

**Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**April 19, 2007**

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

**Members Excused:** Tom Chisholm

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

**Staff Present:** Tim Wahl, Liz Haveman

**Guests Attending:** Dick McKinley, Public Works Director; Joe Yaver, Responsible Development; Dan Remsen, GAC applicant; Jody Bergsma, GAC applicant; Jim Zander, GAC applicant

**Public Comment Period:**

No public comment.

**Agenda Review:**

Items added under Old Business:

- Update on new land acquisition position
- May walk

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

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

**New Business:**

Interviews of Applicants for the Greenway Advisory Committee:

After the March GAC meeting, Laurel Cook contacted all current GAC applicants and scheduled interviews for all who were still interested in serving on the Committee. New applicants were also contacted. However, one new application was received by Park staff two days prior to the April meeting and an interview was not scheduled. It was noted that in the future, the Committee would like to be as accommodating as possible in accepting and interviewing applicants, including those applications submitted just before the meeting. Janie Pemble will contact this most recent applicant and inform him that another position on the Committee will be opening in November 2007 and he will be contacted at that time to schedule an interview.

Interviews of three applicants were conducted to fill the vacancy on the Greenway Advisory Committee in the following order:

- Dan Remsen – 7:10 p.m.
- Jody Bergsma – 7:20 p.m.
- Jim Zander – 7:30 p.m.

Michael Chiavario was scheduled for an interview, but withdrew his application to the Greenway Advisory Committee due to personal time constraints.

During each interview, applicants were informed of conflict of interest rules and procedures. They were also informed that the Mayor has requested that the GAC recommend 2 applicants, of which he will select 1 to fill the vacancy.

Recommendations on Greenway Advisory Committee Appointment:

Following the interviews and Committee discussion, it was the decision of the Committee to recommend to the Mayor that Dan Remsen be appointed as the Committee's first choice, and recommended Jim Zander as the Committee's second choice.

The Role of Public Works in Creating Green and Park Spaces:

Dick McKinley, Director of Bellingham Public Works, addressed the Committee on the role of Public Works in creating green and park spaces. Dick stated that as the Public Works Director he has two jobs; running Public Works and participating in the overall executive management of the City of Bellingham. As a participant in the executive management of the City, Dick has been able to use his role as Public Works Director to help fund City projects. For example, Public Works made the Laurelwood Trail a possibility by doing all of the clearing and excavation work to put in a waterline, and then covered up the new waterline with the trail. Over \$3 million dollars for the Civic Field renovations came out of the Public Works budget. All new restroom facilities in Parks are considered a part of the public sewer system and therefore come out of the Public Works budget. Public Works has also been able to acquire green and park space by trading land for roads; for example, in the Samish Hill area, a private party donated acres of park land to the City in exchange for Public Works building a road into the area.

Jack Kimmes asked Dick how the GAC can ensure that Parks and Public Works are not duplicating each others' efforts to acquire parks and trails in North Bellingham. Dick responded that he is in communication with Park staff on a daily basis. Parks and Public Works working in cooperation on projects like this should be the expected norm. Edie Norton stated that as she understood it, Parks did not get in on the planning of large developments until the final technical review stage and asked if this has changed. Dick and Tim Wahl both responded that this has changed and Parks is included in the process earlier to ensure that green and park space is included in future developments. Kenni Merritt recommended that Dick provide all of his staff with a copy of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan so that they can see where parks and trails could go in relation to planned streets. Laurel Cook asked what the proper process should be if a project comes up where Public Works could work in cooperation to get a park or trail built. Dick responded that they should call him or send him an email. John Blethen and Eric Hirst voiced concerns about the plans for parks in the development of the waterfront and whether or not the amount of designated park acreage will be enough to accommodate the number of people living there. Dick responded that Bellingham City Council and the Port Commission will make the ultimate decision, and it is important

that citizens attend the scoping meetings during the process of drafting the Environmental Impact Statement to give public comment on the need for parks and open space. After the Environmental Impact Statement is drafted, a new Interlocal Agreement will be adopted to determine a timeline for development and what the City and Port will each pay for. Eric Hirst commented that there has been a public perception that the City has given away too much in waiving park impact fees in waterfront development. Dick responded that only certain impact fees were waived in exchange for maintaining a growth pattern that will help sustain downtown Bellingham. The concern was that developers would pass over the property between downtown and focus just on the most desirable waterfront property, leaving a gap between downtown and the waterfront.

John Blethen brought the funding shortfall for the Whatcom Creek Trail portion from Kansas Street to Meador Avenue to Dick's attention as a possible cooperative project between Parks and Public Works. He noted that the bridge at Meador Avenue needs to be replaced and a trail could be incorporated if Public Works replaces that bridge. Dick responded that he will look into it with Park staff.

### **Old Business:**

#### Adoption of Acquisition Guidelines:

Jack Weiss drafted Acquisition Guidelines for the Greenway Advisory Committee and revised them after Committee discussion at the March Retreat. Kenni Merritt moved to adopt the Acquisition Guidelines, Eric Hirst seconded; the motion was approved by a unanimous 9-0 vote of the Committee.

#### Update on new land acquisition position:

Matt Burke was hired for the Parks Property Acquisition Specialist position and started on Monday, April 16. To date he has been going through City employee orientation, setting up office, and he has started working with Tim Wahl on reviewing all of the properties on the list for potential acquisition.

#### GAC walk in May:

The May walk will be on Wednesday, May 9 from 6-8 p.m. Beginning in June, walks will be held on the first Wednesday of the month from 6-8 p.m. Jack Kimmes will email Committee members the destination and meeting location for the May walk.

### **Executive Session:**

Executive Session was held from 9:04 p.m. to 9:25 p.m.

### **Vote in Open Meeting Following Executive Session:**

In open meeting following the Executive Session, John Blethen moved, and Janie Pemble seconded the motion, to recommend that staff proceed with negotiations to purchase approximately four acres in the Padden Gorge area, the Committee having provided recommendations to staff during Executive Session as to the maximum purchase price and other recommended acquisition terms. The Committee recommends that the acquisition be funded with proceeds from the Greenway III levy as a new

Southside Property Acquisition line item. The motion was approved by a unanimous 9-0 vote of the Committee.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.