



Parks & Recreation Commission

Thursday, April 17, 2025 – 4:00pm
Parks & Fair Department Teams Meeting
849A Argyle Road, Friday Harbor

MINUTES

Call to order: 4:06pm

Attendance

Member/County Attendance: Brandon Andrews, Justin Jewett-Platts, Kari McVeigh, Cy Field, Tex Blankenburg, Heather Oaksen, Bill McGown

Community Attendance: Jake Perrine (Orcas Center)

Agenda Changes

No proposed changes to the agenda

Prior Meeting

Approval of minutes January 2025

Vote (w/edits): Tex moved to approve Heather seconded, unanimous approval

- *Election of Officers language amended*

Public Access

Jake Perrine from Orcas Center joined. Just sitting in on the meeting.

Correspondence

N/A

Council Liaison message (Kari McVeigh)

- The inaugural run of passenger-only, proof-of-concept, service to Anacortes begins tomorrow morning (4/18/25) at 7am. The ferry will start in Friday Harbor, stop at each ferry terminal and drop off passengers at Cap Sante Marina in Anacortes near Anthony's.

The journey takes approximately 3 hours, and the ferry has a capacity of 48 people. The return ferry leaves Anacortes at 4:55pm, returning to Friday Harbor by 8pm. Reservations are required on the San Juan Safari website. Data will be collected on attendance numbers and where passengers are from. There will be two runs per day, in the morning and afternoon. The free-to-ride pilot program runs through June 30th (state commerce department haven't extended funding beyond that date). This ferry will serve as a backup for interisland ferry, when it's not working.

- San Juan County is also working on updating its comp plan. More details will come at a later date.

New Business

- Multi-user discount discussion
 - Multi-user event discounts have been increased from 15% to 25%. Eligible parties include will include any individuals/organizations using a parks property six times a year or more (such as Soroptimists, Orcas Center, Island Rec, Lucky Fido, etc.).
 - Conversations have taken place over the last four years on who should receive discounts to the fee schedule. In spring of last year, Amanda and Brandon met with Heather and Margaret to discuss this topic, with a particular focus on ESGV. Coming out of that meeting, Parks discounted ESGV events to \$300 and added on multi-user discount in addition to that. SJC Parks' goal is to avoid picking winners and losers and make savings available to everyone that's eligible.
 - When it was time to update fee schedule in Fall 2024, the Commission decided to not separate the ESGV from the stage (you either use the whole park or not). Currently, SJC Parks is renting the entire ESGV for \$300, whether the stage is used or not. The current fee schedule was passed in March.
 - Heather feels there may be some confusion about how these discounts may apply to different organizations at different locations (such as the Fairgrounds). Brandon explained that generally organizations/individuals that use the Fairgrounds are charged more than those that use ESGV. Jake clarified that Orcas Center would prefer to rent just the stage from noon-5pm, until the show starts. He stated that they don't need to rent the entire park for the set-up time. Brandon responded that parked trucks and set-up activities are still needed outside of the stage prior to these events commencing, even if much of the Green isn't being utilized.
 - Additionally, Jake brought up that County programming takes place in Friday Harbor on county property, but rarely on Orcas. He expressed his feeling that the Orcas Center is trying to fill a need for cultural programming on Orcas that the County often provides to Friday Harbor. Brandon clarified that all non-County orgs pay for space in Friday Harbor and elsewhere in the County (including music programs, San Juan Community Theatre, etc.).
 - Cy mentioned that the Commission has struggled with this topic for his entire time here. He added additional context that Parks was exclusively fee-based at one point, but the County/taxes now provide additional support to subsidize services.
 - Heather asked that the multi-user discount policy be available to review ahead of the next meeting, so it can be discussed at that time.

Old Business

- 2025 Work Plan
 - Brandon confirmed that meetings have been approved by County Council to be shifted from monthly to quarterly moving forward.
 - Brandon sent a calendar hold for the next meeting on the third Thursday of July (7/17/25), asking if the group would like to set up an all-day meeting at one of the parks.
 - The group recommended a full day meeting on Lopez.
 - Brandon confirmed that he will update the invite.
 - County Councilmember McVeigh clarified that she won't be available the whole day of 7/17.
 - Brandon shared various Lopez updates, including the skate park, Blackie Brady bids coming in today, new shop being installed at Odlin, RomTec at Odlin, etc.

Announcements

- All seasonal employees are hired for the year, including mostly returning employees.
- New camping software, Xplor Recreation, opened on Tuesday (4/15/25).
 - Customer service has seen significant improvement over Itinio. However, the system's cost is a bit higher.
 - Brandon stated that Xplor has a strong track-record. Prior to adopting the system, Brandon and Parks employees reached out to several camp-based organizations using Xplor. They had positive feedback to share regarding their experience.
 - To date, SJC Parks' has seen some additional efficiencies, including shifting paper contracts to online agreements.
- San Juan County acquired a public works property on Shaw last year that is being used for Parks seasonal employee residence. The Shaw seasonal employee will be staying there this during the camping season.
- Capital Projects
 - Lopez Village Restrooms are being finalized before Tour de Lopez.
 - Blackie Brady bids were submitted today. There is a frontrunner for the project.
 - Several projects ongoing at the Fairgrounds.
 - Brandon and Parks staff are working on establishing a fee schedule with an architecture and engineering firm to build the Odlin Park shop. The initial schematics were reviewed yesterday.
 - Brandon and Parks staff are working on the archeology reports for RomTec additions and the Shop at Odlin.
 - A contract is in place the week of May 16th to add flooring material, ADA thresholds and partitions to the restroom at ESGV on Orcas.
 - Heather said she's heard some larger wheelchairs can't turn around in ADA-approved bathrooms, due to limited space. Brandon said that he would discuss it with County Facilities. Brandon also mentioned the possibility of adding a push-to-open button to the bathroom door, to increase wheelchair accessibility.

Meeting adjourned: 4:56pm