

**THURSTON COUNTY  
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD**  
4131 Mud Bay Rd SW  
Olympia 98502

**MARCH 11, 2008**

**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**      Jon Halvorson, Chair  
                                 Bernie Chaplin  
                                 Donna Weaver  
                                 Candace Rydalch  
                                 Larry Schaffner  
                                 Donald Krug  
                                 Ed Cael

**GUESTS**              Anne Mills – South Sound Green  
                                 Students and teacher from Black Hills High School

**STAFF**                Michael Welter, Director  
                                 Chuck Groth, Park Operations Manager  
                                 Kerry Hibdon, Capital Projects Manager  
                                 Sue Poyner, Recreation Program Manager  
                                 Cheri Johnson, Administrative Assistant

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

Mr. Ed Cael was introduced as the new member to the Parks Board.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Member Chaplin moved to approve the minutes of the January 8 meeting. Member Weaver seconded. Motion carried.

Member Rydalch noted that in the January 24 minutes, Chairman Halvorson is named as Vice-chair. With this correction noted, Member Rydalch moved to approve the minutes. Member Krug seconded. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Anne Mills, from South Sound Green, and students from the Black Hills High School, came and gave their input in favor of the Parks Department acquiring the property currently for sale by Mrs. Pettit. The students gave a presentation on the educational and recreational value the site can provide.

**RECREATION PROGRAM REPORT** – Ms. Poyner stated that while Alisson Bonner, Recreation Program Coordinator, is on a six-month maternity leave, Gordon Fox has taken over programming for the Specialized Recreation division.

Ms. Poyner reported that staff is looking into the possibility of providing a day camp program for the first time in the Rochester area. McLane Elementary and the Parks Department has joined together to provide Enrichment classes at their school beginning this spring. This is also a pilot program.

The Valentine Dinner and Dance for people with special needs was a big success. Approximately 70 people participated. Ms. Poyner thanked those who contributed to this event in helping to make it affordable to the participants.

For the benefit of Member Cael and the other board members, Ms. Poyner talked a little bit about the Recreation division and how it is fee based; the department does not receive any general fund contribution from the County for these programs.

As a point of information, Member Rydalch reported that she would be attending the next PARC meeting in 2 weeks. The Foundation raises money for area recreation departments to provide programming for youth. The foundation will be holding their annual auction this spring.

**PARKS REPORT** – Mr. Hibdon reported that staff’s number one priority for several months has been the renovation and move into the new office. Mr. Hibdon reported that has been some significant vandalism at the Chehalis Western Trailhead at Chambers Lake and at the RAC. Staff has been taking care to repair the damage immediately as a discouragement to others.

**PETTIT PROPERTY EVALUATION** – Several of the board members who have been able to view the property turned in their evaluations. The evaluation process was discussed and several of the board members expressed some frustration with the questions. Director Welter reported that the evaluation has evolved from previous IAC property evaluations for grant applications. The board discussed revising the form to make it more understandable. Director Welter encouraged the board to consider revising the form for future property evaluations. He will provide the board with a copy of the Development Evaluation form.

The board was given a deadline of April 1 to turn in their evaluations on the Pettit property to Director Welter. He will provide the results at the next meeting.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE & STRATEGIC PLANNING** – Director Welter reported that the Board of Commissioners has authorized the expenditure of \$50,000 to update the parks comprehensive plan. This was well received by the board. It will be up to the staff and the Parks Board to determine what portion the consultant will do and what support WSU Cooperative Extension can provide.

Due to the dollar amount, it is County policy to go out for RFQ or RFP for a consultant. This process may take up to a month or more. Director Welter is hopeful the plan will be complete by October.

Director Welter shared with the board his idea to use the Parks Plan update to consolidate the County’s land preservation priorities of not only the Parks Department, but the Agriculture Committee and Historic Commission as well. This option is made possible because all responsibilities are consolidated within the umbrella of the Development Services Department. If successful, this approach will provide the County with better options for prioritizing the expenditure of limited existing funding sources and new potential funding sources. A good example of the coordination that could occur is in the effort to preserve the 700-acre Black River Ranch, located just south of the Glacial Heritage Preserve. In that effort, the County has taken the lead to

apply for a grant for farmland preservation from the state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Partners in the proposal include The Nature Conservancy, Capital Land Trust, South of the Sound Farmland Trust and a couple of foundations, among others. Thurston County is contributing \$400,000 in Conservation Futures funding to the \$7 million project. This is another project within the Black River Preservation Initiative plan. The Parks Board expressed strong interest in the concept of the consolidated planning effort, including the possibilities around a joint meeting with the Agriculture Committee and Historic Commission. Director Welter advised the board that he would work on some of the details as to how this might occur and report back at the next board meeting.

**CAPITAL FACILITIES PLANNING** – Mr. Hibdon will give a presentation at the next meeting. Director Welter reported that construction of the bridge over Martin Way is scheduled to begin this summer. The last leg of the Bridging the Gap project is for a bridge over Pacific Avenue.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Due to an interest by the public for off-leash dog parks, the Board of Commissioners have requested staff to brief them on this issue. Staff has maintained that it is an urban problem, and should be a city lead project.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.