

Park Board Regular meeting March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 @ Cusick Community Center

Park Board members present: Vice chairman Dave Gruver, members Ken Timmreck, Don Comins and Mark Bender.

Guests: Pend Oreille River Tourism Alliance (PORTA) executive director Susan Harris, Bob Gish and Jim Hudkins of the Northeast Chapter of the Backcountry Horseman of Washington (BCH), County Commissioner Mike Manus and Guy Thomas, paddler-at-large.

Pend Oreille County staff: Director Mike Lithgow, Parks Manager Todd McLaughlin and administrative assistant Terri Ann Hedtke.

Vice Chairman Dave Gruver called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.

Copies of the financial reports were handed out to the members, in the absence of Treasurer Jeanetta Taylor. It was noted that \$10,742.23 was deposited from the Rustlers Gulch timber harvest.

February minutes were approved.

Parks Manager Todd McLaughlin provided a report. Manager McLaughlin covered 8 items in his report:

- A visit to the Sandy Shores boat launch to assess repairs, elevations and conditions at the site. Discussion on extending the launch or repairing it in the original footprint. (it was noted a permit to extend the ramp would be more challenging than to repair it in the same footprint) Manager McLaughlin's opinion is the depth of water is sufficient, member Comins asked if any complaints had been received. Director Lithgow said complaints have been received. It is a Water Trail site.
- A meeting has been scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup> with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wildlife biologist and Northwest Management Inc. consultant Luke Machtolf to discuss the wildlife component of the Parks Plan.
- Pend Oreille County is up-dating the web site and Manager McLaughlin is taking over the Water Trail site and domain. Director Lithgow elaborated on the new County web site.
- A Geocaching event is being planned for July, a \$600 grant has been received to facilitate supplies, it is planned to host 20 different sites throughout the County, and the Greater Newport/Oldtown Area Chamber of Commerce is supportive and will be partnering with coupons on the back of the Passport for the event.
- Site visit with Nan Berger to snow park sites.
- The Washington Trails Conference is being held in Spokane for 2016. The conference has not been on this side of the state since 2008. In 2012 Director Lithgow presented the Water Trail at the conference in Vancouver, attendees may be interested to view the Trail. Manager McLaughlin will be helping out on the committee and will fight for a tour to get the participants to Pend Oreille County. PORTA Executive Director Susan Harris agrees this is an exciting prospect and PORTA can help to tell the story. Further discussion on what Pend Oreille County can do to aid in facilitating Spokane Parks and Rec in attracting this conference to eastern Washington. The conference is usually held in October and the Lions Train rides would be a good day trip and highlight the County.
- Illegal wood cutting continues to be a problem on the Rustlers Gulch/Section 16 property. Parks Manager McLaughlin and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) officer Severn

Erickson met on site to view and assess the damage. Vice Chair Gruver suggested an article in the newspaper and Don Comins suggested signs. Signage would help the WDFW with enforcement. Gated access was proposed as a possible deterrent. Cameras were mentioned, their range is limited.

- Signs have been ordered for both the Park and Sweet Creek trash receptacles that read “not for household garbage.” It was noted Geocachers have a “Cache in-Trash out” program.

Vice chair Dave Gruver re-visited the possibility of dedicating ¼ of 1% of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) to fund the Parks. The Board of County Commissioners would need to be vocal and supportive. It would require a special election, the public will need to be informed and educated.

Director Lithgow continued with an update on the danger tree removal at the Park, it is hoped it will be done the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week in April. The Boy Scouts have made contact and would like a service project for the Park in May.

Bob Gish of the BCH would like to be kept apprised of Park functions, his group historically has maintained the equestrian trails, and they would not want to schedule any activities that might conflict with the hazard tree removal. Again, the newspaper was mentioned as a good mechanism to raise public awareness re: logging trucks in the Park, and to make sure people know the logging is for hazard tree removal, not commercial logging. Other ways to manage public issues would be the KUBS radio station and Selkirk Sun. Dave Gruver thought a weekly article in the newspaper highlighting what’s happening in the Parks and Rec world would help educate the public and gain support for any upcoming tax initiative. Susan Harris of PORTA mentioned a public awareness program of this nature is called Public Issues Management.

Kick-off for the Geocache event is scheduled for July 18<sup>th</sup> 9:00am to noon at the Pend Oreille County Park. Director Lithgow explained about the commemorative coin to be given to participants that complete the Passport.

#### Public Comment

- Bob Gish suggested a meeting with Director Lithgow re: designs for pull through parking. The old power line road is an option. A site visit was scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> 3:30pm at the Park.
- Guy Thomas, representing the Pend Oreille Rowing & Paddling Association (PORPA). Operates out of Riley Creek, it is an Idaho corporation however 3 of the 4 officers are Washington residents. Mr. Thomas is helping Director Lithgow with the 2015 Poker Paddle event and is a former member of the Pend Oreille County Planning Commission. An event is planned for September; Oldtown to Cusick, and bicycling back. Infrastructure is needed to secure water craft and bicycles. This will enhance the usage of the Water Trail.
- Susan Harris (PORTA) shared information from the Economic Development Council (EDC) meeting re: Batey Boulder; the first step will be a Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) grant for planning. Commissioner Mike Manus also mentioned Katy LeBlanc with Tri County Economic Development District (TEDD). Kevin Walton of the Forest Service is also interested in the project. This could be a long range project. Bob Gish recommended the Washington Trail Association (WTA), for a letter of endorsement. The actual track is on Forest Service lands but it will take the county to develop the project, the parking is on County lands. Susan Harris is in

hopes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Forest Service could be in place sooner rather than later.

The “Iron Rangers” pay station/system has been ordered. 1 base with 2 inserts and 1 envelope box at a cost of \$676.00 for the unit, \$388.00 a piece for two inserts and \$88.00 for the envelope box.

The Board of County Commissioners will hold open public forums May – June, throughout the County, to assess the interest in the Edgewater North property.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45pm.