

**THURSTON COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD**
Parks Department Conference Room
Olympia, WA

JUNE 12, 2007

MINUTES

PRESENT Jon Halvorson, Chair
Bernie Chaplin
Donna Weaver
Larry Schaffner
Candice Rydalch

ABSENT Donald Krug
Grant Larsen

STAFF Michael Welter, Director
Chuck Groth, Parks Operation Manager
Sue Poyner, Recreation Program Manager
Cheri Johnson, Administrative Assistant

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Member Rydalch moved to approve the May 2007 minutes. Member Chaplin seconded. Motion passed.

PARKS REPORT – Mr. Groth reported that the maintenance division has been able to utilize prison crews for the past three weeks. The cost was covered through service contracts. This year, for the first time, the fields at the R.A.C. were top-dressed with sand and fertilized.

Staff is working on building the well house at the Griffin Athletic Fields. Staff is hopeful that the irrigation system will be installed this fall. The design work will be done by J.D. Fowler and the crew will install the system to save money.

Mr. Groth reported that approximately 700 people attended the Prairie Appreciation Day at Glacial Heritage Preserve last month. This is an increase over last year. Attendance has continued to grow each year. The work is complete on the caretaker residence and is looking very nice. The caretaker is doing a good job of upkeep so far.

Attendance in all the parks has increased from last year. Events on the trails have also increased this year.

Work on the trail improvements in the City of Rainier is continuing. An Eagle Scout resulted in a concrete pad and kiosk being constructed and plantings placed along the trail. Rainier will be dedicating a town park and efforts are being made to clean up along the trail in the city.

RECREATION REPORT – Ms. Poyner stated that the Swede Day Fun Run in Rochester will take place this weekend. Margaret Huff, Recreation Coordinator, has raised over \$600 in donations for the event.

Ms. Poyner reported that the same program model that staff uses to offer after-school enrichment activities for children in the Griffin School area will be used in Rochester next year. The Griffin program has been a big success and there is a strong need for this type of program in Rochester.

There has been an increase in user requests for all the athletic fields. She contributes this to Nick Herzog's, Recreation Supervisor, hard work in the sports area, and the efforts put into making the fields as nice as they are by the maintenance division.

Ms. Poyner stated that the recreation division has added their volunteer program to the department's website.

The department offered a summer program in Bucoda several years back which included a free lunch and was very successful. This was offered using grant money. Staff will be evaluating the potential for offering camps or a playground program in the south county next year

BOARD OF COMMISSIONER/PARKS BOARD MEETING REVIEW – Member Weaver reported that American Express is offering grant money for a community project and she submitted the Rochester park and trail as a nomination. The winner will be announced later in June.

The board talked about the maintenance list that Member Halvorson submitted to the Board. The entire list is comprised of priority projects that staff had prepared for the parks board several months back. The list that was given to the Board of Commissioners consisted of the top projects from the list. Director Welter is hopeful the Board of Commissioners will consider funding the projects using REET money, but he will continue to work to get funding for the entire list in phases.

MCLANE TRAIL – Director Welter reported that Ralph Munro has made a request to the Board of Commissioners that the County consider assuming a lead role on the McLane Trail project so that grants can be obtained for further development. The Board of Commissioners has asked that the parks board evaluate this idea and make a recommendation on whether the trail should be included in the parks plan. The trail was built on County road right-of-way. The board asked for clarification on the following:

- 1) What are the expectations of the County attached to the proposal
- 2) What are the annual costs of maintaining the trail
- 3) What would the cost be to continue developing the remaining portion of the trail to The Evergreen State College and the Capitol Forest.

The board suggested visiting the site and possibly inviting Mr. Munro to go along. A tentative date of July 6 was scheduled. Staff will contact the two members that were absent and make the final plans. Director Welter will check with Development Services for possible outstanding permit issues. Mr. Groth will prepare a cost estimate for maintaining the existing trail and the development and maintenance of the remaining portion of the trail.

AUGUST PARKS BOARD MEETING – the meeting will be held at the Creekside Shelter at Kenneydell Park and will include a barbecue picnic. More details will follow.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – Member Schaffner, following the suggestion at the board's retreat to begin the process of revising the policy statements in the Parks Comprehensive Plan, offered his written comments/modifications to the policy statements to begin dialogue on the update. Several of the members found the draft very useful and had few comments to add. There was discussion about Level of Service and public input. Member Schaffner suggested that provide the public some context of what the department owns, operates and programs offered would help better inform them and prepare them for their active involvement in the plan update. He stated he would be willing to prepare a list of items for consideration.

Director Welter summarized the board's strategy to move through the Comp Plan update process:

- 1) Form a subcommittee to evaluate all the pieces – start now and define a work plan. Members Schaffner, Rydalch, and Weaver volunteered for a committee to review Section V – Park Lands Acquisition Plan.

- 2) Request funding for a consultant to complete an existing conditions and needs analysis.
- 3) Review the public outreach campaign components after the consultant is finished with their part.

Staff will look into the costs of a survey. The subcommittee will report back in July. Director Welter will make the request for funding. Member Schaffner and Director Welter will discuss items for the consultant to consider.

The board agreed that the bulk of the park plan public meetings should be held in September and October.

TRAIL GATE UPDATE – The County has received written word from the Federal Highways Department to remove the gates and replace them with bollards. Staff has begun planning the change. However, the County will wait to get written clarification about the bollards design before moving further.

REGIONAL ATHLETIC COMPLEX UPDATE – The City of Lacey has closed on the 26-acre property adjacent to the complex at a cost of \$2.145 million. The County, using Conservation Futures Funds, made the purchase as part of the Public Facilities District agreement between the Cities of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and the County.

BOSTON HARBOR LAND ISSUES – Director Welter referred the board to the Summary of Details statement found in the board’s packet. Mr. Rutledge has stated that he is willing to do the work to proceed with the trade.

BOARD NOMINATIONS – Member Weaver volunteered to follow up with the committee members who were not present to solicit nominations for the Chair and Vice-chair. They will report back at the July meeting.

PARKS DEPARTMENT REORGANIZATION – Director Welter outlined a proposal he has for a reorganization of the departments and functions under his responsibility. The Board of Commissioners have given him permission to move ahead with a plan. There was concern that the parks department could be “absorbed” into the system in the future. Director Welter underscored the importance of the Parks and Recreation Department’s need to maintain its own independence in order to insure the public receives the services they seek. A new manager will be appointed to oversee the Parks Department and Director Welter stated that he will phase this person into the department responsibilities and will define at a later date his role with the parks board and their meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.