

# What do people want done on Lynden parks?

## Meeting called for Oct. 6 to give direction to city, regional recreation district leaders

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*Tribune editor*

LYNDEN — What do people think about meeting Lynden-area parks and recreation needs? That's what local leaders want to hear at a public meeting set for Thursday, Oct. 6, in the Lynden City Annex, 200 Fourth St.

Mayor Scott Korthuis gave a brief update on the parks and rec topic at the Sept. 6 meeting of the Lynden City Council. The idea of creating a Metropolitan Park District has gained about 600 signatures on petitions, Korthuis reported. But the support has not been strong enough to get to 1,600 signatures as hoped by now, in time to get the proposal onto a February 2012 ballot.

That voter-petition method would save the city the costs of an election. However, the city could ask the County Council to join in on a ballot proposal, and then the two entities would have to share the costs of an election. There is still some time for that approach.

A Metropolitan Park District is favored by Korthuis and the City Council and also commissioners of the existing Lynden Regional Parks and Recreation District. It was not officially supported by the Lynden School Board for the Lynden School District, which had been sought as a third partner.

Backers say the new Metro Park District would directly replace the Parks and Rec. District, but would operate under different state laws and would have broader power to raise money for parks and recreation purposes. It could levy up to 75 cents per \$1,000 property value.

The boundaries would continue to be the same as those of the Lynden School District, since many facilities within Lynden — Bender Fields, the Lynden YMCA pool and tennis courts — are used by residents outside the city and school district sports teams.

The city and regional parks and rec district have cooperated on some projects, notably at Bender Fields and in creating new Paterson Park near downtown Lynden. But city officials have said they cannot make needed upgrades to city trails and the YMCA — or possibly even pay for regular maintenance — on the current budget.

Korthuis said the Oct. 6 "open forum" with citizens from 6 to 8 p.m. will be "not to dictate, but hear from them" in regard to parks and recreation for the Lynden area.

The proposal for creating a Metropolitan Park District, as launched in May, would involve the election of five commissioners to run it.