

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, December 21, 2017

Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis Committee Chair at 6:06 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Commissioners: Sonja Max, Kenneth Kiesner, Theresa Sygitowicz,
Susan McClendon, Jeff Margolis

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Rod Lamb

EXCUSED

Commissioners: Richard Sturgill, Chad Perrin

GUEST(S)

Daniel Probst

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Daniel Probst, a Trail Advocate and Recreational Business Owner, wanted to remind the commission that there are opportunities for private and public partnerships to help reduce the cost of building trails. Daniel has been committed to building trails for years and knows that there are a lot of other people in the community that are committed to building trails that are looking for opportunities to help.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Susan McClendon apologized for not making it to the last meeting. Theresa Sygitowicz discussed the Washington State Legislature and budget. Jeff Margolis wanted to compliment Reid Parker and his work on the Chanterelle Trail. Jeff said that Reid must be a very profound staff person who works well with staff and the public, as Jeff heard high praise from local residents and a member of Reid's Chanterelle crew. Jeff wanted to be sure Reid was commended and hoped the Commission would extend their thanks to Reid for doing such an admirable job.

V. AGENDA

A. December 21, 2017

MOTION: Michael McFarlane asked to modify the agenda to include approving the minutes from the October 19, 2017 Commission meeting.

Theresa Sygitowicz moved to amend the December 21, 2017 agenda. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

MOTION: Theresa Sygitowicz moved to accept the December 21, 2017 Agenda as amended. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. October 19, 2017

MOTION: Susan McClendon moved to approve the October 19, 2017 Minutes as written. Theresa Sygitowicz seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

B. November 16, 2017

MOTION: Jeff Margolis moved to amend the November 16, 2017 minutes to show that Jeff Margolis, Chair, mentioned that there was high praise for Reid Parker from the community with regard to his outreach and relationship with the immediate community while building the Chanterelle Trail. Theresa Sygitowicz seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

MOTION: Theresa Sygitowicz moved to approve the November 16, 2017 Minutes as amended. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Planning & Development Report (Rodney Lamb)

- i. **Silver Lake Road & Electrical Improvements** – Rod received the staff report from Planning & Development Services. Immediately after receiving the report, Rod put together the permit submittal package and took it to Planning & Development Services. Rod requested that the current permit for the Maple Creek Campground be modified to include the roadway work. The plan is to have the contractor mobilize on site after opening day of fishing season so that the project will be completed by mid-June 2018. Rod is also working on the timber harvest and finding the value of the timber so that the County is compensated for this taxpayer owned resource.
- ii. **Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation** – HB Hansen has completed most of the demolition work of the boardwalk. There was unanticipated rot found in the substructure of the deck and a choice needed to be made as to how many of the supporting concrete piers would be replaced. The engineer defined structural failure and advised that 70 of the 173 concrete piers met the threshold of structural failure. The remaining piers varied as

to how close they were to the failure threshold, so the decision was made to replace all of them. A change order proposal in the amount of about \$23,000 from HB Hansen was approved to address this and structural upgrades to the picnic shelter posts. Work on this project will resume after the first of the year. The original contract was to have this project substantially completed by February 28, 2018, but that has been extended for three weeks because the contractor was not able to work while the structural repair issues were being analyzed. The new date is March 21st, 2018, but HB Hansen is hoping to still get it completed by the original date.

- iii. **Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – Big R has submitted shop drawings of the Maple Creek Bridge. The engineer is reviewing the drawings and the bridge should be delivered March 2018. The plan is to get it installed as soon as the permit process is completed. Rod submitted the SEPA and Substantial Shoreline Applications on December 11, 2017.
- iv. **Nesset Farm House** – The shed foundation repair is complete and payment was mailed to the contractor.
- v. **Lummi Island Stairs** – Shop drawings were submitted and approved by the engineer. The stairs will be fabricated and then the repair will start onsite after the first of the year.

B. Director's Report & Operations Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. **Commission Vacancy** – Three applications were received for the District 3 Commissioner vacancy. Jack Louws will make an appointment mid to late January 2018.
- ii. **Maple Falls Park Group** – Michael McFarlane was able to get the letter of agreement with the Maple Falls Park Group sent down to the Executive's Office for signature. This had been delayed because the Maple Falls Park Group had a change in board leadership and had been struggling to find insurance.
- iii. **American Tower Company** – Christ Thomsen gave an update at the last meeting that the tower will stay there until the watershed window opens. Michael McFarlane is working on an agreement with another tower company that is planning to erect a 90-foot tower on the site where the ATC tower is removed. That tower will be used by Whatcom County Emergency Government and Skagit County. Crown Castle, who also has a tower on the same site, has asked to renew their lease, so there will be a lot of activity in that area in 2018. All of the companies accessing these towers are responsible for any damages to the road.
- iv. **Staffing Update** – The Parks Administrative Specialist took a position with the City of Bellingham. That position was posted, closed on Monday, and the staff is reviewing applications. The Repair Maintenance III position closed today and those applications will be reviewed in the next week. An

offer was made for a Regional Park Supervisor position, but the individual declined. The applicant pool will be reviewed again and the job may be reposted. Extra help is still being recruited for the Sumas and Point Roberts Senior Centers. Michael McFarlane met with the Council on Aging and discussed the possibility of them taking on the four smaller senior centers (Everson, Sumas, Point Roberts, Welcome), and encourage the Council on Aging to provide more programming at these centers. Michael McFarlane has also discussed this with the County Executive. If this agreement were made, Whatcom County Parks would transfer the funding it receives for Senior Services to the Council on Aging and would be written into the current contract (or changed for the next contract).

- v. **Semiahmoo Park Vandalism** – Someone threw rocks from the road at the restroom building and several windows were broken out. The Sheriff caught a female that was breaking into vehicles at Teddy Bear Cove, Pine & Cedar Lakes, and North Chuckanut Trailhead; she was charged and released from Skagit County.
- vi. **Water System Replacement at Headquarters** – About half of the main office water distribution system is being replaced and that project is lined up to start shortly after the first of the year.
- vii. **Capital Projects/Year End/2018** – Rodney Lamb, Christ Thomsen, and Shami Campbell have been working finishing up capital projects, year end, and beginning work on some of the 2018 projects. As of this afternoon, all of the revenues are on target for making budget in 2017.
- viii. **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 other things, but the portion of the property that is commercial forestry will remain active timber. Recreation passes are still being sold for public use (individual and vehicle).

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. **Chanterelle Trail Benches** – Jeff Margolis has made an effort to connect the Whatcom County Parks Department to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to get benches put on the Chanterelle Trail.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **2017 Park Retreat – 2019-2020 Budget Items** – The Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Department had their retreat for the entire staff December 12th at the Roeder Home. This is kind of a kick off to the budgeting process, as the capital projects will be worked on in the next couple of months and then the 2019 – 2020 operating budget will be started. The retreat was an opportunity for the staff to hear from employees as to how the year went and what would be helpful in the

future. There was a lot of positive feedback on the upgraded signage in the parks; this is something that needs to be pushed out to other park areas. Equipment upgrades were also very helpful and suggestions were made for additional upgrades. Employees would like to do more interpretive programs in the parks. There is some money in the Park & Recreation Foundation to start an interpretive program for at least a year. The Hovander Animal Contact Area was discussed and ideas and suggestions were received from the employees that will be working in that area about infrastructure and animals. All of the information received will be taken into consideration when working on the budget. Overall, the retreat was very positive and there were a lot of good ideas.

- B. Bay Horizon Park Proposed Sewer Easement status** – The proposed sewer easement for Whisper Lake was approved by the National Park Service. However, the Sanitary District doesn't like some of the language that is in it. Whatcom County Parks will be meeting with the Sanitary District and the developer in January to discuss the language requirements of the National Park Service. If the Sanitary District can't agree to the language, the only other option would be to reroute the sewer around the park.
- C. Birch Bay Park Committee & Beach Park Development** – The Executive and Michael McFarlane met with the Birch Bay Park Committee to talk about the new park, the development schedule, and funding for the park. The Executive reminded the Committee that the County put in a substantial amount of money for the acquisition of this property and the County Council had challenged the Committee to bring a funding proposal to build the park. Whatcom County Parks would not have funding for this project until about 2020 and that would only happen if funds were awarded from State Grants. The other integral part of the park is the berm project, which is behind schedule by about two years. The Committee asked to extend water and power to the site and the Executive indicated that if there was no cost to the County and the plans were approved and up to code, it would be okay. The challenge with this is that the site is culturally rich, so anytime there is land disturbance, the requirements increase costs and expenses. The Committee also asked about scaling their plans back to only put in a small restroom building, but doing so would not be cost effective. The park may see some day use this year and other than that, will continue to be a place that the community can hold special events. The Park District has committed to cutting the grass.
- D. Funding options for park, trail and other projects** – Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Department is funded from a number of sources. Each year, the Parks' Budget includes capital projects, new developments, major capital maintenance, and operating and maintenance projects. The Real Estate Excise Tax Fund II (REET II) is used for most of the park projects and can only be used by Public Works and Parks. Parks receives money from grant applications. That process happens every two years and is through the Recreation Conservation

Office. Parks tends to only apply for Federal Grants that are at least a million dollars because of the additional costs such as auditing and record retention that is required. In the Parks budget, there is a Parks Special Revenue (for park benches, miscellaneous donations, etc.) and a Park Capital Fund (for Capital Projects). Special Revenue donations can be taken directly at the Park Office and carry over from year to year. Some donations are dedicated to certain parks. There are Foundations (Nesset Foundation, Whatcom Community Foundation, and Whatcom Park & Rec. Foundation) that have funds that are held and released when needed. Finally, Parks can partner with Park Districts and companies to fund and work on specific projects.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. Theresa Sygitowicz** encouraged the Committee to go on the Whatcom County Conservation District website and apply for an absentee ballot for the annual election. There is one position opening this year and the election takes place in March.
- B. Jeff Margolis** announced that the public is welcome at the Van Zandt Community Hall on New Year's Eve where bandZandt will be featured.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on January 18, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, 315 Halleck Street, Bellingham, Washington.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

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