

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, March 15, 2018**

**Tennant Lake Interpretive Center**  
**5236 Nielsen Avenue**  
**Ferndale, Washington**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Margolis Committee Chair at 6:01 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT**

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

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Christ Thomsen, Rod Lamb

**EXCUSED**

Commissioners: Chad Perrin

**GUEST(S)**

Bill Black

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Bill Black would like the protocol for using herbicides in County Parks to be reviewed. Michael McFarlane advised that neither Parks Staff nor Sheriff Work Crews are spraying herbicides in the parks. The Conservation District volunteered to help implement mitigation planting so they could use it as an example to improve riparian habitat. Rod will contact the Conservation District to find out when they were last out.

Michael McFarlane shared letters from the public thanking the Commission for its stand on the ORV docketing.

Michael McFarlane shared two letters that went to the Council; one in support of the rerouting of roughly 30 miles of the Bellingham-Mount Baker Trail into Whatcom County and one in favor of not docketing DNR's zoning amendment until more information was received.

**IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

None

**V. AGENDA**

**A. March 15, 2018**

**MOTION:** Kenneth Kiesner moved to approve the March 15, 2018 agenda as presented. Susan McClendon seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

**VI. MINUTES**

**A. February 15, 2018**

**MOTION:** Richard Sturgill moved to approve the February 15, 2018 Minutes as written. Sonja Max seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

**VII. STAFF REPORTS**

**A. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane**

- i. Recreation Conservation Update** – Whatcom County Parks was awarded \$1 million from the Recreation Conservation Office for the Birch Bay Park acquisition. The money will be deposited in the Parks Special Revenue Fund to help for future development.
- ii. East Whatcom Regional Resource Center** – The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center received funding for the Food bank and covered play area, but is still short \$200,000 - \$300,000. There is an upcoming meeting to discuss the project and what they can do to keep the funding package together.
- iii. Lighthouse Marine Park Ordinance Amendment** – An Ordinance Amendment is being requested for additional funds to complete the playground and to fix the structural deficiencies of the deck that were not apparent until the surface decking was removed.
- iv. Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – A budget supplemental is being requested to put the new bridge in later this spring.
- v. All Point Bulletin** – The All Point Bulletin published an article looking for information on the Point Roberts Lighthouse project. The Lighthouse Society would like a park shelter with a deck and Coast Guard light, but without funding beyond the initial commitment of \$500,000, the project will not move forward.
- vi. Fragrance Garden** – The installation of the floor in the garden is complete. New walkways were installed by the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation crew in the fall of 2017 for about \$30,000. They did an outstanding job on a very challenging project.

**B. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen**

- i. Staffing Update** – The Repair Maintenance III (carpenter) started and is doing a great job. An offer was made for the Regional Park Supervisor position (West Region); the individual accepted and will start April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Interviews are underway for seasonal extra help positions that begin in

April and May. There will probably only be one more round of interviews, as there are a number of returning employees.

- ii. **Ferndale Senior Activity Center** – The Ferndale Senior Activity Center has had a lot of upgrades in the last couple of years (new roof, exterior paint, store room windows). This year, the kitchen floor was set to be replaced, but after finding asbestos in the mastic, replacement became too expensive. Instead of replacing the floor, the mastic was abated and the concrete slab was treated, ground down, and finished with a urethane coating. The resulting floor is beautifully textured and slip resistant. The kitchen was also painted and the Jet Oldsters were able to raise money to replace the bathroom and pool room floors with vinyl composition tile.
- iii. **Fee Schedules for Whatcom County Parks** – The fee schedule was passed out to Commission members. It is also available on the Parks website and at each park.

### **C. Planning & Development Report (Rodney Lamb)**

- i. **Silver Lake Road Improvements** – The Silver Lake Road and Parking Improvement project is out to bid. Sixteen contractors showed up for the pre-bid meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The bids are scheduled to open on March 27 with a start date of April 9<sup>th</sup>. The contractor has 40 working days to complete the project. Working days are exclusive of weather delays and holidays. It is anticipated that the project will be complete around June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Planning and Development Services continues their review of the amended permit approval. Critical Areas has signed off on the project, so Shorelines is next. An application was submitted to DNR for the Forest Practices Act (FPA), which should be approved by April 1<sup>st</sup>. The FPA is required when more than 5,000 board feet of timber are going to be cut. There is a deduct item in the bid that places a dollar value on the trees, so that compensation is received for the trees. A three part communications plan is being developed to alert the public of the project and includes onsite signage, customer outreach, and public outreach. Signs will be posted at the boat launch and on the main road with information regarding the partial closure of the boat launch and limited boat trailer parking. The customer outreach portion involves contacting everybody that has a reservation during the construction timeframe and making them aware of the project. The public outreach portion includes information on the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation website and an official public notice that will be delivered to local sporting goods stores (Yeager's, REI, Fly Shop, etc.).
- ii. **Lighthouse Boardwalk Renovation** – HB Hansen should be done with the Lighthouse Boardwalk renovation by March 21. Rod will meet with the contractor after that to compile a list of items that need to be finished. Rod expects the project to be completely done by March 28. The playground

will be started next, assuming the council approves the supplemental budget request for additional funding.

- iii. **Maple Creek Bridge Replacement** – Funds for this project were transferred from 2017 to 2018. The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife has approved the project and will issue the hydraulic project approval (HPA). Planning & Development Services has not yet approved the project. Delivery of the premanufactured bridge is scheduled for the first week of May. The plan is to have the abutments constructed, the staging area ready, and the crane on site, so that the bridge can be lifted into place. Once the bridge is in place, the trail will be rerouted to it, as it is in a slightly different location. There will also be some mitigation planting.
- iv. **Lummi Island Stairs** – The contractor set the premanufactured aluminum stairs on March 13. The deck on the overlook is being replaced with Ipe, a tropical hardwood. All of the joist hangers on the deck were corroded, so a change order was completed to install new joist hangers. Vycor flashing was also added to increase longevity of the substructure. The deck is about 800 square feet with a picnic table that may need to be secured so that it doesn't damage the Ipe. An aluminum sign from Correctional Industries will be installed with reflective graphics. The project should be completed a week before the deadline of March 30<sup>th</sup>. After that, the only thing left will be some landscaping improvements.
- v. **Hovander Maintenance Shop** – The wetland delineation is complete and a base plan is in place. Rod hopes to have Reichhardt & Ebe Engineering under contract for engineering services by March 21<sup>st</sup>.
- vi. **Semiahmoo Restroom/Concession Building** – An engineering firm was hired to provide a structural upgrade proposal to make this space more flexible for a concessionaire. The renovated building will contain about 1500 square feet of usable area for concessions. The adjacent outdoor deck area between the buildings is about 800 square feet. Once the final design drawings and calculations are complete, the building permit will be submitted to the City of Blaine. Whatcom County Park employees will perform the work once permits are approved (probably in the fall).

## VIII. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. **DNR Baker to Bellingham Plan** – The County Council did not docket the zoning amendment request; the off road groups and DNR staff will present more information. DNR's website has lots of information, including the two options being considered, meeting dates, and public comments.

## IX. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Drones in Parks** – Whatcom County doesn't currently have any rules regarding drones in parks, but is working on establishing a policy for the operation of drones for County purposes (bridge inspections, landslide inspections, etc.). The FAA provides guidelines regarding the operation of drones at their website (<https://www.faa.gov/uas/>) and parks departments in Washington State are creating rules specific to their parks. Whatcom County is hoping to find a suitable space for drones that minimizes disruption to wildlife and other park users while preventing damage to historical buildings and property.
- B. 2019-2020 Parks Capital Projects** – Parks staff is reviewing the 20-year list of Capital Improvement Projects to develop a 6-year plan and a list of projects for funding in the 2019-2020 operating budget. This list will be submitted to the Executive and then forwarded to the council for approval as part of the budget process. Projects are chosen based on necessity, funding sources, and staff workload capacity. Some projects are completed in phases; the design/engineering/permitting may be funded in one 2-year budget cycle and then the construction phase is funded in a second 2-year budget cycle. Capital Development Projects that are being considered: Hovander Access Improvements (better traffic flow and increased parking); Maple Falls Trailhead (restroom and parking at Maple Falls Community Park); Nessel Farm Phase II (restrooms and final restoration of the Nessel house interior); Silver Lake Park Phase II (restrooms and showers); South Fork Park Phase II (connecting the two properties by trail); Lake Whatcom Trailhead Improvements (design and engineering for increased parking and restrooms); Hovander Picnic Shelters (installing open shelters in the day use area). Capital Maintenance Projects that are being considered: Bay Horizon (hostel building demolition and sidewalk improvements); Silver Lake Rangers Residence and Employee Cabins (demolition); Parks Headquarters Water System (replaced/updated); Hovander/Tennant Lake (exterior house painting); Tennant Lake (remodel of interpretive displays); Surfacing Maintenance (repairs to roads, walkways, steps, etc.); the Hertz Trail (resurfacing and drainage improvements); the Gerdrum Home (roof replacement); Silver Lake Cabins (renovation/update of cabins). Other factors that come in to the decision making process are how much the staff can handle and whether or not portions of the projects can be contracted. Current projects include: Semiahmoo (interior remodel); Samish Lodge (deck replacement); South Fork; Hovander Animal Contact Area (design and funding); Birch Bay Community Park (design and funding). Conversation ensued regarding the distance people travel to use parks and possible alternatives (bus lines, bike lanes, etc.) to building huge parking lots in valuable park space.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

NONE

**XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION**

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on April 19, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the Van Zandt Community Hall in Deming, Washington.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director