

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, October 19, 2017

Ferndale Senior Activity Center
1999 Cherry Street
Ferndale, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis Committee Chair at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

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

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Rod Lamb, Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Chad Perrin, Theresa Sygitowicz

GUEST(S)

Daniel Probst

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Daniel Probst, a Trail Advocate and Recreational Business Owner, would like to give a presentation to the Commission at the next meeting about continuing with trail segments in Lake Whatcom Park. The Chanterelle Trail (which was built this past summer) is part of the proposed Bellingham to Mount Baker Trail and Daniel would like to save the County \$140,000 by using volunteer efforts and private funding to complete a five mile section of trail.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Jeff Margolis mentioned that he always copies the Commission Co-Chair when he is communicating via email with other Commissioners and Mike McFarlane. Jeff feels that this creates transparency and means that both someone on the Commission and someone in the Department know what's going on. Mike McFarlane advised that when he is cc'd on an email, it also creates a record that is archived by the County and makes Public Records Requests much easier for the IT Department to process. Jeff mentioned a program called REAP (Rural Energy Assistance Program) offered by the United States Department of Agriculture. It's a program that offers grants to non-profit or rural facilities that will pay 25% for energy efficiency or solar upgrades. The City of Blaine and Puget Sound Energy also offer energy analysis and savings programs.

V. AGENDA

A. October 19, 2017

MOTION: Susan McClendon moved to add Daniel Probst to the Agenda under new business. Sonja Max seconded. Susan McClendon moved to approve the October 19, 2017 Agenda as amended. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. September 21, 2017

MOTION: Susan McClendon moved to approve the September 21, 2017 Minutes as written. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Operations Report (Christ Thomsen)

- i. **Staffing Update** – The Regional Park Supervisor position is still vacant. The position has been posted several times, but the candidates have not been the right fit for the position. The field staff is on board with taking time to get the right person for the job. The Repair Maintenance Specialist position (carpenter) was posted internally and there is a County employee who is being considered. A decision should be made in the next couple of weeks. The Park Attendant position was posted externally and 89 applications were received. These applications will be filtered down to 5-8 candidates to interview.
- ii. **Chanterelle Trail** – Construction started in earnest on National Trails Day (June 3rd) and the trail was opened to the public on National Public Lands Day (September 30th). There were 1944 hours of volunteer labor to help with the construction of this trail, which is quite a bit for summertime construction.
- iii. **Fragrance Garden** – The floor replacement is not complete because of the weather. The goal is to finish by the October 31st completion date. Once the floor replacement is done and the new carpenter is hired, the next project will be the deck replacement at Samish.
- iv. **Water System Replacement at Headquarters** – The main office water distribution system needs to be replaced. An engineer has been hired to help with design and specifications. The job will go out for quotes in the near future.
- v. **Iron Chink Shelter** – The Purchase Order for the cultural resource monitoring was signed today. Mike needs to sign the Letter of Agreement and then staff can get going on the project. The challenge with this portion of the project is that it's affected by cultural resources and needs to

be monitored while the foundation is being put in. The rest of the project is simpler.

B. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. **Schedule of Meetings for 2018** – Commission meetings are the 3rd Thursday of each month. If the Commission would like to change the dates, they need to notify Mike so that he can contact the Executive's office.
- ii. **Whisper Lake Sewer Proposal (Bay Horizon Park)** – Mike will insert Federal language on the draft easement tomorrow. Then the National Park Service and the Sanitary District need to approve it. The Sanitary District was hoping to start on the sewer line before the weather turned bad, but that will not happen.
- iii. **Camp Horizon** – Camp Horizon is at Bay Horizon Park and the Camp Horizon Foundation would like to extend their agreement in the park for another 25 years (this extension is a part of the current agreement). The Foundation has 5 years remaining on the current agreement and would like to add items to the agreement that would allow them to fundraise. A 25 year agreement gives the Foundation some assurance that any large donations to repair and maintain the buildings would be worthwhile. The County can no longer have agreements that exceed 5 years, so Mike has contacted the County's legal staff for direction. There are many different types of County Agreements that can be found online on the County Council's website. The history on Bay Horizon Park is that it was turned over to the County by the Federal Government with a permanent caveat that it be used for park purposes. The Federal Government still retains control of the property; it cannot be sold and easements cannot be transferred. There can be some licensing, like the Park & Recreation District providing services there, but it's very restrictive. There have been requests to use it for a school, library, and community center, and all of those requests were denied as not following the use for park purposes.
- iv. **Blue Canyon** – There's a request for an easement and some encroachment issues occurring at Blue Canyon. Parks will be working with private property owners and driveway accesses to come up with an agreement, but this most likely won't be completed until the spring.
- v. **Stewart Mountain** – The large piece of timberland for sale on Stewart Mountain was purchased by Conservation Forestry. There's a planning group looking at easements and some other things, but the land will remain active timber.
- vi. **Special Event Application** – The process of revising the Special Event Application should be completed in the next couple of weeks. Mike met with a couple of the departments involved and has received some changes, but is waiting on changes from the Fire Marshal. The Fire

Marshal's changes are some of the largest and most critical from a risk and reliability standpoint.

- vii. **Employee Testing at the Range (Christ Thomsen)** – Airborne lead and noise exposure testing will be happening at the Range in October and November. L&I came in and did some sampling at the Range, but had problems with their sampling, so WC Parks hired a consultant to look at the operations at the Range. Phase I of the testing showed there is very low exposure for our employees while sitting in the control room, interacting with customers, and occasionally going onto the firing line. The levels are also well below permissible exposure levels for routine cleaning of the range. The next step is to see what the exposure level is when an employee cleans the back of the trap at the indoor range (where the bullets are captured) and when the air filters in the air handling unit are changed. The trap isn't cleaned very often and employees wear PPE (personal protective equipment) when they clean it, but it's necessary to find out if the PPE that is being provided is the right level of protection so that employees are not being overexposed.
- viii. **State Capital Budget** – The budget has not been approved and as a result, the trail projects, the Range Roof and HVAC, and the Food Bank at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center are not moving forward.
- ix. **Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation** – Mike is meeting with the Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation to talk about the farm exhibit at Hovander Homestead Park. The Hovander Homestead Bluegrass Festival lost about \$10,000 this year. It was a really good event and was well organized, but it was unusually hot. The Bluegrass Festival has started fundraising for next year and will decide whether or not to continue in 2019 based on how successful the Festival is in 2018. WC Parks took in \$5,700 in camping during the Festival.
- x. **Commission Vacancy** – There will be a Commissioner vacancy in District 3 beginning February 2018, as Theresa Sygitowicz's term ends January 31, 2018.
- xi. **Presentation** – Mike showed the Commission the Chanterelle Trail presentation that will be given to the County Council and the Natural Resources Committee.

C. Planning & Development Report (Rodney Lamb)

- i. **Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements** – Rod had a pre-application meeting to discuss the road and parking lot improvement project at Silver Lake. Rod requested that the current permit for the Maple Creek Campground be modified instead of starting a new permitting process. This request was granted and should streamline the process and reduce the permitting time and the consulting services cost. The plan

is to bid the project this winter and have the contractor mobilize on site after opening day of fishing season so that the project will be completed before the camping season (roughly June 2018).

- ii. **Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation** – HB Hansen was awarded the contract for the Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation. There was a preconstruction meeting yesterday and the plan is to start October 30th. There will be a meeting with the electrician next week to talk about the interface between the contractor’s work and county performed work. The contractor plans to demo the existing deck surfacing and joists, make necessary structural upgrades, and resurface the deck with Trex composite decking. The electrical will be upgrading existing wiring to be enclosed in conduit and the number of outlets will be reduced to better serve current use.
- iii. **Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – This project is currently being advertised for bid, and next Tuesday is the bid opening. The bid is for the procurement of a premanufactured pedestrian bridge. Interest in the project has been good, as Rod has been contacted by four manufacturers.
- iv. **Lummi Island Stairs** – The Lummi Island Stair project is also out for bid, with a bid opening on Tuesday. The project involves replacing the existing wooden access stairs to the shoreline with a set of aluminum stairs that will be able to withstand harsh marine environment. The project also includes an alternate bid item that involves replacing the overlook deck surface. There has been a lot of interest in this project. Contractors have indicated that completing this project in the winter is ideal because it avoids the crowds on the ferry typical of the summer months.
- v. **Nesset Farm House** – Rod gave a slide presentation of the Nesset Farm House and Machine Shed restoration. The Nesset Farm improvement project is being facilitated by the County because it’s a capital improvement project, but it is being paid for by the Nesset Foundation which is a trust that was established to provide the needed funding to operate and maintain the buildings at Nesset Farm.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. **Blue Canyon** – Jeff Margolis did not make it down to Blue Canyon to get any further information about the littering that he had reported at the last meeting. Reid Parker did go to Blue Canyon and found some trash, but nothing of great consequence. The plan is to order Park Rules signs and install them at the pathways leading to the day use area. There are three main trails that seem to get quite a bit of use, so the thought is to order between 1 and 3 signs.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Daniel Probst**

MOTION: Kenneth Kiesner moved to add Daniel Probst to the November 16, 2017 Agenda under new business. Richard Sturgill seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

- B. Review 3rd quarter visitation for parks, trails and senior services** – Park visitor counts are done through trail counters, vehicle counters, and formulas. The senior center visitation numbers are taken by the coordinators and are reported on a weekly basis. The information from these surveys will be used to make decisions as to where to focus our efforts; customer service, capital improvements, maintenance, etc. This type of survey information is on the County Executive’s website under “County Metrics” and eventually all of the different County Departments will have this information on there for the public to access. Once the 4th quarter is done, Parks will be able to make comparisons to past years.
- C. Review Preliminary report format – customer service survey** – It was suggested to use more pie graphs and have better labeling on what was being represented on the charts (there are numbers listed on charts, but it’s not clear if it’s a scale of 1-10, number of people, percentage, etc.).
- D. Review trail implementation process** – Rod and Christ explained the six step process for getting a trail built. The steps are as follows: scoping, inventory/site analysis, design/layout, regulatory permitting, construction, and monitoring/maintenance (on-going). The newly constructed Chanterelle Trail was used as an example to show each part of this process.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Richard Sturgill** announced that he would not be at the November or December commission meetings.
- B. Jeff Margolis** announced that “The Wild Bunch” will be playing this Friday at the Van Zandt Community Hall theater outreach. Next Friday will be “African Queen”. Entry is \$5 per person or \$10 for a family (with free popcorn).

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on November 16, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Administrative Offices, 3373 Mount Baker Highway, Bellingham, Washington.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

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