

Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2008

Members Present: Eric Hirst, Jack Kimmes, Kenni Merritt, Glenn Merrill, Edie Norton, Janie Pemble, Jim Zander

Members Excused: John Blethen, Steve Walker

Staff Present: Leslie Bryson, Tim Wahl, Liz Haveman

Board Liaisons Attending: Jim McCabe, Park Advisory Board liaison

Guests Attending: Joe Yaver, Responsible Development; Kent Kovacs, Northern Economics

Agenda Review: No changes were made to the agenda.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Motion made and carried to accept the February 21, 2008 minutes as written.

Public Comment Period:

Kent Kovacs introduced himself as an economist with a degree in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of California, Davis. Kent stated that he wrote his dissertation on land development and open space from an economics perspective, and he came to see what the Greenway Advisory Committee does.

Joe Yaver introduced himself as a Responsible Development board member working to save Chuckanut Ridge from development and distributed copies of the Scope of Work for the Fairhaven Highlands Environmental Impact Statement. Joe reported that there were 840 submissions, 430 of which were duplicates, on issues that the public would like to see addressed by the EIS. Joe stated that Mayor Pike has identified a carbon footprint issue with the potential development and stated that it is encouraging that the Mayor is looking at these issues. Joe also reported that Responsible Development is putting together a "Guide for the Perplexed, or, Get That Bank Off My Trees" document addressing their concerns that will soon be available for distribution. Joe also reported that a civil engineer is creating a 5-10 minute presentation that uses Google Earth to overlay the two-dimensional proposed development on the three-dimensional satellite views of Chuckanut Ridge to show what the proposed development will do to the area. Joe asked if it would be possible to schedule a time to show that presentation at a Greenway Advisory Committee meeting. Eric Hirst responded that the Chuckanut Ridge Research Sub-Committee of the GAC will contact Joe to set up a meeting once the Chair of the Sub-Committee, Dan Remsen, is back in town. Eric also stated that the issue of setting aside time for a particular group on a GAC regular meeting agenda has come up before and the Committee decided that it would be better for Responsible Development to host a public meeting, or a meeting where they invite just the GAC to attend, outside of the regular GAC monthly meeting. The reason for this decision is

time constraints due to already full monthly meeting agendas, as well as fairness and equal attention to other groups who might wish to have time allocated on a Greenway agenda.

New Business:

GAC Vacancy: Tom Chisholm's resignation resulted in one opening on the Greenway Advisory Committee. The opening has been advertised on the Greenways website and the Mayor's office has been notified to begin recruiting applicants. The Mayor's office will advertise it on their website and put an announcement in the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committee newsletter and at the next MNAC meeting.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Chuckanut Ridge Research: Dan Remsen is the Chair of this Sub-Committee. Janie Pemble reported that Dan will organize a walk on the Chuckanut Ridge property for Committee members who are not familiar with the property. The walk date and time will be supplied to all Committee members once it is determined.

Greyway/Greenstreet/Bike Boulevards: Leslie Bryson reported that Jack Weiss emailed Kim Brown a list of Sub-Committee members and the vision for the Sub-Committee. Kim is sharing this information with her supervisor to get it approved as part of her work plan. Sub-Committee members are Jack Kimmes, Steve Walker and Dan Remsen. The Sub-Committee has not met yet.

Guest Invitations: Kenni Merritt reported that she has compiled a long list of potential guest speakers taken from Committee members' suggestions. Kenni suggested and the Committee agreed that the GAC Chair and Vice-Chair should set the meeting agendas and let Kenni know when to extend an invitation. Committee members agreed that they would like to invite Ralph Black to lead a walk on his properties on King Mountain and then attend a meeting to discuss his intended development and land dedication plans. Committee members also agreed that they would like to extend an invitation to City Council President, Barbara Ryan, for their April meeting. If Barbara is not able to attend, they would like to invite Louise Bjornson, Chair of the Council's Parks Committee.

Monthly Walk: Jack Kimmes reported that walks will take place on weekday evenings now that daylight savings time has begun. The next walk will be on Tuesday, April 1, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The meeting location will be emailed to Committee members. It was suggested that Jack poll committee members by email to determine weekday evenings that work best for most members.

Northridge Park Phase II Steering Committee: Glenn Merrill has committed to being the GAC liaison to the Northridge Park Phase II Steering Committee. Leslie Bryson reported that Berger & Associates have been selected as the design consultant. The Steering Committee was impressed with the sensitivity displayed by Berger & Associates to the importance of preserving the urban forest in Northridge Park.

Park Advisory Board: Edie Norton attends the monthly Park & Recreation Advisory Board meetings as the liaison from the Greenway Advisory Committee. Edie reported that at the February Park Board meeting, Tom Barrett led a discussion that resulted in a resolution supporting the planning of the Bay to Baker Trail corridor connecting Birchwood Avenue to James Street under I-5. Edie also reported that the Big Rock Committee gave a presentation to Park Board summarizing the Garden's short-term and long-term needs and fundraising ideas. GAC members requested that the monthly Park Board minutes be included as part of the monthly GAC meeting packet.

PRO Plan Steering Committee: Leslie Bryson reported that the PRO Plan Steering Committee's most recent meeting involved reviewing all of the current park facilities and brainstorming additional needed facilities. Kenni Merritt asked Leslie if the PRO Plan update will examine level of service issues. Leslie responded that it will; the 2002 PRO Plan did not include UGA population in existing level of service, which resulted in inflated annexation modeling cost estimates for acquiring additional acres of parks to serve the growing population. This update will count current UGA population in the service areas which will make the cost estimates more affordable. Leslie also reported that two PRO Plan surveys ended yesterday; a random household telephone survey with 368 respondents and a web survey with 468 respondents. Leslie reported that at first glance, the results of the web survey do not greatly differ from the random household survey, which suggests a fairly random sample of web respondents. Leslie also reported that the majority of respondents said that they would be willing to pay for additional resources; most in the amount of \$50 to \$100 per year. Also, approximately 85% of respondents said that they currently live within walking distance of a park or trail.

Public Outreach: Glenn Merrill, Janie Pemble, Jim Zander and Steve Walker are on the Public Outreach Sub-Committee, but have not had an opportunity to meet yet. Edie Norton reported that the Cordata neighborhood is having a neighborhood picnic on June 28 at Whatcom Community College and suggested that this would be an excellent outreach opportunity to celebrate recent acquisitions in North Bellingham. It was suggested to ask Julie Guy to invite Pete Kremen to this event for recognition of the 7 acre parcel of property being transferred from the County to the City for a park.

Strategic Planning: Eric Hirst reported that the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee met and created a draft charter that has been reviewed by Park staff who suggested some revisions. The charter had two purposes; 1) to help the GAC focus on priority property acquisitions, and 2) to suggest improved processes for GAC executive sessions. Eric reported that the recent GAC retreat proved to be quite successful in both areas.

Executive Session:

Executive Session was held from 7:55 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. to discuss potential real property acquisition.

Vote in Open Session following Executive Session:

In open meeting following Executive Session, Janie Pemble moved to recommend the purchase of parcel #122 in Northeast Bellingham. Jim Zander seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

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