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Director



STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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A RESOLUTION OF THE WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE TRANSFER OF FORT WORDEN STATE PARK TO THE FORT WORDEN LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, Fort Worden State Park (Park), encompasses 434 acres within the City of Port Townsend (City), provides recreational opportunities, is home to more than a hundred historic buildings, and is designated a National Historic Landmark; and

WHEREAS, long-range planning for the Park began in the fall of 2004. Since 2004, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has adopted a vision and mission statement for Fort Worden State Park (May 2005); approved a roadmap and assumptions to guide long range planning (August 2005); and adopted land classifications, long-term boundary, value statements, park use and development principles, and refined the learning center concept (January 2007), among other actions; and,

WHEREAS, this planning process supported with public and private funds, has resulted in an adopted Long-range Plan (Plan) for Fort Worden State Park (2008) to transform the Park into a Lifelong Learning Center. Hundreds of City residents, visitors to the Park and residential partner organizations have been involved in the planning process for the Lifelong Learning Center vision at the Park; and,

WHEREAS, as a Lifelong Learning Center, the Park is envisioned to provide outdoor space for recreational and educational opportunities and house a variety of tenants and groups that would offer residential and nonresidential programs and classes involving, among others, performing and visual arts, environmental and natural resources, health and wellness, historic preservation, woodworking and cultural history, and culinary arts; and

WHEREAS, as part of the adopted Plan, this Commission recognized that the State did not have adequate resources to fully implement the Plan. The Plan recommended that a new management structure for the Park was needed to carry out the Commission's vision of a lifelong learning center. A task force was formed and recommended that a nonprofit management entity was best suited to manage the Park. Following a request for proposals process, Centrum was approved to negotiate terms with the Commission to serve as the new managing entity for the Park upon completion of specific milestones; and

WHEREAS, in a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") adopted between the Commission and Centrum (March 2010), it was acknowledged that the City, represented by the Port Townsend Public Development Authority, now known as the Fort Worden Lifelong Learning Center Public Development Authority (Authority), a public corporation chartered by the City under RCW 35.21.730 through 35.21.755, would support Centrum in the development and enactment of the long-range vision for the Park; and,

WHEREAS, for over a year, the Commission and Centrum, with the help of partners including the Authority, Fort Worden Collaborative and the Friends of Fort Worden, worked to accomplish specific tasks and milestones set out in the MOU; and,

WHEREAS, the ongoing recession and other factors led to a decision by the Centrum Board of Directors to not proceed with assuming the role of the nonprofit managing entity for the Park; and,

WHEREAS, on January 27, 2011, staff reported to the Commission that there is interest on the part of the Authority with regards to assuming the lead as the nonprofit managing entity for Park; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission is authorized by RCW 79A.05.170 to transfer park property to a local government or other entity so long as any transfer agreement includes a clause requiring that if the land is not used for outdoor recreation purposes, ownership of the land shall revert back to this Commission; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission adopted a resolution on March 24, 2011 authorizing staff to “seek agreement on the proposal submitted by the Port Townsend Public Development Authority with the understanding that one of the intended outcomes will be a request to the legislature during the 2011 session for language to facilitate Fort Worden State Park becoming a Lifelong Learning Center”; and,

WHEREAS, Under the terms of a transfer agreement the Authority believes it can provide certain public benefits and successfully transition the Park into a self-sustaining center for life long learning, outdoor recreation, and public and recreational use generally consistent with the Plan; and,

WHEREAS, Transfer of the Park to the Authority has the potential to ensure the realization of the Commission’s goals of providing meaningful programming for persons of all ages and abilities, creating new opportunities for the stewardship and rehabilitation of the Park’s historic structures and the continued use of the property by the public for park and recreation purposes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Washington State Park and Recreation Commission hereby expresses its willingness to consider the transfer of Fort Worden State Park to the Fort Worden Lifelong Learning Center Public Development Authority as soon as possible upon:

1. An understanding by all parties that the Commission intends, prior to taking any final action on the transfer of Fort Worden State Park to the Authority, to provide ample opportunity for the public to learn about and express its views regarding the potential transfer of Fort Worden State Park to the Authority; and,
2. Acceptance by the Commission of a business plan from the Authority for its operation of the Park; and,
3. Acceptance by the Authority of existing encumbrances, deed restrictions, agreements, and contracts for which the Commission is now responsible; and,
4. Acceptance of any deed restrictions, covenants and requirements that the Commission would attach to the transfer of Fort Worden State Park to the Authority; and,
5. Agreement by the Commission, and acceptance by the Authority, of financial terms and considerations from the Commission to the Authority associated with a transfer of Fort Worden State Park to the Authority.

ADOPTED THIS 9TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2012

Joe Taller, Chairman
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission