

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

SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT Jon Halvorson, Chair
Donna Weaver-Smith
Larry Schaffner
Donald Krug
Ed Cael

MEMBERS ABSENT: Donna Weaver-Smith
Bernie Chaplin

GUESTS Adrienne Smith
Meredith Rafferty
Lynda Eich
Eric Hulburt
Rowland Thompson

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 6:40 pm.

MINUTES – Larry asked that the statement in the Comprehensive Plan discussion where it says that he requested that Mr. Landerman-Moore provide a table under Parks Programming be struck from the minutes as he does not remember saying it. Instead, what he wanted to convey is that he would like the document written in a manner that allows the reader to draw their own conclusions based on the information and data presented.

Member Cael moved to adopt the minutes with the noted revision. Member Schaffner seconded the motion. Motion passed.

BURFOOT PARK TRAIL – Director Welter gave an overview of what was discussed at the August meeting. Subsequent to the meeting, the Boston Harbor Neighborhood Association submitted a proposal to accept the secondary trail option that would provide pedestrian access to the park by way of the Boston Harbor Extension Road as was suggested at the meeting. Mr. Hibdon reported that the department will use Cedar Creek Correction crews and volunteers to build out the trail. The trail would ultimately include use the caretaker road to get access to the park and then a trail would be constructed to connect to the existing park trail system. The plan is to avoid adding stairs and switchbacks. There will be a gravel base surfaced with wood chips.. The Cedar Creek work crews will cost approximately \$2500. This and the cost of permitting will be funded by REET money. Mr. Hibdon stated that volunteers are needed for the finishing work, such as adding and spreading wood chips and revegetation.

The plan is to have the trail complete by the end of November. Mrs. Rafferty stated that the community supports the plan and are more than willing to volunteer their time and other resources, and they may be able to offer funding to some degree. The Association thanked the board for the efforts of the Parks Department staff and were happy this is coming to a positive conclusion.

Mr. Cael moved to accept the alternative access and trail into Burfoot Park for the Boston Harbor community as defined by staff. Mr. Schaffner seconded. Motion carried.

Mr. Schaffner complemented the Association on how well the meeting in their neighborhood went last month. He was very impressed with how the community interacted with the board and the positive suggestions that were made.

RECREATION REPORT – Ms. Poyner reported that all the camps had great attendance this summer, beating previous years' records.

Mrs. Poyner reported that Margaret Huff, Recreation Program Coordinator, left today on maternity leave and will return in early January. Andrew Beattie, Recreation Program Supervisor, is still away on FMLA and may return at the end of the month. The newest and remaining staff member, Gordon Fox, has been taking on added responsibilities and a few temporary employees have been brought on to assist.

Staff is looking at the possibility of expanding recreation programs into the Yelm area by starting afterschool enrichment in the elementary schools.

Historical Commission Update – After taking the summer off from meetings, the Commission will resume their monthly meetings beginning this month. The Territorial Stage Coach event will take place Friday, September 19 at Nelson Farm, off Old Hwy 99. Director Welter reported that the Historic Commission has a budget of \$54,000 which will be used to cover staff support, events, and projects.

PARKS REPORT – Mr. Groth reported that he and staff from the Stream Team and Water & Waste Management worked together to offer a tour of the Glacial Heritage Preserve and Deschutes Falls Park. The event was put on by Stream Team and offered a look at the geological effects of the land brought on by glaciers.

Mr. Groth reported that the Department received a grant from NRCS for \$80,000 for restoration and management of the Glacial Heritage Preserve. A burn is scheduled at the preserve this week on 80 acres of land. Besides various fire departments, many volunteers will be on hand to assist. Approximately \$10,000 value will be realized from the burn. The benefit is huge as it reduces the amount of scotch broom and encourages native growth.

Director Welter reported that he and Mr. Hibdon have met with the DNR to discuss issues around transferring the northern end of the DNR-owned Chehalis Western Trail to the County. Mr. Krug had concern of maintenance issues the County would inherit.

CAPITAL PROJECTS – Mr. Hibdon reported that staff will be actively pursuing completing the REET funded projects. In order to save time and staff labor, some of the projects will be contracted out.

This fall, the department will be contracting out to have Cottonwood trees removed along the trails system because they are hazardous and undesirable. A community tree planting project to replace the trees removed with more desirable species. Another project staff is working on is installing trail use counters along the trails. They are investigating where they'll be placed to get the most accurate count.

2009 BUDGET – Director Welter distributed a summary of the budget strategy that was presented to the Board of Commissioners. The department is facing a \$264,000 shortfall for 2009. Some drastic measures will be needed to make up this shortfall, including including not funding the Lacey/County-owned regional Athletic Complex. and turning it over the City of Lacey, and reducing staff by 4 employees. Services will be reduced in several areas, such as maintaining the courthouse and health department grounds.

The Roads and Transportation Department have suggested classifying the trails system as a transportation corridor. They would contract with Parks to continue maintaining the trail system and fund staffing costs. Negotiations are going on with Water and Waste Management to reinstitute the \$90,000 maintenance service contract that the department lost last year For the WARC.

The City of Lacey is aware of the county’s proposal to eliminate the R.A.C in 2009. A final decision has not been made by the Board of Commissioners. Member Schaffner stated that this may be an opportunity for the County to redirect its park services away from athletic fields. He suggested that the City of Tumwater may be interested in taking over the Kenneydell fields. He cautioned staff about ideas that may be presented during the comp plan review for generating revenue to the parks department, because sometimes these ideas can actually be more costly.

Director Welter suggested having a special parks board meeting with Norm Landerman-Moore to discuss options around enterprise recreation and what it means. On October 15 at 9 a.m. staff will meet with the Board of Commissioners to talk about enterprise recreation and where the comp plan is leading. He encouraged board members to attend if they could.

Member Schaffner had concern of how the department would handle the loss of an administrative staff and how it would affect services. Again, he expressed his feelings about the County divesting itself of athletic fields since they are a drain on the department.

COMP PLAN – Director Welter stated that he passed onto Mr. Landerman-Moore a synopsis of what came out of the last meeting concerning the comp plan.

BOSTON HARBOR LAND PROPOSALS

Reichel – Director Welter reported that the County offered Mr. Reichel the 2007 assessed value of the land but he declined the offer and countered with a much higher price. Director Welter suggests that the property is not worth pursuing at the price he is asking. The board was in agreement and felt the County was over-generous with their counter-offer. Member Weaver suggested offering to pay his taxes for a certain amount of time in trade for his land.

On an additional land issue in the Boston Harbor area, Director Welter advised the board that Suzanne Murray has requested that the Parks Department support a road vacation request that would generate additional property to her for siting a drainfield for her property. She also wanted to secure some property from the parks Department when the road vacation occurred to add to her drainfield project. Mr. Welter described the road vacation request and the implications it had, not only for the Parks Department, but several other property owners in the area. He confirmed that by signing the petition to vacate, the department would in essence be supporting all the other road vacations included in the proposal. It was the consensus of the board that the County should 1) not sign the existing petition to vacate and that it should only be a party to a vacation request that had benefit to the Parks Department; and 2) sell any property that it owned to the Murrays rather than consider leasing or some other alternative.

PARKS BOARD OFFICERS – Member Halvorson announced his resignation from the board. He stated that he would be available for meetings until another member is appointed. By consensus, the board supported

transitioning the role of Chair to member Weaver-Smith, who was elected as Vice-Chair at the last meeting. .
Director Welter thanked Jon for his six years of service and leadership on the board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.