

County Manager Update

June 21, 2021

11:00 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Erik Martin, Becky Butler, Chris Panush, Steve Wohld, Tailor Arrington, Katie Conradi, Josh Metcalf

Guest: Edna J. Fund, Bill Serrahn, Nic Scott, Claudia Yaw

Recorder: Lara McRea

Packwood Sewer

Erik Martin said he hopes to hear from the Department of Commerce sometime this summer regarding the grant for the Packwood Sewer project and then will get a consultant on board to help with the process. Commissioner Stamper said he felt the meeting last week in Packwood was valuable and the city will likely put another meeting together in October.

Skate Creek Park

Erik discussed Skate Creek Park which is an area of 175 acres on the other side of the Skate Creek Bridge on the Cowlitz River. Washington State Parks currently owns the property. He said that Bill Serrahn has been doing a good job of keeping it clean, picking up trash and making sure the trails are clear. Two years ago the county started conversations with reps from Washington State Parks as they planned to surplus it. The board at that time felt it was better to be under local control because if the state surpluses it then the future of the park would be uncertain.

Erik said it was his understanding that the intent was to preserve it, however if the state wanted to preserve it that would be fine too.

Bill Serrahn, who is the president of Friends of Skate Creek Park in Packwood, gave a brief history of the park.

Bill said he and his organization would like to see the park protected. The park has 4 miles of trails and is used by residents. The parking lot is full all the time and is a popular natural attraction in the community.

Bill said their organization wants to keep the park natural. They will embrace Lewis County as the title holder as long as there is a long-term protection plan in place.

Commissioner Stamper suggested looking at carbon credits as a potential. He feels there are opportunities there.

Erik stated that the county has a request into Washington State Parks to acquire the land but is waiting to hear the status.

Commissioner Swope said that if the state is going to surplus the property then he thinks Lewis County would want to preserve it.

Erik noted that Lewis County's current parks are not well funded and taking on another 175 acres could pose a funding issue. He said if the county wants an unmaintained piece of property there is a maintenance and cost attached.

Bill said their organization is interested in a maintenance contract with the county and they would have an arborist come in a few times a year to evaluate. The cost could be as \$10k per year. The organization would want to have insurance and they could also get donations.

Erik stated that the current parks budget for all county parks is \$65k per year.

Commissioner Stamper said he would like the county to speak with the state again to see what they are going to do with the property. He also said that Lewis County has an opportunity to secure 175 acres and feels it is a good thing.

Commissioner Pollock suggested involving the new parks director to come up with a plan. She also voiced her concerns if a recession hit then the park wouldn't be adequately funded.

Erik said he would reach out to state parks again and check on the status.

HR/Risk update

Steve Wohld noted that Megan Eastman has been working on the Long Term Care Act guidance and should have something to present by the end of the month.

He also said that HR's quarterly newsletter is drafted and explains benefits and options.

Capital Projects update

Steve reported they are closing on some properties this week which will allow Public Works to move.

They are currently awarding contracts for the abatements.

The L&J building has been repaired structurally and it will be sealed soon.

Steve discussed an upcoming hearing that will revise the surplus code.

Facilities update

Steve said the department continues to address custodial needs and the custodians are doing a great job in keeping up with everything.

Steve said they are continuing to look at the health building window issue for next winter.

Steve discussed the budget for Rainier North which is the section of the new building that is brick where the Weed Dept. is located. The space will be used for two large conference rooms for the county campus. The courts have asked to use them next year for jury selection.

Steve discussed the canopy repair at the fairgrounds entrance.

Parks/SWW Fair/Tourism update

Steve said the SWW Fair Association has tentatively agreed to rename the South Stage the Community Stage.

He said the new PA system is ordered and will be installed. He said it will feed into the grandstands.

They are currently looking at ducting and stairway safety issues.

Steve said the rodeo contract is pending but should be under contract in the next week or two. He has also signed off on entertainment for the fair.

Chris discussed the food vendors and said there will be a carnival this year.

Steve also said there will be two demo derbies this year and there will also be a Garlic Festival.

Other

Commissioner Stamper asked the status of the flood plain mapping study.

Josh said the consultant hasn't published anything publicly yet. The draft mapping will be given to FEMA for review.

Josh discussed the closure of Jones Rd. which has a culver underneath it that has failed. It is not on the repair list for this year. To prevent further damage to the road Public Works plans to restrict it. They will need engineering work to figure out what the fix is. Josh further discussed the routes to get around.

Erik said he is supposed to get draft report from Deltawrx for the 911 Consolidation Feasibility Study by this Wednesday.

Erik noted that Public Information Specialist interviews will take place on July 7th.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.