

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

NOVEMBER 13, 2007

MINUTES

PRESENT Jon Halvorson, Chair
Bernie Chaplin
Larry Schaffner
Candice Rydalch
Donald Krug

ABSENT Donna Weaver

STAFF Michael Welter, Director
Chuck Groth, Parks Operation Manager
Kerry Hibdon, Capital Projects Manager
Sue Poyner, Recreation Program Manager
Alisson Bonner, Recreation Program Coordinator
Cheri Johnson, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Chairman Halvorson said he would like to add an item to the agenda to discuss nominating a representative from the board to being attending the PARC meetings. Member Rydalch moved to add this item to the agenda. Member Schaffner seconded. Motion carried.

RECREATION REPORT – Alisson Bonner, Recreation Program Coordinator, gave a report on specialized recreation. She announced that the department was awarded a \$58,000 Millage grant for an additional two years. These funds support the Program Coordinator position which runs the Specialized Recreation programs.

Ms. Poyner asked the board to consider referring business owners or individual who may be interested in donating to the Specialized Recreation Valentine Dinner Dance in February. Staff's goal is to raise \$1000 to offset the cost of the dance and thus lower the admission fee to the participants. So far they have been able to secure \$400.

The recreation staff worked on their 2008 work program at their retreat last week.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Because the October meeting minutes were not available to the board in their packet, the minutes will be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting.

CAPITAL PROEJCTS – Mr. Hibdon stated that the gates and bollards project on both trails is complete. The final cost of the project was \$26,000; far less than the \$60,000 budgeted for the project. Money was saved by retrofitting the gates and making them into bollards. The design works very well and other agencies have shown interest in the design. The Road Department has said they will help insure an appropriate vegetation clear zone for the intersections by adding this work to their regular mowing program along county roads.

Due to the extended amount of work on the gate/bollards project, the crew has not been able to put much time toward cosmetic upgrades in the parks. They will begin doing those things this winter.

Mr. Hibdon stated that the Griffin School District has agreed to fund \$8,300 the installation of a pump for the new well at the Griffin Athletic Fields.

Mr. Hibdon reported on the continuous vandalism at the Chambers Lake Trailhead.

MAINTENANCE UPDATE – Mr. Groth reported that utility upgrade work is going on along the trail. Provisions have been made to allow users to continue to use the trail during construction in those areas. Specific safety measures were required of the contractor to insure public safety.

The maintenance staff has cleared several trees along the trail where property owners have concern. Mr. Hibdon stated that staff is becoming more proactive about removing trees along the trails and in the parks to ease liability issues.

Mr. Groth reported staff is working at acquiring an easement from the Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad line to allow the department to pave the gravel connection around the trestle near Rainier Road and Indian Summer Golf Course.

The County Roads Department is the lead agency in designing the crossing on Martin Way which connects to the DNR portion of the Chehalis Western Trail. The work is being paid for with grant money from Thurston Regional Planning Council Transportation (TRPC) enhancement funds.

The Roads Department has said they will work cooperatively with the Parks Department to make repairs on the trails as needed, as they view the trail system as part of the county's transportation system.

RUTLEDGE LAND TRADE/BURFOOT PARK TRAIL PROJECT - The proposed land swap with Mr. Rutledge has been finalized and recorded. The department has received \$25,000 from Mr. Rutledge in addition to the equal exchange of 10 lots each by the parties. The land trade also required Mr. Rutledge to survey the property to document the ownership boundaries after the trade and to construct a wooden split rail fence to define the boundary between Park property and private property. The Planning Department will require a Boundary Line Adjustment in order for the exchange to result in a buildable lot for Mr. Rutledge. This will take at least three months or more. The survey needs to be completed first so that properties can be defined. His land will need to be cleared so a survey can be completed. Planning and on-site evaluation of issues to be addressed for a potential trail, as requested by the Boston Harbor Association, can not begin until property lines are surveyed and vegetation removed. Permits will still need to be acquired from the Planning Department before any work on potential trail development can be considered. It is likely that work will not occur until sometime mid-year 2008.

Mr. Welter stated that two other property owners have expressed interest in trading/selling their property in the same area. Staff will be evaluating the feasibility of such an initiative and making recommendations to the Park Board at a future meeting.

2008 BUDGET PROPOSAL AND ISSUES SUMMARY – Staff prepared a summary of the 2008 budget for the board to review. Some board members had concern of the amount of indirect costs to the department from the Central Services Department. Board members expressed concern that it actually is costing the department significantly more to move into a county-owned building than what it cost to be in rental space. The City of Lacey has opened the bid process on the \$10,000,000 phase II construction project at the RAC. Two synthetic soccer fields are included in the plan. Parks staff determined that maintenance of the County's portion of the park will continue to cost the department annually. While self-sufficiency remains the goal, staff does not foresee the park generating enough revenue to offset all maintenance and operation costs. Phase II construction will cause two of the fields to close next year which will cut revenue to the department.

The department's main concern for the 2008 budget is the loss of a permanent ¾ time maintenance position due to losing an intergovernmental contract at the landfill. Director Welter stated that staff will be looking at ways to generate more revenue to allow the position to be retained. Member Schaffner suggested staff consider looking at cutting expenses in the parks by exploring opportunities to convert underutilized turf areas to less maintenance intensive landscapes (i.e., native plants). Staff explained that they have been reevaluating maintenance level of service standards such as watering less or fewer areas. Staff has begun doing this and will continue to evaluate all ideas. The board offered to support the department in securing the necessary funds to retain the maintenance position.

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS PLAN – Director Welter stated that Norm Landerman-Moore, the consultant proposed to take on the project of evaluating demands, needs and level of service data for the comp plan update will be attending the next Parks Board meeting. Mr. Landerman-Moore was the consultant originally hired to develop a comprehensive plan for the department many years ago. Cliff Moore, from Thurston County Cooperative Extension will also be attending. Cliff will discuss how we might utilize the resources of his department and WSU to facilitate a focus group component and public participation in the plan effort.

Mr. Landerman-Moore will be sending a draft scope of work and Michael will forward it to each member prior to the December meeting. Michael encouraged the board to review the plan and to send him ideas of what they'd like to see the discussion focus on for the board meeting by December 1.

PARKS BOARD VACANCY – Grant Larsen has resigned and has left a vacancy in Commissioner District 3. Director Welter stated that he has given this information to Commissioner Macleod to see if he had any suggestions for a candidate in his area. To date he has not received word back. Staff will begin the advertising process next week. Director Welter encouraged the board to let others know of the opening.

REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN – Director Welter stated that he would submit the comments he received from some of the board members under separate cover from the letter the board had approved.

PARC MEMBER VOLUNTEER – The board agreed with the importance of having a representative from the parks board attend the PARC meetings. After some discussion, Member Rydalch volunteered to serve as the representative, and Member Chaplin volunteered to be her backup.

GOOD OF THE ORDER – Director Welter reported that the DNR is looking at ways to address the gate design issues on the northern section of the Chehalis Western Trail in preparation for a potential transfer of the property to the parks department. They have been getting pressure to remove the gates and replace them with bollards as the County was told to do. Funding for the project appears to be an issue.

Director Welter also advised the board that TRPC has received notice that Thurston County will receive a \$950,000 Regional Enhancement Transportation Grant for the Bridge the Gap Project. The final decision is expected by early December. Funds will be used to buy right-of-way and construct the bridges over Martin Way and Pacific Avenue.

There being no further business, Member Rydalch moved to adjournment the meeting. Member Krug seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

