

DRAFT OUTLINE MINUTES
Fort Worden Public Development Authority
SPECIAL MEETING

Date: February 10, 2012 Time: 8:30 a.m. Location: Fort Worden--Building 204 S

Attendees: Scott Wilson, Anne Murphy, Lela Hilton, Bill Brown, Gee Heckscher, Cindy Finnie, Ted Springstead, Norm Tonina

Absent: Tim Caldwell

Chair: Cindy Finnie

Staff: Dave Robison, Rick Sepler, Kate Burke

Public: Ron Kubec, Rick Zajicek, Rodger Schmitt, Alfred Chiswell, Gary Cummins, Kevin Alexander, Jean Dunbar, Charlie Bermant, Erin Fristad, Henry Werch, Tina Miller, Susan Thoms, Eric Harrington, Dennis Haven, Bill Brown, Linda Brown, Sandra Haven, Carmyn Shute, Joe and Peggy Ryan, Barb Pastore, Janet Hollingsworth, Jill DeCianne, Steve Shively
Carla Main, Steve Milner

Board Agenda Items:

III. Changes to the Agenda (No changes were added)

IV. Board Review and Discussion of State Park's Commission February 10 Meeting

A. Review of Commission Resolution

- Dave Robison handed out and summarized the resolution that was considered by the State Parks Commission on February 9 in Tumwater.

B. Review of Commission Discussion and Action

- Dave reported that the Commission tabled the resolution after much discussion. The vote was 5-2. The Commissioners identified four issues.
 1. Need a business plan.
 2. How the PDA would close the \$700k gap.
 3. The Commission has not had enough public input regarding transfer.
 4. Concerns were expressed on the impact of Fort Worden employees.
- Dave discussed how there are seven Commissioners, but four are fairly new and don't know much about Lifelong Learning Center concept. Dave reminded the Board that the Commission passed 2 resolutions last year, one supporting possible transfer or lease to PDA "We are working in a partnership approach with Parks; hoping to work through legislation that would enable us to complete our due diligence and adopt one of the three options. One week ago, State Park's staff came back to us and asked us to consider the entire transfer of the Park to the PDA. That set this train in motion."

- Cindy Finnie stated that the Commission is supportive but needs more information. Seven FW Parks employees spoke at the Commission meeting and were “very passionate.” The employees have 250 years of institutional knowledge; some here 30 years; some close to retirement. Employees stated that they supported PDA and mission, but not supportive of transfer at this time

C. Board Discussion

- The Board discussed how the status quo is not sustainable and how the current management structure is not working well for the 15 Partners, LLC mission
- Rick Sepler commented that the plan has been in place since 2008. It’s open and transparent. No secret agenda, no minimum wage jobs, etc.
- Ted Springstead noted that the Fort’s operating shortfall is \$700k. And that it would be difficult to have a business plan completed within a few weeks.
- Anne Murphy recommended to move forward and focus on March 29 meeting.

D. Next Steps

- Dave recommended having Kate Burke to begin work immediately on the business plan.

V. Public Comment

Rodger Schmitt: I am a Parks Commissioner. Went into meeting saying we will consider transfer. We discussed requirements on deeds, adhering to contracts, also other contractual arrangements. But some of the Commissioners wanted to hear from public and didn’t want to make a transfer decision until we hear from public.. Everyone on the Commission wants to see LLC succeed, everyone would like partnership with PDA but we would like to hear more from investors on why that is problematic. The Commission voted to postpone their decision to the March meeting..

Steve Milner: I am a Parks Commissioner and I was the one who moved to table the resolution. The 3 options show two arguments against collaboration with Parks, but one for transfer. I have operated lots of partnerships; you don’t touch on why investors don’t want to come here. Frankly we have history of transferring parks only to get them back again. We want this to succeed, but we don’t want to get it back again.

Bill Brown, I am a volunteer at the Park. I think the Park is run as efficiently as possible under the bureaucracy. Kate has done a good job keeping org together, curtailing losses. I am concerned that SP will lose flavor for rest of state people coming here. I would not like to see access for rest of state or visitors curtailed in any fashion.

Barbara Pastore: Also citizen of state. Glad you were able to state concerns. PDA should look hard at small first baby step contract, to get PDA some standing with Park system. That way you can keep looking at 3 options, prove yourself as an organization that can handle mgt of Park. Dave dismissively said SP lacks skill set, I point out that PDA may lack skill set to manage the rest of the park. Investors have said, they will come, haven't said which ones turned you down to say co management is not an option. Only way to fill the gap, is not to have investors, but to have patrons. I don't see you closing that gap, let alone handle the \$5 mil needed for Building 202. The devil is in details.

Erin Fristad: The Commission needs to meet and hear from the Fort Worden Partners. The PDA should prioritize working with employees at the Park.

Linda Braun: Volunteer for 6 years. Been here since 83-84. I recommend that Washington State public be given a chance to comment on the total transfer option. I'm totally against that. I think a partnership could work between Parks and PDA. Residents here don't want to pay Discover Pass, as camp host I see that they are parking just outside. This is a national treasure, and by god it doesn't just matter to the residents of PT. You are only addressing that; we need to get the word out so people of the State make the decision, before this park is transferred out of public ownership.

Dennis Haven: Disappointed with PDA, after 8 years, not more cohesive. Should have had a business plan in place. Employees been doing a heckuva job.

Jean Dunbar: We need to remember that there is 40,000 hours of volunteer support in the Park.

Walter McQuillen: This is kind of like getting the girl pregnant first before you buy her a house. You are saying, lets get the park, and then we'll figure out how to get the money. Either you have a big corporation who has his eye on this place. Or you are going to go back to the Legislature and ask for more money.

VI. Staff Comments

Rick Sepler: There is an existing business plan that was adopted by the Commission in 2008. The PDA acknowledges that Fort Worden is a treasure of the state; all the previous plans say that we will maintain access for all residents. This proposal is not a ploy to ask taxpayers to pay more. This is to ask taxpayers to pay less; and the PDA proposes to find way to close \$700k operations gap. No matter who is operating, (Parks or PDA) there is still a budget gap of \$700k

VI. Director's Report (None)

VII. Adjourn: 10:30 am