

THURSTON COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
Development Services Conference Room
Olympia WA
April 6, 2004

PRESENT: Joseph Shorin, Vice-Chair
Bernie Chaplin
Mark Lovrien
Judy Johnson
Grant Larsen
Jon Halvorson

ABSENT Joel Staloch

GUESTS: Bill Willis
Barb Anderson

STAFF Michael Welter
Chuck Groth
Sue Poyner
Cheri Johnson

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – It was noted that Commissioner Wilson was not present at the March meeting, but Commissioner Wolfe was. Also, the board felt that part of the wording regarding Cooper Point Park Proposal did not accurately reflect what the board had said. They agreed that the minutes should have read “the Park Board attempted to protect the integrity of the acquisition consideration process until some decisions were made to make a recommendation on the project”. The Park Board wanted to make it clear that they had put the property through the standard evaluation process. With these changes noted, the minutes of the March meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Barb Anderson, a county resident, gave her support of reopening the ORV Park. She stated that she has attended most of the Commissioner meetings and the IAC meetings and gave a briefing of the outcome of the last IAC meeting which Don Krupp and Michael also attended. The IAC discussed forming a mediation group to include IAC members, County officials, and park users. Bill Willis said he asked the IAC members why a park neighbor wasn't included in the mediation group and the IAC responded that the County officials represent them. Commissioner Macleod responded that has been one mission of the Board of Commissioners and he hasn't seen the Board deviate from it.

RECREATION REPORT – The recreation division is in the middle of sports sign-ups and summer camps registration. They are also preparing to bring on summer staff. Sue stated that her staff would be looking into the fee structure for the special recreation programs and possibly recommending an increase in some of the activities where the expenditures exceed the revenues.

Jon Halvorson stated that the Olympia Kiwanis has agreed to donate \$500 toward the recreation scholarship fund.

Sue reported that she is working in collaboration with the Housing Authority to provide a playground food program in the south county.

PARK REPORT – The parks and the trailheads opened for the season April 1. Kenneydell's ball fields are booked pretty much through summer and early fall.

The partnership with the Boston Harbor Marina to keep the boat launch restrooms opened and cleaned during the winter seemed to work out well. This may be a short-lived agreement since the Marina has applied for a permit to renovate the marina and it includes restrooms.

Michael has asked staff to look at the pros and cons of keeping the parks closed during the winter season. It appears to him at this point that the benefits are minimal to the department. There have been issues with sanitation since the restrooms are locked but people continue to use the parks. Also, there wasn't much of a savings on supplies. Based on this and other findings, the Parks Board and staff will need to evaluate closures for 2005 and beyond. The new Eyman initiative, if it passes this fall, could devastate the Parks Department and this may not be an issue.

The annual Arbor Day ceremony will take place this Thursday noon at Burfoot Park. Prairie Appreciation Day is scheduled for May 22 at Glacial Heritage Preserve.

Friends of the Trails Program – Chuck distributed a draft outline of his proposal for the Friends of the Trails Program. He used other trail systems with similar programs as a model. Revenues from this program would go toward the maintenance of the trails. Chuck envisions that the Parks Department would run the program and track all revenues.

Commissioner Macleod was enthused about the concept and feels it is something that should be looked at other areas as well. Some of the board's comments were:

- Consider charter members
- Marketing – name of others as a memorial or acknowledgement
- Speak to groups and organizations that board members may be involved with to encourage interest
- Implement phases – Phase I, cash donations. Phase II, work days
- For better customer service, look into credit cards for the county
- Eliminate the wording for the contributions brackets (individuals, family, group)

Jon moved that staff move ahead with completing this concept. Michael stated that before this moves ahead the Board of Commissioners would need to be apprised of the effort.

Staff's goal is to have it finalized and implemented by the end of the year. There is still much work to be done on it before it is brought to the public, such as preparing staff for the impact of interested people.

Jon volunteered to work on the Friends of the Trails committee with Chuck.

CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN – Michael will bring the proposed Capital Facilities projects to the Parks Board for their review at the next meeting. Michael will be scheduling a briefing with the Board of Commissioners to talk about the merits of the Boston Harbor and Gull Harbor projects. Michael will let the Park Board know of the date. The Parks Board needs to make their recommendation for the Plan by June.

The Board of Commissioners wants to see the board's process for prioritizing and evaluating projects.

Michael reported that the Town of Rochester has expressed an interest in developing a neighborhood park. Commissioner Macleod is on their committee and has let them know there is no capital money at this time. Someone from Rochester may be contacting Michael for his assistance.

Boston Harbor Properties – A property owner in Boston Harbor has brought a proposal to the department to trade some parcels of land. These parcels are in close proximity to Burfoot Park and would work well with the department's goal to infill around Burfoot Park with a buffer of land.

Another individual has expressed interested in acquiring from the department parcels of land on the other side of Boston Harbor Road. They appear to have minimal value to the department and aren't near the park's boundaries.

The board asked that staff find the true values of the parcels of the property and bring back for further discussion. They suggested the interested party do the necessary research since they approached the department with their proposal.

2004 BOARD WORK PLAN PROGRESS REPORTS

Scholarship Committee – the group has prepared a letter and is working on a strategy of distribution.

Commissioner Macleod stated that Puget Sound Energy Community Relations Manager expressed interest in contributing toward a community program. He suggested the group contact him.

Park Code Update - The committee has not met to date.

Park's Board Contacts – Bernie and Joel are making plans to attend the area's board meetings. Staff will prepare a list of the boards' meeting dates and times.

ORV PARK UPDATE – Don Krupp and Michael attended the IAC meeting last week. They answered questions and talked about the options that the County has looked at. IAC has written the Board of Commissioners recommending that they begin mediation. If the issue can't be resolved from that, IAC will begin taking legal action. Commissioner Macleod stated that the Board is adamant that the questions they prepared in February for the IAC had been very well thought out, and since IAC has refused to sufficiently respond to them, the Board is rejecting IAC's request for mediation. The next IAC is planned for July.

Commissioner Macleod reiterated that this has not taken the investigation to determine whether or not to reopen the park lightly and has done significant due diligence in the process.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Thurston County/City of Lacey Athletic Complex – Jon suggested it be referred to as the Regional Athletic Sports Complex. Michael encouraged the board to view the site during development. Phase I, which includes the soccer fields, should be complete by early summer. An old dump was found on the site and this is being analyzed.

The Board of Commissioners has given staff approval to get an appraisal of the 26-acre parcel adjacent to the athletic complex. It is uncertain where the money to purchase would come from at this time.

Bridging the Gap – Recently Michael learned that the \$5.5 million in Federal funds being sought for this project is currently in the 2004 House Transportation budget. The bill now heads to conference committee with the Senate. Representative Brian Baird has led the House effort and Senator Patty Murray has led the effort in Senate.

The Board of Commissioners has directed staff at Development Services to do a Cost Recovery Study. Michael stated that, ultimately, this framework might benefit the Parks Department.

The County has signed an agreement to purchase the credit union building on the courthouse hill. Development Services is scheduled to move in sometime next year. This may have an affect on the Parks Department's location in the future. Acquiring this building will save the County a lot of money over time.

Yelm-Tenino Trail - Several months ago the Washington State Department of Transportation required the department to delay construction of the Yelm-Tenino Trail because of their plans to straighten Hwy 507. They have recently changed their plan due to lack of funds. Hopefully, construction on the trail will begin this summer.

Griffin Fields – This project is moving ahead. Reseeding of the fields has taken place and, hopefully, the weather will cooperate.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm