

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Final Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2006

Jack Davis Maintenance Shop

Burlington, WA 98233

6:30 p.m.

6:30 – 6:35 p.m. Roll Call of General Meeting

Present

Colleen Fisher, Chair

Lloyd Brown, Vice

Kevin Loy

John Semrau

Liz McNett Crowl

Keith Magee

Jeri Krampetz

Nathan Salseina

Absent

Peter Swanson

Staff

Robert Vaux

Brian Adams

Dennis Lind

Tawni Helms

Agenda for meeting approved

September 2006 minutes were approved as written.

Public Comment: No public in attendance. Letter from Ron Carlson was distributed to board upon request from Ron.

REET Funding Requests:

Bob Vaux updated the board on the Sherman Anderson project. He met with the Mount Vernon School District along with Dennis Lind and Tawni Helms. The Sherman Anderson proposal was discussed along with the agreement by the Parks and Recreation Board (PRAB) to approve a \$10,000 contribution to the project. The PRAB also agreed to consider an additional contribution of \$10,000 if the baseball group agreed to work with the Mount Vernon School District on this project. If the District is willing to reduce some of the County's facility use fees in lieu of a financial contribution to the Sherman Anderson facility the Parks Department is willing to consider increasing the \$10,000 contribution towards the project. Dr. Bruner agreed to bring it to the School Board and get back to Bob before the Thanksgiving holiday.

Bob and Brian met to develop the Capital Facilities priorities list. Bob distributed the 2007 list to the board for review. There are only subtle changes in the existing line items. The biggest change and/or addition to the list is the request for \$300k to go towards the Indoor Recreation and Event Center project.

Keith inquired about the procedure for requesting funds.

Tawni distributed a draft template of Board protocols for requesting REET funds.

Kevin suggested that submissions for requests should be considered all year long.

Bob agreed that there should be no time constraints because that implies that the money is just sitting there and it is good to remain flexible.

John agreed that we should be willing to hear requests all year long.

Jeri suggested the priorities should be an internal tool for assessing criteria.

The draft template included 6 priorities/protocols. It was agreed by the board that priority #4 should guide most if not all of the decisions for REET requests:

“Requests will be evaluated in light of our County priorities and approved projects. Eligible requests must be aligned with the community’s priorities as evidenced in the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and user surveys.”

It was agreed by the Board to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Indoor Recreation and Event Center:

Keith reported on the progress of the Indoor Recreation and Event Center. Last April the Board of County Commissioner’s unanimously approved that the Parks and Recreation Department send out an RFQ to recruit an architect for the schematic design phase of the REC. The selection process was vigorous and eventful. A firm from Colorado, Sink Combs Dethlefs, who brings an extensive list of similarly designed projects and a wealth of knowledge in this arena was selected. They are a first rate group.

The negotiation of the contract has been halted because the Board of County Commissioners didn’t think they had agreed to this next phase. So we are working on getting the funds approved by the Board. It looks like the ball park figure at this time for the schematic design development of the project is \$300k. The good news is we have a young, energetic and enthusiastic lobbyist who has agreed to work with us on this project pro bono. He is very optimistic about our funding opportunities. In his view if we haven’t committed to the schematic planning phase then it will drastically reduce our funding opportunity. If planning is done we can likely secure construction dollars.

The next step is to contact some big donors for the project with the goal of raising 6 million dollars at the local level. We are also working on a legislative handout that we will use to attract donors and to keep in front of our legislators.

Bob stated that a new asset to this project is the recent hiring of Suzanne Gilbert who is the County's new facilities Manager and architect. She is very enthusiastic about this project and sees this project as ahead of other County capital projects. She has brought in a nice infusion of energy. She is talking with Sink, Combs, Dethlefs to negotiate a figure for this next development phase. Bob also agreed that Ryan has said if we have the money for planning it will go a long way in securing funding from the legislators.

A letter to the Board of County Commissioners requesting the release of funds as approved in April was read and signed by the entire Board.

Jeri and Colleen expressed hearty thanks to Keith for his leadership in this effort and Colleen went on to say that we need to all step up to keep this energy alive during Keith's absence the next two months. Keith will be gone from December 1 – February 7th.

Flood Update:

Bob reported on the recent flood event. He praised his department and crew for stepping up and for their willingness to help out in any way possible. It was also through their efforts that we were able to prevent more significant damage at HMSP. The crew worked in Rockport at Howard Miller Steelhead Park, on the Cascade Trail and Downtown Mount Vernon.

Brian reported that the flood waters hit so quickly that it was challenging to save everything. We lost 4 asphalt pads at Howard Miller Steelhead Park because the crew couldn't get all of them covered with visquene. The ones that were covered were protected and saved from damage. The drain field was also saved because the crew learned from the 2003 flood that they simply plug the toilets, sinks and other restroom drains to prevent water getting into the drain field.

Brian also reported that there was significant damage on the Cascade Trail with a 60' by 4' section washed out. The damage has been assessed and much has already been repaired.

John inquired about the high water mark at Pressentin. Brian answered that it traveled all the way up to the deck posts at the Ranger house. All of the pasture was flooded.

Bob reported on the budget work session with the Board of County Commissioners and Gary Rowe. The work session went well and the Board showed some appreciation for our efforts.

Keith mentioned that Gary Rowe is really ramping up the regional parks district discussion.

Bob stated that he and Larry Otos are doing their very best to stay in front of that discussion.

Nathan inquired about this discussion and mentioned that Sedro-Woolley should be brought into the discussion too because they would likely be very interested.

Bob stated that urban areas have been successful in developing park districts with different tax bases.

Based on Budget commitments the Parks & Rec Department had to cut 190k to come only 19k under budget.

Lloyd inquired about the 75k allocation on the capital facilities list for the Padilla Bay.

Bob said it was for special pathways projects.

Brian said we may need to develop some more parking on the north end of the trail.

The Board voted to endorse the Capital Facilities Project list. Motion was made to approve it was seconded and unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

Brian reported on the Howard Miller Steelhead Park Eagle Fest project. The old caretaker's residence is being converted into an office space for the Eagle Fest organization. The deck has been replaced to meet ADA specifications and the interior is being remodeled to meet the needs of the Eagle Fest organization.

Brian also reported on the Monroe Jail crew who worked for a few days with our Parks crew to clean up HMSP and do some debris cleanup on the Cascade Trail. They proved to be a very hardworking group and they got a lot of work done.

Dennis reported on the recreation activities. Things are looking good and our 2006 revenues will come in higher than originally projected.

Dennis also distributed a resolution to increase Skagit Valley Playfield fees. There are modest increases but reflect more accurately a competitive fee and will help to offset some of the field maintenance costs.

Lloyd inquired about the NSRA facility. He thought the cross country trails could prove to be a source of revenue.

Bob agreed that for now the trails should be used to create public awareness for the facility and when the property continues to improve appropriate fees will be developed.

The Board reviewed the resolution to increase field user fees and agreed unanimously to support the proposed increases.

Bob reported that the Parks Department will have a full staff roster beginning Monday, November 20th with the hiring of Mike Shannon, the new East County Park Ranger.

Bob reviewed concerns shared by John via email regarding the Frailey Mountain Gun Range. The questions John posed, he felt, had all been answered by the hearings board.

Board Nominations:

Kevin Loy was unanimously elected to be the 2007 chair. He agreed and Lloyd Brown agreed to remain as vice chair.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50

Alumni holiday potluck scheduled for 11:30 – 1:30 December 15th at Jack Davis.