

**Waterfront Recreation Committee
Minutes
December 1, 2004**

Attending: Members Steve Gates, Michael Schock, Lori Stirn, and Ann Frodel; Commissioners Hoby Streich and Sherry Bohn; Staff Members: Dave Harlan, Mike Doke, and Linda Hull; Guest: Diane Barkhimer (CGWA)

Absent: Richard Sassara, Dennis Shypertt

- 1) Sherry Bohn opened the meeting at 3:10 p.m. with introductions.
- 2) **Financial Overview:** Dave Harlan stated, once again, that the financial management goal in the Strategic Plan is to have all assets be financially self-supporting, decreasing subsidization from bridge revenues. However, as discussed at the Port's strategic planning fall session, the trend over the past year has been to increase the reliance on bridge revenues. The Port has to act as if the bridge revenues will cease in twenty years when a new bridge may be built and the challenge, in the meantime, is to grow replacement income. For example, the yet-to-be-formed Marina Planning Committee's work will be futile unless there is the political will to implement recommendations adding assets to pay for the Marina Park area.

The committee reviewed the investment, income and expense sheets provided by Finance Manager, Linda Shames. Although the Event Site traffic count was down (according to Linda Shames, weekdays only, not on weekends, traffic was down), the Event Site revenue stayed the same this year due to the \$1 daily fee increase. It was suggested that the increased traffic at the Spit and Hook might be the reason. Steve Gates questioned the figures and said Big Winds' business this past season was not down and he is concerned that people might think the sport participation as a whole is down when it is not. Gates stated there is, however, not much available on the Hood River waterfront for intermediate windsurfers and some do have to go elsewhere. Gates said he thinks the revenues/expenses for schools should be appropriated to the Hook and the Spit where the lessons occur, not where the sheds are located. Or, Gates asked, can the Port move the sheds to the Hook?

There was discussion regarding the depreciation shown in the income statement of the waterfront assets.¹ If the depreciation is removed, it appears as if the properties are revenue neutral for cash flow. Sherry Bohn stated this might be acceptable to some people. Ann Frodel stated that the economic development from tourism for the community is difficult to measure. She wondered if an automated payment with a gate like the airport would help reduce costs. Lori Stirn commented other funding sources related to tourism are used elsewhere to support recreation/tourism facilities, such as the hotel/motel and food service taxes. Steve Gates commented there are many perspectives on this issue and they should all be represented.

Sherry Bohn asked if the financial information could be provided in advance of the meetings so that members have a chance to review the figures and ask questions of the Finance Manager prior to the meeting? Yes, that will be done in the future, said Harlan.

¹ Funds for replacement and maintenance of facilities over time are tracked on the Balance Sheet. Committee members may contact Linda Shames, Finance Manager, for further details.

3) **Facilities: Issues and Fees:**
EVENT SITE:

- Parking regulations were discussed. CGWA had some concerns about it being marked red now instead of yellow for unloading. Harlan explained the police department asked the Port to paint it red and post no parking signs so they can enforce the ordinance. People can still unload at the curb but it is similar to the airport curb and tickets will be issued for parking there. Steve Gates said he appreciates that effort because people were abusing the unloading zone. The RV parking lanes appear to be working. Dog control continues to be a problem. The Committee agreed there should be no kites at the Event Site or parking lot and it should be signed. The schools could also educate their students on where to practice. The idea of having an adult volunteer "camp host" was discussed as a way to alleviate the enforcement in these areas from Port staff. Diane Barkhimer thought some of the CGWA members might volunteer. Harlan said Port staff would check into the liability ramifications.
- The committee discussed the 2005 events (Wind Fest (July 9-10), Gorge Games (July 16-24), and National Windsurfing Championships (July 25 – August 6)) and what impact they might have on the Event Site during the peak of the summer season. Some of these events will require exclusive use for the kiteboarding and for the windsurfing racing. The committee felt that the promoters are sensitive to the tourists and will work to allow access. Scotia Bauer will be invited to the spring pre-season committee meeting to discuss the scheduling of events.

CRUISESHIP DOCK:

- Harlan said that national homeland security requirements might preclude slack water beach access in the Nichols boat basin. There appears to be some need for structural repairs to the piers caused by the tie-up methods of some of the vessels that the Port will be analyzing this winter. Dockage remained the same this year; next year the Columbia Queen will be back on the river. A question was asked regarding the economic benefit of these stops to our community? Linda Hull asked for that information from all the cruiselines and they told her they do not track discretionary spending of their passengers. Mt. Hood Railroad and Carousel Museum are two activities that are booked by some of the cruiselines. Generally, the passengers rarely have time to "shop" Hood River on their own and transportation into and around the city is problematic.

MARINA PARK:

- The potential dredging of the beach was discussed. Harlan had some preliminary costs not seen yet by the Port Commission from Stu Cato (civil engineer) who engineered the Event Site construction and restrooms projects. Cato indicated costs would include removal, permitting (no guarantee), and disposal; not included is projected costs of any jetty, pile dike, or sheet pile structure to prevent future shoaling. Impacts on navigation, fish migration, and river environment could preclude approval from the Corps of Engineers. Bohn stated there is a group that would like the sand moved to the Spit. Frodel thought it could be taken to Lot 6 for a beach. Harlan also mentioned the Nichols area might be an example of good fill area, but also said there could be Goal 5 issues. Could a Corps of Engineers' spokesperson be brought in to discuss the permitting issues?

- Harlan said he doesn't mean to be contrary, however, it is his job as director to look at this issue from a larger picture; there is no revenue from the Marina Park area to pay for this work. Stirn said as a parks person her experience is that it is unrealistic to breakeven on an out of the ordinary project like this. Harlan said that is why the original plan in the Marina Park encompassed more development around the perimeter to pay for the beach amenities. Frodel asked about grants to pay for this? Stirn said grants usually cover "studies", not the expensive actual work.
- Barkhimer suggested projects be broken down into smaller parcels: what is it, how can it be done, and at what cost. Bohn said the Lot 6 park committee would be a good forum for discussion of this issue.
- Harlan said the moorage rates will be CPI-adjusted on January 1 and electricity rates will increase to \$20/per month winter usage. The Port is considering installing electrical meters allowing for a more equitable assessment from tenants.
- Harlan said the Mid-Columbia Marina business will be moving to Cascade Avenue in approximately 6-8 months and the Port has had several inquiries for leasing.

HOOK/SPIT:

- The consensus of the committee was not to charge fees for these unimproved areas. Harlan told the committee that there could be Goal 5 issues generated by all projects along the waterfront, including those to improve these sites. Frodel's understanding was that Goal 5 allows projects for recreational purposes.
- Harlan said the maintenance department would schedule the road grading earlier in the season than in the past because of the extra usage on the Spit for kiteboarding and on the Hook for the windsurfing schools.
- Barkhimer asked if better quality of portable toilets could be put out there? Or possibly men and women marked separately? Staff will check on this. She also suggested more picnic tables and improving the entire site with water, electricity, bathrooms/showers and changing rooms. Stirn suggested the Port stay focused and positive in seeking solutions and cost options for minor projects. CGWA and other user groups can help prepare a list of environmentally "non-invasive/non-threatening" projects for review by the committee in the spring and to prioritize. This way, people who use the sites can be part of the solutions for improvements.
- Barkhimer said overall this season she heard no major complaints and that her organization's newsletter can help get the word out about kites only at the Spit, dog control, parking at the loading zone, and other issues. They would be willing to work with the Port on improvements. Their other concern, the sandbar and drop-off issue was already discussed and more information will be forthcoming after further analysis.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

4) **Next Meeting:** to be determined