

**MEETING MINUTES  
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
Thursday, October 15, 2015**

**Samish Park  
673 N. Lake Samish Drive  
Bellingham, WA**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Paul Woodcock, Chair at 6:12 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT:

Commissioners: Paul Woodcock, Jeffrey Margolis, Theresa Sygitowicz and Richard Sturgill, Janet Boyhan and Vern Yadon

Staff: Mike McFarlane, Rod Lamb, Christ Thomsen and Reid Parker

EXCUSED:

Commission: Kenneth Kiesner

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS / COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**1. Daniel Probst, Cascade Mountain Runners** – Daniel commented that the Planning Commission should not remove the trail corridors and corresponding map from the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and that additional proposed trail corridors should be added and that if they are outdated they should be removed or updated.

**2. Stan Letz, Backcountry Horsemen** – Mr. Letz recommended that the trail corridors and corresponding map should remain in the County Comprehensive Plan and that the Bellingham/Mount Baker Trail should be added.

**3. Michael Plummer** – Mr. Plummer stated that he is here in support of the Bellingham/Mount Baker Trail and to observe the process of the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission meetings.

**B. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

**1. Memo: Mt. Baker Trail Association, RE: Pedestrian trail survey on the Mt. Baker Highway corridor.**

**2. Letter: Christ Thomsen to Michael Plummer, RE: Response to Mr. Plummer's concern regarding trail maintenance on Hemlock Trail.**

**3. Draft Resolution: Daniel Probst, requesting that Whatcom County Council include the Bellingham-Mount Baker Trail corridor in Chapter 9 of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.**

**4. Email: Daniel Probst to Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission, Subject: Bellingham-Mount Baker trail resolution update.**

**IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS - none**

**A. Commission Communications** – Theresa Sygitowicz requested the floor. The Chair recognized Theresa.

Theresa stated that she is concerned about Commission related emails that come to her personal email address being subject to public disclosure and would like all Commission related emails to go through Mike McFarlane, Parks Director who will then distribute them to the Commission. She requested that all personal emails no longer come to her email address and instead go through the Parks Department.

Paul asked for clarification on the rules of emailing. It is his understanding that Commissioners can receive emails from the public to their personal email address and that the public does have a right to contact Commission members.

Mike stated that the public does have that right. If the email addresses Council actions or agenda items, or is in relation to the duties and responsibilities of the Park Commission, there are no restrictions on being contacted as a Parks Commissioner and that those emails are subject to public disclosure and State archival requirements.

Mike discussed that the most effective way to handle Commission related emails is to forward a copy of the email to the Parks Department and once it is on the County system it is then archived and if there is a public disclosure request the County has the ability to search the system and provide the information requested.

He explained that this would not prevent a search of Commissioner's personal email accounts as the request would most likely include a search of those records for any information regarding Commission business. County Council members manage this issue by replying to any communications received in their private email accounts be sent to the official County Council email account. The Park Commission members could reply with a request to send the email to the Parks Department email.

It was discussed that the challenge to tracking and managing emails is when bits and pieces of email conversations are received. It was discussed that it is good practice to have all emails forwarded or cc'd to the Parks Department for disbursement, to make sure that any emails received and replied to should be cc's to the Park's Department and to select "reply all" when replying to emails as this replies to any email address included in the communication.

**V. AGENDA**

**A. OCTOBER 15, 2015 AGENDA**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz, seconded by Richard Sturgill and passed unanimously to accept the October 15, 2015 Agenda as presented.

**VI. MINUTES**

There was discussion regarding expanding the content of the transcribed minutes to include more detail or to have the ability to listen to the recorded copy of the meeting. Mike stated that typically the minutes are not transcribed word for word, nor is it a requirement. If a Commission member has concerns that the intent was not captured, a verbatim transcription can be done upon request and settled prior to approving the minutes. In addition, the audio of the meeting is available up to when the Commission approves the minutes then erased as it is not required to be archived.

In addition, if there is a comment made during the meeting that a Commission member would like to have transcribed as stated that can be requested at that time and will then be transcribed as such.

#### **A. SEPTEMBER 17, 2015 MINUTES**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Theresa Sygitowicz, seconded by Jeff Margolis and passed unanimously to accept the September 17, 2015 Minutes as submitted.

### **VII. STAFF REPORTS**

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

##### **1. Mid-biannual Budget Adjustment** – Revenues and expenditures are on target.

The Department is requesting that the Range HVAC system funds be brought forward into 2016 because of the previous discussed regarding State budget and grant award delays.

##### **2. Stimpson Nature Reserve Easement** – The easement adjustment is with Whatcom Land Trust pending their board's consideration.

##### **3. Northwest Soccer Park** – Mike discussed that The Sports Commission has received a grant for \$1,000,000.00 and are raising an additional \$1,000,000.00 to install lights and artificial turn on two fields to extend the play season.

##### **4. South Fork Park-VanZandt Community Hall Operation/Maintenance Agreement** – The custodial agreement with the South Fork Valley Community Association has come up for renewal. The Department has drafted an agreement that is being reviewed by legal staff prior to sending it forward to the contractor for approval/signatures.

##### **5. 2015 Senior Center Participant Survey Results** – Mike provided a copy of the survey results for Commission member review. He provided an overview for the Commission and discussed that it will be going forward to Council and the senior centers.

He discussed that there are a number of partners delivering services to the senior centers, including the Cities of Lynden, Ferndale and Blaine, Pt. Roberts Parks and Recreation District, Jet Oldsters and Whatcom Council on Aging. He explained that the Sumas, Everson, Pt. Roberts and Welcome Centers are operated by the Department and that all but the Welcome, Ferndale and Bellingham centers are owned by other agencies. Mike broke down the operational responsibilities, the involvement of the partners for each center and the programs provided.

The survey provided the demographics and overall satisfaction of each center in terms of the programs, median age, volunteer performance, survey comments and overall satisfaction.

**6. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRRC)** – County Council approved funding for the EWRRRC to open a food bank be provided from REET I funds and for the EWRRRC to be able to attempt to procure funding for an indoor or covered youth recreational area on site.

It is the plan to use the same model to construct the food bank that was used for the construction of the Center in that the Whatcom County Facilities Management Department will oversee the construction and the construction contract management and the Parks and Recreation Department will continue to manage the EWRRRC operations contract.

**7. Contract Agreement Renewal** – Contracts for all the Senior Centers and the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center are due for renewal at the end of 2016. This is a huge task that the Department will begin work on in order to have them ready for signatures around mid-summer 2016. All those contracts will need to be included in the budget renewal in November of 2016.

There was a question on whether or not there is a plan for a Senior Center to be located at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. Mike stated that the Council on Aging has been considering this location in their discussions but it will depend on the ability of the Northwest Regional Council and San Juan Nutrition Program to take on the additional expenditures since the Federal government has reduced funding for the meal program.

The County added funding two years ago at the request of the Council on Aging and additional funds were awarded to the Park Department maintenance budget for utility increases for the Bellingham and Ferndale Centers.

**8. Birch Bay Community Park** – The Beach Park Committee is going to request an additional \$50,000.00 from the Blaine/Birch Bay Park and Recreation District to be used as a local match for an upcoming grant application. Mike explained that this is a two year cycle and that the grant application will be submitted this spring, ranking notification should be received toward the end of 2016 and if approved, funds would be awarded in 2017 and work begun in 2018. Because of the cycle the Department will need to plan ahead in order to be in a position to move forward if funds are awarded, therefore Rod will begin working with the community plan after the first of the year.

Public Works is currently working on the designs for the trail and berm project along Birch Bay Drive and have requested the use of the park site next winter for materials storage. This will work for the Department and the community as it will provide use of the site during the summer season for special event and special events staging.

Because the County Executive is committed to being the least disruptive to the businesses that make their living in terms of the tourism season in the summertime Public Works will begin transporting materials during the off season.

In addition, using the park site for staging this project will provide a substantial savings to the County.

There was some discussion regarding a report of vagrant camps on the Community Park site. Mike stated that there is not a vagrant camp on the Birch Bay Community site. It is a large open and mowed grassy area. The only thing on the site is the building that is going to be torn down. He explained that there may be some confusion in that there is a vagrant camp on one of the parcels that was being considered for acquisition for the community park but the County did not acquire that piece.

The Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce is asking about the possibilities of installing water and electrical on the site that they could use during their events. This would alleviate the necessity of running a hose from the condominiums and using a generator for the electric.

There is an existing water line on site that provided water to the building that will be demolished and it there is the possibility of installing an electrical panel on an existing pole on a temporary basis that could be removed once the Public Works begins using that site as a staging area.

The Department is not opposed to the installation but the Chamber would have to provide 100% of the funding to make this happen. In addition, the water district would need to be agreeable and it could not include any unground trenching because of cultural resource considerations.

**9. Lummi Island Quarry Acquisition** – The Lummi Heritage Trust has purchased the quarry on Lummi Island. They have acquired bridge funding that will provide funding into January. The County has committed \$400,000.00. The Department is working through that process and drafting a public conservation easement for access.

The Lummi Heritage Trust will be the primary manager and operator-owner of that property.

**10 Conservation Futures Fund Presentation** – Mike is providing a presentation on the Conservation Futures Fund at the October 27, 2015 committee meeting. They have asked for an update in terms of Parks, Conservation Futures and PDR Program expenditures.

The Parks Department does not have any involvement with the PDR or the Agricultural Programs, they are managed by Planning and Development Services, but it does receive funds from the programs for acquisitions of park lands and easements.

**11. Smith Creek** – The Department, the County Executive and the County Public Works Director met with concerned citizens to discuss the hazards that this particular corridor presents, their concerns the about trail use and debris build ups and the steps that are being taken to reduce the possibility of another event such as the 1983 event that resulted in the loss of homes.

Mike discussed that the 1983 event was a two stage event. There was a buildup of debris higher up in the valley and stream and when it released it hit the bridge, formed a dam and when that released the bridge and some homes were deposited in the lake.

He explained that the bridge in Lake Whatcom Park crosses over Smith Creek. Downstream from the bridge the County has constructed two berms that are armored with a toe to reduce erosion and contain the creek and both the bridge and the berms are designed for an event the size of the 1983 event. There was also a request to remove some of the trees that are growing in front of the bridge and between the dykes. The engineers have determined that any sizeable event will take out those trees so removal is not needed.

Mike discussed that the 1983 event removed only about 20% of the debris upstream. There are a number of slides in the area, it is a very narrow gorge and geologically it's a very unstable area. The woody debris in the area is actually good because it not only provides wildlife and fisheries habitat, in the event of a blowout it will help dissipate some of the energy.

It was discussed that the homes in the area below are built on the alluvial fan, and throughout the county owners receive warnings that if you build on alluvial fans there will be events that will happen. That it is not if an event occurs, it is simply a matter of when an event will occur, and that when it does occur it will occur in a very short duration of a matter of hours and will not give much warning, unlike flooding in areas such as the Nooksack River where you have a number of gauges and monitors and have time to warn the residents.

The steps that are being taken to minimize an event are annual inspections of the area from a standpoint of safety down-stream by the Parks Department and Public Works. The last inspection was completed just recently.

In addition, in the Parks' planning process the Department has been sensitive to minimizing disturbance in the area. The area is also being allowed to mature into older growth forest which is the best and the only measure that can reasonably help mitigate an event.

**12. Point Roberts Senior Services Agreement** – This agreement is up for renewal. The agreement renewal will include the use of the Point Roberts Community Center and that funding the meal and staffing requirements for a second day will be provided by the Point Roberts Park District.

**13. Pickle Ball** – A group in Birch Bay has requested an area at Bay Horizon Park for pickle ball activities. The Department is not opposed to this but the Birch Bay Park and Rec District will need to assume any costs and are therefore working with them.

## **B. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT – ROD LAMB**

**1. South Fork Park Shoreline Substantial Permit** –The Hearing Examiner's meeting was conducted on September 16<sup>th</sup> and the permit has been issued.

At the meeting there were a few private party citizens that spoke in opposition to the park. The Hearing Examiner left the record open for a few days so that those in opposition could review the record and make comment.

After the hearing Rod spoke with those citizens and discussed how their park boundary concerns could be taken into consideration in the planning process. He also took down their contact information so that as we move forward in the development of the trail and begin marking boundaries they can be contacted so that we can work together to keep trail users on the trail and not on private property.

**2. Silver Lake Park Road & Electrical Improvements** – Over the last month the Department has been working with Planning and Development Services and the Fire Marshall for approval of the roads, electrical and water systems.

There was a very positive exchange at a pre-application meeting back in August. Approximately two weeks after the meeting the Department received a staff report indicating that the plan was acceptable with one exception; project approval was subject to the condition that fire flow be provided at the campgrounds as defined by the County. The fire flow definition in Whatcom County calls for a structure that will provide 500 gallons per minute at 20 PSI for a period of not less than one hour. This would require an installation of a 30,000 gallon tank on a hill, a road leading to the structure and the installation of a delivery infrastructure. This would drastically change the proposal of the project, the scope of work and the costs. The contract engineer was asked to price out this exception and the estimate was in excess of \$500,000.00. The entire project budget is approximately \$800,000.00.

Meetings were held with the Fire Marshall and the Planning and Development Director to discuss alternatives. The installation of a dry hydrant on site was rejected at that time so Rod contacted other fire departments and the local District 14 Training Officer stated that their department engine has a capacity of 10,000 gallons and when that ran out they would go to the Boy Scout camp to fill up at their dry hydrant because there is not a dry hydrant at Silver Lake Park. The

District 14 Training Office indicated if the Parks Department did put in a dry hydrant next to the boat launch they would consider this an excellent on-site fire suppression improvement.

This information was provided to the Fire Marshall who discussed the installation of a dry hydrant at Silver Lake Park with the District 14 Training Office and agreed that a dry hydrant would be a reasonable compromise as long as the next time the fire suppressant or safety priority list for Silver Lake Park was updated that a sprinkler system for the Day Lodge be identified as a priority.

The best location for a dry hydrant was identified and it was agreed that the installation of a concrete pad would be required to provide a stable area for the engine to sit on while refilling and that when the fire suppressant or safety priority list for Silver Lake Park was updated a sprinkler system for the Day Lodge would be identified as a priority.

It was determined that this will cost approximately \$15,000.00 and that this will most likely be the route the Department will follow. Rod stated that the other requirement is that the dry hydrant must be designed by a Washington State licensed engineer and will require a series of approvals and permits.

It was suggested that contact be made with the Department of Ecology to discuss any changes in requirements for pulling water from the lake.

**3. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Update** – The engineer was contacted to assess the dock failure. The engineer submitted two alternative auxiliary wave attenuation chambers designs. These were reviewed by Rod and the contractor who both had comments and suggestions regarding the designs. The comments and suggestions have been sent back to the engineer who agreed with them and is revising the drawings. The revised drawings will then be submitted to a fabricator for an estimate to manufacture the attenuation chambers.

Rod provided background into the long process of getting the dock installed and the incident that led to the ramp's failure. This is a complex problem and that it is too premature to determine who is at fault and how the problem is going to be resolved.

**4. Samish Playground** – Installation is set to begin this coming Monday with an anticipated project completion date of October 31st. It was discussed that there will be a press release issued upon completion and consideration for a ribbon cutting.

### **C. OPERATIONS REPORT – CHRIST THOMSEN**

**1. Staffing** – The Operations Department is now fully staffed. The last vacant position was the Electrician position and that was filled as of 9/31/15.

**2. Incidents** – Over the Canadian Thanksgiving holiday a camper choked on a piece of turkey and the Park Ranger, Aaron Johnson dislodged the food, saving the campers life. It is the intention of the Department to nominate Aaron for the Executive's Life Saving Award.

#### **3. Projects**

**a. Hovander House, Drying Shed and Tennant Lake Interpretive Center Roofing Project.** – The bid was awarded to Mt Baker Roofing and a contract has been signed. It is expected that the project will be completed prior to the winter season.

**b. Lighthouse Marine Park Boardwalk Demo** – The project has been awarded to P & P Excavation and the contract has been sent to the contractor for review/signatures. It is

anticipated that the demolition will begin prior to the end of October and will be completed in a very short time frame.

**c. Birch Bay Community Park Building Demolition** – A meeting was held with the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the Archaeological Permit is expected to be issued within the next 30 days. The project will commence upon receipt of the permit and should be completed within 2 days.

**d. Canyon Lake Community Forest Alternative Access Route** – Meetings were held with John Gold from Sierra Pacific Industries to discuss alternatives for public access to this site.

After some discussion it was determined that the best option would be to pursue an easement or agreement with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for public access through DNR lands.

DNR was contacted and they are interested in discussing this option and it is the goal to obtain access to the Community Forest by the end of the next summer season.

**4. Ongoing Projects** – Several projects that had watershed windows and were required to be complete prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> have been completed. These were the Samish Playground installation, the Plantation Rifle Range road shouldering work, the Birch Bay Trail ditch line and certain sections of the Hertz Trail.

Christ stated that completing these projects prior the watershed window closing was a big push for the maintenance crew and extra help staff.

**5. Trails** –A great deal of work was completed on the Chuckanut and Pine and Cedar Lakes trail systems. Over 9500 feet of trails and ditch lines were reconstructed as a primary project in terms of drainage for this winter. Drainage work in those areas will continue as staff patrol the area for downed trees, etc.

There was discussion regarding the importance of drainage on trails and having an ongoing storm maintenance plan.

**6. Equipment** – Eight pedal boats were replaced this fall. The pedal boats are a popular draw for the public on our lakes. We upgraded two of the boats from 2-person to 4-person because they are more popular.

They were not received until the end of the season as the manufacturer had problems with their manufacturing line but this actually wound up being a benefit for us because they upgraded some of the boats at no additional cost to the Department.

**7. Park Brochures** – An extra-help staff person who was hired for their graphic design skills has been developing new park brochures. Christ provided copies for Commission review. He explained that these are only drafts and templates but would appreciate any questions or comments.

The focus is on the main parks and subsets of park amenities and when completed will be posted online as a download for public convenience.

**8. Reservation Software System Upgrade** – The Park reservation software system will be utilized for point-of-sale at selected parks. On 10/27/15 a software representative will be meeting with Park Administrative and Plantation Rifle Range staff to discuss the necessary changes to

the system to make the transition successful. The Plantation Rifle Range will be the first facility to use the point-of-sale on-site. Additional sites will be added as the system is ironed out.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. LAKE WHATCOM RECONVEYANCE PLANNING UPDATE – ROD LAMB**

The next scheduled community work shop will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2015 at 6:00 PM at the Bloedel Donovan Community Center Meeting Hall. A public notice has been released and is posted on the Park website.

Additional flyers will be distributed to local business, post offices and park trailheads. The meeting will consist of a presentation of the draft trail proposal that reflects the previous meetings public input.

Following the meeting will be a 21 day comment period. Following that comment period work will begin on the environmental analysis of the proposal. This is a supplement to the SEPA permit submittal. There were discussions with Planning and Development Services who encouraged the inclusion of background on what the proposal is and what the impacts are, that providing that additional documentation will facilitate then in arriving at a fresh holding decision.

The environmental assessment work is expected to be completed by the end of this year. At that time a work session will be scheduled with County Council to review the draft trail plan, describe the planning process and relay input received about the plan from individuals throughout the community. If there are modifications that come out of this last meeting these will also be shared. The process will be summarized and a request for direction submitted.

If Council recommends moving forward, agrees with the plan we would then submit our SEPA application. If they would like to see some changes those changes will be made and resubmitted to Council.

It was requested that a copy of the trail plan be shared with the Commission members before the Public Planning meeting is held in order to be informed for the public. Rod stated that he will do his best to get a copy out to the Commission as soon as possible. The planned completion date for the draft is the Friday prior to the meeting.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. REVIEW TRAIL STANDARDS – REID PARKER/CHRIST THOMSEN** – Christ Thomsen, Rod Lamb and Reid Parker met to discuss developing trail standards throughout the park trail system. Meetings were also held with various stakeholders for input.

It was decided to look at the US Forest Service standard and see how they would apply to our organization's needs and objectives and the types of trail opportunities provided.

A set of documents on the proposed trail standards were provided for Commission review and reference during a Power Point Presentation by Reid Parker that addressed the standards and provided field examples.

Also discussed was how the trail standards will provide guidance in terms of maintenance from year to year, provide a historical picture of the trails, look at all our existing trails and create trail management objectives based on the construction and existing use of the trail.

There was some discussion regarding the classifications and the possibility sharing the completed information with other jurisdictions.

The presentation discussed the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Trail Classification and Design Parameters Overview and why trail standards are needed to provide the experience that the public has expressed they want. In addition, many of the existing trails in our parks are old roads, social trails that have not been designed correctly and present maintenance problems.

Trail standards will provide a consistent message when working with volunteers, stakeholders and park staff when discussing immediate need, standards for new construction design, maintenance priorities and solid criteria for any trail activity.

The Power Point Presentation reviewed the trail classifications, design parameters by classification, the specifications of each classification, the reasoning for the set specifications and a photographic example of each classification.

It was explained that once the trail standards have been adopted, staff will assign a classification to each of the trails throughout the Department, use them in planning documents for new trails and will be included, by reference, into the plan for the Lake Whatcom watershed. Each trail will have the Trail Management Objectives identified, cataloged into our management plan and hold volunteers and staff to those objectives.

There was discussion on how this information and the practical application to the trails can be useful in a grant application, is required in some cases to determine the cost and give the granting agencies more information when awarding a grant.

There was additional discussion regarding technical trail features such as jumps and high elevation features. These have not been included in this packet because if technical trail features are added it has to be a very conscious decision and would be considered on a case by case basis as standards are ever evolving and changing and the decision would need to be made for the specific landscapes and trails.

The floor was opened for comments and questions. The following were the comments and suggestions discussed.

It was suggested that in addition to standard recreations trails other categories such as commuter trails should be considered between cities that cater to pedestrian and bicycle use and that these trails may require different standards than discussed in the categories presented and to identify the agency that would be responsible for maintenance and upkeep. It was noted that a trail plan and or objectives can always be modified in the future to meet the changing needs of the community.

The next steps to be taken are how the captured trail information will be used to identify what percentage of each type of trails are in the system and does this match with usage and demand. That this will help Park staff make informed decisions on changes and improvements to the trails system in order to give all trail users an opportunity to experience the trails.

As the population ages, changes will need to be made to the trails and interpretive signs. Interpretive signs will be updated to provide trail difficulty, the location of rest station and trail usage. Trails will need to be evaluated to establish standards and guideline for assisted mobility devices and rest stations added. This information may also be required when applying for grants.

Because the local hospital is known for their cardio and joint replacements, trails that are closer to the center of Bellingham could be designed for cardio and joint rehab.

Christ stated that there is additional work to be done on the trail standards draft documents in order to move forward. He asked that the Commission Members take the documents provided home and

communicate any comments or feedback to him for consideration as the final touches are made to the trail standards.

## **B. REVIEW PLANNING COMMISSION CHANGES TO CHAPTER 9-WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Mike provided copies of the revised Chapter 9 for Commission review. He stated that he met with the County Executive regarding the concerns that were raised by the Commission at the last meeting. The County Executive suggestion that a letter be drafted to Whatcom County Council requesting that the main corridor trails and corresponding map not be removed from Chapter 9.

Mike stated that the Executive asked him to relay to the Commission that it is the prerogative of the Commission to advise as it sees fit, that the review and revision of the Comprehensive Plan is not an Executive Initiative and that the Planning Commission works for the County Council and therefore it is County Council that will need to weigh in on this.

Mike discussed that he has had several conversations with various trail groups that have a stake in these trails and the following concerns have been noted. Removal will be negatively affect funding requests that are outside of the County funding process, that trails that were removed are approved, established trails that in many instances are fully marked and are maintained. Additionally, if the trail corridors are removed from the County Comprehensive Plan they will not get the recognition by other agencies such as State and Federal agencies. Many local communities are invested in the trails in terms of acquiring connecting sections, improving existing sections that pass through their communities and have the same concerns.

Mike stated that he was also contacted by a Council member who had obviously had conversations with constituents who expressed displeasure that the trail corridors and map were removed from the County Comprehensive Plan and therefore was also very concerned about the removal.

Mike was asked when a letter expressing Commission recommendations would be needed. Mike discussed that there are two upcoming opportunities to address the Planning Commission.

On Thursday, November 12, 2015 there is a public meeting to discuss the preliminary Planning Commission's finding and recommendations on the County Comprehensive Plan. This could include discussions and or consideration of amendments to any chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

Then on Thursday, December 10, 2015 is a public hearing to release the Planning Commission's final recommendations on the County Comprehensive Plan.

It was discussed that it would be best to send a letter expressing the Park Commission recommendations to the Planning Commission with a copy to the Whatcom County Council prior to the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and also to have a representative attend the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to verbally express Commission recommendations.

There was some discussion regarding the difference between having the trail corridors and map in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Open Space Plan versus having them only in the Parks Open Space Plan and the importance of having them in both plans in terms of planning and funding for not only the County Parks Department but also for the local municipalities.

There was a discussion that the concerns that public outreach to private land owners to increase their awareness of where the trail corridors are located has not been addressed but that in fact

that the information has been in the County Comprehensive plan for many years and that throughout the development of the Plan there has been outreach to private land owners as well as public information forums conducted.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Richard Sturgill and seconded by Vern Yadon that Paul Woodcock, Chair draft a letter representing the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation to add the trail references and the maps back into the Comprehensive Plan, specifically Policy 9.C.24, 25, 26 and 27 and the map that corresponds to those which by reference is the Proposed Map 9-2 to replace existing map 23, Proposed Trail Corridors.

Discussion was called for. After extensive discussion the motion passed with a vote of 5 for, 0 opposed. Theresa Sygitowicz abstained.

### **C. DISCUSSION OF OFF LEASH DOG AREAS AT LIGHTHOUSE MARINE PARK AND MAPLE BEACH**

Mike stated at Point Roberts there is not an off leash area in either Lighthouse Marine Park or Maple Beach and the Sheriff's Department as well as our Ranger has been enforcing the leash law throughout the Point Roberts area and in our Parks. As a result we have had a request to establish an off leash area at Lighthouse Marine Parks and/or Maple Beach.

It was discussed that there is really no area at Lighthouse Marine Park to set up a specific off-leash area and that dogs off-leash at Maple Beach would create a disturbance to the marine mammals, the shellfish beds and other dog owners who control their dogs with a leash and feel other dogs owners should too.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Richard Sturgill, seconded by Theresa Sygitowicz and passed unanimously to not make any changes in the Maple Beach and Lighthouse Marine Park pet policy, all animals must be on-leash.

### **D. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF SUPPORT LETTER RECOMMENDING ADDING THE BELLINGHAM-MOUNT BAKER TRAIL CORRIDOR TO CHAPTER 9 – WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Chair recognized Daniel Probst. Daniel provided background into the timeline of the development of the Bellingham-Mount Baker Trail corridor and the route that it would follow.

There was a great deal of discussion regarding easements, letters of support, agency involvement and funding for the trail.

**MOTION:** It was moved by Janet Boyhan and seconded by Jeff Margolis that the Parks Commission supports the Bellingham-Mount Baker Trail proposed by Daniel Probst to the County Council and that it should be included in Chapter 9 of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and also in the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan. The motion passed 4 for and 0 opposed. Theresa Sygitowicz and Vern Yadon abstained.

### **X. ANNOUNCEMENTS – NONE**

### **XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION**

The November 19, 2015 Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting will be held at the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Administrative Office at 6:00 PM.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** It was moved by Vern Yadon, seconded by Richard Sturgill and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director