

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, May 17, 2018

Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis Committee Chair at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Brad VanderWerff, Sonja Max, Richard Sturgill, Jeff Margolis

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Rod Lamb

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Kenneth Kiesner, Chad Perrin, Susan McClendon

GUEST(S)

None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

None

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

None

V. AGENDA

A. May 17, 2018

MOTION: Richard Sturgill moved to approve the May 17, 2018 agenda as presented. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. April 17, 2018

MOTION: Sonja Max moved to approve the April 17, 2018 Minutes as written. Brad VanderWerff seconded. Richard Sturgill abstained.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. **Puget Sound Energy** – Puget Sound Energy has requested a 45 foot easement along Mount Baker Highway at the East Whatcom Regional

Resource Center to move the power poles further away from the highway. PSE would like to move the poles further back than necessary to allow space for a trail to be built that would provide safe walking and biking access to the Resource Center. This trail is in the very early stages of planning and will be maintained by County Parks when complete.

- ii. **Canyon Lake Community Park** – Whatcom County Parks is working with Whatcom Land Trust and DNR to hopefully gain access to Canyon Lake Community Park. The challenge is a 200-300 yard parcel between DNR property and County Park property that is owned by Sierra Pacific. Whatcom County has an easement from when this road came from a different direction, but a new easement is needed from Sierra Pacific to add this portion to that easement. Whatcom County has offered to cost share road maintenance, etc.
- iii. **Capital Projects** – The Executive requested that the main campground renovation at Silver Lake Park be added to the Capital Projects list. The Executive’s Office is putting together a list of all County projects (Jail, Parks, Facilities, etc.) and funding sources for the Council to review.

B. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen

- i. **Staff Updates** – Temporary staff is typically hired in March for April and May start dates. This year, all but two positions were filled and staff started in April, but then 5-6 employees accepted jobs elsewhere. Interviews are being held tomorrow to hopefully fill these empty positions. Staff and their responsibilities are being shifted around to try to keep facilities clean, but this means that work that normally is getting done, is not getting done. The new Regional Park Supervisor for the West Region worked for about a month and resigned his position on April 20th. Jerry Warren, the Regional Park Supervisor that ran the range retired on April 19th, so that leaves two Regional Park Supervisor position openings. Interviews for the Range position were held last Friday and the hope is that both Regional Park Supervisor positions can be filled from this pool of candidates.
- ii. **Project Updates** – Public Works is doing some work on the bridge on Mosquito Lake Road that crosses the Nooksack River by the Fire Station. To help facilitate that project, Whatcom County Parks is allowing Public Works to use the Welcome Bridge River Access site as a staging area for their materials and equipment. The Welcome Bridge River Access site will be closed to public access from May 7th to about May 21st. Public Works had a meeting on April 20th about the replacement of the Samish Bridge in 2021. This project is going to have a large impact on the operations of Samish Park and Public Works is interested in using the park for the staging of materials and equipment. Public Works is receiving Federal Funds for the bridge replacement and because the project is going to have

an impact on recreation, mitigation will be provided. Public Works is working with Whatcom County Parks to decide what kind of mitigation and/or enhancements are appropriate. The replacement of the Samish Deck is slightly behind schedule, but will be finished before Memorial Day weekend. A tree service was hired to remove a portion of a tree at Samish and during removal, a strap broke, dropping a branch through the roof of the building. Fortunately, nobody was hurt and the portion of the building that was damaged was the office area, so it won't affect any of the group rentals. A \$100,000 budget supplemental was requested for the road failure above the residence on Lookout Mountain. The road should be completed and ready for use in about a week. June 2nd is the beginning of this season's trail construction on the Lookout Mountain side of the watershed. A budget supplemental is going to Council on Tuesday for funding to replace the HVAC system and roof of the indoor range.

C. Planning & Development Report (Rodney Lamb)

- i. Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements** – The contractor is making good progress. There were some early change orders to remove more trees because and the road was shifted about 4 feet in one location to save some trees. Concrete curbs were poured in the auxiliary parking lot by the shower/restroom facility and the sidewalk will be poured next. The contractor dug up the phone line in a couple of locations because the lines were not marked. The contractor will begin installation of the drainage improvements on the side of the road. Two new 2-inch conduit will be installed to serve electricity or high-speed internet in the future. The project is still on schedule to be completed mid-late June. A few days were added to the Contractor's work window of 40 working days because of the change orders.
- ii. Lighthouse Marine Park** – The contractor has completed this project and the project closeout procedure will be started once the final invoice is received. The Whatcom County Parks crew has removed the existing playground and will renovate it so that it can be reinstalled.
- iii. Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – South Fork Construction was hired to build the concrete abutments for the 60-foot pedestrian bridge. The concrete abutments will be poured next week and the bridge will be set on June 20th. Once the bridge is placed, the trail will be realigned.
- iv. Lummi Island Overlook** – The Lummi Island Overlook and stair replacement is complete and is in the project closeout process. The Whatcom County Parks crew will be installing a new park entrance sign and doing some landscaping.
- v. Birch Bay Beach Park** – Rod submitted a grant application for Birch Bay Beach Park development. The highest priorities are parking and

restrooms. The grant application was due on May 1st and there is a technical review with the evaluators next Friday.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review 2017 Senior Services Survey – This is the annual survey for Senior Services (no surveys were returned from the Point Roberts or Sumas Senior Centers). There are no significant changes on the surveys returned from the other centers. Attendance has been relatively stable with a slight dip at the Bellingham Senior Center because of the challenges they are facing with homeless issues. BSAC is also seeing a change in demographics. The center seems to be attracting a lower income group and attendance from the middle income group is decreasing. The seniors are most interested in active activities, such as the trip program, dancing, and the workout rooms. The comments from the surveys are listed on the very last pages and are broken down by the individual center. The groups that manage the senior centers (Council on Aging, City of Lynden, City of Blaine, Jet Oldsters, etc.) look at these comments for programming and food services. This information is shared with the Council in June as a part of the presentation on Department activities. Jeff Margolis would like to share the information from these surveys with the community and news outlets.

B. Update on Communication Tower Activity – American Tower is in the process of getting permits for the removal of the communication tower on Lookout Mountain. That work will begin in June. Parallel Communication is very interested in getting a tower up. The radio units on that tower will mostly be for public service (Skagit 911, Whatcom 911, Emergency Management for both counties, and the Sheriff's Office for both counties). BPA is also taking down a tower and replacing it with a new tower.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chad Perrin is tendering his resignation, so that will leave an opening in District 4. The County Executive will post that vacancy within a week or two.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on June 21, 2018. The meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m. at Maple Creek Park, 7842 Silver Lake Road, Maple Falls, Washington and then continue to Silver Lake Day Lodge, 9006 Silver Lake Road, Maple Falls, Washington at 6:00 p.m.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director