

STRATHCONA PARK PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 9, 2006 6 PM – 10 PM

BOARDROOM –PROTECTED AREAS HQ – RATHTREVOR BEACH PARK PARKSVILLE

Present – Ron Quilter(staff), Anne Fiddick (chair), John Wilson, Sandy Briggs, Barb Baker, Gary Schaan, Frank Hovenden, John Milne (secretary),
Guests - Ken Rodonets (CDMC), Peter Rothermel (Federation of BC Mountain Clubs), Jim Fiddick (public),

*Note: Warrick Whitehead arrived at 8:00 p.m.

Absent – Rick Rollins, Paul Erickson, Dave Vincent

1. Opening Remarks

Anne Fiddick – welcome, positive comments on SPPAC members detailed email communication regarding the Bedwell Trail proposal since last meeting.

2. Confirm Previous Minutes – to be posted on website

2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda - noted

3. Review Previous Minutes

Paradise Meadows Trailhead Relocation and Visitor Center – Ron gave an update on the situation. The Mount Washington Resort's land donation is still in process. A Park Use Permit (PUP) is being worked on to accommodate Mount Washington infrastructure in the land donation (sewer and water lines), winter parking and snow removal. The new access trail is still under snow. It will be worked on when the snow's gone and ground dries. The goal is to have the trail completed by August. An opening celebration is planned to draw attention to the new trail, and to encourage the public to use it.

The Visitor's Center is part of a larger group under the Vancouver Island Mountain Sports Society (VIMSS). Len Apedaile is the project manager. Andy has applied for \$300 000 of Min. of Health "Act Now" funds as part of their fitness for life program. This facility will be used by others as a way of keeping it profitable. The center will be a parks building during the summer season. While there is a lot of momentum for the visitor center project, a business plan still needs to be in place prior to any construction to ensure there is a way of obtaining funds to maintain the facility.

Gary volunteered at last SPPAC meeting to be a liaison with this project. He contacted Andy about this. Len sent him an update. *Note – make sure Gary knows about the next meeting. BC Parks is to make the decision about the exact location of the Visitors Center with input and advice from other members of the various committees. Neither Mount Washington nor VIMSS will determine the location. SPPAC has a role in advising the location of Center and on snow removal. Conditions regarding snow

dumping must be written into PUP. A discussion ensued about the layout of the area. The structure of VIMSS was also discussed. A decision was made to invite a VIMSS representative to next the SPPAC meeting. It was suggested that maybe SWI would have a PUP to run Visitor's Center, and operate the facility. So far no money has been obtained for the Visitor's Center. There is enough money available to finish the trail, and to erect signs including a large one for the entrance to the Park. Thought needs to be given to the design of the sign.

Action – SPPAC to provide suggestions for entrance sign design
- Invite a VIMSS rep to next meeting to discuss the overall project

Bedwell Trail/Clayoquot Wilderness Resort – Last meeting's presentation from the Clayoquot Wilderness Resort was reviewed. SPPAC's response to the presentation was mixed. Barb did not get the email interactions since the last meeting. Barb polled a few Port Alberni people. Most people she spoke to supported accepting the proposal with unfettered access guaranteed, and conditions where the permit could be cancelled if problems.

Action – Ron to forward e-mails to Barb.

Parks will need to engage in a process of getting more information. The Gayle McGee Bridge is to have its condition assessed. Ministry of Forests will be contacted. Dave Vincent, Ron and Andy will go June 22 to visit the first 3 bridges, Gayle McGee Bridge, and two logging bridges. Dave Vincent has been hired to do an engineering report. Frank thinks Dave may have a conflict of interest since he is on SPPAC, and designed the bridge. Tourism Arts and Culture is funding this as it is outside the park. Ron thinks no conflict there, and he has worked for Parks in the past. Dave has also worked for John Caton. John W thinks as long as everyone is aware of the situation it should be OK, and it's not a large project. Sandy pointed out SPPAC is only an advisory group. Dave will be reporting as a professional engineer, and the engineering standards are very good. Frank asked how an outsider would view the relationship, and whether or not it would be perceived by an outsider. John Caton is giving them a ride up the road. Gary asked for a report on Dave's recommendations.

Action – Ron to distribute Dave's report at next meeting

Anne received two phone calls, one from Brian Gunn lobbying for John Caton. The other from Jim Dehart who left a message. Anne recounted some of her conversation with Brian who is in favour of the Caton proposal. CWI needs to apply for a PUP with detailed costs and construction information. It is recommended that public meetings take place in Tofino/Ucluelet area and perhaps Victoria. An impact assessment may be required. Parks have started the terms of reference for the process. An independent person would be hired to conduct the process. Jim Dehart has responded with another email agreeing to the standards requested by Parks for the project. When a PUP application is made there is a 90 day period for the whole process. It could go longer depending on the timing of public involvement processes. Suggest that the meetings take place in the fall after the summer. Applicant is responsible for the cost of the meetings. SPPAC members would be invited to attend the meetings. Parks will most likely distribute a handout at the meetings to get feedback.

Tloos Creek Update – no update available. Ron couldn't contact the ministry staff involved.

Crest Creek Climbing Area – Comments on Draft Plan – The Draft Plan was given out at last SPPAC meeting, and feedback was requested.

Action - Ron will email copies to members who didn't get copies.

Sandy sent his comments to Andy. Ron photocopied this and circulated it at the break.

*Aside – Frank suggested that members not at meetings get copies of handouts, e.g. Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge package from last meeting.

Sandy compared Crest Creek to other climbing areas in BC. Crest Creek is in better shape than other similar areas. The group working on the area is doing a good job that adds value to the intensive recreation zone, benefiting local area economies. Cleaning off rocks is worth doing. Impacts on the local environment should be considered, but on balance the work looks positive. A comment was made that boundaries should be set after the botany is assessed by a qualified person.

Comox Glacier Trail Land Trade – not much happened since last time. 15 – 20 letters received supporting preserving lower part of trail. Non-park lands were suggested for trade, but other ministries are not offering anything. There will be no logging there until 2007? Parks is not willing to trade parkland. Conversations have occurred with Steve Lorimer about leaving buffers. TimberWest is aware of public sentiment on this issue. SPPAC's position is to support Glacier Trail as public land, and to support the direction in the Management Plan to acquire land.

Evan Loveless looking into the legal question of public access through private lands to access parks. Peter spoke to the question. This doesn't concern the issue of acquiring land, just access. SPPAC questioned TW's certification and ISO (International Standards Organization) rating if they don't provide access.

Marmots – No news since last meeting. Dick Heath has provided a letter to SPPAC on November 21/05 indicating Parks support of marmots being relocated in the park, and asked for SPPAC recommendations as to how to implement the program.

Warrick spoke to Don Doyle, who said there will be no release of marmots in the park this year. Warrick wants the Marmot Committee to share statistics about it successes in other areas. Warrick said if the marmot group wants to go into park, there is nothing SPPAC can do about it. He is opposed to introducing marmots at this time. However, he would back the proposal if there were some conditions put on camps, shepherds, dogs, noise, etc and there were some successes in other areas to show the program is working.

Ron reminded the committee that permission has been given, and now SPPAC can suggest conditions. The Marmot Committee was asked to submit operational plans to a future SPPAC meeting, and it would be looked at then. They've already committed to no fences, music, dogs, etc. Warrick doesn't want Strathcona used as a test area. It must be proved somewhere else first. Frank agrees with Warrick's points. Barb would have a problem with all the activities mentioned. Gary would like it to happen with as little impact as possible. Sandy agrees with Gary. John W. supports Warrick, Frank and Gary

because of their expertise. Anne thinks there is a big difference between Haley Lake and Park, and agrees with the concerns about impacts. She also wants to minimize these impacts. She also reminded members that this SPPAC committee doesn't necessarily have to agree with previous SPPAC decisions.

The decision was made to wait until a proposal comes forward, and react to it then.

Action – provide update on operational plans at next meeting

Unfettered Access – Warrick sent out an email on this topic. He commented on Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge's proposal and that access to the park is through private land. He mentioned the land donation at Mount Washington and the charge to cross reserve land at Friendly Cove. It was noted that Warrick was not at last meeting, and did not receive the material. A discussion took place on the question of paying for access, and whether or not this is reasonable.

There are many areas around the park where access is an issue. Gary suggested discussing this issue in a more strategic sense at a future meeting. Perhaps Wood Mountain will be an access issue in future, also Comox Lake Logging Road, Willemar Lake, Comox Glacier, and maybe elsewhere as well.

Warrick agreed. The park is at a critical point now regarding access issues. We should look at all access points to assess the situation. We should inventory access points and the status of the land there. We must have unfettered access in future, not react to situations after they have arisen. Ron responded and pointed out there are limited rights of access over private lands, and how to deal with it. It's a huge issue province wide. Access is going to become more difficult in future, if it isn't dealt with now.

Barb suggested members inventory their own areas. She could do the Port Alberni area. Ron is familiar with most access around park. Frank could do Gold River area. Frank will also do the Oyster River area.

Action – Frank, Barb and Wharrick will review ownership of access points to various areas of the park

4. New Business

Membership – Anne mentioned Rick's email offering to stand down if his attendance has been a problem. Ron circulated the attendance record covering the last 7 meetings. There was a discussion about how many meetings a member can miss and still be contributing to the group. How can a member be knowledgeable without attending? The feelings of group were that members, who have missed quite a few meetings, will be contacted and asked if they wish to continue on the committee, or do they wish to step down. Are they able to attend? In future it may be necessary to replace members who miss too many meetings.

Action - Ron will contact missing members by phone.

BC Parks/Strathcona 100th Anniversary – Ron presented a PowerPoint slide show with lots of ideas to think about. Ron is looking for ideas and people and groups to get involved. This will be followed up on at subsequent meetings.

5. Public Question Period

Ken Rodonets – asked about new resort on Mount Becher. Do they have a permit? Yes – it's on private land outside Wood Mountain Park.

Peter Rothermel – asked about Bedwell Trail. If the log spans are rotten, would they be taken out? No. There is no money to do so. The trail would be closed. Peter asked about finding other shallow crossings. Peter spoke of the importance of the ocean to alpine route. A suggestion was made of using Peter's group's resources and Friend of Strathcona Park's resources to build a suspension bridge over the chasm to replace the rotting bridge. Ron was supportive of this idea.

Jim suggested fund raising to buy Glacier Trail corridor, maybe using rock star who would like to do a benefit concert.

Sandy reported some of his friends found a trail brushed out in the Moyeha Valley. He reported it to Andy.

Next Meeting: - October 6, 2006 In Courtenay, location to be determined.

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