

## **Minutes – Kitsap County Non-Motorized Facilities Community Advisory Committee**

**March 18, 2025 – Kitsap County Public Works Building, Port Orchard**

<b>Members Present:</b>	<b>Members Absent:</b>
Brian Watson (Vice Chair)	Janet Kidd (Chair)
Nathan Menefee	
Deborah Weinmann	
Jessy Osterloh	
Rick Feeney	
Jess Chandler	
Scott Satter	

### **Public Works Staff Present:**

David Forte

Melissa Mohr

### **Guests/Public:**

Alex Wisniewski – Kitsap Parks Director

### **Approval of Previous Minutes:**

- Jess Chandler moved to approve the minutes from February 2025, and Deborah Weinmann seconded. The February 2025 meeting minutes were approved without objection.

### **Public Comment:**

- Jessy Osterloh shared that she had traveled to Olympia and met with District 26 Legislators about maintaining funding for State Parks and State Lands.

### **Discussion Items:**

#### **1. Kitsap County Parks Department Update:**

- Director Wisniewski provided an update on recent activity at Kitsap County Parks. He discussed the recent PROS Plan review process, which is nearing its final stage. He noted that Kitsap County Parks manages approximately 140 miles of trails for non-motorized use.
  - He reported on the following capital projects:
  - Deck project at one of the fairgrounds buildings

- Various athletic field enhancements
  - The Port Gamble parking lot from Carver Drive, which will add 75 parking spaces to serve Port Gamble trails, including the mountain bike skills park.
- An update was provided on the legal action on the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park STO trail segment. The appellant, Kitsap Environmental Coalition, agreed to drop the SEPA appeal if the trail segment from the parking lot was removed from the TIP as an active project, and the county would start further review and analysis. The Board of Commissioners signed a resolution specifying that the trail project would be put on hold pending further review and analysis to settle the appeal. The settlement allows the Carver Drive parking lot project to move forward. All trail projects south of the parking lot in the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park are on hold.
  - Deborah Weinmann commented that the phrase “pending further review and analysis” is very vague and questioned who would be involved in the review and discussion. Wisniewski commented that the nature of the review would be discussed in upcoming commissioner meetings, which are open to the public.
  - The committee members discussed the potential of communicating to the commissioners about the resolution. The concern expressed was the importance of the Port Gamble trail as a shared use path and that it is a key part of the STO concept. Without the Port Gamble shared path, the STO concept would appear to be dead. The sudden change in direction was of concern to the committee.
  - It was noted that multiple SEPA determinations concluded that the Port Gamble shared use path segment would have no adverse environmental impacts. Changing the surface of the path from paved to gravel would not be possible due to extensive maintenance costs on account of the topography.
  - David Forte noted that if the commissioners decided not to move forward with the proposed trail following the review and analysis, it is very possible the only improvement that could be made is a minor improvement to the logging road at the top of the park, and a 4-ft wide trail improvement to the Stottlemeyer trailhead parking lot.
  - David Forte noted that there was extensive effort to engage with the public and all interested parties during the feasibility study, and no significant concerns were submitted. Jess Chandler noted that it is frustrating that at the end of a long public process, an interested party who did not express concerns previously can suddenly stop the planning effort and start a new

process. Wisniewski noted that the appeal was essentially based on what the appellant saw as a technicality.

- Brian Watson noted that the Burke Gilman trail was an extensive project that took significant effort to get to the finish line. Concerned people and supporters had to be very vocal for that project to be successful. We must remember the Burke Gilman trail didn't always exist. He noted he believes a similar effort is needed for the NSTO. His concern was that the commissioners are getting an earful from a very small number of people.
- Deborah Weinmann asked what Director Wisniewski thought the NMCAC's role was in relation to the Parks Department. He stated that it was important that the parks be connected to the non-motorized transportation system. Non-motorized use enables visitors to use the parks without driving via sidewalks, bike lanes, etc. He noted this was stated in the PROS plan. Deborah asked whether this includes trail connections through the parks. Mr. Wisniewski agreed that trail connections through the parks align with the Parks Department's objectives, but ultimately, the commissioners have the final decision.
- Nathan Menefee commented that the environmental concerns noted by the Kitsap Environmental Coalition are contradicted by the protections achieved by the designation of parks and shared use facilities. Parks and facilities such as shared use trails offer defined protection to our open spaces because, absent these designations, the alternative is logging or development. He noted that he has seen the construction of logging roads within the Port Gamble complex, and these roads are constructed without extensive environmental review and public involvement.
- Scott Satter noted at the end of the Parks discussion that there was a need for additional crosswalks in the Fairgrounds area.

## **2. Member and Staff Update:**

- David Forte provided an update on federal funding actions. He noted that the DOT issued another memo last week, setting up the DOT framework for evaluating all existing grants and awards from the previous administration. DOT is signaling that it will attempt to reclaim funds that have already been distributed, except for grants with executed agreements. This means that if the county has a project where the funds have been obligated, it may be safe. However, anything not yet obligated is at risk. Several projects in the county fall into this category. David noted that over \$16 million in grant funding is not

expected to survive. The DOT memo mentioned that bicycle-related projects and shared use paths would be targeted, but it did not mention sidewalks.

- Melissa Mohr noted that the public works staff is working to determine if projects could still be secured and moved forward by making small adjustments.
- Jessy Osterloh asked about State funding. David Forte responded that WA State projects will have to get extended, and some may be dropped. For Kitsap County, this includes a significant number of fish passage projects. The State was in the process of trying to get the tribes to extend the deadline for those. The Gorst projects is still moving forward. The Kingston Ferry re-alignment project cost is more than anticipated, and a creek under Highway 104 is posing a fish barrier challenge. Re-alignment is now on hold until they can determine what to do about the creek. The money that was allocated for this project is now at risk. The Highway 305 project, which is \$2.5 million dollars short, will now likely be put on hold.

**Adjournment:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 19:00.