

**KITTITAS COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY**

**2:00 P.M.**

**NOVEMBER 4, 2014**

Board members present: Chairman Paul Jewell; Vice-Chairman Gary Berndt and Commissioner Obie O'Brien.

Others: Mandy Buchholz, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Doug D'Hondt, Engineer; Kathy Jurgens, Finance System Manager; Kirk Holmes, Public Works Director/Building Official; Jim Armstrong, CEO Kittitas County Chamber; Jill Scheffer, Senior Conservation Director-Forterra; Steve Hahn, Washington State Parks & Recreation.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**HELEN McCABE PARK**

**PUBLIC WORKS**

At 2:00 p.m. **CHAIRMAN JEWELL** opened a Public Hearing to consider a transfer of property at Helen McCabe Park from Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission to Kittitas County.

**KIRK HOLMES, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/BUILDING OFFICIAL** reviewed a staff report. He stated that the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is considering the transfer of two parcels totaling 20 acres (Parcel's #060333 and #090333) of the Helen McCabe property to Kittitas County in order to facilitate the development of a scenic byway interpretive center on the site. He stated that the full Helen McCabe property is approximately 64 acres in size and is located south of Ellensburg Washington at the northern edge of the Yakima Canyon Scenic Highway. **MR. HOLMES** explained that the Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) has leased this property from State Parks since 2004 and is working with Kittitas County to develop the interpretive center.

**STEVE HAHN, WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION** briefly reviewed the history of the site. He stated that by law, when transferring State Park property to a local government or other entity, the agency must include in the transfer document (Governors Deed) legal and enforceable conditions and reservations requiring the local government of other entity to manage and operate the park property for outdoor recreational purposes available to the general public. He stated that the Deed restriction "runs with the land" which means that should

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**APPROVED**  
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the party receiving the park property ever cease to make the property open and available for public outdoor recreation, the land with either "revert" or transfer back to State Parks or the local government or other entity will compensate the Commission for the then, fair market value of the lands transferred. He explained that in addition to the Deed reservations, Staff of the Commission is recommending the Commission retain an easement through the proposed transfer property as needed to provide other access to State Parks assignee's, noting that Kittitas County has agreed to compensate the Commission for all transaction and staffing costs associated with the property transfer and the County has additionally agreed to operate and maintain the vault toilet, parking lot and all other State owned facilities currently located on the property.

**KATHY JURGENS, FINANCE SYSTEM MANAGER** stated that the Paths and Trails Fund or the County General Fund would pay for the maintenance costs and upkeep.

**CHAIRMAN JEWELL** questioned **MR. HOLMES** regarding the work that the County Public Works Department is doing with KEEN. He asked him to describe the work and speak to the importance of the timing of the project, the documentation process and when the funds have to be spent by, or if an extension will need to be requested. **MR. HOLMES** briefly described the work being done with KEEN and stated that the funds have to be spent by the end of September 2015. He indicated that there is a good chance the County will request an extension, noting that they are planning to begin the work in spring of 2015.

**STEVE HAHN, WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION** stated that assuming that the transfer gets approved the County could realistically begin work 45 days after the Deed is signed.

**THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING: JILL SCHEFFER, SENIOR CONSERVATION DIRECTOR-FORTERRA** spoke in support of the project. She spoke about the habitat restoration and the planning and outreach being done. She stated that the land transfer is a key piece to achieving the interpretive center. **JIM ARMSTRONG, CEO KITTITAS COUNTY CHAMBER** spoke in support of the transfer. He explained that there is a lot of tourism potential and the location of the proposed interpretive center will just enhance the amount of visitors that will travel through the Yakima Canyon Scenic Highway.

THERE BEING NO OTHERS REQUESTING TO TESTIFY THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.

COMMISSIONER BERNDT moved to approve/accept a 20 acre transfer, by directing Staff to prepare enabling documents (a letter) to the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission at a later date to be formalized by Resolution at a future Agenda.

COMMISSIONER O'BRIEN seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD

  
Mandy Buchholz

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Paul Jewell, Chairman