

MEETING MINUTES
WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Thursday, July 18, 2013

Semiahmoo Park
APA Maritime Museum Building
9261 Semiahmoo Parkway
Blaine, WA

PRESENT: Commissioners: Gordon Rogers, Kenneth P. Kiesner, Paul Woodcock, Janet Boyhan, Theresa Sygitowicz, Jeffrey Margolis

Staff: Michael McFarlane, Erik Axelson, Rodney Lamb,

ABSENT: Commissioners: Richard Sturgill

GUESTS: Laurel Baldwin

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Gordon Rogers at 6:18 PM.

I. **AGENDA: July 18, 2013 Agenda.** It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the agenda as written.

II. **MINUTES: June 20, 2013 Minutes Approval.** It was moved, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

III. **PUBLIC INPUT/COMMUNICATIONS:**

A. Everson Survey – Janet Boyhan discussed a recent survey that was conducted with the citizens of Everson. Results showed that the most popular public venue in Everson is the Public Library and second most popular is Everson’s City parks.

IV. **DIRECTOR’S REPORT – MICHAEL MCFARLANE:**

A. Expectations for Board & Commissions – Per last meeting Action item for Theresa Sygitowicz, Mike provided the document County Council & County Executive Expectations for Boards & Commissions. This document is available on the Whatcom County Boards and Commissions web page.

It was requested that this topic is placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Commission meeting.

ACTION: Add Item for discussion to the September 2013 Agenda: County Council and County Executive expectations for Whatcom County Boards & Commissions.

B. Lake Whatcom Reconveyance – Update - County legal staff and DNR real estate staff are currently reviewing the Reconveyance deeds.

Portions of The Washington State Habitat Conservation Plan are being incorporated into the agreement where applicable to the County.

The final survey fees and closing costs we underestimated by DNR. There is a supplemental budget request to Council for additional funds to cover these costs.

D. Nasset Foundation Building Restoration Budget – A request for approval of the funding for building restoration and equipment purchases is on the July 23, 2013 Council Agenda.

E. Disability Camping Discount – A request has been submitted to the Executive to honor the Whatcom County camping discount with the presentation of a State issued disabled parking pass. The language in the Whatcom County Unified Fee Schedule is being reworded to include this discount requirement and will be moved forward to the Executive for consideration.

F. Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plan – The Public Visioning Sessions are concluded. Some sessions were better attended than others.

The public survey was released and 69 out of the anticipated 200 responses have been returned. The online survey has produced 49 completed responses. The consultant will compare and share results as available.

Mike discussed the various venues that have been utilized to increase public awareness of and participation in the survey. It was agreed that Commission members could assist with public awareness through Facebook, email and discussing the survey with the public.

V. OPERATIONS REPORT – ERIK AXELSON:

A. Parks' summer activity – Erik provided the Commission with various pictures of current summer activities in the parks. Parks attendance and revenues are up as a result of the warm weather.

B. Silver Lake Park Goose Abatement Update – There will be the addition of a kite in the design of an American Bald Eagle that will be flown above the lagoon and picnic area. The kite has a 6' wing span and has been used successfully for goose abatement in other parks throughout the nation.

Additional attempts at discouraging geese are to remove their food and nesting sites. Parks is currently removing vegetation around the water's edge and restoring the beach to a sandy surface. This will discourage geese from setting up residency in the area and provide a more comfortable bathing beach for park visitors.

C. Bellingham Senior Center Drainage Repair – Parks is currently working with the City of Bellingham to repair a drainage problem that was created with the recent installation of ADA ramp access to the Whatcom Creek Trail.

D. Hovander House Ventilation – The Parks and Rec Foundation donated an exhaust fan to improve and increase air flow in the Hovander House. The fan will be installed next week. Additional system improvements will be installed in the near future.

E. Hovander Group Picnic Shelter Access Improvements – A concrete apron will be applied around the edges of the facility to remove trip hazards. This will not only improve access but will assist with rain water drainage.

F. Hovander Fragrance Garden – There are tiles at the Garden that have lifted. These will be ground and re-set. Gravel will also be added in areas to remove trip hazards.

G. Josh Vander Yacht Park – A new memorial stone was added to the park this past weekend. The stone was donated by the Vander Yacht family and funded by the family and community donations. The Parks' maintenance crew prepped the site for installation.

A memorial celebration will be conducted this coming Sunday from 1:00 PM to dusk. Festivities will include interviews of various Whatcom County political candidates, a handball tournament, free ice cream and a pot luck dinner. There will also be a variety of musicians performing throughout the day.

At 4:00 PM the official memorial will begin with the reading of the names on the memorial stone and an invitation to share stories about these individuals.

The event will conclude with a tour of the park.

H. Request For Proposals (RFP) – RFPs for three minor capital projects have been released for bid. These include parking lot repairs and repaving at the Plantation Range and Lighthouse Marine Park and haying at Silver Lake and Deming Eagle Parks. The close date for the RFPs is July 23, 2013.

I. Upcoming Events – Staff is busy preparing for upcoming park events for the remainder of the season and into the fall. Many of these events are complicated and will require a great deal of focus on risk management and liability.

VI. DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT REPORT – Rodney Lamb:

A. Lighthouse Marine Park Dock Renovation – The RFP to replace the boat ramp creosote piles with steel piles and build a new boarding float was released in June, 2013.

One bid was received from Neptune Marine that was approximately \$175,000.00 over the budget. Rod stated that he does not feel the bid was representative of the actual costs. After a conversation with Neptune Marine and was determined that they did not allow a sufficient amount of time to prepare the bid documents and that they provided a bid that did not include all aspects of the project. Rod stated that he did not receive any phone calls from Neptune Marine prior to the bid closing to clear up any questions or concerns they may have had.

The contractors on the bid list that chose not to bid on the project were contacted to gain insight on their reasons for not submitting a proposal. Most stated that were unavailable at this time. One company chose not to bid because of the remote location of the project.

Bid documents are currently being reworded to simplify the project by reducing the scope of work and will be released for bids this month.

If bids are returned favorably it is likely that the project would be completed in 2014 as the open work window for in-water work closes in October. It could be possible to have a contract in place by September and complete the float this year for installation next year.

B. Hovander River Trail – The RFP produced eleven bids for this project. Whatcom Builders was the lowest qualified bid. Approval to award the bid is on Council Agenda for this coming Tuesday. Upon approval, a contract will be drawn up and work started by August. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the end of September, 2013.

Rod explained that the trail is an eight foot, multiuse, gravel surface trail. It is approximately 1.5 miles long and is anticipated to cost \$115,000.00. This is significantly lower than the median bid of \$155,000.00. There was additional discussion regarding design, building materials and construction.

On September 28th the Parks and Rec Foundation and the City of Ferndale will be sponsoring a trail dedication. Times and locations will be shared with the Commission at a later date.

C. Samish Dock – The docks have been received from the manufacturer. The project will begin after the summer season, with an anticipated completion date by 2013 year end.

D. Silver Lake Playground – The playground is complete with the exception of the addition of benches, a drinking fountain and signage. The project was completed for use by July 4th and is receiving many favorable comments.

E. Lookout Mountain Trailhead – The construction for this project began June 3rd. Faber Construction is the awarded contractor.

The installation of a sub-drainage system that is located under the main parking lot is nearing completion. This is a fairly sophisticated storm water system that consists of a permeable ballast that holds runoff prior to directing it to a sand filter that will treat for phosphorus in order to protect the water shed and surrounding area.

F. Extra-Help – Special Projects – This position was recently vacated by Jeff Winslow, who held the position for approximately a year and recently accepted a position in the Assessor's office mapping division. The position was filled by Robert Bryson, a WWU with a major in Natural Resources and a minor in GIS.

Rod provided the Commission with a map that Robert recently completed for the Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan. There will be several similar individual maps that will be created that will not only be used in the Comp Plan but can also be used for the website, brochures, etc. A unique feature of this map is that it is not only attractive, it is also a "smart map" that is attached to a database that provides information that can be extracted to provide information such as the linear shoreline footage, square footage of picnic area, number of picnic tables and restrooms, maintained lawn area, playgrounds, etc.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. South Fork of the Nooksack River – Mike informed the Commission that the Executive has all of the information that he requested from the various departments but has not released when or how he is going to present the information to the Council. It is not on the Agenda for

the July 23rd Council Meeting. Mike will inform the Commission when that issue is on the Council Agenda.

B. Kendall Trail – There is a local citizen group that would like to create a community supported trail from the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center to Limestone.

Mike stated that the citizens have been meeting with the Department of Transportation as part of the trail involves the State Highway and would require a highway right-of-way. DOT has drafted a proposed route for this portion of the trail.

Mike discussed the issues that make this a considerably difficult project to complete. Parts of the trail run through a sub-division that includes many small patches of green belt, some as small as 10 feet and privately owned properties. All of these areas would require titles to be cleared prior to starting the project and many of the privately owned properties involve issues of bankruptcy, property liens and foreign ownerships. In addition, there are many hazard trees and dumped garbage that would need to be removed.

C. Glacier Community Trail – The Glacier community applied for a grant to fund this trail and were recently notified that the project would not be funded in the upcoming budget.

D. Chuckanut Mountain Trail – The Back Country Horsemen's Club has agreed to adopt approximately a mile of trail in the Raptor Ridge area that is part of the original Chuckanut Trails Plan. Because this has been a low funding priority for the Parks Department at present, the Back Country Horsemen have volunteered to sponsor the project.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 19, 2013, 6:00 PM. The meeting will be held at Samish Park.

X. ADJOURNMENT: Since there was no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Transcribed by: Pat Fisher, Clerk III

Approved by: Michael McFarlane, Parks Department Director