce our construction and mitigation costs for the project. We are looking at protecting the playground area from a 25-year flood event. This approach will reduce costs while providing a reasonable level of protection from seasonal flooding.

D. Lighthouse Marine Dock. We submitted our grant application to replace that facility January 13, 2010. We have a project review meeting with RCO office next Friday (February 25). Evaluations of the projects will happen during the latter part of April, deliberation & the award, if we're successful will happen in August.

E. Silver Lake Lodge Repairs. We were on hold at the last meeting because of weather conditions and the elevation of the lake. The contractor has since been able to go back to work over the last couple of weeks.

F. Bay Horizon Playground is complete. We just installed age-appropriate signage at each of the 2 structures. The last detail that we need to complete is to put up a sign that indicates the partnership between the District and the County (suggested by the District).

G. Lily Point. (Handouts) Preliminary layout of the parking lot for Lily Pt. Marine Pk. in Pt. Roberts. The proposed layout provides parking for 30 vehicles, and is consistent with current zoning requirements. The trailhead also includes a restroom facility and information kiosk. Currently, the park is undeveloped but there are existing trails throughout the facility and they see a considerable amount of use. The proposed trailhead will provide adequate on-site parking and user accommodations.

VIII. RECREATION AND SENIOR SERVICES' REPORT:

A. Senior Services Contracts. The intention of the County is to contract the 4 major senior centers effective April 1, 2011. The Department is currently in the process of finalizing interlocal agreements with the Cities of Blaine & Lynden. Dana Hanks will continue as center coordinator through the City and Lynden is now accepting resumes for this position.

Bellingham and Ferndale senior centers we will be going through an RFP (Request for Proposal) process. There are 2 non-profit agencies that are interested; Whatcom County Council on Aging and Jet Oldsters.

The 4 smaller centers; Everson, Sumas, Point Roberts and Welcome, will continue to operate part-time programs through the Parks Dept. Funding for all of this is assured through 2012.

B. Northwest Rehabilitation Center has applied for a "Conditional Use" permit to put up fencing for a "flyway" for birds. It has been decided that they need a "Building" permit instead. They may still need a Conditional Use permit if they take in additional type animals. The Commission will have to sign off on any permits as property owners.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

X. NEW BUSINESS:

A. DISCUSSION ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – ALEX CLEANHOUS, WC PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Overview: The Growth & Management Act regulates development in the State of Washington. As a part of that, a Comprehensive Plan is created which has a number of elements that deal with land use, capital facilities, and the environment. There are about 12 chapters total. GMA requires that every 7 years we review and periodically update the Comprehensive Plan. The documents along with the corresponding zoning codes are reviewed to see if they need to be updated and to make sure zoning codes which implements the Comprehensive Plan are consistent. Alex Cleanhous is in charge of taking the Recreation chapters through to the Planning process. Mr. Cleanhous is looking for feedback about what would make this document more functional. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that helps interested citizens and developers and it will be used to guide Planning and Development in Whatcom County the next 20 years. In this process, Mr. Cleanhous will work the next few months to create a document that will be recommended to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on revisions to the chapter and it will then go to County Council for their vote. The updated Comprehensive Plan project is due December 1, 2014, but because of the number of chapters involved the process will be begin now.

Discussion to review the Comprehensive Plan at the monthly Commission meetings ensued. The Parks Commission would act as a committee to review changes. Members are asked to review and compare the Parks Open Space Plan, come up revisions and maybe have it on the agenda for the next couple of meetings and see where it goes. It was decided that all members would be involved in this.

B. WHATCOM COUNTY SAFEKIDS LIFE JACKET LOANER BOARDS IN PARKS - PRESENTER, CHRIS ELLIS

Safekids was restarted last year in Whatcom County. It is a coalition that is in national, state and local areas. The whole idea is to keep people safe—primarily kids. One function is water safety and a program Safekids is looking at implementing this year is Life Jacket Loaner Boards. The idea behind it is that a life jacket is available to anyone who wants it and particularly, at this time many places don't provide lifeguards anymore. Ideally, boards or cabinets would be installed and maintained by organizations outside of the Parks Dept. so that there is no burden. Two Parks that Safekids is looking at this year is Hovander and Lake Samish. With permission, Safekids would move forward by finding a spot in the park that works best, come back and present a more defined proposal to the Board of the location and site. The request was well-received and Chris will work with the staff.

D. PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED NOOKSACK LOOPED TRAIL – DANIEL TEPPER

Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation started working on these plans 2.5-3 years ago. The idea for the trail exists in various Comp Plans, but was significantly vague as to where the trail should go. Although, the corridor was defined, where the trail should go was not specifically laid out in a number of locations. One of the first things the committee did was to decide where this trail should go based on the information they had. An overview of the trail lay out was given and the next phase of development, funding and possible problems. The trail is about 45 miles. This subject will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Daniel has been encouraged to decide what WPR&F would like from the Commission and it would be discussed at the next meeting.

XI. ANNOUNCEMENTS: The March meeting is moved to March 24 at the Parks & Recreation Department office.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: The next meeting was discussed.

Transcribed by: Daisy C. Hansen, WC Division Secretary
Approved by: Michael McFarlane, WC Parks Director