

Gig Harbor Peninsula Advisory Commission (PAC)

May 8, 2019, Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the PAC are not verbatim. Recorded copies are available upon request.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gordon Ballantyne
Garth Jackson
Patricia Peterson
Jack Conway
Lucinda Wingard
Peter Clement
James Peschek
Robert Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chair Ballantyne called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present.

NEW BUSINESS

**Major Amendment/Conditional Use Permit/Site Plan Review: PenMet Parks
Applications 906050, 906052, 906054**

Applicant: PenMet Parks
Planner: Ty Booth, ty.booth@piercecountywa.gov
Request: Convert an existing golf driving range and abutting vacant parcel to a community recreation center occupying 17 acres, to include multi-purpose rooms, food/drink concessions, meeting spaces, exercise areas, outdoor event space, and indoor sports fields (in an air dome). The Cushman Trail would be extended from the site's north property line to the south property line. Located at 2416 14th Ave NW, Gig Harbor, in the Rural 10 zone classification, the Gig Harbor Peninsula Community Plan area, and Council District #7.

Staff presented the case.

Ty Booth, Senior Planner, gave a PowerPoint presentation and summarized the Initial Project Review.

COMMISSION QUESTIONS

- Are there plans to improve the County right-of-way for the Cushman Trail?
 - A: Mr. Booth stated he is not sure but there may be plans to incorporate the trail.
- What is the relationship between the applicant and the property owner?
 - A: It is Mr. Booth's understanding that PenMet Parks would be purchasing the property.
- Why does this require a Major Amendment? Because it is going from a private use to a public one?
 - It is required because the changes in use are substantive and do not meet Minor Amendment criteria – kicking it into a Major Amendment and requiring a new public hearing.

APPLICANT TESTIMONY

Carl Halsan, *Agent*, stated the Parks Department will purchase the property if the project moves forward. Traffic Engineering has already conducted its initial review of the traffic study. The old soccer facility was torn down, leaving a need in the community. PenMet Parks received survey results showing many residents want the old soccer facility to be replaced. Because the building is not flat, it should be measured to the center (not top) of the structure, making it more conforming. Sound from the dome cannot escape due to the nature of the material and insulation. Light also cannot escape the dome. The dome itself may help buffer noise and light from the highway for those who live behind the dome. The timing worked out for PenMet Parks to also include a portion of Cushman Trail in the proposal.

Questions to Mr. Halsan:

- How will you mitigate the local noise and light from this project?
 - A: There are no plans for that now.
- This isn't really a "park" – it's more of an event center. Why are they fighting vegetation and landscaping so hard?

- A: This is an existing commercial recreational facility.

Brett Allen, *Contour Engineering*, stated this is a 17-acre site so it doesn't take much for cubic yardage to add up when moving earth. There will be gates closed at night to discourage after-hours parking. There will be adequate lighting to meet safety standards. There is no excavation being proposed – just balancing the site (cut and fill). Sewers are too far away, so the applicant cannot tie into the existing system. There is a need for a water tank, but the location for it hasn't been determined yet. Most likely it would go on the north end of the site. The size has not been determined yet.

Don Campbell, *Landscape Architect*, has done four indoor sports facilities before. The issues you always deal with are lighting, sound, parking, and life safety. The dome would be made of Tevlar, a flexible PVC. It is easily washed off. By using LED highly shielded structures, the light does not escape the site. Must plan for parking as though each use will be happening at the same time. PenMet is planning to employ a 24-hour caretaker to live onsite and monitor the property. There will be spaces outdoors for casual play and picnicking. The existing trees that are proposed to be used as the buffer are required to stay in perpetuity because WSDOT is required to keep them as mitigation.

Questions for Mr. Campbell:

- Is the parking coverage really needed to avoid parking on side roads?
 - A: Unsure of that right now.
- Is all the parking on one level?
 - A: Yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julie Tappero, 15221 14th Ave NW, does not live near the project, but on the other end of 14th Ave NW. She does not feel this is a park and does not think it should be in a neighborhood. The height and size are too much. They should accommodate the buffers, as opposed to fighting it. Part of their mission is to preserve open space and they should do that. They are planning this as a regional facility, meaning it's not just for our community, but for people from all over. When Fisherman's Village and Performance Golf went in, people were pissed off. If this goes in, people are going to be pissed off and all the elected officials will hear about it.

Scott Gray, 4711 Gustafson Dr NW, stated that in 2017 PenMet Parks put out a survey to update the Park's Comprehensive Plan to establish goals and recommend specific projects for PenMet Parks for the next five to ten years. In November 2018, PenMet Parks Director stated in a memo that they identified the development of a new community recreation center as an immediate priority. Many households surveyed do not have youth in the home and will have no need for a youth soccer facility. The top response in the survey was for expanded or improved trails. The category for indoor gymnasiums received a 24% vote and came in at number ten. Expanding or improving upon indoor soccer came in at number fifteen with an 18% response level. That means 82% of the local community does not support expanding or improving on indoor soccer.

Teresa Fasano, 1205 27th St Ct NW, lives on 27th and Ts up to the existing golf course. She stated the project will impact her neighborhood of 21 homes a lot. She already has people using her driveway many times a day to turn around. She would like to see PenMet Parks place a security gate at the entrance to her neighborhood.

Steven Fasano, 1205 27th St Ct NW, agrees with everything said before him. This will directly impact him, but will PenMet Parks reimburse him for people using his property to turn around? Will they pay to put in a gate at the entrance of his neighborhood to protect them?

Tom Suttles, 1301 27th St Ct NW, can look right into the driving range from his property. The biggest issue is the height of the structure. Current zoning allows 45 feet for a reason. There are lots of homes in the area. He suggested to the Parks Dept. they use sheet metal instead and keep it to the shorter height. This material is flammable and there are no proposed sprinklers in the structure. He would like to see them come back with a more responsible proposal.

Gretchen Beckman, 1216 27th St Ct NW, has lived here for 25 years and is very upset about this. There is a retirement community right across the street and will be looking at cars being parked in their front yard. This is a huge structure on a two-lane road.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Commissioner Jackson was the case reviewer. There is a depression that will need to be filled. This is a major project and he recognizes it would be a large structure. He understands they want to get a better use of the land. Design alternatives should be looked at. The Parks Dept should also look at mitigating impacts on the neighborhood. Parks is supposed to meet the needs of everyone in the community, not just a select few. There isn't much available land and the land that is available is commercial and very expensive. This is not in a neighborhood – it is in a transition area between homes and commercial. But it still affects the neighborhood.

Commissioner Peterson stated that more recreational facilities are a good thing, but you must ask how it fits into the Community Plan and the zoning. The issue is not whether the community needs a sports facility, the issue is the size and location. The height is excessive. Evading the buffers is an issue. It is not a park; it is an indoor facility. Why would a Parks Dept be so opposed to adding some vegetation? Past traffic studies were not adequate. The community could build something similar in phases as funds become available.

Commissioner Clement stated that crime is a concern and he would like to see a plan for some security.

Commissioner Peschek pointed out that the applicant is not calling this a park – they are calling it a recreation center. As a youth coach, he can attest to the fact that getting gymnasium time at schools is very difficult and competitive. He would like to see more trees along 14th and some other buffering.

Commissioner Wingard agrees that the size is shocking, but this Commission does see that often with projects. She has some confidence that the trees along the abutting property will remain in perpetuity as a buffer. In this case, the parcel is being used to benefit the public. It may not be a park, but it is part of the Parks and Recreation system. In the Community Plan, residents asked for a level of service for parks and recreation opportunities and the Parks Dept is struggling to get them to that level of service. The Community Plan encourages community use for recreation. This is a growth area and with people come trash, traffic, and crime. The community needs to support a facility like this, but with less impactful design.

Commissioner Ballantyne stated that a Conditional Use Permit should not adversely affect the character, or planned character, of the vicinity. The building is large and will be seen from far away. He isn't sure if it fits the nature of the area. Code states the granting of a Conditional Use Permit should not cause harm or injury. The potential neighbors obviously feel injured and the applicant should look into more mitigation and look at what the actual needs of the community are.

Motion made (Peterson/Johnson) to recommend approval of the use of the land, disapprove of the height variance, include the required buffers, carefully review the traffic study, and require the County, PenMet Parks, and their engineers meet with the community to find out their concerns and ask for mitigation and/or remedies.

Vote:

Ballantyne – yes, with comment: He is against the dome.

Conway – abstained

Jackson – yes

Peterson – yes, with comment: She is against the dome.

Wingard – yes, with comment: She believes the dome design can work.

Clement – yes, with comment: He does not believe the dome is the correct type of structure.

Peschek – yes, with comment: He believes the dome structure can work but Parks should work with adjoining property owners.

Johnson – yes

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes

(April 24, 2019)

Motion made (Clement/Ballantyne) to approve the minutes as presented. *Motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.