



**Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting**

**Thursday, February 20, 2025 – 6:00PM**

**Bellingham Senior Activity Center Room #16**

**315 Halleck St. Bellingham, WA**

**\*\*If you are unable to attend this meeting in person and have comments/communication you would like to share, please email them to [parks@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:parks@co.whatcom.wa.us).\*\***

**AGENDA**

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes**
- 3. Welcome New Commission Members and Review Essential Charges**
- 4. Public Comments/Communication (comments should be kept to 5 minutes or less)**
- 5. Director Items**
- 6. Operations Manager Update**
- 7. Parks Design & Development Manager Update**
- 8. Old Business**
  - a. Commission Vacancies (District 5 and At Large)**
  - b. Comp Plan Review – Chapter 9**
- 9. New Business**
  - a. Quorum Rules for the Commission**
  - b. Revision to Commission Order of Business**
  - c. Setting Priorities for Purposeful Discussion**
- 10. Open Discussion**
- 11. Commissioner Engagement Opportunities – March 12, 2025 BPAC Committee Action Transportation Network Presentation.**
- 12. Meeting Input/Evaluation**
- 13. Next Meeting:** March 20, 2025 - 6:00 PM – East Whatcom Regional Resource Center 8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA
- 14. Adjournment**

***Community Members who require special assistance to participate in a committee meeting are asked to contact the meeting facilitator at least 4 business days in advance.***

## **Agenda Item: Introducing New Commissioners**

Andy Leveto and Ryan Rickerts

Ask the Commissioners to review a little about themselves and what they would like to bring to the Commission's discussions.

### Review of Essential Charge for Commissioners:

Bylaws are included the in the Commission notebooks.

Essential Charge: The purpose of the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission is to advise the Parks & Recreation Director on parks, recreation, and senior services issues. The commission provides recommendations in the development and review of acquisitions, plans, programs, policies and funding for parks and open space. (from webpage)

2.29.050 Parks and recreation commission.

A. The parks and recreation commission is created and shall serve in an advisory capacity to the parks and recreation department

2.29.080 Continuity.

D. Policy and budget matters brought before the county council relating to the parks department shall have received the review of the parks and recreation commission. (Ord. 92-081 (part)).

## **Agenda Item: Review of Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.**

### **Essential Points:**

#### **Purpose**

Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide growth in unincorporated areas in coordination with the plans of its cities. The fundamental purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a framework of goals, policies and action items for the more detailed growth planning and implementation actions which will occur in the near future in designated urban growth areas and in the county's rural areas.

#### **Review Requirements**

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Whatcom County to review and revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations by December 31, 2025 (RCW 36.70A.130). Additionally, the GMA requires review of urban growth areas (UGAs) under RCW 36.70A.130(3). The UGAs must be able to accommodate housing and employment growth projected for the 20-year planning period. Therefore, Whatcom County has initiated a multi-year project to update its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations by the state deadline.

#### **Commission Role:**

The Commission provided an initial review of the plan by forwarding comments from each member several months ago.

Guidance from Director Knox: Parks has been asked to comment on Chapter 9. Direction from Planning and Design Services is that Advisory Committees shall provide their feedback from the committee as a whole, rather than from individual members as was done in a preliminary round.

#### **Proposed Action Frame:**

February Meeting: Commissioners discuss the charge with Director Knox and review the status of the current planning effort. "Homework" assignments are given for each Commissioner to review Chapter 9 in detail and bring specific comments/suggestions to the March Meeting.

March Meeting: Commissioner's comments are compiled and grouped into categories. The Commission works towards consensus on comments to be forwarded. The Chair list these comments/consensus points with the goal of developing a written agenda item to be forwarded to the Commission for the April Meeting.

April Meeting: An agenda item lists the consensus points and the Commission votes on the statement to be forwarded to the Director.

## **Agenda Item: Update to What Constitutes a Commission Quorum**

### **Background:**

The Commission has been operating under a principle that a quorum requires a majority of the seven members to be present during the meeting.

Last year (in December) the County Council revised rules referring to Board or Commission Meetings.

On the County webpage under “Board or Commission” the Council states that a quorum is— “A majority of all the current membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be required to take action and approve all formal Committee recommendations.”

The existing Bylaws for the Commission state:

“Quorum-Voting”

"A majority of appointed confirmed positions constitutes a quorum for the conducting of regular business."

**Motion:** I move to revise the Commission's Bylaws in regard to quorum requirements to state:

“A majority of all the current membership of the Commission shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be required to take action and approve all formal Committee recommendations.”

## **Agenda Item: Revisions to Commission Order of Business/Agenda**

**Part 1:** Washington State Law stipulates that individuals in private discussions must be informed if they are being tape recorded. As a good business practice, in many public meetings people are informed if they are being tape recorded.

**Motion:** The Commission's Order of Business and Monthly Agenda be revised to indicate the Chair make a public statement that the meeting is being tape recorded for purposes of efficiency in keeping the minutes.

**Part 2:** It would be advantageous if the County Council's Charge to the Commission is readily available "up front" in order to guide Commissioner's and attendees comments and discussion.

**Motion:** The Commission's Order of Business and Monthly Agenda be revised to list the Commission's Charge as indicated below:

The purpose of the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission is to advise the Parks & Recreation Director on parks, recreation, and senior services issues. The commission provides recommendations in the development and review of acquisitions, plans, programs, policies and funding for parks and open space. (from webpage)

**Part 3:** The County Council prescribes that "Policy and budget matters brought before the county council relating to the parks department shall have received the review of the parks and recreation commission." (2.29.080 Continuity. D. Ord. 92-081 (part)).

**Motion:** In the Commission's Order of Business and Monthly Agenda under "Staff Reports/Director Reports" an ongoing item is included to list any policy and budget matters to be brought before the county council relating to the parks department. This may then be discussed under the "New Business" section of the meeting.

**Part 4:** Commission Record Keeping. Commissioners need to be able to access past letters and memos sent by the Commission to the Director.

**Motion:** Letters and Memos Voted Upon by the Commission and Forwarded to the Director shall be stored and posted with Commission Meeting Minutes.

## **Agenda Item: Setting Priorities for Purposeful Discussion.**

### **Background**

With a large turnover in the Commission, it is timely to review the way the Commission has been working to advise the Director with the goal of being more purposeful and impactful in our discussions.

### **Review of the Purposes of the Commission**

Webpage: “The purpose of the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Commission is to advise the Parks & Recreation Director on parks, recreation, and senior services issues. The commission provides recommendations in the development and review of acquisitions, plans, programs, policies and funding for parks and open space. The Commission serves as a liaison between the County and citizens and works to promote parks, recreation and senior services programs.”

#### **Chapter 2.29**

##### **2.29.050**

- A. The parks and recreation commission is created and shall serve in an advisory capacity to the parks and recreation department.
- D. Policy and budget matters brought before the county council relating to the parks department shall have received the review of the parks and recreation commission.

### **Proposal**

During the March Commission Meeting priorities for discussion over the next year are identified.

Step 1: Identify Priority Listing of Discussion Topics.

March Commission Meeting: The Commission conduct a nominal group process, with the Director participating, in order to identify priorities for discussion over the next year. Those priorities are relayed to the Director in writing through a memo from the Chair which is copied to all Commission Members. As new Commissioners are appointed, they review the results of the earlier nominal group process, make their additions/votes, then (if needed) the priority list is revised. In order of the priority, each ensuing priority item is the subject of discussion during future Commission Meetings.

## Step 2: Preparing for Upcoming Discussion of the Priority Item

During the “New Business” section of the Order to Business for each meeting the priority topic of discussion for the next meeting is identified in the agenda. Commissioners engage in discussion in order to identify supporting resources for the discussion. This could involve individual Commissioners taking on responsibility to gather data/information to support the discussion (i.e., homework) and/or identifying speakers Commissioners would like to invite to inform the upcoming discussion during the meeting.

## Step 3: Engaging in the Discussion

During the “Unfinished Business” section of the following meeting Commissioners engage in discussion with staff on the priority discussion item that was identified in the previous meeting (Step 2).

At the conclusion of discussion of the priority item the Chair prepares a draft memo (intended to be sent to the Director) which summarizes the major points of the discussion.

## Step 4: Formalizing Results of the Discussion

This memo is included in the minutes of the following meeting during the “unfinished business discussion” The Commission reviews the memo and revises, if necessary, then a vote is taken. A majority vote is needed to forward the memo to the Director.

## For Example:

So, for instance, during the March Meeting “Prepare for Wildfire Risks” is identified as the top priority item for discussion. During the “Unfinished Business” section of the April Meeting this item is listed and the Commission engages in a discussion to identify what resources are needed to support the discussion. “Homework” assignments are given and experts/speakers are identified that the Commission would like to invite to the May Meeting. During the May Meeting, the Commission discusses “Prepare for Wildfire Risks.” At the end of the discussion the Chair lists major points made. The Chair prepares a draft memo of the major points which is included in the June Meeting (under Old Business) for Commission Approval. Following approval, the memo is forwarded to the Director.

**Motion:** The Commission Approve the Process for Setting Priorities for Purposeful Discussion.