

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

MAY 13, 2008

MINUTES

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Donna Weaver-Smith

GUESTS Lynn Scroggins
 Tom Patten

STAFF Michael Welter, Director
 Chuck Groth, Park Operations Manager
 Kerry Hibdon, Capital Projects Manager
 Cheri Johnson, Administrative Assistant

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – Mr. Patten, representing citizens in favor of off-leash dog parks, was present to observe the meeting. He said is also very interested in exploring ways to expand the trails to make connections to various parks in the community.

RECREATION PROGRAM REPORT – Sue Poyner was absent, so Director Welter stated that Alisson Bonner, Recreation Program Coordinator, has resigned from her position effective immediately. Ms. Bonner has been on maternity leave and was expected back in July. Mr. Gordon Fox has been her temporary replacement. The position will be posted soon.

Ms. Rydalch reported the PARC foundation raised approximately \$25,500 at their annual auction. This money will go to the area parks departments for outdoor recreation programs. Mrs. Rydalch stated that she plans to continue to attend the PARC meetings as a representative of the Parks Board.

CAPITAL PROJECTS REPORT – Mr. Hibdon reported that the construction of phase II of the Regional Athletic Complex is moving quickly. He reported that 5 new buildings, backstops, lights and grading have already been completed. They are currently working on the synthetic soccer field.

Mr. Hibdon reported that work has been completed on several of the projects that were funded by REET money. The playgrounds in all the parks are being installed as well as new decking on the docks and other improvement around the beach area at Kenneydell Park. Siding and steel roofing are being put on the Kenneydell caretaker residence. Information kiosks are being placed near the Yelm-Tenino Trail in Rainier and Tenino. Staff will begin painting all the park restrooms and gates soon. A new road into the Glacial Heritage Preserve will be constructed along with a separate road for volunteers that will lead to the back of the caretaker residence. Mr. Hibdon noted that the caretakers at Glacial Heritage Preserve will be leaving in June to move into their new home.

Mr. Hibdon reported that the maintenance crew has spent a lot of time repairing and cleaning up vandalism in all the parks. It seems to be happening more then ever before and staff is having a hard time keeping on top of it. Other entities are noticing the same thing. Chairman Halvorson again requested a report from staff on the financial implications of the ongoing vandalism for next month's meeting.

PARKS REPORT – Mr. Groth reported that approximately 40 people attended the Burfoot Park Arbor Day planting. A Boy Scout will be constructing a butterfly garden and a pathway to the shelter as part of his Eagle Scout project at the park as well. About 750 people showed up at the Glacial Heritage Preserve for the annual Prairie Appreciation Day event.

New playgrounds are being installed in all the parks and the plan is to have them all complete by the first of June. The Olympian newspaper will be running a feature article on the new equipment. The department elected to pay extra and have the playground company install the equipment rather than the parks maintenance crew because of liability insurance purposes. Director Welter underscored that the department hasn't typically had the funding to contract out for things like installation and the burden for these type of improvements have fallen on the maintenance staff. It was real helpful to not need park staff for this work, as they are way to busy with ongoing maintenance issues in the parks to have to take on the burden of construction projects as well.

Mr. Groth reported that the Board of Commissioners approved the three-quarters time project maintenance position and advertising for it has begun. Mr. Groth is hopeful to have the position filled before the end of the month. This position is mainly to focus on the contract sites in the county and ends in December.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING – The board was given a copy of the summary and the verbatim document from the visioning meeting held earlier this month. Mr. Welter reported that the Historical Commission met a week later and through this process they were able to find a commonality with the Parks Department. The Agricultural Committee will meet next, but a definite date has not been set. After their meeting all the groups will meet as a whole. The information obtained through the visioning groups will be used by Norm Landerman-Moore as the foundation for his work on the plan. The Commissioners are interested in the plan incorporating new funding resources for the department.

The board commented on the following:

Page 1 – Increased Interest in Open Space: Scarce is misspelled.

Page 2 – Trend Toward Smaller... : Energy prices (misspelling)

Page 2 – Increased Interest in an Inter-disciplinary... : Include land trusts, Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands

Page 3 – Environmental Awareness: Include reclaimed water

The board is to forward on to Ms. Johnson any further comments. Dates for future meetings will be discussed at the next meeting.

CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN – Mr. Hibdon presented a summary of the changes for this year’s CFP. The monetary difference between this year’s and last year’s plan is \$886,000.

Member Schaffner stated that he would like to see the department and board look at the possibility of Tumwater Parks taking over the maintenance and operation of the Kenneydell Park ball fields in the future.

Director Welter stated that staff will be having discussions with Griffin School regarding the use agreement at the Griffin Athletic Fields. The county is reluctant to continue with infrastructure improvements until the school district commits to extend the use agreement.

Member Rydalch moved to approve the Capital Facilities Plan as presented. Member Krug seconded. The motion passed.

COUNTY BUDGET – Director Welter reported on the County’s budget outlook for the upcoming year and beyond. The budget has a shortfall of \$3.8 million going into next year. The County convened a task force made of citizens to look at all expenditures. Member Krug served on the committee. He reported that some of committee’s recommendations were:

- Freeze hiring
- Freeze budget
- Freeze salaries
- Centralize budget office team
- Manage budget process better
- Provide staff training on budget prep
- Improve process of including elected officials in budget process

The committee has prepared their report and it was given to the Board of Commissioners for their review. They will meet with the task force later in June to answer questions.

Director Welter feels that it is a positive thing that the Board of Commissioners approved allocating \$50,000 to the Parks Department to do a park plan and that the timing is good for looking at other revenue streams.

OFF-LEASH DOG PARK - Director Welter stated that there is a strong interest group in the county lobbying the cities and county to offer off-leash dog parks. The County does not have a position on it. Mrs. Scroggins stated that their group, the Sound Hounds, is interested in educating the community to these type of parks and are willing to work with the jurisdictions to do this.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

