

**Whatcom County  
Council Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee**

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038  
(360) 778-5010**



**Committee Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, January 9, 2024  
11 AM  
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY NOON, MAY BEGIN EARLY  
(PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT  
[www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil), OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

**COUNCILMEMBERS**  
Todd Donovan  
Kaylee Galloway  
Mark Stremler

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**  
Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## **Call To Order**

Committee member Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order in a hybrid meeting at 10:48 a.m.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 3 - Todd Donovan, Kaylee Galloway, and Mark Stremler

Also present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Ben Elenbaas, and Jon Scanlon

## **Announcements**

### **Special Order of Business**

1. [AB2024-062](#) Nomination and assignment of Committee Chair

**Donovan moved that Galloway be NOMINATED AND APPOINTED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 3 - Donovan, Galloway, and Stremler

**Nay:** 0

Kaylee Galloway was appointed as Chair.

### **Committee Discussion**

1. [AB2024-030](#) Discussion of the proposed adoption of the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (CPROS) 2024

The following people presented:

- Lucas Clark, Planning and Development Services Department
- Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director
- Rod Lamb, Parks and Recreation Department

Lamb and Knox answered questions about how to determine from the Capital Improvement Plan list in Appendix C (pages 148-159) of the attachment called “CPROS Plan 2024” which projects have funding, the details on the Planning Commission’s amendment of the plan recommending that Parks explore public and private partnerships to better understand the feasibility of developing indoor recreation facilities, whether the County is still doing reclamation on the outdoor rifle range, the timeline for granting public access at Governors Point nature reserve, whether there has been an ask from citizens for more overnight camping provided by the County, whether there could be something in the plan

around the theme of responsible recreation on trails as well as around Lake Whatcom, whether analysis could be done on what our parks and recreation funding needs are from the Conservation Futures Fund and whether there would be some support for increasing capacity from that funding source, how the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) fund might be affected by an annexation of the area around the airport, finding productive ways to consult and engage the tribes on recreation, what we could do with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) III funding which is available, whether there is a timeline for the Proposed Trail Corridors represented on page 47 of the plan (PDF document page 54), what plans the Parks Department has for potential recreation uses of lands that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has under their jurisdiction and that are going to be transferred into a different use, and increasing capacity for camping and experimenting with holding back last minute camp spots to cater to locals.

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED.**

2. [AB2024-066](#) Discussion regarding a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) among United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, and Whatcom County for cooperative development of the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan

Elenbaas briefed the Councilmembers on an email sent to them (on file as “Draft MOU Transmittal Email”) and asking them to review the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and to send one representative to join the other participating agencies at meetings. He spoke about the County having a seat at the table, his concerns with the definition being used for high-use trails and whether recreation will be impacted, and the fact that the 10(j) Rule is a mechanism for managing the bears.

***Donovan moved*** that they approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) then find the person they are being asked to designate, which he would propose to be Elenbaas.

Councilmembers discussed the motion with the following people:

- Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council
- Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

They discussed whether the MOU is ready to be signed yet and whether that is something the Council wants to do, the value of the County having a seat at the table, how the County achieves the responsibility of being a cooperating agency and whether the Executive could make staff available

that might have more technical expertise, whether the County needs to hire a consultant or engage the Wildlife Advisory Committee, and who would be available to go to the planned meeting in January.

Donovan spoke about his motion and asked whether it should just say they are supportive of pursuing the MOU and then designating the person, since the MOU may not be final prior to January 18th.

Councilmembers discussed what it is that they need to do right now.

*Donovan amended* his motion and *moved* to appoint Elenbaas as the contact person for the meetings.

Galloway suggested they request Council staff to fill in the blanks of the MOU, add Elenbaas' name, and bring it back to Council this evening for consideration.

Councilmembers discussed whether filling out and signing the MOU means they are agreeing to the final terms.

*Donovan amended* his motion and *moved* to pursue the MOU and have Elenbaas be the contact person for these meetings.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 3 - Stremmler, Donovan, and Galloway

**Nay:** 0

**This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.**

Motion approved to pursue the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and have Elenbaas be the contact person for the meetings.

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Kaylee Galloway-via email 1/16/2024**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kaylee Galloway, Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE