

**NORTH MASON SCHOOL DISTRICT  
THELER COMMUNITY CENTER CITIZEN  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**02/05/2015**

**Notes by Mary Swoboda**

Advisory Committee agenda and materials posted here:

<http://www.nmsd.wednet.edu/domain/644>

**[THESE NOTES ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE A VERBATIM  
TRANSCRIPT]**

Committee members: Craig Patti (CP), Richard Calvin (RC), Steve Johnson (SJ), Kristina Schweigert (KS), Bill Bernier (BB), female school student

Audience: Kaye Massie, Cat Ross, Ken VanBuskirk, Peggy VanBuskirk, Joan Moore, Brad Carey, Katherine Carey

Reviewed minutes of last meeting before approving them.  
*[The minutes mentioned a "Fortin" email.]*

Acknowledged correspondence they have received between last meeting and this one. Mostly from Ken VanBuskirk.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Discussed a sample Request For Proposal (RFP) created by Richard Calvin.

*[View the document here:*

[http://commonsensemason.com/uploads/150205-sample\\_Rfp\\_Created\\_For\\_Theler\\_Committee\\_Mtg.pdf](http://commonsensemason.com/uploads/150205-sample_Rfp_Created_For_Theler_Committee_Mtg.pdf)]

RC These RFPs can take a lot of different forms. Can be simple or complex. You don't want it to be too general or too specific. It should include background, requirements, acceptance criteria.

SJ thinks bidders' financial information should be included, such as balance sheets, year-end financials. It would help determine stability. The bidder must have the financial wherewithal to handle it.

RC Will add financial accountability to RFP.

RC The Schindleheim property has conditions of use, therefore not included in his sample RFP. Neither is the Mellon Trust properties.

RC The responsibility is on the school district. They own the property. There are a lot of conditions in RCO (Recreation & Conservation Office - [www.rco.wa.gov/grants/](http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/)) grants.

BB Would hope the school district would hire someone to write the RFP.

RC We've asked for a legal opinion but don't think we'll get one. We are responsible for due diligence.

CP Look for a pattern of good leadership.

RC Three years is a pretty good sample for financial information.

CP Do we still want to go this route? Transferring to the Port of Allyn (POA) would be pretty easy for the school district.

SJ There may be other government entities out there who might be interested in responding to the RFP, such as Fish & Game *[Dept. of Fish & Wildlife]*.

RC This sample RFP is easily tailored to government entities.

BB Concerned that if POA gets the property, after a couple years they could sell the property and make money *[he mentioned \$2 million]*. Giving the property away doesn't sit right with BB.

CP We are not "gifting" it. We're giving it to ourselves. the POA is another government entity, accountable to taxpayers. Not like Fish & Wildlife.

CP An easy answer is to create a parks district, but it would take a lot of time. The ultimate accountability and control is with another elected government agency.

RC My impression is the school district wouldn't be upset walking away. They just have to do it appropriately.

CP If the property went to a nonprofit, the liability would still rest with the school district. I'd rather my school dollars go to schools.

CP Are we willing to come up with a recommendation to the superintendent to present to the school board?

CP Give the RFP to the POA or other government entities and see what they can offer.

CP Make a recommendation to send proposals to government entities.

SJ The intent is to get proposals from both nonprofits and government entities.

CP The "gift" from Sam Theler has become a burden to the school district.

*[NOTE: Interestingly, CP mentioned the Salmon Center but called it the "Salmon Enhancement Center." I am amazed over the confusion people have toward that entity! See my comments about this organization at the end.]*

CP Has had conversations with Jean Farmer, chair of the Port of Allyn commission. Asked her what she thinks. The POA can create partnerships with other groups. They also don't have the burden of "educating kids." The POA has been unable to get any Theler financial records from the school district.

RC The property needs to stay with elected bodies. This issue has been out in the public for quite a while and the only government agency to step up is the POA.

RC In the beginning when developing Theler and the wetlands the school district did a lot of great stuff, but they lost their focus and oversight.

BB Still worried another public entity would sell it once it is under their control. They'd just hire a lawyer and sell it.

RC The POA wants to own the property, not lease it. In order to get grants they think they must own it.

Brad Carey: A long-term lease is like ownership, but it would still be in the name of the school district. There could be a clause in the contract that the property would revert back to the school district if another agency failed to perform or the outcome wasn't what they had hoped. He likes Bill's idea of maintaining ownership.

RC Let the POA show us what they can do.

Cat Ross: Many brochures say the Theler trails have 250,000 people visiting every year. That number seems too high. KS and others agreed. Would like to have accurate numbers.

Ken VanBuskirk: Brad and I had a meeting with Superintendent Rosenbach today. The school district does not have a lot of the historical information.

CP What other legitimate nonprofits want to stick their neck out?

CP We don't have to propose the POA take ownership, but take a long-term lease instead.

Peggy VanBuskirk: Grants now base everything on collaboration. Do a 100-year lease with the option for 100 more.

BB Ask the POA what they would like to do. Would they consider a long-term lease?

RC We should come up with recommendations for the RFP. The school district is looking to us for recommendations.

SJ I don't think the school district should take my bond money to support non-educational issues. We need to know from the school district what they want.

Ken VanBuskirk: Trails are an important component of environmental education. I think the school board should embrace Theler, not think of it as a monkey on their back. Perhaps consider the Hood Canal Coordinating Council ([www.hccc.wa.gov/](http://www.hccc.wa.gov/)). They are made up of elected officials and can leverage a lot of grant money.

Brad Carey: During the meeting with the superintendent this afternoon, we talked about imagination. Getting the University of Washington, Department of Fisheries involved to create a real learning center. Even contacting the Gates Foundation for support.

RC If the superintendent is willing to invest time, we can do this. But I'm feeling there is a sense of urgency. I'm all for getting the right answer, and that takes time.

CP What is the reality? We don't want to spend time on something that is ultimately not feasible. Will talk to the superintendent tomorrow.

Brad Carey: The superintendent's goals and objectives seem to be local and long-term.

RC We've come up with three possible solutions. If the superintendent is willing to invest time we can come up with more.

SJ We need to at least request RFPs.

CP Will invite the superintendent to the next meeting to discuss.

KS I don't want to have this same discussion again, want to move forward.

SJ Don't lock into a 100-year lease; we want a long-term lease.

Cat Ross: She thought she heard Joel Emery at an earlier Theler advisory meeting imply the school district might have a proposal themselves. Does the school district have their own proposal?

Kaye Massie: Just put out RFPs so entities can respond.

CP We are really close to consensus on this committee.

RC We need to protect the community.

Ken VanBuskirk: The school board surplused the Theler property in June. This committee was formed in September. The property should never have been surplused in the first place. There's only one Theler property within the UGA.

Ken VanBuskirk: Could Marty's plan be put on the advisory committee's school district web site for the public to see?

[I found out "Marty's plan" is the "Fortin email" referred to above.]

Ken VanBuskirk: The superintendent should consider talking to the trustee. Property 16 has been assessed for taxes. Based on the grants attached to that property, they shouldn't be paying that tax and should request a refund.

Ken VanBuskirk: The school board will have a study session in two weeks (February 19 at 5:30 PM) where the public can comment on trail repair. This committee should make a recommendation on that repair.

[Additional comments Ken VanBuskirk submitted to the committee after the meeting. Read here:

[http://commonsensemason.com/uploads/150205-kenv\\_Comments\\_To\\_Theler\\_Committee.pdf](http://commonsensemason.com/uploads/150205-kenv_Comments_To_Theler_Committee.pdf)]

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

**Next meeting Wednesday, February 11 at 6:30 in the board room.**

**After the meeting these two items were posted on the school district's Theler Advisory Committee web site:**

\* Sample PEI Environment Program Integration Plan, K-12  
<http://www.nmsd.wednet.edu/cms/lib6/WA01000979/Centri-city/Domain/644/PEI%20Integration%20Plan%20-%20General%20Sample.pdf>

\* Launching, Managing and Sustaining an Outdoor School Program, A Guide Prepared by The Oregon Community Foundation, published February 2012 (80 pages)  
<http://www.nmsd.wednet.edu/cms/lib6/WA01000979/Centri-city/Domain/644/Launching%20Managing%20and%20Sustaining%20OEE.pdf>

**Comment and questions from Mary regarding the "Salmon Enhancement Center."**

\* There is no legal organization named Pacific NW Salmon Center, Salmon Center or even Hood Canal Salmon Center.

\* The Pacific Northwest Salmon Center is shown as INACTIVE by the Secretary of State. It originally filed 7/17/2002. Its registration expired 7/31/2012.

([http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/search\\_detail.aspx?ubi=602221160](http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/search_detail.aspx?ubi=602221160))

\* The last 990 PNWSC filed with IRS was in 2010. The IRS has since revoked its exempt status because it failed to file a form 990 for 3 consecutive years. (<http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/41-2069189/pacific-northwest-salmon-center.aspx#legitimacy>)

\* A Kitsap Sun article dated February 8, 2012 stated the HCSEG and PNWSC merged, keeping the "salmon enhancement group" as part of the overall organization, but operating under PNWSC (<http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2012/feb/08/two-belfair-salmon-groups-merge/>).

\* The Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group shows its status as ACTIVE. It originally filed with the Secretary of State 11/20/1990. The current expiration date is 11/30/2015.

([http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/search\\_detail.aspx?ubi=601285471](http://www.sos.wa.gov/corps/search_detail.aspx?ubi=601285471))

It appears to be up to date on its IRS filings.

(<http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/91-1518294/hood-canal-enhancement-group.aspx>)

\* Salmon enhancement groups were created by the legislature in 1990. Are the current functions of the co-mingled organization within the legal guidelines of RCW 77.95 or is it operating outside those legal guidelines?

(<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=77.95>)

\* If HCSEG is "Doing Business As" PNWSC (or HCSC or SC), why have they not filed those names as "DBA?"

\* Did HCSEG change their corporate filings to include the functions of PNWSC? <http://pnwsalmoncenter.org>

\* How is this iteration of the Pacific Northwest Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group Center any different than the one a previous North Mason School District school board fired for their co-mingling of assets when they ran Theler?