

**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, April 11, 2023  
9:30 AM  
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 10:35 A.M.(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  
Ben Elenbaas  
Kaylee Galloway

**CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

## **Call To Order**

Committee Chair Kaylee Galloway called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in a hybrid meeting.

## **Roll Call**

**Present:** 3 - Todd Donovan, Ben Elenbaas, and Kaylee Galloway

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, and Carol Frazey

## **Announcements**

### **Special Presentation**

1. [AB2023-225](#) Report from the Parks and Recreation Department

Bennett Knox, Parks and Recreation Department Director, presented on recent efforts of the department since the last Committee update, a review of current activities including major projects and key initiatives, and goals for this and next year.

He discussed with Councilmembers the total cost of the Plantation Range HVAC replacement and the fact that the funding request for the last 2% of the project is on the agenda today, whether the County is still having trouble with mountain bike vandals on the Lake Whatcom/EH 1 Trail project, whether the Parks and Recreation Department is currently working with the Sheriff's Office work crews, how the County will recoup all the money that is going into the Plantation Range (HVAC replacement and lead reclamation), whether they should discuss how the range is financed or find someone who might want to buy it, how many other projects have been delayed over the years because of the County staff time going into the Plantation Range, and scheduling a future meeting to dive more into the issue.

**This agenda item was REPORTED.**

### **Committee Discussion and Recommendation to Council**

1. [AB2023-233](#) Request for motion to support Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization

***Donovan moved*** that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST.

Austin Rose, Public Works Department, briefed the Councilmembers and answered whether the letter can be sent to the full delegation. She stated

that would be just fine.

**Donovan's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST carried by the following vote:**

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

**Nay:** 0

2. [AB2023-272](#) Request approval to send a letter regarding the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

*Elenbaas moved* that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST and gave a background for this item. He stated the letter is not stating whether the Council is in support or not, but more that they want to be involved in the decision-making. He thinks it would be prudent that the Council be very involved in the conversation.

Galloway stated it looks like we are in the process of coordinating a joint meeting with other counties including Skagit, Snohomish, Chelan, and maybe Okanogan, so that should be forthcoming soon.

Donovan asked whether Okanogan County initiated this and stated, understanding that county's history and position on this, he did not want to be seen as allied with them so he will not be supporting it.

Elenbaas stated the Council asking to have our voice heard is not saying we are aligned with Okanogan's position but that this equally impacts our county.

**Elenbaas' motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 2 - Elenbaas, and Galloway

**Nay:** 0

**Abstain:** 1 - Donovan

3. [AB2023-273](#) Request approval to send a letter regarding the Brokedown Palace timber sale  
Galloway briefed the Councilmembers on the purpose of the letter.

Councilmembers discussed whether the timber sale is presently paused, whether there is a need to send the letter, making sure that beneficiaries are supported, an investment of upwards of \$83 million that the Legislature is currently considering to balance conservation of forest lands and compensation for our beneficiaries to make sure no one is left behind, whether part of the goal of a pause is so that the Council will know (when

the legislative session ends in two weeks) whether there is funding for some of the carbon programs, what the best timing is for sending this letter and whether it should be sent before the session is over, whether the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is currently engaging with the Tribes, and whether the Council is putting themselves in a position to keep writing letters about each individual timber sale as opposed to supporting a broad policy.

John Gold, Forest Advisory Committee Chair, spoke about the current status of the project. He stated there is no permit that has been issued on the timber sale and DNR is not able to move forward with an option until all the permitting process is completed, so there is a little time. This site was not on the list of candidate areas for phase one or two of the DNR carbon project. As far as the \$83 million proviso, only about \$10 million is targeted at possible acquisition and compensation to the beneficiaries so it would be a limited number of acres involved. These types of acres can run \$10,000 an acre so statewide you might be looking at 1,000 acres. He spoke about what has been done in the line of tribal consultation. He stated the Forestry Advisory Committee met in a special meeting this morning and will be sending their thoughts to the Council about this sale. He spoke about how Brokedown Palace fits in to the big picture of forest land in the state and stated the Forestry Advisory Committee would suggest that the Council withhold taking a position on Brokedown Palace until the regulatory review is complete and that they carefully consider the policy positions which lead to additional loss of productive forest land. He answered whether the potential funding from the Legislature to compensate beneficiaries would only cover \$1,000 acres statewide.

Donovan spoke about a possible amendment to the letter and Gold discussed with Councilmembers how the \$83 million proviso was slated to be spent.

***Donovan moved*** to recommend to the Council for further discussion and Committee members voted on the motion (see below).

Galloway asked that if anyone has amendments they would like to see tonight, they should get those to her and the Clerk of the Council so they can get a revised version out for discussion.

**Donovan's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 2 - Donovan, and Galloway

**Nay:** 1 - Elenbaas

4. [AB2023-275](#) Request approval to send a letter regarding the Pacific Northwest National Trail Comprehensive Plan

Daniel Probst, project lead for the Bellingham-Mt. Baker Trail, briefed the Councilmembers.

***Donovan moved*** that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST.

Probst answered whether this is proposed to be on trails that already exist or whether they would need to acquire land to connect the trails, and stated there would not be a need to acquire land. He answered whether it is just one trail, and whether it would require the County to acquire private land to accomplish this. He stated it would not.

Galloway stated she supports the letter but would like to be sure that the Parks and Recreation director and his team are at the table when these conversations are taking place.

**Donovan's motion that the Request for Motion be RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL OF REQUEST carried by the following vote:**

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

**Nay:** 0

### **Items Added by Revision**

There were no agenda items added by revision.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

**Kaylee Galloway-via email 4/13/2023**

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

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

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

SIGNED COPY ON FILE