

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, December 19, 2019

Roeder Home
2600 Sunset Drive
Bellingham, Washington

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

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

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Rod Lamb, Christ Thomsen

EXCUSED

Commissioners: None

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Kenneth Kiesner inquired about the thinning of trees for the Silver Lake Maple Creek Campground Project.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Sonja Max said that people were upset about the trail/drainage work done on the North Lost Lake Trail. Christ advised that this type of work requires the removal of more vegetation than is typical and oftentimes leaves equipment tracks. However, it's meant to last quite a few years and typically within a season, users will not even be able to tell any work was done. Jeff Margolis received a call from a fisherman who was concerned about some work at Hovander Homestead that exposed a rivulet. Jeff will get more information so that Christ can look into it.

V. AGENDA

A. December 19, 2019

MOTION: Sonja Max moved to approve the December 19, 2019 agenda as written. Brad VanderWerff seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VI. MINUTES

A. November 21, 2019

MOTION: Richard Sturgill moved to approve the November 21, 2019 Minutes as written. Brad WanderWerff seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Planning & Development Report – Rod Lamb

- i. Slideshow of 2019 Capital Projects** – Rod and Christ shared a slideshow of 2019 Capital Projects. These included: painting the exterior of the Tennant Lake Interpretive Center and Hovander Homestead House, extending the Chanterelle Trail in Lake Whatcom Park, installing the new boardwalk and playground at Lighthouse Marine Park, residing the restroom building and adding a drinking fountain at Lighthouse Marine Park, replacing wind walls at Lighthouse Marine Park, renovating the Maple Creek Campground in Silver Lake Park, and designing the new shower/restroom facility and septic at Red Mountain Campground in Silver Lake Park.

B. Operations Report – Christ Thomsen

- i. 2019 Projects** – An informational kiosk and trail orientation signage was installed at Maple Creek Park. Staff at Silver Lake Park were able to do a thorough job of cleaning and repainting the interiors of the CXTs in the Maple Creek Campground while the campground was closed for renovation. WC Parks staff have been able to catch up on some of the backlog of maintenance work orders.
- ii. Staffing** – One of the Clerk III's took an internal promotion and transferred to the Finance Department, so that position is open for recruitment. The Repair Maintenance III (Carpenter) and new Park Attendant are starting in January. The applicant for the Ranger position in Point Roberts is currently in reference/background check. Ben Houpt, the Maintenance and Construction Supervisor, started December 9th. Rod added that Emily, the Special Projects GIS temporary extra help employee, took a full-time job with the City of Bellingham. That position was posted and had over 20 applicants. It has been filled by Leah Robison.

C. Director's Report – Michael McFarlane

- i. Opening Day for 2020 Reservations** – December 2nd was the opening day for 2020 reservations. Approximately \$85,500 of reservations were processed, an increase of about \$22,000 from opening day in 2019. WC Parks' internet provider came close to crashing, but have guaranteed they will be prepared to accommodate the increased volume next year. Lighthouse Marine Park wasn't online for about a half-hour because the third-party provider neglected to flip the switch to make it visible, but other than that, everything worked well.

- ii. **Boulevard Park** – The City of Bellingham met with Whatcom County Parks and legal staff to discuss a new restroom facility at Boulevard Park. The restroom at the north end of the park is closed, placing a large burden on the restrooms by Woods Coffee. The only viable location for a new restroom is the property immediately east of the Woods Coffee building, which is owned by Whatcom County.
- iii. **Staffing** – WC Parks will be fully staffed in January.
- iv. **Y Road Purchase** – DNR purchased the seed farm next to the Y Road access. Whatcom County will be purchasing a Forestry Conservation Easement, but the easement will not guarantee public access. Long term, DNR is planning for the trail system and that property is an important link.
- v. **Glacier Restroom Easement** – WC Parks will be working to get an easement for the septic system at the Glacier Restroom. The restroom building is located on WC Parks property, but the septic field is on property that was not included in the original transfer from the railroad and is now owned by another party.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **2021 – 2026 Capital Projects** – Starting in January, WC Parks staff will be putting together the Parks Capital Projects Plan and establishing priorities for the next six years. If there are any projects the Commissioners feel strongly about, they should talk with Mike, Christ, or Rod.
- B. **Pedestrian Access to Josh VanderYacht Memorial Park** – Jeff Margolis shared his concern about the pedestrian access problem adjacent to the Van Zandt Community Hall and the Josh VanderYacht Memorial Park. Jeff would like the Commission to make a recommendation or write a letter of concern to WSDOT, as he is worried that the danger to pedestrians will not be addressed without more community agency involvement. Mike advised that this is not a county project and the county has made it very clear that this is a state issue. The commissioners agreed that Jeff’s concern should be shared with the Barb Chamberlain, the director of active transportation with WSDOT, and maybe the state or county Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION

The next Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission meeting will be held on January 16, 2020 at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, 315 Halleck Street, Bellingham, WA.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Transcribed by: Kristin Lunderville, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director