

**THURSTON COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD**
Creekside Shelter, Kenneydell Park
Olympia WA

August 3, 2004

PRESENT: Joel Staloch, Chair
Bernie Chaplin
Mark Lovrien
Judy Johnson
Jon Halvorson

STAFF: Michael Welter
Chuck Groth
Sue Poyner
Linda Watkinson

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – The minutes of the June meeting were approved as written.

RECREATION REPORT - Sue reported that this summer's activities have been a success. She thanked the Park Board members for rounding up donations and their tremendous support. The recreation division received a donation from PARC to be used for kids' sports. Much appreciated are Park Board generated donations of monies and services for camp programs and Special Olympics. Judy Johnson suggested a public "thank you" in the Olympian newspaper to recognize Colorgraphics and The Valley Health Club for their donations of hats and t-shirts for Special Olympics.

The field use and sports programs have all been popular. Lakefair Kids Day at Sylvester Park drew over 2000 kids. Recreation staff will hold a planning retreat in September to discuss goals for 2005 and improvements to next year's programming. Bernie and Jon each mentioned that the fiscal year for the Kiwanis ends October 1 and suggested staff make their request for donations before then.

PARKS REPORT - Chuck attributes record attendance in all parks to the summer weather. Field use at Kenneydell Park has been cut back to maintain the grass. Glacial Heritage Preserve has scheduled two burns to maintain scotch broom, but has only had one so far. Due to the shortage of fire fighters, the second burn will be postponed until fall. A grant was received from the NRCS to be used at Glacial Heritage Preserve for removal of various species of encroaching fir trees to encourage the growth of Grand Oak trees. Judy Johnson asked for an update of the roof replacement for the caretaker residence at park and stated her concern of the County's liability and the caretaker's safety. She also suggested that the Landlord-Tenant Act should be considered. Michael responded that the Landlord-Tenant Act did not apply to park caretakers and that while the County may have a moral obligation to replace the roof, it does not have a legal obligation. At this time, the department does not have the funds to make the repairs.

The trestle over the Deschutes River was completed this week.

ORV Update - There have been no problems and no further vandalism in the park. Michael reported that Heather from The Daily Olympian contacted the IAC for an update and was told only that a meeting between them and the County had taken place but that no action had been taken. Meanwhile the County has had no contact from the IAC.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Michael thanked all the board members who attended the recent Board of Commissioners briefing regarding the Cooper Point property. The acquisition is moving along with an appraisal and title search. The 12-acres at Green Cove has been secured, and Capital Land trust is working on the Gull Harbor piece.

Regional Athletic Complex Construction Update - Michael reported that the utilities are in and construction of the restrooms is scheduled to begin next week. The seeding of four soccer fields is scheduled for the first of September. There are issues with the general contractor which have resulted in liens. Phase 1 completion was scheduled for July 2004, but has been rescheduled for the end of October 2004 instead.

The soccer fields are scheduled to open for use in fall 2005 which will allow a full year for the grass to establish. Parks Department staff, Kerry Hibdon & Wendi Garrison, will be shifting resources in the coming year to provide coverage for scheduling and maintenance of the Complex. Staff will approach the County Commissioners to request funding in 2005 to help with the costs associated with the maintenance of the facility. The expectation is that by 2007 the complex will be a fully staffed facility.

The site was having problems with vandalism of construction materials, property, trespassing and off-road vehicle use. These activities have ceased since letters were sent to neighboring property owners enlisting their help in reporting any suspicious activity.

Michael reported that the complex is looking great and all members are encouraged to go by and see the progress.

Yelm-Tenino Trail – Construction of the trail has been delayed due to issues with the “S” curves and a safe crossing at Highway 507, the replacement of a culvert, and increased costs for asphalt and other oil based materials. As of now, there will be approximately 2 miles of trail unable to be completed. The shortage to finish the project would be approximately \$100,000.

Deschutes Trestle - Parks has been working with the State Department of Transportation to provide signage to discourage parking along Highway 507 near one of the trestles. The hope is that the Department of Transportation, posting “No Parking” signs will keep the highway safer by making it difficult for trespassers to access the area. Issues that staff are continually dealing with at the trestle are trespassing in this unsupervised and unpatrolled area, vandalism to the trestle itself and the fencing surrounding the area, jumping from the trestle, swimming, toileting on the river bank, noise, garbage, camping, alcohol and drug use.

County Comp Plan Amendments related to Parks:

Michael distributed additions to the document *Permitted Uses in County Parks*. This document will clearly define permitted uses for Parks owned properties. He will be working with Geo Data to identify properties on maps and in descriptions. Benefits are documented land use, resources and preserves. This will also benefit existing or potential property owners in knowing the permitted uses on parks owned properties. Another benefit will be the elimination of approvals on projects as each construction phase is completed.

Caretaker Capital Improvements: Michael distributed copies of the Park Caretaker Residences / Capital Improvement Needs which outlines the department responsibility for residences, caretaker functions, and the benefits of having caretakers at the site. The report indicates that current repairs for all residences total \$70,000.

OTHER PROJECTS

Rochester Community Park:

Michael reported that he and Commissioner MacLeod revisited the Rochester Community Park idea. The Development Services Department will perform an environmental study of potential sites and land may be set aside for future park properties. The Rochester community suggested using the old elementary school for a park. In other Rochester news, the recent bond did not pass which leaves the city without school bus transportation. As a result, students are using the railroad as a trail to and from school. The railroad company is considering donating an easement for a trail running parallel to Highway 12. This trail could eventually connect to the town of Gate.

Northeast Olympia Park Donation: Michael reported that a local family wishes to honor their father's last wish by donating approximately 35 acres of property to the Parks Department, with the stipulation that it be used as playfields for children. After the Commissioners are briefed on this news, a tour will be arranged for Park Board members. A tentative date and time was suggested; board members will meet at Hubers Gast House on Tuesday, September 14 at 5:30. Members wishing to carpool from the Parks Department should call ahead for arrangements.

OTHER NEWS

Bridging the Gap: There been many meetings concerning this project and it appears to continue to move ahead. Currently the Washington State Department of Transportation is working to acquire the right-of-way for land near the South Sound Mall in Lacey.

The possibility of relocating the Parks Department to the McLane Fire Station is fully dependant on if the bond passes for a new Fire Station at the September election. Other possible locations for the Parks Department include space in the County Courthouse building.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm