

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**WHATCOM COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Thursday, July 18, 2024**  
**Silver Lake Day Lodge**  
**9006 Silver Lake Road, Maple Falls, WA**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Sonja Max at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Joe Hashmall, Sheli Moore, Frank Boteler, Carl Weimer, Sonja Max.

Commissioners Absent: Kristen Fagan, Geoff Klise

Staff Present: Bennett Knox, Christ Thomsen, Rod Lamb

Guests/Public: Daniel Probst

**2. Approval of Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes**

Joe Hashmall moved to approve the July 18, 2024 agenda as written. Carl Weimer seconded. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Joe Hashmall moved to approve the June 20, 2024 minutes with amended edits. Franklin Boteler seconded. The Motion carried with a unanimous vote.

**3. Public Comments/Communication: None**

**4. Director Items**

- a. **Whatcom County Selective Hiring Freeze Announcement** – Bennett shared that Whatcom County Executive Sidhu sent out a memo to all Whatcom County employees regarding a selective hiring freeze. Bennett shared that this is a 90-day hiring freeze that is meant to narrow the budget deficit. Bennett shared that the WC Parks only has 3 current vacancies. The current freeze only effects general funded positions and that dedicated funded positions like the multi-mobile trail planner isn't impacted by this freeze. Vacant positions that are affected are: Seasonal extra help, Park Attendant, and Conservation Park Steward. The Conservation Park Steward position is still under development in terms of what the position will look like. Bennett shared that there is a process for requesting exemptions during the hiring freeze. Regarding the open Park Attendant position, the Department is fairly far along in the hiring process so there is a possibility that the Department can still fill that position. Bennett said that the Department is looking at some sort of delay for hiring the Conservation Park Steward position.



equipment safety, awareness of public, awareness of your surroundings, and more. Discussion ensued regarding payment of repairs and budget around vehicle repairs.

## 6. **Parks Design & Development Manager Update**

- a. **Capital Projects Update – including Silver Lake:** Rod shared information on projects that the WC Parks are currently working on. **Bay Horizon Hostel Building:** The building will be demolished. Dave Bramer, WC Parks Project Manager, attended the pre-bid meeting today with 6 or 7 contractors attending. The Department is looking at doing the project in the fall. **Hovander Homestead Park Vision Plan:** The Department is still waiting on qualifications to be submitted. There was a request for qualifications earlier this month, that request is due at the end of the month. Rod shared that also at Hovander Park the Department is continuing to push our contract for the Maintenance Complex. RMC Architects has been selected as the project architect, and are currently finalizing the contract. **Headquarters HVAC System:** The preliminary design has been completed. A draft cost estimate is pending, but once available will allow the Department to fine tune the project scope and begin the work on the permit submittal. The plan is to start construction early next year. **Lookout Mountain:** Rod shared that GeoEngineers is formulating a final task and fee for the forest road repair. Which will include scope of work and fee estimate for final engineering, permitting, bidding, and construction support. **Silver Lake Park:** Rod shared that the new Cedar shower and restroom facility has been submitted for permit review. Rod said he expects permit approval in the next month or two. The Department will bid project before they have final project approval. Rod said that construction of the facility should probably start this fall with the facility opening in the Spring of 2025. **Stimpson Family Nature Reserve:** Rod shared that the Department identified the low apparent bidder as Ritter Dirt & Asphalt. The Department will enter into contract negotiations with the company Ritter Dirt & Asphalt. The contract approval is going before council in August. Rod said the company should be under contract in late August. The contractor is planning beginning the work after Labor Day and to be complete before the water-shed work window closes, which is September 30<sup>th</sup>. Rod said public notice signs have been posted at the trail-head alerting the public that facility will be closed to the public during construction. The notice will also be posted on the Department's Facebook page to get the message out. The trail-head and trail access from Lake Louise Road will be completely closed during construction. **Plantation Indoor Rifle Range:** Rod shared that there was a coordination meeting with Tiger Construction. The former superintendent is leaving the company and Scott Isenhart, Tiger's President, will take over project management responsibility. Rod said that the meeting with Tiger was very positive, and they appear to have a good action plan moving forward. Items that

need to be done include: assessing the air handling unit (AHU) that has still not been connected to the HVAC ductwork. The manufacture is scheduled to come to the site and asses the condition of the AHU. Concurrently with the assessment, the last piece of duct work will be installed connecting the AHU to the indoor range building. Once the duct work is installed there are other corrective measures needing to be addressed such as, weather damaged duct insulation before the HVAC system can be balanced and adjusted. Rod shared project roles that have been assigned to park staff, where he will manage the contracts and that the WC Parks Construction Supervisor, Brandon, will be responsible for construction oversight for the project. **Grants:** Rod shared that Bennett submitted grant applications for WWRP for the Carrasco property acquisition reimbursement acquisition. Rod shared that he submitted the Birch Bay Beach Park for ALEA (Aquatic Lands Enactment Account) water access that will help fund a restroom and parking improvements. WC Parks Dave Bramer is working on Community Outdoor Athletic Facility grant for the covered sports court at East Whatcom Regional Resource Center that is due August 15, 2024. Rod shared that both he and Bennett have final presentations for the two mentioned projects in August.

## 7. Old Business

- a. **Facility/Park Naming Ordinance Discussion:** Bennett shared that the Department did not have an opportunity to contribute to the writing of the ordinance when it was first written. The Department made sure to provide comments after it was first introduced. Bennett previously shared a draft of the Department's comments with the commissioners. Bennett said that he had a meeting with the Council office today and they stated they are going to separate out WC Parks from the proposed ordinance. Bennett said it is great that this has been put forth as we've been able to put forth comments and concerns, but the Parks being separate isn't quite the sense of urgency. There is now time to develop own policy naming opportunities. Bennett shared a draft that incorporated pas Commission input. Discussion ensued regarding the draft Bennett presented. Bennett said he will put the item back on the agenda for a future meeting.

## 8. New Business

- a. **Forest Resilience Task Force Update – Carl Weimer:** Carl shared that the Forest Resilience Task Force had their first meeting last Monday. He shared that it was an organizational meeting focusing on learning who is on the task force and what the council asked the task force to do Officers were also elected at the meeting. Carl shared that a consultant was hired and will be looking to do external outreach to other forest type users to get other information. Carl said that the committee members of the task force were tasked with coming up with

two big overarching goals that they hope the task force can help address. Discussion ensued around goals for the task force.

**9. Open Discussion**

Bennett acknowledged that the Silver Lake tour before the meeting looked at placed in the area that are on the Departments radar for necessary improvements for Silver Lake. He said that the tour started at the boat ramp, which is a potential project for WC Parks to apply for RCO grant funding to renovate the boat ramp. The project would bring the ramp up to standards and create some additional capacity. Bennett shared that the group also looked at the boardwalk across the lake, and that that it is an old structure that has some issues and coming to the end of its life cycle. The group then looked at the Cedar campground restroom facility.

**10. Commissioner Engagement Opportunities**

- a. **Employee Appreciation Day – August 1, 2024, 11:30 am – 3:00 pm, Nugent’s Corner River Access 3685 Mount Baker Highway, Everson, WA**
- b. **Bigfoot Festival – August 3, 2024, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Maple Falls Town Hall (7509 Mt. Baker Hwy, Maple Falls, WA) – Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Table**
- c. **Senior Day in the Park, August 7, 2024, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at Hovander Homestead Park – Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Table.**

**11. Meeting Input/Evaluation**

**12. Next Meeting: August 15, 2024 6:00 PM, Hovander Group Picnic Shelter, 5299 Nielsen Road, Ferndale, WA.**

**13. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM

Transcribed by: Erica Kulm, Clerk IV

Approved by: Bennett Knox, Parks Department Director