

**THURSTON COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA**

Tuesday June 9, 2009

**McLane Building Conference Room
Olympia, WA**

MINUTES

Members present: Larry Schaffner
Ed Cael

Absent: Candice Rydalch
Donna Weaver Smith

Guests: Tom Patten

County Commissioner: Karen Valenzuela

Staff: Cliff Moore, Director, Resource Stewardship
Scott Schmelfenig, Solid Waste Manager, Public Works
Kerry Hibdon, Public Works, Parks Division
Andrew Beattie, Recreation Supervisor, Recreation Services
Marilyn First, Parks Board Recording Secretary, Recreation Services

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM. Minutes from the previous meeting were shared, but not approved as there was no quorum. Minutes will be distributed and be adopted at the next meeting. Any changes can be sent to Marilyn First, the new recording secretary.

Introductions

Cliff Moore, Director of Resource Stewardship introduced staff who are new to the Parks Board

Dog Park Report

Scott Schmelfenig, Thurston County's Solid Waste Manager, Public Works, provided information from the county commissioners' briefing on the proposed dog park near the Waste and Recovery Center (WARC). Possibilities include using either North or South sides of the WARC, and/or collaborating with the cities of Lacey and/or Olympia. Intercity Transit is building a park & ride on the North side of the WARC. If the Northern site about 2.5 acres is chosen, the work on the park would need to wait until IT is finished with park & ride lot. The South side option, about 5.5 acres, near Master Gardener Closed Loop Demonstration Garden, has more room for possible future expansion.

A local group, "Sound Hounds" was at the BOCC briefing to show its support and enthusiasm for the project; the group works to advocate and raise funds and awareness for the need for dog parks. Staff has done research on similar parks from as small as 1 acre or as large as 40 acres in the other areas in Northwest. Staff has considered concerns including park hours and locking gates at the site, if dog park hours are different than the WARC's hours; environmental impacts:

storm water runoff and rotation of the dog run areas, and underground gas lines. The park will be fenced and will include water, bags for dog waste, and benches; possibly shelters in the future.

Recreation Services Update

Andrew Beattie reported that the Specialized Recreation Program, provided only to people with special needs, funded by a grant is funded only through 2009. The numbers for day camp registrations at the McLane and Pioneer elementary school sites are at similar levels (650 registrations) as in previous years. In other adult recreation programs, there are 36 soccer teams and 35 softball teams, also similar levels as in previous years.

Parks Update

Kerry Hibdon reported that Parks facility rentals at Frye Cove, Kenneydell, Burfoot and Griffin Field are showing no drop from previous years' levels, even though the media coverage about whether parks are open or not has not been clear. Both Parks and Recreation Services have issued media releases to help clarify and let the public know what services and parks *are* available.

Kerry is also working with Scott Schmelfenig and staff on the county's dog park planning, sharing that there is great need for this type of park in the community. He noted a survey that the *single largest* recreational activity adults report is: walking with dogs! Kerry also reported that crews have begun maintenance work on county owned buildings.

Board membership update:

Cliff Moore and Commissioner Valenzuela together reported that the county commissioners are aware that the Parks Board has vacancies in both the 1st and 2nd districts. There are candidates interested in serving who are already under consideration. Commissioner Valenzuela said there will soon be a complete parks board, and now more than ever a parks board is needed! She also added that the BOCC just today approved their work plan or their docket.

Parks Plan update:

Cliff Moore reported that County Commissioners still have significant interest in keeping the parks and recreation alive and expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Valenzuela attending Parks Board meetings. The BOCC (a new Commission since the previous comprehensive parks plan was adopted) adopted on new work plan to explore the future of parks funding and the possibilities of a metro parks district in the area.

The plan has 3 tiers:

- 1) Plans that absolutely must be done by 2010
- 2) Items that the BOCC would *like* to accomplish in the next year
- 3) Inter-jurisdictional items that need attention, including looking the possibilities impact fees to help fund

Cliff added that the parks and recreation are philosophically "married" but that for practical purposes, given the current funding situations, a temporary plan was put into place over the short run. The current plan for parks and recreation is not necessarily the structure for the long term.

Commissioner Valenzuela concurred and explained further that the 2009 budget, was based on revenue projections from the previous year; at the beginning of 2009 when it was clear that revenue was short by \$5 million, significant budget cuts were made in several departments to fill the gap. As the new board finalizes its parks, Parks Board members will be informed and asked to be a part of the conversation as they progress forward.

Other Business

Cliff Moore asked if there was other business. Kerry Hibdon reported that he met with Public Works Director, Les Olsen earlier in the day. Mr. Olsen had hoped to be at this meeting but was unable to attend. He asked that Kerry let everyone know that he offers his full support as well as the support of Public Works.

Guest Tom Patten, who joined the meeting mid-way, was given the floor to introduce himself. Mr. Patten is a member of the community, who is extremely eager to see dog parks established in each parks' jurisdiction in the area. Mr. Patten has attended other jurisdictions' parks board meetings, where he has heard information on Thurston County's park and recreation services, that is not consistent with information about county parks and recreation services shared at this meeting, that would have significant impacts on other parks' system. Mr. Patten offered that he would share the updated and corrected information when he attended future meetings. Andrew Beattie and Kerry Hibdon reiterated that there has been communication with staff at the other jurisdictions to clarify what is or is not available through Thurston County this year; however, that information may not have been distributed to all staff. Staff have also been working with the media to correct some of this misinformation, which is a continuing process.

Cliff re-confirmed that the next Parks Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Marilyn First
Recording Secretary