

Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2007

Members Present: Kenni B. Merritt, Janie Pemble, Steve Walker, Laurel Cook, Jack Kimmes, Edie Norton, Jack Weiss, John Blethen, Tom Chisholm

Members Excused: Eric Hirst

Members Absent: John Wilson

Liaisons Present: Stan Snapp, Park and Recreation Advisory Board; Marie Kimball, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Staff Present: Leslie Bryson, Paul Leuthold, Liz Haveman, Dominic Metroplis-Palo

Guests Attending: Joan Hoisington, City Attorney; Therese Holm, City Finance Director; Jim McCabe, Park and Recreation Advisory Board member; Jim Zander from Cordata neighborhood; Barb Campbell from Birchwood neighborhood

Agenda Review:

No new items were added.

Election of GAC Officers for 2007:

Officer nominations took place at the November GAC meeting. Laurel Cook was nominated for Chair and Eric Hirst was nominated for Vice Chair. No other nominations were made. Tom Chisholm moved to appoint Laurel Cook as the Chair of the Greenway Advisory Committee and Eric Hirst as the Vice Chair. Jack Kimmes seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Funding for Land Acquisitions:

Joan Hoisington explained that bonding with Greenway III Levy funds will not be an option for funding a large Greenways purchase before the levy funds are accumulated. The Greenway III Levy Proposition that voters approved to authorize the City to increase its regular property tax has to abide by the Washington State procedure for elections to authorize increase in regular property tax levies (RCW 84.55.050). The Washington State procedure states that, "The ballot of the proposition shall state the dollar rate proposed and shall clearly state any conditions which are applicable under subsection (3) of this section." Subsection (3) states that "...if the limited purpose includes making redemption payments on bonds, the period for which the increased levies are made shall not exceed nine years." Because the Greenways III Levy Proposition did not state that the funds would be used to pay back bonds, and because it stated that the funds will be collected over a ten year period, it does not meet the requirements of the Washington State procedure for bonding this type of tax levy. The Greenways III Levy required a simple majority vote; whereas bond measures require a 60% approval vote. In order for Greenway III Levy funds to be bonded, the Greenway

III Levy Proposition would have had to mention bonding, and it could not exceed a period of nine years.

Therese Holm distributed an updated estimate of Greenways III Levy collection that shows that the amount collected will likely be a little higher than what was originally estimated.

Therese explained that while bonding is not an option, there are other ways to fund large purchases, such as Interfund Loans. Therese distributed a copy of the City of Bellingham's Interfund Loan Policy (FIN 09.00.01). In summary, City Council can authorize a loan from another idle City fund to front Greenways III Levy funds. The term of the loan cannot exceed five years and will be paid back at the same interest rate that the idle City fund was collecting at the commencement of the loan. Therese explained that the amount of money available through an Interfund Loan depends on the amount of idle money available in City funds, but estimated that a \$5 million loan would be easy to come up with; a \$10 million loan would be more of a stretch. She also commented that a bonus to using an Interfund Loan, rather than a bond, is that Interfund Loans can be drawn up and approved by Council Ordinance much quicker than a bond. Bonds also require interest payments as well as an additional 2% bond cost.

Therese and Joan encouraged the Greenway Advisory Committee to draft an estimated schedule of expenditure for the ten year period of the Levy.

Old Business:

Process for Prioritization of Acquisition Projects:

Jack Weiss reported that he began an exercise with Jack Kimmes, Edie Norton, Tim Wahl and Leslie Bryson last week of reviewing all properties that had been previously highlighted for future acquisition. He stated that there were scores of them all over town and in some areas the link desired was obvious, and in other areas the links were vague. The GAC could continue that exercise and come up with a graphic bubble sketch mapping out the links of greenway corridors needed across Bellingham. These corridors could be prioritized and then submitted to Park Board and City Council for approval. At that point, City staff could begin working to provide the GAC with assessed values, availability, and other acquisition information on the priority properties. The GAC will plan a retreat at their February meeting to work on this project.

North Bellingham Trail and Greenway Planning Project:

Leslie Bryson distributed copies of the most current North Bellingham Area Trail and Greenway Plan which included a map, a draft outline of the plan, and a vision statement with goals and objectives. She explained that the process to develop this plan began in March of 2006 with monthly public meetings and June workshops where the meeting attendees split up into four groups and developed their own ideal trail and greenway plan for North Bellingham. The four plans were then compared and compiled into one plan. That plan was shared at a public open house in December and citizen comments at that meeting were incorporated into this latest draft. Leslie explained that a written plan is being drafted to accompany the map. The written plan will include a description

of each trail route on the map. Public Works will develop bike lanes and sidewalks on all new or redeveloped arterial roads. These bike lanes will be drawn into the final map to show how they link to trail systems. John Blethen asked if the trail routes on the map are all proposed, or if some of them have been finalized. Leslie answered that some have been finalized. John Blethen suggested that the finalized trail routes be represented differently on the map than the proposed trail routes.

The Park & Recreation Advisory Board endorsed the North Bellingham Area Trail and Greenway Plan at their December meeting. Leslie stated that endorsement from the Greenway Advisory Committee isn't necessary, but would be nice for City Council's information when the plan is presented to them on February 5. Kenni Merritt moved to endorse the North Bellingham Area Trail and Greenway Plan, Jack Weiss seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Leslie commented that Lynne Givler and Mike McFarlane from Whatcom County Parks & Recreation have been involved in and very supportive of the North Bellingham trail and greenway planning process and they have said that they are including language in the County plan that references the adoption and support of all local recreational plans and will include specific trails of countywide significance in their own plan.

Announcements:

Steve Walker wrote up a summary of points discussed by the GAC on their January walk from the corner of 10th Street and Donovan Avenue proceeding northwest to the tidewaters of Padden Creek. Jack Kimmes will do the same for the GAC executive walk that will be led by Tim Wahl on February 3.

The public input meeting on Greenways Levy III implementation that was originally scheduled for November 28 and then rescheduled to January 10 due to inclement weather has been rescheduled again due to inclement weather. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 31, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Squalicum Boathouse in Zuanich Point Park.

Executive Session:

Executive Session was held from 8:30 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Motion made and carried to accept November 16, 2006 and December 12, 2006 minutes as written.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.