

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes
Thursday, January 17, 2002
6:00 pm – Public Presentation and Regular Meeting
Hearing Room C
County Administration Building

6:00 pm – 7:15 pm

Northern State Recreation Area Presentation to Public:

The staff of Skagit County Parks & Recreation presented the conceptual master plan of Northern State Recreation Area (N.S.R.A.) to the public. Bob Vaux, Director, gave an introduction. Patrik Dylan, Projects Manager, discussed the elements of the program. Patrik called upon Derek Koellmann, from Public Works, to discuss various issues raised about Hansen Creek. Patrik also called upon Louis Requa, from the Northern State Task Force, to talk about the ball field complex at the site. Finally, Judy Grosvenor was introduced to talk about the equestrian element of the site. Bob concluded the presentation with the department's main goals, and opened the floor to the public for questions and comments.

Many questions were asked of the department:

1. 1. Why aren't soccer fields included in the design?
2. 2. What is the timeline of the construction of the site?
3. 3. What will the total cost of the project be from A to Z?
4. 4. Who will pay for the project?
5. 5. What will the people who pay for this project get back from it?
6. 6. What is the total number of people estimated to use the site?
7. 7. How will security be managed on the site?
8. 8. What is the timeline of the construction of Helmick Road?
9. 9. What is the budget for Helmick Road?
10. 10. Will the University of Washington help to manage Hanson Creek like it did with the Padilla Bay Trail?
11. 11. Will there be a separation between the alluvial fan and ball fields?

12. 12. For what will the open space of the site be used?
13. 13. Will \$300,000 per year be enough to keep the project running?
14. 14. How will the people who fund the site be protected by any change in salmon or environmental rule changes?

Many comments were made:

1. 1. There are enough trails on the site. None of these trails needs to be connected to the Cascade Trail, because there have been robberies near the Cascade Trail.
2. 2. There should be user fees for the park.
3. 3. Helmick Road should be reconstructed before the ball fields are built.
4. 4. Good design of the trail system; close parking makes the trailhead easily reachable, whether accessed by foot or by horse.
5. 5. Sports have changed and the parks department is not keeping up on that change.
6. 6. This project should have been put into place in 1994; time has been lost.
7. 7. There should be a soccer field and a football field on the site.
8. 8. There should be more security than is planned on the site, because it needs to be a really safe place for youth to attend.

This public meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm. All those in attendance were offered a copy of the Northern

State Recreation Area Master Plan Update for January 2002.

7:20 pm

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting:

Attended:

John Semrau, Chairman

Keith Magee, Vice Chairman

Lloyd Brown

Carroll Dillon
Colleen Fisher
Curtis Metz

Staff:

Bob Vaux, Director
Earl Dierking, Assistant Director
Dennis Lind, Recreation Supervisor
Meghan MacMullen, Office Assistant I

Guests:

Randy Good
Louis Requa
Jim Vogelsang

John Semrau called the meeting to order. He asked for the approval of the minutes for the December meeting. Colleen Fisher made a motion to accept the minutes, and Keith Magee seconded the motion.

Public Comment Period:

Randy Good provided a public letter for the records. He did not stay for the meeting. See attached letter.

7:30 pm – 9:17 pm

Staff Updates:

Bob Vaux started the meeting by presenting a baby gift to John. He then introduced Meghan MacMullen to the board as the department's newest employee. He talked about the All Staff Meeting held on Friday, January 11, 2002. He also shared the news of Ryan Hernandez's success in being offered a job as Planner I, for the City of Martinez, in California. Then he gave an update

on the Parks Crew's shop. Bob also announced that Earl became an official employee of the county on Wednesday, January 16, 2002. He went on to discuss an offer made by the Skagit Valley Softball Association. He had met with Dave Lolly, Director, and Dottie Moe, Treasurer, to discuss the offer. The association offered the department to match funds up to \$75,000 for a light system at the playfields. Bob concluded his update by saying the year finished quietly, and that the New Year was successfully underway. Each board member was given information relating to project priorities for the department.

Earl Dierking also provided a packet of project priority review to the board.

Preliminary Discussion of N.S.R.A. Plan:

John opened the floor to the board for questions and comments that they might have about N.S.R.A.

Lloyd Brown mentioned that the plan was very good. He felt there were enough ball fields in the county, however, and that it might be a good idea to double check the numbers for the need of ball fields. He said perhaps the space could be used for something other than ball fields. He also added that the involvement of the city of Sedro Woolley was very important in the process for the site.

Louis Requa volunteered that the city would provide the infrastructure for the site, but that it would not pay for it.

Bob commented that the numbers for ball fields had been addressed in the assessment of the county. It revealed that there was a great need for more ball fields.

Carroll Dillon thought it would be helpful to preface the total cost of the project by a time limit.

John talked about the budget and the process of the project. He felt the money for the project should be used wisely; plan an update not just a layout. He reminded everyone that it is really important not to cut elsewhere into the Parks budget. Throughout the rest of the process, of N.S.R.A., he added that it was very key to keep the public involved. This is so the public can know what is happening with the project, and to continue getting their input in the matter.

Bob shared his idea about having a project presentation for the City of Anacortes. His hope is that more people would take interest in the project.

Keith mentioned that money was the key issue, of the project, and that that funding for the project should be emphasized more when presenting it. He reiterated John's idea that the public's participation in the project was very critical.

Earl then took this opportunity to point out the information provided in his packet to the board. He focused on the implementation strategy list and the potential funding sources the department could use.

Bob further supported this information with the additional idea that the Fairground was a project priority too.

John asked how the Fairground was financially.

Earl explained that it was not paying for itself, and that the maintenance line item budget for the Fairground was only \$5,000.00.

Colleen mentioned that the idea to build N.S.R.A. should not take away from the other needs in the department, like the renovation and move of the Fairground.

John felt the board needed more information before it could start allocating the \$3 million set aside for the Sedro Woolley project.

Carroll added that the board really had to have a good idea of what was a priority with the project, since there was not very much money with which to work.

Colleen asked who would prioritize the needs of the project.

Bob then took this time to refer to the December 2001 minutes. He addressed the County Commissioner's idea that the ball fields should be the number one priority in building N.S.R.A. Therefore, the understanding was that the ball fields should be developed first.

Dennis Lind supported this understanding.

Keith disagreed however, feeling that the Commissioners did not want to focus just on the ball fields, otherwise other areas of the project would be short changed.

Carroll interjected that he felt Helmick Road should be reconstructed before the development of the ball fields was attempted.

Lloyd supported this idea with the fact that "Step One" needed to be completed before "Step Two" could begin.

Bob touched on the notion that permitting for the project was very important. Permits need to be acquired and settled, then the master plan needs to be updated, and finally, the ball fields can be addressed.

Countywide Project Priorities:

John started with three main points: take care of what needs to still be finished, finish existing projects, and then address other big priorities. His

question to the board was how to start this process. He started with what would be a REET priority.

Keith agreed with these ideas, and asked if there was an updated priority list.

Bob presented his packet to the board. He said Howard Miller Steelhead Park, Clear Lake Beach, Recreation Programs, and Skagit Valley Playfields were first on the list of countywide priorities.

Keith mentioned he would like a specific list of what was still needed to maintain and operate the above sites mentioned by Bob.

Earl felt there were certain facilities that stood out more than others. He did not think it was very realistic to go through all of the sites, and make one enormous list. What was more important was to look at what changes would be the greatest benefit to everyone. He wanted the board to define further what information it wanted for each facility. Ideally the major facilities should be listed and costs itemized out. What specifics? To what level?

Bob said the department would generate some kind of a list for the board.

Colleen asked what would be lumped into it.

Bob said the department would start with what needed to be done first; any unfinished projects. Some kind of an itemized report would be made. If it met with everyone's approval, the department would keep moving forward.

John asked what other priorities would come about after the abovementioned were addressed. Swinomish Boat Launch? Conway Park? Boat launch fees? Lights at the playfields? Kitchen at Clear Lake Beach?

Bob mentioned again the real proposition made by the Skagit Valley

Softball Association.

Keith wanted to know what the revenue increase would be, as a result of having the new lights.

Dennis explained that each night, three or four more teams could play. He estimated that this could generate up to \$600.00 more per season in the summer alone. He added that the fall season would benefit even more than the summer season. Teams can't play as long during the fall season, but with the lights, would be able to.

Keith decided the lights should be a priority placed higher on the list.

Carroll added that he thought any time the department had a partner that was willing to match a certain amount of money with it, that proposition should be a major priority. Partners are very important.

Keith then made the motion to support the parks proposal to get the cost of the lights at the playfields matched by the Skagit Valley Softball Association. Colleen seconded the motion. Everyone voted, and all were in favor; no one opposed.

Bob thanked the board.

9:17 pm

Meeting Adjourned

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