

## **Fort Worden Public Development Authority**

*Public Forum on Fort Worden State Park Business and Management Plan—  
Working Draft, 8.23.12*

Approved Meeting Minutes

Fort Worden Commons

September 6, 2012

### **7PM—Introductions:**

Washington State Parks: Rodger Schmitt, Commissioner; Larry Fairleigh, Assistant Director; Mike Sternback, Assistant Director; Ed Giruard, Regional Supervisor; Allison Alderman, Park Manager.

PDA Board Members: Scott Wilson, Bill Brown, Anne Murphy, Tim Caldwell, Gee Hecksher, Dave Robison (staff)

Moderator: Scott Wilson, Vice-chair, PDA

- Scott reviews meeting agenda
- Scott reviews highlights of the August 23 meeting when consultant, Brian trusty, presented the roll-out of the Working Draft. Highlights include:
  - ◆ Fort Worden State Park is unique
  - ◆ State Parks cannot resource needs
  - ◆ Co-management of the Park can work
  - ◆ Conference use has fallen over the past 10 years
  - ◆ Better marketing is key to financial sustainability
  - ◆ Overnight accommodations need to be improved
- Parks and PDA cooperation would simplify management
- Scott briefly reviews PDA Board meeting where board members suggested revisions to the working draft; Scott refers attendees to handouts of August 29 meeting notes
- Scott introduces Dave Robison, staff, to review planned changes to the Working Draft

Dave Robison: Reviews in detail a handout, dated 9/06/12, *Planned Changes & Alterations to the Working Draft*. Dave discussed changes underway to the following sections of the plan:

- Executive Summary
- Plan Overview
- Public Input
- Market Analysis
- Operations and Management Analysis
- Business Plan and Pro Forma
- Capital Plan
- Implementation Recommendations
- Next Steps
- Governance Model

Dave Robison: Dave reviewed handout with the business plan review schedule noting the next meeting was on Thursday, Sept. 13, at 8:30 a.m. in the Cotton Building. Dave reviewed the next steps in the process from that meeting until the end of the year.

**Public Comment:**

Scott Wilson: Opened public comment session by asking for people who were attending a PDA meeting for their first time. Scott explained the previous process of developing the Lifelong

Joyce Francis: Who is the audience for this plan?

Dave Robison: Ultimately the Commission and Legislature. The plan will also go to the Governor. And of course there is interest by the Fort Worden partners, other stakeholders, the Union, employees and PT community. The plan has a diverse audience and must be understandable to all.

Question: What is Park's enterprise system?

Larry Fairleigh: Due to cuts in general fund support, Parks has to become an enterprise system. That means if Parks gets less funds from the legislature, it needs to raise more funds from fees for services or enterprises.

Rodger Schmitt: Will the reservations for campgrounds, program reservations, meeting rooms and accommodations be included in one system?

Dave Robison: That is one of the items we are looking at now. Brian believes there will be some real synergies there and is in the process of researching a new reservation system.

Jim Costello: I am the former mayor of Pacific Gove, where Asolimar State Park is located. It is a world class conference center where its management is contracted out to a very large private business/concession. It has a great partnership with Ca State Parks, but is so much different that Fort Worden. It is not the kind of partnership that would work well here. The governance issues will be intense so the document must be fluid. I also am a new Centrum Board member and I think this co-management approach could work.

Jan North: I have worked at Fort Worden since 1991 in various capacities'—from a program manager at Centrum, to Copper Canyon, the PT Marine Science Center and I am now a FW Advisory Committee member. The programming is integral to Fort Worden. The PDA should not put an undue burden on the Partners. I am encouraged with the PDA's approach and think it will need lots of evolution.

Michelle Bruns: I support more of the Elderhostel programs and nature programs that involve more lifelong learning opportunities. I am afraid of the conference center or resort emphasis.

Jan North: We need more hotel rooms. When I ran the Elderhostel I found that these participants do not want to stay in dorm rooms. They will come in the off season if we have better accommodations here.

Megan Claflin: Will you use any of the City's strategies for increasing visitors to Fort Worden?

Dave Robison: The City, through LTAC, focuses on using its marketing dollars to target shoulder season visitors. We can partner with the city to bring additional shoulder season visitors to Fort Worden.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bailey: Is there the potential to use UW business school students to help move this project forward?

Dave Robison: Yes, we are exploring a partnership with UW where a two-quarter studio involving graduate planning, design, architecture, public affairs and business school students can study Fort Worden as a pilot project, including hosting a planning charette at Fort Worden.

Carla VanDerVeen: The partnership emphasis is appreciated. What about other groups that use the Fort but are not based here? Like conference groups. Have you interviewed them?

Dave Robison: Good point. No we have not interviewed other groups. We do talk a lot about the Partners and programs, but conference users are a very important part of the overall mix to grow the revenues at the Fort.

Erin Fristad: Goddard is concerned about the future management and governance roles, but we really appreciate the PDA process. Goddard and the partners want to be involved in future policy and operational decisions.

Dave Robison: We will be discussing the governance model at our next meeting. It will likely take some time to determine what the appropriate governance structure is and the roles and responsibilities between all the different stakeholders at Fort Worden. We will definitely involve the Partners in that discussion.

**Adjourn:** 8:15 p.m.