

**PLANNING COMMISSION
FOUR SPRINGS HOUSE, (585 Lewis Lane), CAMANO ISLAND, WA
TUESDAY OCTOBER 14, 2008**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers</i>	
	<i>Ray Gabelein</i>	
		<i>Mike Joselyn</i>
<i>District 2</i>	<i>Terry Reynolds</i>	
		<i>Bill Massey</i>
		<i>Alan Schell</i>
<i>District 3</i>	<i>Wayne Havens</i>	
	<i>Deb Eidsness</i>	
	<i>Scott Yonkman</i>	

Vice Chair Gabelein called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Wayne Havens, Ray Gabelein, Deb Eidsness, Terry Reynolds, Scott Yonkman, Val Hillers

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes from September 9, 2008
Commissioner Hillers moved to approve the minutes as written, Commissioner Reynolds seconded, motion carried unanimously

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director, Jeff Tate briefed the Planning Commission on the decision of the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board on the appeal of the Freeland Sub Area Plan. The County prevailed on all twelve arguments raised by the appellant. The hearing was held August 21, 2008 and the decision was issued a few weeks back. There is an appeal period during which this decision may be appealed to Superior Court, but the appellant has indicated he does not intend to carry forward with any additional appeals. If that is the case, the Plan is in place.

The Board of Commissioners adopted an implementation strategy with the Sub Area Plan, which sets staff on the path of completing the remaining pieces. A Sub Area Plan and a Land Use Plan have been looked at, but it will also require a Transportation Plan and a Capital Facilities Plan, a Housing Element, Parks and Recreation and Open Space for Freeland specifically. It will also include drafting development regulations to govern the use of property in that area. All of these will come before the Planning Commission.

Initially the schedule intended to have the first part before the Planning Commission by now, but the appeal delayed that. The 2009 docket will include some of these items.

Vice Chair Gabelein asked if there was an updated schedule for these items. He stated he didn't think the public was clear on how this will be phased in.

Mr. Tate stated the reality is that none of it can go into effect until all of those pieces are adopted and there is infrastructure in the ground, primarily the sewer system. There are no specific dates set, but the Department will be working on development regulations during the first half of 2009. The other elements of the Comprehensive Plan will be worked on in the second half of 2009.

In the meantime, the Interim regulations adopted by the Board of Commissioners will remain in effect and will likely remain in effect until the permanent regulations are adopted. The permanent regulations will most likely be set up indicating how development will occur in this boundary of the non municipal urban growth area if the property is served by infrastructure, sewer, water and storm water and also how development will occur if it is not served by that infrastructure or it is not planned to be served by that infrastructure in the immediate future. This will let people know how they can develop now, but that it won't be at the same level of intensity that would be allowed if the infrastructure was in place.

Regulations will be written following the concept of a term used in other jurisdictions called shadow planning. This allows someone with a five-acre piece, which would be allowed to have six houses per acre, once served by infrastructure to show how they would develop three houses per acre using half of the property and reserve the other half of the property for future development once the infrastructure arrives. This allows credit for the whole five acres, but can only be built on half of the property. Once the infrastructure is in place, the remaining three houses could be built on the other half.

Mr. Tate also briefed the Planning Commission on the appeal before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board of the Wetlands Ordinance. The hearing was held in Coupeville on September 30, 2008. The appeal was filed by both Camano Action for a Rural Environment (CARE) and Whidbey Environmental Action Network (WEAN). The appeals were consolidated; all arguments have been heard and the decision should be out in late November.

He also advised the Commission that budget workshops are currently going on looking at the structure and function of all County activity for 2009. The Board of Commissioners will enact a budget by December 1, 2008. The Planning Department has had their first budget workshop and will be conducting the second workshop next week. As indicated in the news it is a difficult time, counties such as King County and Snohomish County are having a difficult time. Island County Commissioners have done a good job from a fiscal point of view, making sure the County can weather financial storms fairly well.

The permit side of our Department is fully funded by permit fees, no tax dollars are collected for Building division and Planning division functions. Based on permit fees, the Department must run as close as possible to a business model. The permit activity is low and therefore the Department needs to look at ways to cut costs. Trying to be budget

conscious the Department is standing with 8 positions unfilled, trying to refrain from hiring. There is still a large amount of activity in terms of phone calls, counter visits and other work needing done; there just aren't as many new permits. Looking at reducing overhead costs, the biggest cost is personnel, stating he would rather try to function leaner and look at cuts through attrition rather than affecting people.

Commissioner Hillers asked what percent of the Department budget is from permit fees

Mr. Tate replied 100% of the Building division and 100% of the Planning division. The Parks division has a budget and Resource Enhancement is primarily grant funded with some matching funds that come out of the general fund.

Commissioner Yonkman asked what other items could be cut besides personnel.

Mr. Tate replied one of the things the permit fees pay for is long range planning functions and the Department must consider what long range planning functions are priorities; what things are essential and need to be done right now and what can possibly be put off until next year. These conversations will occur during the budget workshops and will also be a conversation that occurs in February at the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Board. The Department is operating as lean as possible; some positions have been vacant for up to six months. Right now, the staffing level is the same as it was in 2000.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Handout - initial draft of the Countywide Parks Plan.

Public Hearing: Countywide Parks Plan

Mr. Tate provided background to the update of the Countywide Parks Plan. The current plan was adopted in 1998. One of the challenges of an old Park Plan is that outside funding for projects and ideas are unavailable unless the Plan has been updated in a specific timeline of 7 years. The Planning Department assumed responsibility for Parks January 1, 2008, one of the reasons in doing so was to get Parks up to date in terms of long range planning. The 1998 Plan doesn't provide much direction of where Parks heads in the future; it is basically a summary of current inventory with a few policies and guidelines. Updating the Parks Plan as a priority was done to become eligible for different sources of funding and to provide more planning behind Parks, rather than just maintenance.

Mr. Tate stated the draft Plan is a broad policy document, it applies universally to Whidbey and Camano Island. There are a lot of different parks on both islands and a lot of different services provided. The Plan is universal in its application, which is why there isn't a lot of specificity described for different properties. There is an appendix in the back that is being updated; currently it is the same as in the 1998 Plan. The appendix describes all the different properties in the system. The priority was to get the policy portion to the Planning Commission to begin the discussion of the Parks Plan.

The policy portion sets out a draft vision statement, there is a section listing park agencies and land stewards in the County. There are fourteen agencies in Island County that manage parks. The Federal government has holdings and management responsibility, Washington State Parks has nine separate holdings in Island County. Other agencies include Fish and Wildlife, DNR, two cities and a town are responsible for managing parks. There are two Port Districts, two Parks & Recreation Districts and schools also provide an active park recreation opportunity. For a small jurisdiction like Island County, that is a large number of managers of open space and park land.

When the Planning Department started thinking about Parks planning, the discussion began by thinking about the public and their priorities. They don't care who manages a property, they just want the open space and the resource. It became obvious that the place to start was looking at things holistically and then narrowing it down to what the County can do to with its' holdings and its' ability to partner with other agencies to build better relationships.

A regional needs assessment needs to be done. People rarely drive from Camano to Whidbey Island to use a park. Even on Whidbey Island, not many South Whidbey residents are driving to North Whidbey to use those parks. It was important to outline what the holdings are and not consider who is managing them. It will help guide future discussion of where the needs and resources need to be directed.

Page 9 describes an inventory of lands owned and managed by public agencies. It describes the number of sites and total number of acres. Countywide it shows there are about 150 properties and about 7,000 acres of Park and Open Space Recreation Land.

The standards that some of the State agencies have put together, such as the Interagency for Outdoor Recreation establish what goals and standards communities should strive for in park lands. This is translated into something called a Level of Service, (LOS) which is essentially how many acres per thousand people there are.

The Interagency for Outdoor Recreations recommends 3 ½ acres of County Park per thousand residents. The preliminary calculation countywide of 7,000 acres and approximately 80,000 people translates into 88 acres per 1,000 people. If you break it down further into the County's share of about 2,100 acres of landholdings for Parks it translates into 22 to 23 acres per 1,000 people, which far exceeds the recommendation.

The next piece is to make sure the system serves the public as it should. On page 10 and 11, it begins breaking down the different type of services by agency. It looks at the different types of features found on park property, ranging from active to passive. It looks at how much exists throughout the County and who is managing what. The services include ball fields, play grounds, waterfront access, boat launches, camping and picnics areas.

The next four pages attempt to break that down further into regional areas. It may be an appropriate management tool to look at these different regions and perhaps in addition to

establishing Level of Service in the sense of how many acres per thousand people also possibly looking at how far someone needs to go to get to these resources.

Beginning on page 18 is the main piece of this Plan, the implementation strategies, providing direction for the future of Parks. The Department has attempted to focus on 17 strategies for implementation.

1. DEVELOP PARK SPECIFIC PLANS

Mr. Tate explained the Department feels park specific plans are a good idea; looking at individual properties to identify the needs. Sometimes the need may be basic, raw acreage with trails and open space may only need a small gravel area for parking or possibly controlling noxious weed or evasive plants in that disturbed parking area.

Currently if a member of the public calls asking when a specific parks' need is going to be addressed, there isn't a list of planned projects. He stated such a list needs to be developed and a plan established for where money for Parks should be directed.

It will also put Parks in a better position to apply for grants to help fund site specific projects on properties. Another reason the Board thought Parks working in Planning could achieve some efficiency is that the Department is already in the position of seeking grants for things like salmon recovery projects. Waterfront park properties could utilize some of these funds, where they prove to be mutually beneficial.

2. CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR COUNTY PARKS

Evaluating demographics and population and Level of Service within these different regions to determine what the needs are and then prioritize those needs. He stated he would want this to be a public process and perhaps surveying people to determine their desires and needs and then start a prioritization process. It would include the Planning Commission and public hearings to fine tune the direction.

3. EXPAND FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Develop a Donation and Fund Raising Strategy. Certain properties and services should have a more active outreach for donation by the County or by a group for a specific property; identifying community efforts for donation to the parks system other than taxation.

4. ESTABLISH LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Determine which services should have a Level of Service standard.

5. MAXIMIZE VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE

Invite volunteer groups into Site Specific Plans and develop agreements between County and volunteer groups. There is a wealth of volunteers on both Camano and Whidbey, providing time, energy and money and it would be great to work closer with those groups in a common direction, discussing what the best outcome for each property is. It will be important to get those groups into the site specific planning process.

6. DEVELOP A PLANT SALVAGE PROGRAM

As the agency that evaluates Clearing & Grading Permits he stated they would be looking at these to see if there is an opportunity to draw on a core group to collect plants from these areas to be cleared and transplant them to a Parks property or store them on them on a park property keeping them alive for future use. The Department felt this was an idea worthy of exploration.

7. INCORPORATE LID TECHNIQUES INTO PARK PLANNING

Using the park properties as show cases of techniques the Planning Department is advocating. Planning directs people as to what they should do with their property. This will provide examples for those interested in LID techniques to look at as well as allowing the Department to lead by example.

8. UTILIZE PARK PROPERTIES TO SUPPORT SALMON RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

Areas in the County could benefit not only from the environmental benefit of salmon recovery, but also by providing a leverage of funds from salmon recovery by identifying and implementing projects on Parks properties adjacent to salmon habitat.

9. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE DOMESTIC PET MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

This is a real issue at parks; many do not pick up after their dogs at park properties and a lot of these properties are located next to water. The Department wants to be sure these areas have doggie pot stations and bags present to enlist the help of pet owners to clean up after their dogs and thereby improve the water quality in these park areas.

10. DEVELOP AN INTEGRATED AND CONSISTENT STANDARD FOR PARK SIGNAGE

Certain park properties have sign pollution, there needs to be more focus sending the message of rules and providing outreach at park properties to standardize signs and reduce existing clutter. Using Maple Grove as an example, there are twenty-two signs there.

Commissioner Havens stated some times there are less signs when people throw them into the bushes to park. Negotiating with the developer on the neighboring property under development in order to get more parking would be a good idea.

Mr. Tate stated when looking at signs for managing pet waste on the 54 properties, there were 9 different signs addressing that; there should be a standard.

Commissioner Hillers stated she was surprised to discover that many of the parks didn't have any sign stating it was a County Park. She wanted to know if it wasn't a good idea to put up signs indicating where County Parks are.

Mr. Tate stated that it was.

11. INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY OF PARK PROPERTIES

Seek ways to make existing parks more accessible as well as looking at ways to expand accessibility in new park development in order for more segments of the population to be able to utilize park facilities.

12. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF PARK PROPERTIES

Increase public awareness of park properties, making information more available to the community through the internet and other methods.

13. INCORPORATE PARK PLANNING WITH NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

There is a section of county government that is housed in Public Works that deals in trails and paths for non-motorized transportation. There is an obvious connection between park properties and those goals and the Department would like to enhance methods of communication to achieve common objectives that are shared under both plans.

14. RECLASSIFY THE ZONING OF ALL PARKS PROPERTIES TO PARK ZONE

There is a zoning designation for Park, but there are lots of parks that are not zoned as Park. These need to have the zoning and the use aligned correctly. It may also be that the zoning itself needs to be looked at.

15. ARRANGE AN ANNUAL MEETING FOR ALL AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE PARK SERVICE AND AMENITIES

There has never been a meeting between all fourteen agencies. An annual meeting would benefit all. There have been lots of opportunistic discussions as to how the different parks can benefit from one another.

16. SEEK PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH OTHER PARK AGENCIES

Seeking partnership opportunities with other agencies would also be beneficial. Sharing resources, using each others property for storage or combining buying force through an interlocal agreement for cost sharing and other opportunities should be explored.

No. 17 was left blank for other ideas that come up.

After the October 21st comment period passes, these comments will be gathered and incorporated into the draft plan and another iteration of the document will be sent out to the Planning Commission for review.

Vice Chair Gabelein opened the floor for public comment.

Carol Triplet, President and Co-Chair of Friends of Camano Island Parks. FOCIP has been in existence since 1993, serving all of Camano Parks and have been somewhat maverick, moving ahead on properties. They have sponsored conservation properties and/or supported them. They have put trails in and carried out projects. They meet once a month as a board and have a constant plan going for each of the parks on the island, which they follow through on.

She stated she was glad there was going to be an overall plan, sometimes on Camano they feel they are not being paid attention to. Most of the administration of Parks has been done by Whidbey Island residents. Sometimes they have felt left out but it hasn't stopped them from doing.

- In looking at the old Plan, she noted the need to update the description of existing parks. She also felt a definition of Parks was important. Parks that have been purchased with conservation funds have minimal impact requirements. You can have trails but it is basically an open space, she didn't really see a definition there versus trails that are County recreation parks, with ball parks, tennis courts and that type of thing. She would like the public reading the Plan to be able to see there is a difference and to see what can be done with those lands. Looking at a site that was a conservation property they might think a ball field could be placed there when it would not be appropriate because it is not a minimal impact. They should understand that it was done to preserve natural resources here.
- The descriptions of the parks are missing or not mentioned, stating she was not familiar with Whidbey, but on Camano a lot are not mentioned or are not up to date regarding the number of acres.
- There should be an appendix that can constantly be updated on an action plan. She understands the need for planning for specific projects, but sometimes things come up through damage or circumstance. Also when a project is completed it should not be on an action plan. Stating she was focused on action and what could be done and working together and thinks it is a real important part of this Plan.

- After setting up all the strategy it needs to be implemented. Seven years is a long time to wait for an action plan which may involve smaller changes or new parks that may come in during that period of time.
- In the recognition of organizations it says non-profit and profit, but there is no mention of any organization such as theirs, which has been an important part of a historical acquisition and support. The educational aspect of the parks, in the conservation parks specifically they have put up kiosks for educational materials about the park or about what's in it.

They have published a booklet about all the trails on Camano Island and people can get it for a dollar donation. All of this was not addressed in this Plan and she felt their name should be listed as one of those organizations. Without FOCIP there would still be road end parks only on Camano, they feel they have made a significant impact in all of these parks.

- The Parks' superintendent should come over once every couple weeks to meet with them about the projects and then lend support for the projects. There is a large turn over in Island County. The communication and connection gets lost with these turnovers.
- She wanted to know the rules of the two park districts mentioned. How many people are funded for those park districts out of the money collected and are they just for a specific park, a specific area or for a whole region? She stated they weren't quite sure of the value of the park district and if Island County would be looking to get more park districts.
- Population changes, with pressure of more people move onto the islands, particularly Camano, there's a need for water access areas, recreational playground parks, stating she knew this would be a part of the needs assessment.
- Remove inappropriate and unsafe hunting areas from Island County lands such as Camano Ridge. She knows that same discussion has occurred on Whidbey, stating it is getting to a point where the safety issues are horrendous and it also shuts down areas from other use from September to January.
- Clarify the Island County funding connection with Public Works. Public Works trails that are supposed to be transportation trails and have all these rules; it has to start here and end there and connect to different areas. In a park who does the parking areas, is it Public Works, is it Parks. How these two agencies work together and what specifically they are responsible for doing in relationship to these trails or the parking areas is an important part of any Parks Plan.

Mary O'Farrell, 4858 S. Camano Dr.

She stated that in her neighborhood there is still a lot of construction going on and she is therefore very concerned about the conservation of the environment in Island County and providing a good Level of Service to the residents.

- ◆ In the draft Plan the Stanwood Camano School District was mentioned as a partner agency, but the actual schools on Camano Island were not mentioned. For the record on Camano there is Utsalady Elementary School and Elger Bay Elementary School. Between those schools there are over a thousand elementary age children attending. There is a great need for active parks. If there is an opportunity to purchase property next to those schools it might be logical to expand the parking and ball field areas there or to add tennis courts or play areas.
- ◆ She said she would support the notion of having a Parks zoning classification as it would clarify where those parks are located so people will know that when they are thinking of buying or selling property in the area. There is an ad in her neighborhood for a property, stating it is located next to a 40 acre nature preserve, but no-one knows what they are talking about, yet they are using this “future preserve” as a selling point. If there were an actual zoning for nature preserve or park it would clarify things.
- ◆ In the Plan please consider bicycle trails adjacent to arterials and highways, thinks alternative modes of transportation needs to be considered as well.

Vice Chair Gabelein opens the floor to the Commission for questions or comments

Commissioner Eidsness asked who controls the hunting issue.

Mr. Tate stated the County does not have the authority to allow or not allow hunting. On Parks' properties they do have the ability to regulate the discharge of firearms.

Commissioner Eidsness asked if it was the responsibility of the Parks Department to take care of issues of overpopulation of wildlife, using the example of Canadian Geese in Greenlake.

Mr. Tate stated the responsibility of Parks' Departments ends at making sure that each site has a management plan that determines what is appropriate on a specific park. He stated he hesitates in a broader policy document to address this. There are rules that govern hunting, proximity to development; there are rules that govern discharge of firearms. The County doesn't have the authority to say that hunting is allowed or not allowed in this County. The County can only deal with what is on these properties.

Commissioner Eidsness stated her concern was primarily about the hunting, but more so the overpopulation of the deer. Whose responsibility is that, Fish & Wildlife? It is not healthy for the deer population either, they are getting real tiny.

Commissioner Gabelein stated it is up to the State agency Fish & Wildlife, not the County to manage the fish and wildlife in the county. The County can manage their lands in terms of safety issues, but if there is a problem with a deer or goose it would require coordination with Fish & Wildlife.

Mr. Tate stated it is a question that requires a more global discussion. The only thing Parks has the opportunity or ability to do is to establish rules as to how County property is used.

Commissioner Havens asked if anyone had seen the picture of the two deer in the paper eating at the birdfeeder. That was his front yard. He stated the population of the deer is getting out of control.

Ms. Triplet stated more deer are being seen because of the reduction in the amount of their habitat.

Commissioner Yonkman asked if it was legal to hunt in County parks.

Mr. Tate stated no, it is not allowed in parks, if it is designated as a park, but not every property in the system that is managed and owned by the County is designated as a park. It requires an action by the Board of County Commissioners to formally designate a property as a park. There are other properties that are managed and operated as open recreation properties that don't have a park designation on them.

Commissioner Yonkman stated one of the public comments sparked a thought in regard to fairness, regarding sharing the space. Hunting season is fairly short and as a percentage of time goes, the bulk of the time the public has access to those spaces to a greater degree. Safety is a serious issue, but in the respect to fairness the balance is more in favor to the non hunter.

Commissioner Yonkman also asked if there was a Users Guide for parks, relating to services for the public to reference.

Mr. Tate stated the County has not developed a guide. FOCIP and other groups have developed good information about different properties. The Department is working on that, both on a webpage and something that would be in hard copy form for the public to learn about what is on a park property. Currently some of the GIS people are working on that in mapping.

Commissioner Reynolds stated her husband no longer hunted on the island because it is not a challenge. She also stated that the safety issue wasn't related to there being too many houses, but rather too many hunters that don't know what they are doing.

Ms Triplet stated this was an issue brought up by members of the public. There are irresponsible people.

Commissioner Havens stated it has been a problem for many years. The population has increased to a degree that makes it difficult to find a safe area for hunting.

Ms. Triplet finished by stating one of the items in the Parks Plan should be classification of park properties to Park zone.

Commissioner Hillers stated in the inventory of basic services by agency, under passive use, nothing is marked in it. She asked what Mr. Tate had in mind for that category.

Mr. Tate stated it may change to several categories as the discussion moves forward. Passive would be trail use, open space, currently the Department is trying to quantify that. All parks have some passive quality to them; it was put in as a placeholder. There needs to be some way of quantifying what passive use is, what it means, how much is out there and what do people want to see. When drafting this it was difficult to characterize in numerical form, there have since been more ideas develop.

Commissioner Hillers added one of the things not included in is walking trails.

Mr. Tate replied that when he began looking at this, walking trails were passive use because it is passive in its disturbance on the land, maybe not passive to the person doing the walking. A ball park on the other hand requires grading and removal of every stick in the area of the park and it totally changes the character of the landscape. Putting in a trail doesn't do that.

Ms. Triplet stated that Conservation Futures funding defines it and basically it will allow you to have trails, but not the active sport features of ball parks and playground.

Mr. Tate replied that on one park DFW defined hunting as a passive activity. That was a charged decision, people reacted to that. There are different agencies that have different opinions about what that means.

Commissioner Havens asked about Maple Grove and the percentage of people from different counties using that park. There is very limited parking there and it is a major issue. He feels the road needs to be widened for people to use the park, it is a safety problem. It is overwhelmingly used by off island people during the crabbing season.

Commissioner Yonkman thanked Carol on behalf of the Commission & FOCIP for the good work they do. Asked how many other groups there were like hers that are somewhat organized and working in the same capacity. He further asked if they were working outside of any guidance of Island County or State guidelines.

Ms. Triplet stated that when Planning took over Parks, she immediately went over with about five or six page history of what her group has done with each park and what their plans were and what they would commit themselves to. She stated she also does a newsletter of everything they do and gave the Department a copy of that as well.

She stated there is someone in Planning over at the Annex that has taken an interested in what they are doing, but probably the first time they received any real response was the previous Parks Superintendent and because FOCIP was involved in so many projects, they were able to get many things done. Mr. Tate is very aware of the things they need support on now and they constantly list in the newsletter future projects. She stated they put in benches and kiosks and have tried to communicate with Parks.

Mr. Tate stated there is not a person in the Superintendent position at this time. Since January he has taken on this responsibility with the assistance of Chris Wilson in order to learn and understand the responsibilities of the Parks Superintendent. There needs to be a permanent Parks Superintendent, it is a full time position and there is a definite need for that position to be filled in the future.

He further stated that Carol's groups, Friends of Camano Island is the only one of its' like. On Whidbey there is not something that is global. There are lots of groups that are friends of groups that are focused on certain areas. FOCIP is clearly the largest and most encompassing of numerous properties and does the most work.

Pamela Cooper, 306 Baker Way, Camano Island.

Since 1994 she has been an Island County Beach Watcher. They are sponsored by WSU and by Island County. They started in 1994 doing assessments and bio surveys on Camano Island State Park and Cama Beach and several other waterfront areas around the island. It lapsed for a few years but restarted in 2000 and now they are doing annual surveys on several areas, particularly in the State Park and at Cama since the docks were installed. They are looking at what the beach contents were before they were put in and how they stand up to the use. Beach Watchers on Camano Island are doing twelve or so beaches and it is very intensive as the work must be done when the tides are low.

Commissioner Eidsness stated the Back County Horsemen on Whidbey have done a lot of hard work for Putney Woods and such. There used to be more horse trails on Camano, but they went through private property. The trails that are on Camano are helped by either the Skagit or Snohomish Chapters of this group.

Vice Chair Gabelein discussed the inventory list on pages 13 and 14 stating some inventory under schools is missing, for example Central Whidbey must have football and basketball. South Whidbey is also not complete. He further suggested softball needs to be added.

Regarding the question of the Park & Recreation District, if the community so chooses they can vote in a Park & Recreation District that is separate from the County Parks. It is a separate taxing district. On South Whidbey that is what the people chose to do a number of years ago. The original forty acres that started this district has grown in size.

On water access, he asked if the County road ends are going to be included in the inventory, stating it is a double edged sword. If they are advertised but don't have adequate parking or facilities it could be a problem.

He further stated that under community halls, the County only owns one, but there are many more, the Bayview Hall, the Clinton Progressive, Saratoga/ Baby Island, and then there's the Legion and the Eagles, stating he was not sure where you would draw the line when listing these. Regarding other halls owned by the communities, referring back to basketball courts, there are two great basketball courts in two of the church facilities on South Whidbey. The local minister has said as long as there is adult supervision kids are welcome to use the courts. Not sure if these should be listed when taking a look at all the inventory. Sharing parking and non-motorized travel, if coordinated would be a huge step in the right direction. He stated he was pleased by this undertaking and hoped it doesn't end up on the shelf.

He stated he also agrees with Commissioner Yonkman regarding government growing and sometimes getting in the way of these volunteer efforts. In two cases a joint project with Parks & Recreation on their property, the little league built ball fields and then Park & Recreation used their funds for fencing. It was amazing the amount of energy and hard work volunteers can accomplish for the kids. It works very well, but it must be coordinated by the person that is taking care of that property. Trying to find the balance of not growing government and utilizing the volunteers out there, it can work very well. He hopes the Plan actually happens.

Commissioner Eidsness stated she is hopeful about this Plan and hopes it doesn't bind the wings of these volunteer organizations.

Commissioner Gabelein stated the south end had 8 public boat launches, one is in the city of Langley, but the rest are owned by the State and the County; this is another area where the inventory needs to be updated.

Commissioner Hillers stated one reason to have a listing of community halls is for emergency purposes, stating she wasn't sure it should be part of a Parks document but for the County to have a complete listing of where people could be pooled in a major emergency would be a good idea.

Commissioner Yonkman stated a few months ago Mr. Oakes from Public Works provided a gloomy outlook on funds for roads due to the rise in costs and asked about funding for Public Works and the sources for that versus the sources for Parks.

Mr. Tate replied there are three funding sources for Parks. General fund tax dollars pays for personnel, maintenance and operations. Real Excise tax can pay for capital improvement of property and then there is grant funding. There are other ways to enhance some of those, in certain instances people might rally behind a specific project; fund raising could be possible, there is a keen interest in Central Whidbey to establish a soccer field, which would be an example of a targeted funding effort. He stated he felt there were other areas to look at.

Commissioner Eidsness asked about passive activities and applying for grants under the proper terminology in order to cover some of these specific activities.

Mr. Tate replied that at an earlier meeting there had been a discussion about labels and that perhaps it isn't just Park as a definition, but also recreation properties and active properties, etc. Applying for specific grant funds, the Site Specific Park Plan should be very clear on those issues, but in this general Countywide Parks Plan, taking the time to provide that clarity for the 54 would be a challenge. Language in the Parks Plan should be included about the need to provide those definitions for those specific plans.

Commissioner Hillers moved to adjourn, Commissioner Eidsness seconded, the motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Bradshaw
Administrative Assistant