

- 0018 Councilmember Mask convened the Special Workshop meeting at 6:30 p.m. Purpose of the meeting was to explore the option to establish a Metropolitan Park District for the sustainability of park and recreational facilities.

Attendees included: Public Works Director David Vorse, City Councilmembers Mask, Teter, Pingree and Queen, Paul Youmans Director of Pathways 2020, Castle Rock Park Board Commissioners Marguerite Ogden, Linda Frantsvog and Linda Moody, Clerk-Treasurer Ryana Covington, Rich Bemm from the City of Longview, Alice Willward, Librarian Vicki Selander and Barbara Mask.

- 0086 Attendees were provided with the Power point presentation outline and with an informational packet outlining different forms of taxing districts and associated laws governing these districts.

- 0087 Paul Youmans explained that cities and county officials joined in a Government Summit to seek ways to reduce service costs. As a result of this summit, one of the committees formed was to explore possibilities for providing sustainability of recreation and park facilities in Cowlitz County.

Over time, the committee explored three options which included formation of: a Park and Recreation District, Park and Service Area, or a Metropolitan Park District. Further evaluation led to the conclusion for final recommendation of a Metropolitan Park District (MPD).

Youmans explained that an MPD is a taxing district, authorized to levy a general tax in excess of the regular property levy. Voters would need to approve formation of this new taxing authority.

Formations steps include:

- public information meetings with each government agency in Cowlitz County to determine participation in a MPD. The committee would like to establish participation by June.
- a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) must be filed. The SEPA review will take up to sixty days to complete.
- notice of the proposed district will be filed with the Cowlitz County Boundary Review Board.
- a measure may be placed on a general election ballot at least sixty days after approval by the Cowlitz County Boundary Review Board

Youmans stated if everything proceeded as planned, the issue would be placed on the ballot February, 2011.

- 0550 Mr. Youmans explained the leadership differences between a single entity and multiple entity MPD. Districts with multiple entity participation would require interlocal agreements between the entities and each municipality would nominate at least one park commissioner to represent them. Since the MPD is a separate taxing district, voters would decide future representation on the board. Board members would act independently of the participating entity, setting their own policy, tax rate and other management issues.
- 0626 Mr. Youmans explained the structural differences between a traditional MPD and a hybrid MPD. In traditional MPDs park properties become assets of the MPD and their park commissioners would decide on funding distributions. Youman stated his committee is recommending the hybrid version as outlined below:
- requires voter approval for formation
 - maximum levy amount is determined by RCW 35.61. (Maximum amount that could be levied would be 75¢/\$1,000 of assessed value).
 - funds distributed to each taxing entity based on assessed value.
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MPD and each municipality would be required to fund parks.
 - each government entity appoints representative(s) to MPD Parks Commission
 - entities would maintain their current Park Advisory Boards
 - each municipality maintains current staff
 - each municipality maintains ownership of properties and assets
- 0829 Mr. Youman summarized that the Summit Parks Committee recommends formation of a Metropolitan Park District within Cowlitz County and encourages participation from all city councils and the county commissioners. The purpose for the MPD is to provide sustainable revenue for the improvement and maintenance of parks, managed under the hybrid structure described above and eliminate the competition for general tax dollars.
- 0915 A tax comparison chart compiled by Cowlitz County Assessor Terry McLaughlin was provided for discussion to demonstrate revenues for each entity, at various taxing rates.
- 1089 Councilmember Mask stated the Summit Parks Committee have worked to assure protection of assets for each entity. He stated it is imperative to understand that taxes received by the MPD would be distributed to each entity, based on their assessed value.
- 1170 Councilmember Pingree asked if libraries are considered part of a park or recreation facility. Mr. Bemm stated that the library could enter into an MOU with the Metropolitan Park District to transfer to the city whatever the MPD is collecting in taxes. Vorse stated one benefit would be that the library would not need to request voter approval of an excess levy to support this service.

Vorse stated formation of the MPD secures annual funding for parks and

recreational opportunities.

- 1380 Youman clarified that Castle Rock will received all revenues, based on their assessed value. No other entity will be able to procure Castle Rock's portion of the tax dollars.

Selander asked if this would limit the library from expanding their services to areas outside of the city limits. Vorse stated the library could enter into an MOU with other entities to receive a portion of their tax dollars for provision of services in those areas that they can't provide for themselves.

- 1461 Councilmember Queen felt this sounded like a good plan, providing that Castle Rock retains control and ownership of their parks.

In answer to Councilmember Pingree's question, Covington stated that revenues received from the MPD could only be used for defined park and recreation services. A separate fund would be established for management of revenues and expenses.

- 1606 Councilmember Mask stated formation of an MPD would guarantee funds, unless the voters decided to take formal action to dissolve the district.

- 1632 In answer to Councilmember Teter's question, Youman stated it is beneficial to have multiple entities as participants because it would be confusing to voters to form multiple park districts. Alice Willward stated from a political standpoint, the larger cities would need to participate in order for this to work.

- 1788 Councilmember Teter also pointed out that this could also benefit the Senior Center services, since this type of service qualifies under the defined term of recreational activities.

Vorse also noted that Castle Rock recreational activities (such as baseball and softball, Senior Center, boat launch) include both the city and Toutle residents. Therefore it is beneficial to at least partner with Cowlitz County on this MPD concept.

- 1999 Mr. Bemm clarified that the MPD has the ability to tax up to 75¢/\$1,000 of assessed value. The tax rate would not need to be set at the maximum allowed. After the MPD formation is approved by the voters, participating entities would need to agree on the rate and then the entire district area would be taxed at that same rate.

- 2078 In answer to Covington's question, Councilmember Mask stated that in a hybrid form of MPD the city council would have the final decision on how that tax money is used.

Mr. Youman also stated that the committee is aware of the \$5.90 taxing capacity for junior taxing districts and what effect an additional district would have on existing taxing districts. Ms Millward stated that the ports, PUD, state tax and ferry districts are not affected. However cemetery districts and the MPD could be affected if tax rates come close to the \$5.90 junior taxing district cumulative capacity.

2390 Vorse stated that more information will be available after other entities participate in these informational meetings. The object is to obtain a formal decision from the city council regarding participation prior to the committee's July timeframe.

2451 Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

John Earl Queen Mayor Pro-Tempore

Clerk-Treasurer