

**Waterfront Recreation Committee
Minutes
April 17, 2006**

Attending: Members Steve Gates, Lori Stirn, and Ann Frodel; Commissioners Hoby Streich and Sherry Bohn; Staff Members: Mike Doke (until 3:55 pm), Linda Hull; Guests: Mark Worth (Gorge Kiteboarding School), Jim and Cori Bison (New Wind Kiteboarding)

Absent: Richard Sassara, Dennis Shypertt, Michael Schock (submitted comments), and staff Linda Shames

- 1) **Introductions/Additions to Agenda:** Sherry Bohn opened the meeting at 3:10 p.m. with introductions. Linda Hull said the annual passes will be easily distinguishable per Laurie Borton, Port staff. There was some complaint last year that they were too similar.

- 2) **Facilities: Issues – Information:
General:**

Sherry asked for feedback on increasing and/or implementing new fees for 2006. Michael Schock had reported that Washington State Parks dropped its \$5 user fee this year. "The legislation to remove the vehicle parking fee came about in the 2006 Legislature, in a time when the state appears to be financially healthy. In removing the fee, the Legislature provided one-time replacement funds and left the door open for State Parks to request additional replacement funds in 2007, when lawmakers have vowed to find a secure, long-term funding source for state parks." (www.parks.wa.gov/public.asp) Michael's submitted comments would be to keep fees the same, except for motorhomes and he would support an increase. He thought the Hook was still too primitive to charge for access, but suggested a donation lockbox might help defray some maintenance expenses.

Sherry explained that costs to build a road base at the Hook exceed \$50,000. (Added from staff: pervious concrete costs approximately \$6-10 per square foot depending upon cement costs.) The rezoning of the Spit and the Hook to Recreation/Commercial will include types of road surfaces allowed. This work will be part of future budget consideration, not this year's.

Mark Worth asked if the \$2 Spit parking fee was a 1-time only fee to pay for the road improvement last summer? The committee asked for revenue figures. Linda Hull reviewed the season financial figures for the Spit that the committee reviewed in October. Revenue: \$17,032; Expenses: \$25,459. Daily passes sold: 3,241; annual passes sold at Spit: 91; annual passes sold at Event Site: 255. Annual passes could be used at both sites. The committee asked for a waterfront recreation site-specific breakdown on the revenue/expenses. Linda Shames has that information and it will be included with the minutes.

Ann Frodel stated that Stevenson is creating strong competition for the watersport dollar. With no fees and a big welcome sign, perhaps that will impact Hood River. Jim Bison felt with the increase in kiteboard school concessions to \$500 per month from \$300, the 7 schools are contributing more and would like to see the parking fee abolished. Both Jim/Cori and Mark stated their walk-in business decreased last year with the fee in place. And they felt another effect was people felt with a fee they no longer helped pick up trash. Ann thought the booth person would help educate the public on safety and control the access to the site from unaware spectators. Jim said the booth person just sits in the booth and reads books and is not educating the public. There are many families that go on the sandbar with little children and a picnic and have no clue to the danger. Sherry explained with a booth person, the Port could control the overuse of the site; she counted 72 kites in the air one weekend day and that is a safety issue for everyone.

Sherry will take back to the Commission that the committee did not think an increase in fees would be appropriate this year and would remain status quo. Steve stated that other areas want their market share of business and the Port should look at the bigger economic impact picture of the sports. Jim and Cori said the new kiteboarding community that comes to try the sport has a lot of money and Hood River should welcome that.

Signage was discussed and it was agreed that the schools should follow city sign ordinances. The concession permits will address this issue and schools need to remove all signage after the season. Mark asked if directional signs to the Spit could be placed strategically because his customers have a hard time finding the school. He recommends the Port name the Spit road Kite Point Road. Warning signage at the Spit is adequate and warns spectators about the danger of kiteboarding. Staff will review additional signage for the area. Cori stated the schools do not want a lottery draw for their school sites. The issues specific to kiteboarding will be addressed at a meeting of all the kiteboard schools, date to be set this week by Mike.

Discussion was held regarding organized events/demos/activities from the Hook, Event Site, Spit, and Marina Beach and that they need to be registered and coordinated through the Port Office. There were several conflicts with events last season because the event sponsors were doing this activity on their own. There seems to be some misunderstanding that those accessing the sandbar are not on Port property; however, the Port's submerged land goes to the middle of the river. There was agreement from those using the sites that demos and sales are occurring at the Spit and the Event Site every day and are advertised online. Because every vendor needs to have a Port permit and a City transient merchant license, these sales are illegal. Port staff will do research and try to be more proactive in stopping this activity.

Event Site: Discussion was held regarding rental/sales concessions at the Event Site. Michael Schock wrote he is not in favor of it because it is already too busy. Steve said he felt the rental service is an amenity to the site and it's how it's done in worldwide in the industry. There were no objections by those attending to continue the Event Site concessions for rentals. Linda stated that Maintenance did not want the grass used for this purpose. Ann stated the grass is still over-watered.

The Park Host was discussed and it was agreed that the Port should keep this position. The committee felt he did a good job but that he could be better identified, possibly with a Port shirt or hat. It was recommended the Host do more in the way of dog control. Steve said that is by far the biggest problem at the Event Site: dogs running loose, barking, fighting, etc. Port staff will post the county's dog control number on the bulletin board for users to call directly to report dog problems. Theft of equipment is still being reported at the Spit and the Event Site. The Hook doesn't seem to have the problem. Do we need "Do Not Leave Valuables in Your Vehicle" signs?

Hook: See above.

Spit: Sherry asked about the RFP process for kiteboarding? Steve, Jim and Mark said it was a painful process because of its annual nature. They asked if it could be 3-5 years for long-range planning for their schools. Steve felt it was a good idea to do the same for windsurfing schools.

Marina: The fuel pump will be operating by May 1. It had more electrical problems this spring but should be fixed soon.

Cruiseship Dock: An underwater inspection will be made on the pier itself for structural integrity due to the wear and tear from the large ships. The Commission is discussing the

feasibility of redeveloping the cruise dock which would eliminate the some vessels from stopping. Others can still stop in the Marina.

The Corps of Engineers recently did a sounding in the boat basin channel and found there is shoaling from the sandbar. The cost to dredge is \$3.50 per cubic yard and is estimated at \$1.75 million to dredge this small area. The Corps will review the need again for the 2008-09 projects. Port staff will have an aerial view of the delta and sandbar done this year.

Maritime Services is working along the boat basin and has leased the property for 5 years. They will be working on yacht renovation and building floating structures for houseboats.

Sherry reported that the Frontage Road feasibility study will done in response to the Exit 64 study from ODOT. The goal of Frontage Road is to take local traffic off the I-84 freeway in both directions. This project will dovetail with the other improvements being made to Exit 64 and the Toll Plaza.

3) **Other:**

Linda reported that the Port received a "go ahead" from ODOT to apply for its Transportation Enhancement Grant. It will be for infrastructure costs to develop the Riverside Pedestrian Trail System throughout the waterfront area, including the Hook.

Committee members present and Michael Schock agreed to continue to serve. Linda will contact Dennis and Richard to see if they are still interested.

4) **Next Meeting:** After season, to be determined

Meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Prepared by Linda Hull

