

Friday Harbor Port District

Port Commission Meeting
San Juan Island Yacht Club
Friday February 27th at 10:00 AM
Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Graham Black
Barbara Marrett
Richard Goodhart

Port Staff Present: Todd Nicholson, Executive Director (Zoom)
Kyle Gropp, Deputy Director
Megan Workman, Staff Accountant
Mike Roling, IT Administrator

Public Present: Perham Black (Zoom)

Citizen comments/requests: Citizens can make a brief comment or may ask the Commission to schedule a topic for further discussion at a future meeting.

Perham Black commented that he with his sister were interested in submitting a proposal for the potential Floating Sauna RFP.

Commissioner Marrett asked if their proposal was selected if they'd be able to be operational for summer. Perham responded that the goal would be to be operational for the summer.

Commissioner Marrett then asked if he was going to construct the sauna or buy a pre-made one. Perham responded that both options would be explored and they haven't committed to either yet.

Commissioner Black noted for the record that Perham Black is his son, and Perham and his sister Leah are one of the groups interested in responding to the potential Sauna RFP

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Payroll and Vouchers
- B. Approval of Minutes: February 13, 2026 & February 20, 2026

Commissioner Black moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Marrett seconded the motion. Commissioner Marrett noted that Commissioner Black was flagged as being on Zoom in the February 20th meeting when he was in person. Consent agenda approved unanimously with the correction to the February 20th meeting attendance.

Action Items:**A. Resolution 26-002 – Approve WSDOT Grant Application**

Executive Director Nicholson explained that for many operational AIP eligible projects we try to get some matching funds from WSDOT. He feels the airfield lighting and signage upgrades will be competitive. WSDOT requires a resolution before being able to apply. Commissioner Marrett moved to approve Resolution 26-002, Commissioner Goodhart seconded the motion. Resolution 26-002 approved unanimously.

B. Public Art RFP

Commissioner Marrett mentioned that the wording stating for ‘creation and installation’ should be changed to ‘procurement and installation’ so it doesn’t exclude existing art. The other Commissioners agreed to that change. Executive Director Nicholson asked how long the RFP should be left open for responses. May 1st was suggested as a possible deadline, all of the commissioners agreed that May 1st would work.

Commissioner Goodhart moved to approve the RFP with the change discussed and the deadline date of May 1st. Commissioner Black seconded. RFP approved unanimously.

C. Floating Sauna RFP

Deputy Director Gropp explained that we’ve reached out to insurance and legal as directed after the last discussion. Insurance was doing additional research on the topic and hasn’t gotten back. Legal has set up a meeting for next week to discuss it.

Commissioner Goodhart questioned if the RFP sends a message about commercial activities in the marina and if that was something we wanted to do. He continued saying that his concerns about stray electrical current were less of an issue in salt water than he thought but still poses a hazard. He is also unsure if the amount of staff time required justifies the income potential since most of the revenue will have to be submitted to the DNR.

Executive Director Nicholson explained that while it does involve some staff time, the burden isn’t a significant one. So, he feels that staff burden shouldn’t play a significant factor in deciding to proceed.

Commissioner Marrett stated that she thinks the RFP is the safest way to go since we have multiple groups that have expressed interest in operating a sauna. She views a sauna as something that would make the marina stand out from other area marinas. She is also concerned about insurance liabilities, especially related to the cold plunge and heart attacks.

Commissioner Black stated that insurance liability is an issue that should be able to be addressed as there are several other floating saunas pop-up throughout the region. Then he stated the other reason for doing an RFP in addition to what had already been said is we

were limiting the number of saunas to one. The RFP makes it a fair process for all interested parties.

Executive Director Nicholson mentioned that a monitoring system with alarm for stray current could be required to help further limit the risk of electrocution.

Commissioner Black asked what permitting requirements would be anticipated for the sauna. Executive Director Nicholson replied that he feels the permitting should be straightforward because it is either a boat or going on an existing float so he doesn't think any substantial shoreline development permit should be required. There would be an LNI permit for the electrical work, but those are quick.

Deputy Director Gropp mentioned that it would be ideal if the sauna hooked up to 30- or 50-amp power like a boat.

Commissioner Goodhart asked if the existing float would be sufficient to handle the sauna and if the sauna is constructed on the float if that also increases the Port's liability. Executive Director Nicholson responded that we'd want to do an inspection of the float prior to allowing any construction upon it. While also requiring the sauna operator to make sure the float is fit for purpose.

Both Commissioner Goodhart and Commissioner Marrett felt that a self-contained sauna on its own floats would be the cleanest option, Commissioner Black agreed but felt that maybe that would increase the cost of entry too much.

This topic will be brought back for consideration at the next meeting after getting the responses from insurance and legal.

D. DeShon sublease consents

Commissioner Goodhart made a motion to approve the DeShon sublease consents. Commissioner Marrett seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Discussion Items:

A. Portal Putt LLC – Concept and Site Plan Proposal

Deputy Director Gropp presented a proposal from Jeff Nelson regarding a potential mini-golf course for a parcel on Spring Street. The commission looked at pictures of their existing course in Bellingham as well. Deputy Director Gropp mentioned that the proposal didn't specify what term of lease they were looking for.

Commissioner Black feels like a shorter-term, month-to-month or year-to-year, would work for the proposed development while leaving the Port with some flexibility if someone wanted to do a larger permanent development on the site.

Commissioner Marrett is hesitant to allow a month-to-month lease noting that she'd rather the Port get paid for a full 12 months rather than just the months they are using the space.

Commissioner Black pointed out while they might save some money with a month-to-month lease they are at a higher risk of being displaced if someone else wants to develop the parcel.

Executive Director Nicholson we can work with the potential tenant to see what works best for them and bring that back for the commission to discuss.

Commissioner Goodhart suggested that maybe something like a yearly lease would work best for both sides. Commissioner Black also suggested that if a longer-term lease was wanted a buyout option could be added to keep the Port's options open for a larger permanent development.

The Commission is in favor of continuing to develop the proposal with it being brought back in a future meeting.

Executive Director Report:

Executive Director Nicholson reported that he and Kyle were working on improvements for the boatyard stormwater system. There may be some expenses for upgrades there. They have also been working with the design team for the Shipyard Cove Haul Out Pier. There is just a small amount of work left before permits can be submitted.

The permit for the solar canopy is still pending, it has made it through the 21-day ecology waiting period, but we are still waiting for the permit to be issued by the town.

Deputy Director Report:

Deputy Director Gropp reported that he was still working on the new Oystertale lease. He has submitted questions to the town that he is awaiting answers for.

Port Commissioner Reports and New Business: Commissioners may share information or introduce topics for discussion at future meetings.

Commissioner Marrett reported that Commissioner Goodhart has submitted his article for the newsletter and reminded everyone else that she'd like the remaining articles to be submitted in the next 2 weeks.

She mentioned that she ran into Yacht Club Board member, Stephanie Buffum, on the ferry. Stephanie asked about the possibility of partnering with the Port on improving the Yacht Club for event hosting. Executive Director Nicholson thanked Commissioner Marrett for the heads up and would investigate how the Port may be able to help.

Next Commissioner Marrett inquired about the status of Ernie's at the Airport. Deputy Director Gropp replied that they are exercising the first extension in their lease and are working on remodeling the building. Executive Director Nicholson reported that they do have a roof replacement scheduled for the near future.

Commissioner Goodhart noted that he senses from the Pilots is they just want to have something available. Many of them are frustrated at the lack of progress they see, if some visible progress is made everyone may be a bit happy on some level.

Deputy Director Gropp noted that he did walk the facility and could see the water damage throughout caused by the bad roof.

Commissioner Marrett asked if any dates for the Cannery discussions or an open house have been set. Executive Director Nicholson reported that only tentative mid-year timeframe has been set for the public discussions. He also stated that some site safety issues would have to be addressed at the Cannery before bringing the public to the site.

Commissioner Black reported that he would be unable to attend the next meeting in person or via Zoom.

Citizen comments/requests: Citizens can make a brief comment or may ask the Commission to schedule a topic for further discussion at a future meeting.

Adjourn: 11:27a



Barbara Marrett, Commissioner



Graham Black, Commissioner



Rich Goodhart, Commissioner