

**THURSTON COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD**
Gull Harbor Lutheran Church
Olympia, WA 98506

AUGUST 12, 2008

MINUTES

PRESENT Jon Halvorson, Chair
Bernie Chaplin
Larry Schaffner
Candice Rydalch

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

GUEST: Approximately 60 Members of the Boston Harbor Neighborhood Association

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Member Rydalch moved to accept the minutes from the June meeting. Member Schaffner noted a typo on page one; in the second paragraph under Program Report, the word should read plaque, not plague. With the correction noted, the minutes were approved as written.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION: Burfoot Trail Proposal from the Boston Harbor Neighborhood Association:
Members of the Boston Harbor Association were present to give their input into the proposal. Meredith Rafferty, who first brought this before the board, was unable to attend. Another representative of the Neighborhood Association spoke about the proposal. The proposed route that would access the park near the intersection of Boston Harbor Road and Boston Harbor Extension Road and would avoid the risk of walking along the shoulder of Boston Harbor Road in order to enter at the park's entrance.

Mr. Harold Williams, a resident who lives on the Boston Harbor Extension Road immediately stated that he would not give approval to allow the road to be vacated in order to allow it be a walking path into the park. He has concern that it would evidently cause people to park along the road and disrupt his privacy.

Director Welter read the emails that the department received regarding the proposal. All were in support of the proposal, except for one citizen who had concern of the impact it may have on the neighbors along the BH Extension Road.

Many of the neighbors present spoke in support of an alternate route into the park and talked about the hazard of walking around the blind corner on BH Road to get to the main entrance. The majority of the group said they would be willing to provide the labor and maybe some of the costs associated with constructing a trail. Several people were not aware that there would be permitting costs for construction. They did not think it was likely that the back entrance would get as much use as suggested and didn't think it was realistic to compare it to the Priest Point Park side entrance that became so heavily used the City had to build a parking area.

A neighbor stated that before constructing a trail through the woods, the wildlife should be considered and how much a trail would impact them.

There were several suggestions of where the trail could be located, but there were differing opinions for each alternative. Several people stated that the previous caretaker allowed neighbors to walk down the road and enter the beach area that way, but the present caretaker has made it clear that it is not acceptable. Director Welter stated that it was the decision of the Parks Department to limit access on the caretaker access road to protect the caretaker's privacy. Many of the neighbors felt that was the best entrance and would cause the least amount of impact and cost.

The neighbors wanted the Parks Board to give them a timeframe of when this issue would be resolved. They voiced their frustration at how long the process has taken.

Director Welter stated that the department would need a clear idea of where the majority of the neighborhood would like to see the access constructed, and a clear commitment by the Boston Harbor Association that they would commit time and labor if there is need for construction. Chair Halvorson announced that the County is going through severe budget issues, and that the Parks Department may be in jeopardy. The trail the neighborhood is hoping for may not be feasible with impending cuts to the department's budget.

The board suggested that the Association meet among themselves and come to a consensus of where they want the trail to enter and submit it to the board for discussion at their next meeting in September. The group agreed to the board's suggestion.

Pending the outcome of the decision at the next meeting, Director Welter gave permission to the Boston Harbor neighborhood to utilize the caretaker entrance to the beach on a temporary basis. There was applause with his statement.

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS PLAN UPDATE – Member Schaffner said it would have been helpful to get the draft copy a couple days prior to the meeting rather than at the meeting as he would have been more prepared to give input. Member Schaffner had the following concerns about the draft so far:

- Wordiness, needs to be more concise
- Use more graphics
- Make it easier to read
- Needs to "tell a story"
- Provide a table under Parks Programming
- Let the reader come to conclusions rather than telling the reader right off

He felt there was a lot of good information, but improvements could be made in how it is presented. He stated he would email the board examples of other comprehensive plans he is aware of for their review and comparison. Staff was asked for their thoughts and comments. Mr. Hibdon stated he thought there was good information, but it was wordy.

Director Welter stated he would convey these concerns to Mr. Landerman-Moore.

2009 BUDGET ISSUES – Director Welter reported that the Board of Commissioners has given the following instructions in preparing for the 2009 budget:

- Each department is directed to make a 5% reduction in general fund support for 2008
- Prepare for an additional 5% reduction in the general fund support in 2009
- Each department will be required to cover all costs associated with internal costs, and personnel increases including cost of living.

Director Welter said that the timing is good for the comprehensive plan since it deals with enterprise funding. Through the plan, the Board of Commissioners will be afforded several opportunities to make policy decisions to effect the department can becoming an enterprise fund. He encouraged the board to attend upcoming department budget meetings with the Commissioners.

DNR-OWNED CHEHALIS WESTERN TRIAL – The Board of Commissioners have given approval to the department to send a letter of intent to DNR to discuss the County taking over ownership of the northern section of the Chehalis Western Trail

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Member Chaplin moved that the board accept the Nominating Committees recommendation to nominate Member Halvorson for Chair and Member Weaver-Smith for Vice-Chair. Member Rydalch seconded the motion. The motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.