

State Parks Commission Considers Transfer of Fort Worden

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : February 9, 2012 at 6:49 am

OLYMPIA, Wash. - At its regular meeting on Thursday, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission will consider a resolution that establishes the conditions under which the Commission would be willing to transfer Fort Worden State Park to the Fort Worden Lifelong Learning Center Public Development Authority (PDA) that would own and manage the park. The resolution will be considered during the regular meeting, which begins at 9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at the Labor and Industries Auditorium, 7273 Linderson Way S.W., Tumwater. Time for public comment is provided at all regular Commission meetings. If the PDA completes a business plan showing that it can successfully fund the park and if it agrees to certain deed restrictions and conditions as required by the Commission, Fort Worden State Park would be transferred to the PDA to operate by July 1 of 2013.

The resolution to be considered by the Commission includes a provision to give the public ample opportunity to learn about and express their views regarding the potential transfer of Fort Worden State Park to the PDA. A transfer would happen only with the condition that Fort Worden be managed as a park and available to the public. If that failed to happen, it would revert back to the State. Consideration of the Fort Worden transfer is the latest in a long series of discussions about long-range planning for the park. A formal long-range planning process for Fort Worden State Park began in 2004, and subsequently, a group of citizens and potential park partners organized as a public development authority. Since 2004, the Commission has adopted a vision and mission statement for Fort Worden State Park, approved a roadmap and assumptions to guide long-range planning, adopted land classifications, a long-term boundary and park use and development principles. The planning process, supported with public and private funds, resulted in 2008 Commission adoption of a long-range plan to transform the park into a Lifelong Learning Center. The Lifelong Learning Center concept is envisioned to provide outdoor space for recreational and educational opportunities and to house a variety of tenants and groups that would offer programs and classes on a variety of subjects, including performing and visual arts, environmental and natural resources, health and wellness, historic preservation, cultural history and more.