

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, September 18, 2014

Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, WA

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:30 PM. A quorum was not present.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Richard Sturgill and Gordon Rogers

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED:

Commissioners: Janet Boyhan, Theresa Sygitowicz, Jeff Margolis and Kenneth Kiesner.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS

A. COMMENTS: There were no guests at the meeting.

B. COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Barbara Brenner – Barbara Brenner, County Council Member sent Mike McFarlane an email requesting a discount in fees for public school groups. This request is the second of this nature from Barbara and is the result of input received regarding fees for the Silver Lake School Invitational, a special event at Silver Lake Park.

Mike stated that he will discuss the Department's concerns with Executive Louws that the impact that large events have on the parks is considerable and that a reduction in fees would create a deficit in revenue to financially support the increased staff time needed to clean facilities, complete grounds maintenance and provide on-site supervision for larger events. The attendance for the Silver Lake Invitational last year was approximately 5,000 and this year it is anticipated that there will be over 2,500.

Christ Thomsen provided a brief report on the fees that were charged for this and last year's event. He discussed that the fees that were charged last year were incorrect and should have been more than what was charged. This year the event fees were re-evaluated and the correct amount for an event this size was charged. Christ discussed the fees that were charged for this event and the reasoning behind the fees. He stated that the event required multiple fields for multiple days.

Mike explained that a change in the Unified Fee Schedule (UFS) would require an Executive Order or be approved by County Council.

Mike will update the Commission as information becomes available.

IV. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

A. Paul Woodcock discussed that without a quorum no action can be taken at this meeting.

V. **AGENDA**

A. **SEPTEMBER 18, 2014 AGENDA APPROVAL**

ACTION: The September 18, 2014 Agenda Approval will be tabled until October 16, 2014 meeting due to a lack of quorum. The agenda will be reference for informational purposes only.

VI. **MINUTES**

A. **JULY 18, 2014 MINUTES APPROVAL**

ACTION: The July 17, 2014 Minutes Approval will be tabled until October 16, 2014 due to a lack of quorum.

B. **AUGUST 18, 2014 MINUTES APPROVAL**

ACTION: The August 18, 2014 Minutes Approval will be tabled until October 16, 2014 due to a lack of quorum

VII. **STAFF REPORTS**

A. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE**

1. **Budget** – Mike informed the Commission that the Executive's budget will be released on October 17, 2014.

a. **Senior Services Contracts** – All Senior Services Contracts have been sent to the appropriate agencies for signatures. There are no changes to the contracts as they were drafted two years ago.

b. **Capital Projects** – Mike provided the Commission with the September 2014 draft amendment to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 4 – Capital Facilities, Exhibit A and Appendix F, Exhibit B - Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) For Whatcom County Facilities 2015-2020.

Mike also provided the Agenda for the Whatcom County Planning Commission (WCPC) Meeting for September 25, 2014. Both Exhibit A and Appendix F are on the Agenda for WCPC action.

If adopted by the WCPC, Exhibit A will modify the levels of service (LOS) standards for park facilities and Appendix F will set the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for 2015-2020. Appendix F includes the recommendations of the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission on parks and trails capital projects.

2. **Rates and Fees** – There are two notable Department changes in rates and fees on the 2015 UFS. The first is the addition of an online reservation electronic fee that will recover the costs of the new reservation system's software and the second is a staff-time fee assessed on special events to provide on-site supervision.

3. **Maple Falls Park** – The real estate purchase agreement has been sent to the County’s legal staff for review. It is expected that this will be on September 30, 2014 Council agenda for approval. If approved the Department obtain an environmental assessment from the school district and the purchase is anticipated to close prior to the end of the year.
4. **Park Steward Position** – Department staff are currently reviewing internal applicants.
5. **Temporary Extra Help Positions**
 - a. **Special Projects** - Interviews for this position were conducted and results are being evaluated.
 - b. **Parks and trails** – Applications are being accepted to replace the seasonal extra help staff that resigned early to return to school. This will provide staff to fill in the gaps in seasonal park maintenance left by the early resignations.
6. **Whatcom County Web Site Update** – The County-wide web site is being updated this coming spring to be more user friendly and easier to navigate. This will be a benefit for Parks and Recreation web-site users as there is a great deal of useful information on there.
7. **Birch Bay Park** – A phase one environmental assessment and appraisal have been completed. It is anticipated that the proposal will go before County Council at the September 30, 2014 meeting for a decision on whether or not to pursue the acquisition.
8. **2014 Financial Comparison** – Mike provided a copy of the Financial Comparison of revenues as of 8/31/14 for Commission review. The bottom line does not reflect the pending fund transfer from the Park Improvement or Conservation Futures Funds. As it currently stands the Department should be on target to meet budget.

B. OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN

1. Projects

- a. **North Lake Whatcom Trailhead – Wilkinson House Demolition** – The building has been removed and project sign-off has been requested from Whatcom County Planning and Development Services (PDS). Other than some minor on-site clean-up the project is complete.
- b. **Tennant Lake Trail** – The maintenance staff are completing the final phase of this project. The project included raising the low sections of the trail and culvert maintenance to improve good water flow/drainage.
- c. **Hovander Walkway** – ADA upgrades to the walkway between the park office and the river trail will begin Monday, September 22nd.

2. Incidents

- a. **Report of a park fire** – Christ stated that staff researched the report of a five acre fire in the Lake Louise Natural Resource Conservation Area / Stimpson Nature Reserve and discovered that there was a ten foot by ten foot fire that was responded to by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Because Whatcom County Parks and Recreation (WCP&R) manages the Stimpson Nature Reserve through an agreement with the Whatcom Land Trust, a request has

been submitted that WCP&R be placed on the notification list for any incidents or issues that occur on the state portion of the property.

C. DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT REPORT – MIKE MCFARLANE

1. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Renovation – The surf smelt survey will be completed on September 26, 2014 and pile driving activities will be done during the weeks of September 29 through October 3, 2014.

2. Hovander Picnic Shelter Driveway Relocation – The contractor will begin work on September 22, 2014. The anticipated completion date is October 10, 2014.

3. South Fork Park

a. Park Design – The engineer has begun drafting the grading/drainage plan and the storm water design. This project is allocated to move forward with the 2015 Capital Projects plan.

b. Nessel Farm Building Restoration – Work continues to assemble a bid package for the foundation repairs. Building permit applications will be submitted September 20, 2014.

4. Silver Lake Park Road and Electrical Improvements – Pacific Survey and Engineering has been selected as the consulting team for the project. An initial scoping meeting took place earlier this afternoon. The task and fee schedule will be developed over the next two weeks. The phasing and improvement plan will likely take six to nine months.

5. Reconveyance Planning – The inventory and mapping of this area has been delayed until a replacement is selected to fill the Special Projects extra-help position. Applicants have been interviewed. There were several good candidates for the position and once a candidate has been selected and brought on board the project will continue forward.

6. Stimpson Restroom Project – The Certificate of Occupancy was issued by PDS on September 17, 2014. This completes the project.

Richard Sturgill stated that Drayton Harbor Maritime has a small reserve fund from donations that were made by visitors to the APA Museum at Semiahmoo Park. He asked if these funds could be donated / used to assist with the costs to build the cover over the salmon processor located in the park and if an actual project cost analysis could be completed to determine a goal for a possible future project fund raiser.

Mike stated that he would ask Rod Lamb, Design and Development Supervisor where he is on the design for that cover and what he anticipates as the general costs for the project.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mike discussed that the Agenda was amended to remove Item A. Trails Discussion – County Council member Rud Browne because Rud was initially informed that the meeting date was September 19th and that he was available on that date but when he was informed that the actual meeting date was September 18th it conflicted with his schedule for that day. He confirmed that he will attend the October meeting and the topic will be placed on the October Agenda, Unfinished Business.

A. Budget Update 2015-2016 – See Director's Report, Item #1.

B. “Preserving A Way of Life” A Natural Heritage Plan for Whatcom County – Gordon Rogers discussed the email that he sent regarding this subject and confirmed that it had been received. He stated that the purpose of the email was to provide a short synopsis of the August meeting discussion and a place holder for the September Agenda.

Gordon discussed that his concerns with the integration of the document into the County’s Comprehensive Plan is whether or not the document is outdated. He stated that the document was adopted in 1991 and may be in conflict with the stewardship that the County Parks has legally been given to perform. He pointed out for example, that the Growth Management Act was barely in place when the document was drafted and that this and other major evolutions in land management are not taken into consideration. He stated that it is unclear at this point if this document can be effective given this evolution and various other processes that are currently in place under the law. And if not, is the document extraneous and should it then be shelved, with all due respect given to those who drafted the document.

In addition, it is Gordon’s concern that the previous vote to include the document was invalid as there was not a quorum vote with the one abstention and he would like to revisit the subject and call for a re-vote.

It was pointed out that the recently adopted Parks and Recreation Commission General Business Rules states that “Matters of procedure shall be governed by applicable county and state statutes and these rules or the Standard Parliamentary Procedure” and that Sturgis Rules of Order states that a vote can be taken and is valid if there is a quorum present at the meeting.

There was discussion regarding the actual request from Planning and Development Services and if the July motion covered the request. The portion of the July 2014 minutes that discussed the request and the Motion was read.

After some additional discussion was the consensus of the Commissioners present that the subject should be revisited at the October 16, 2014 meeting.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. COMMISSION VACANCIES – There will be a vacancy in the 2nd District effective January 31, 2015 when Gordon Roger’s term will end.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. OCTOBER MEETING DATE, TIME AND LOCATION

The October 16, 2014, will be held at 6:00 PM at the Samish Day Lodge, 673 N. Lake Samish Drive, Bellingham, WA.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director