

Waterfront Recreation Committee Minutes
December 12, 2012 - 1:00 pm
Marina Center Boardroom

Members in Attendance: Doug Archbald, Sam Bauer, Cori Collins, Pepi Gerald, Bill Lake, Greg Stiegel, Lori Stirn, Rich McBride , Michael McElwee and Liz Whitmore

Member Absent: Laney Gale, Forrest Rae, Brian Shortt

Guest: Scott Reynier, Columbia River Insurance

Commissioner Rich McBride opened the December 12 meeting at 1:01p.m. No items were added to the agenda.

Committee approved meeting minutes for October 23, 2012.

Public Comment

None

High-Water Plan

Scott Reynier: The Port’s insurance carrier Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) continues to be supportive of maintaining kite access at the Event Site, but is looking to the Port, Columbia River Insurance, and the community to provide its own safety plan. Understands that kite launching and landing has been occurring at the busiest time of year.

Pepi Gerald: The High-Water Planning Committee was formed to create a safe and consistent plan for the Event Site.

Scott Reynier: Likes the idea of designating a separate area for kiteboarders, but what do you do when there is no wind?

Rich McBride: Very concerned that people are locating themselves in hazardous zones downwind of kite launching and landing, especially people picnicking on the beach. Too many different users at the Event Site; not safe combining with kiting. Recommendation from committee is that an area is designated for kiteboarding only during high-water conditions. Clear signage would be added indicating “Kiteboarding Only” and also directing “Spectators” to a safe location. A Port employee would be hired in a seasonal position to manage crowd control and talk to people about safe locations for spectating and picnicking. The employee would not launch and land kites.

Scott Reynier: Worst case scenario would be if a kiteboarder injured a spectator. Kite access from the Event Site would then no longer be permissible from an insurance and liability perspective. Kiteboarders need to understand that access at the Event Site is a privilege not a right.

Lori Stirn: Education is important. Tourists visiting don’t understand the risk and don’t read signs.

Sam Bauer: Enforcement should be increased. Port and kiting community leaders need to embrace a “We won’t tolerate” attitude and approach.

Rich McBride: Port employee should have a bull horn and hailer to control unsafe behavior.

Bill Lake: Not comfortable with us vs. them mentality. Creates an unfriendly environment with bull horn and signs saying “no”.

Cori Collins: Completely disagrees. As a conservative kiteboarder, appreciates rules and control. Makes environment safer and more comfortable for users.

Michael McElwee: Struggling with the line between accommodating as many people as possible and providing a safe environment that protects the public as well as protects the Port from liability and risk. Concerned the Event Site is a dangerous place for kite launching and landing. Has received feedback that the Port should not allow it past July 4th. Also concerned about a Port employee becoming the enforcer and first responder in an emergency. Suggests that the Port designate a consistent end date for launching and landing at the end of June. Can’t continue to move and adjust the date to accommodate high-water conditions. The work that has been done by the High-Water Committee is very good, but it would take just one accident and kite access at the Event Site would be over. Better to err on the side of caution and protect access for the long term.

Scott Reynier: What happens when the Port employee leaves? Is the Port liable?

Doug Archbald: Food vendors will need to be notified if Port’s intent is to cut off access at a specific date because that will affect their business.

Greg Stiegel: Believes the Port employee is important to the success of the safety plan at the Event Site. If decision gets made to cut off access on a specific date would need to improve other launch sites.

Doug Archbald: During high-water conditions Port should dictate that no swimming or picnicking is allowed on the beach downwind of the launching and landing.

Pepi Gerald: The Event Site was developed as a wind sport venue, not a place for swimming and picnicking. There are other locations along the waterfront for people to do those activities.

Michael McElwee: Suggests plan be reviewed and discussed by Commissioners on December 18 to receive feedback on course of action.

RFP/Food Vendor Update

Liz Whitmore: Reviewed the outcome of the kiteboarding, windsurfing, and SUP evaluation process. Also shared concerns and discontent voiced again by food vendors regarding location for both vendors on lower cruise ship dock.

- *Waterfront Rec Committee supports initial plan for both food vendors on lower cruise ship dock and does not approve other food vendor locations in parking lot or upper cruise ship dock.*

Slackwater Beach/SUP Storage

Liz Whitmore: Discussed Big Winds interest in having SUP storage (two containers) down at Slackwater Beach.

- *Waterfront Rec Committee suggests looking into zoning requirements if allowable use. Believes SUP storage should be offered to any interested school concession and should be charged for using area.*

Waterfront Narrative

Rich McBride: Discussed plan for waterfront narrative – Port staff to put together information on all waterfront recreation sites. Decision made not to go with an outside consultant at this point in time.

Next High-Water Committee Meeting:

Friday, January 11, 2013 at 12:30pm in the Port Boardroom.

Next WF Rec Meeting:

Friday, January 11, 2013 at 1:30pm in the Port Boardroom.

The December 12, 2012 meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Prepared by Liz Whitmore, 12/14/2012