

## June 10, 2019 Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting

**Commission members present:** Tex Blankenburg, Cy Field, Johannes Krieger, Margaret Payne, Bill Scherer.

**Excused absences:** member Barbara Fulton.

**Staff present:** Dona Wuthnow, Kathryn Hansen.

**Guests:** Heather Oaksen, prospective PRC candidate from Orcas, Marcia deChadenèdes, National Monument Manager, County Council Chair/Liaison Jamie Stephens, and County Manager, Mike Thomas.

Chair Tex Blankenburg called the meeting to order at 10:15am in the Odlin County Park pavilion.

**Approval of agenda:** The agenda was approved as prepared.

**Approval of minutes:** The Commission approved minutes of the May 16 regular meeting with no changes.

**Correspondence:** Members signed a card for Leslie Seaman, celebrating her 20 years of presenting Music in the Park at Eastsound Village Green.

**Chair's Message.** Tex shared insights from a news article that claims that, nationwide, many Millennials are enjoying the outdoors for nature and recreation.

**Council Liaison's Message.** Jamie Stephens reported that the Council will hold their Council Budget Retreat in two weeks with the focus on the 2020 budget and the Parks & Fair Department. They are considering reorganizing the department and looking at where funding should come from and go to. Dona stated that the \$100,000 currently proposed for Parks & Fair repairs and maintenance in the levy calculation doesn't cover department operating expenses. Jamie stressed that this money is intended to cover ongoing facility repairs and maintenance, rather than requesting funding from the Capital Improvement Fund.

Mike Thomas explained the history of the levy. He added that the November proposition will increase funding levels and include the same entities as in the past, but adds some new programs. The Council plans to pass a Resolution in June that will set the levy amount. Jamie offered that levy funding for these non-mandated services didn't meet inflationary costs and this will be adjusted in the new levy.

Mike discussed inflation rates and how to best meet the service demands on departments. He added that the visitor data from the Confluence work has been useful, along with the budget and use data staff provided. Mike raised the additional question of how do we find good staff, especially for the seasonal positions.

Johannes voiced his concern over the dramatic increases in staff benefits rates and IT cost increases as placing an unfair burden on Parks & Fair. Mike Thomas countered that these are system-wide costs and that we only pay for



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what we consume. IT investments were made to improve network security. Jamie added that departments need to adjust their budgets accordingly. Mike did note that cost increases should plateau soon, as much work has been done in the last three years on IT & GIS.

Jamie suggested that upcoming discussions will address structural changes and biennial budgeting. He said that one Council member had voiced a desire to sell the Fairgrounds. The discussion will address how the County can best support facilities and use, address what constituents want, now and 10 years from now. Dona reminded all that the Fairgrounds Master Plan and Parks, Trails and Natural Areas Plan should inform the levy, budget, and work planning for the department. Trails are a large element and have received much public comment.

### **Open Forum.**

Marcia deChadenèdes shared that the National Monument is dependent on our Parks & Fair department to support their resources. Dona elaborated that we partner with BLM to support maintenance and operations at Agate Beach Day Park, as the gateway to Iceberg Point. BLM helps underwrite our expenses, i.e. toilet pumping. There should be an opportunity to seek a new funding contract with BLM in October.

Marcia also encouraged everyone who receives a resident visitor survey to complete and return it. It is important to discover what local citizens are most interested in. This is a random sample survey, so only those in the sample can submit a response. All businesses in the local Chambers of Commerce and Visitor Information Bureau can participate in the business survey. Johannes mentioned that not all businesses are members of these two associations, so are being missed. Dona will convey this to the consultant.

Marcia said that the Management Plan for the National Monument is in the review stage and is soon on its way to Congress for edits. It will then go to a public “protest” period at the end of July. During this time, citizens who commented on the plan during the initial comment phase can weigh in on this revised version.

Margaret inquired about housing for prospective employees. Mike Thomas related that the County is supporting other housing initiatives, such as low-income housing. Johannes added that some local businesses are subsidizing rentals for their employees.

Johannes expressed how far the Parks & Fair Department has come to be a pretty fine-tuned machine with good results and happy customers. He added that impacts from program cuts may not be seen for a few years, and it may become increasingly difficult to hire good staff.

### **Financial Report.**

- 2019 Budget. Dona is pleased with our current status, with reservation fees at 75% of budget, 66% of projected revenue received at San Juan and Shaw Parks and 71% at Odlin. Fairgrounds camping is also slightly up over budget. Good spring weather likely contributed. It is helpful that the park field staff can see real-time availability through the reservation system.
- 2020-2021 Capital Improvement proposal. Dona highlighted some of the projects proposed for funding, including The Agate Beach shoreline restoration construction, Agate Beach planning for road alignment impacts to facilities, ESGV restroom design (rather than renting two portable toilets each summer), and LVP septic upgrade (at end of life). The

Farmers Market is interested in reducing road dust at Eastsound Village Green. This can be a companion with the playground construction, since part of the road needs to be relocated to accommodate the playground. Pavers, like those used at the road entrance to the park, are being considered. This road is 12 feet wide and about 300 feet long. Public Works has another paver project in Eastsound, but the timing doesn't work for us to piggyback.

Dona handed out "Projected Capital Needs Outlook" for discussion at the regular July 18 meeting.

### **Director's Report.**

- Staffing. Bill asked if it is the Lopez Park Aide positions that are slated to be cut in the 2020 budget. Dona clarified that it is the #2 Park Aide position at both Lopez and San Juan Parks. The new Park Aide at San Juan is working alongside Toby to learn the tasks of that position.
- ESGV Play Area. No comments.
- Agate Beach Shoreline Restoration project. No comments.

### **Old Business:**

- Music in the Park at ESGV. Dona invited members to the July 7 season opener of the 20<sup>th</sup> year of this program. She plans to be there and present Leslie Seaman with a bouquet of local flowers and the card signed earlier. Margaret liked the banner designed by Kathryn, so staff will order that. We should also invite past PRC members to attend the concert. Margaret will get it posted on the Chamber Blast and in the online papers.

### **New Business:**

- Officer elections. There was discussion about Bill and Tex swapping positions for this next year.

**MOTION:** Margaret Payne made a motion to elect Bill Scherer as Chair and Tex Blankenburg as Vice Chair. Johannes Krieger seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0-0.

Kathryn will notify Susan Kollet in the Council office and update the Parks website.

- Goals for June meeting on Shaw Island. Cy suggested members walk the trails in the park. We should discuss the levy proposed by the Council for the election. Cy recommended some talk about forest health, saying there is funding available for treatment. There was a tree fire on Shaw Island last week.

**Announcements:** Land Bank is planning a June 21 dedication for Lopez Hill 1:30-2:30pm with a 3:00pm reception at Vita's. Jamie Stephens added that Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz will attend.

**Adjourned** at 11:44am, to be continued with Lopez Island Park tour.

[BREAK 11:45am-12:00pm]

Bill, Tex, Cy, Margaret, Jamie, Heather, Dona, and Kathryn went on park tour, starting in Odlin Park, where Dona pointed out many of the improvements made over recent years. The group next visited Blackie Brady Memorial Day Park and talked about plans to install beach access. At Agate Beach, Dona explained plans for shoreline restoration, beach access, and future road relocation. Shark Reef provided a nice trail walk to the shoreline, seeing how the

boardwalk keeps folks off the wet ground. Bill reminded all that this has been the site of illegal fires two of the last three years. The group returned to the ferry landing and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Hansen  
Recording Secretary

*These minutes were approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission at their regular July 25, 2019 meeting at Shaw County Park.*



## Director's Report to the Parks & Recreation Commission

June 7, 2019

The following is a summary update of relevant Park Department happenings since the last PRC meeting that are not included on the agenda as discussion items.

- **Staffing** – We are happy to welcome our final employee for parks this summer, Jillian Urbach has started as our SJI Park Aide. While we were working on getting Jillian, Patricia Bolding, last year's PA2, filled in temporarily to keep the machine running. Thank you Patricia! Additionally, last year's camp host at San Juan Park will be returning for a 2 month stint starting toward the end of June. We're still recruiting a camp host for Odlin Park.
- **ESVG Playground project** – Fundraising through OICF GiveOrcas! Campaign successfully raised our goal of \$15,000 from multiple donors. Additionally, an OICF Legacy Donor program awarded us \$5,000 for the water station element of the project. The core team is meeting next week to refine the schedule and what special additions to the design still need funding. Next week we will have an updated budget and 90% construction documents from Green Works. With the road adjustment we'll need a grading permit and Ken has lined up a professional to assist pro bono. Rick Hughes attended the last team meeting and encouraged us to consider rolling the resurfacing the Green access road into the project. There is a lot of support from Farmer's Market to include it. I will be working with Margaret on PFFAP grant application, which would be due on June 14<sup>th</sup>. There are two options for starting the project construction, mid-July or end of September. We should have a final schedule nailed down by your next meeting.
- **Agate Beach shoreline restoration project** – Below is small snippet of the 3D modeling of the shoreline existing conditions. CGS developed these using hundreds of drone photos and an onsite survey. They are currently working on material quantities and I hope to meet with them to discuss options for the preliminary design by mid- July. Our first progress report to RCO is due at the end of June. You'll be visiting this park on Monday.

