

Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes March 15, 2007

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

Liaisons Present: Stan Snapp, Park and Recreation Advisory Board

Staff Present: Leslie Bryson, Tim Wahl, Liz Haveman

Guests Attending: Christopher Grannis, Kim Erickson

Public Comment Period:

Kim Erickson reported that she was not able to attend the public portion of the GAC retreat on March 10, but wanted to ask what role the City Attorney played in the decision not to view the video clip of the March 6, 2006 City Council meeting where Mayor Mark Asmundson made some statements about the Greenway levy and acquiring Chuckanut Ridge. Laurel Cook responded that the City Attorney did not make that decision; the decision was made by Laurel as the Committee Chair. Laurel provided Kim with a copy of a statement that she read at the retreat.

Agenda Review:

Items added under New Business:

- April walk
- Update on combining Endowment Funds
- Update on new land acquisition position

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Motion made and carried to accept February 15, 2007 minutes as written.

Old Business:

Follow up on March 6 Greenway Public Input Meeting:

54 citizens signed an attendance sheet at the March 6 Greenway Public Input Meeting at Kulshan Middle School commons. There were some citizens who had difficulty finding Kulshan and some mistakenly went to Shuksan Middle School.

The input received at the meeting was collated and compared to input received at the January 31 Public Input Meeting. There were a few new suggestions, but most were repeats of input received at the January 31 meeting.

There are no additional Public Input Meetings scheduled at this time. The Committee and staff will consider holding an additional meeting in six months to a year. Public comment will still be received via email and at the regular Greenway Advisory Committee meetings and published on the Public Comment Tracker.

New Business:

Discussion of Public Comment Period:

Kenni Merritt reported that a suggestion had been made to limit public comment at the Greenway Advisory Committee meetings to new issues only. She stated that approximately a year ago the Committee had a discussion and were in agreement that public comment is appropriate and the first 15 minutes of each regular meeting would be designated for public comment. Limiting the time of the public comment based on the number of people wanting to speak and other items on the agenda is appropriate, but Kenni did not feel that limiting comments to new issues only would be appropriate as the Greenway Advisory Committee is a public board. The rest of the Greenway Advisory Committee agreed with Kenni on this issue and public comment will continue to be received at meetings and will not be limited to new issues only.

Resignation of John Wilson:

John Wilson resigned from the Greenway Advisory Committee due to time constraints. Laurel Cook will contact all of the applicants currently on file to see if they are still interested and to schedule interviews. The vacancy will be advertised and new applications will be accepted as well. Depending on the number of candidates for the vacancy, interviews will take place at 6pm before the April 19 Greenway Advisory Committee meeting, or a special meeting will be scheduled on April 26 for interviews if more time is needed.

GAC walk in April:

Jack Kimmes reported that Jack Weiss will lead a walk on Saturday, April 7; time and location to be determined and emailed to Committee members. The walk will either be along the connection from the Railroad Trail near Northridge Park down to Squalicum High School to the DNR property, or will be to some potential properties in North Bellingham.

Update on combining Endowment Funds:

Leslie Bryson reported that the recommendation to combine the Beyond Greenways and the Greenways III Endowment Funds will go to City Council for approval on March 26. The recommendation is for the Endowment Funds to be combined under the language of Greenways III to allow for more flexibility of expenditure and ease of accounting. The Beyond Greenway Ordinance stated that the Endowment Fund could only be spent on projects acquired with Beyond Greenways funds. Council can combine that Ordinance with the Greenways III Endowment Fund Ordinance that states that the fund could be spent on any properties acquired or developed with Greenway funds. Jack Weiss commented that if Council approves the combination of Endowment Funds, the Greenway Advisory Committee's Endowment Fund Policy would need to be updated to reflect the change.

Update on new acquisition position:

Stan Snapp sat on the interview panel for the new Parks land acquisition position. He reported that six applicants were interviewed and three of the candidates were good; one candidate was particularly strong. Leslie Bryson will be checking references and

expects to make a job offer in a week. Committee members expressed interest in the particulars of the job description and Leslie will email it to the Committee.

Staff Report:

Update on Whatcom Falls trail project:

Leslie Bryson reported that bids opened last week for the portion of the trail from Racine Street to Fraser Street, including a bridge over the creek at Racine St. City Council will award the bid at their March 26 meeting. Construction is expected to be completed by September 2007.

The final phase will be the portion of the trail from Fraser Street through the Haskell Business Center, a footpath along Diehl Ford to the bus barn on Kansas Street, continuing on to Meador Avenue. Leslie stated that a \$500,000 grant combined with remaining Beyond Greenway Trail funds, will cover the cost of construction of the trail from Fraser Street to the bus barn, but there are no funds allocated at this time for the portion of the trail from the bus barn to Meador Ave. John Blethen encouraged Committee members to write letters in support of using Neighborhood Initiative Program Grant funds for this project to Katie Franks at the Planning Department.

Executive Session:

Executive Session was held from 8:10 p.m. to 8:55 p.m.

Identification of Topics for Next Meeting:

- Completing a map with bubbles showing the corridors for potential land acquisition to recommend to City Council
- Discussion/planning of the GAC's annual report to City Council
- Update on the new land acquisition position

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.