

Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2008

Members Present: John Blethen, Steve Walker, Eric Hirst, Jack Kimmes, Kenni Merritt, Glenn Merrill, Edie Norton, Jim Zander, Dan Remsen

Members Excused: Janie Pemble

Staff Present: Leslie Bryson, Tim Wahl, Liz Haveman

Board Liaisons Attending: Jim McCabe, Park Advisory Board liaison; Marie Kimball, Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Guests Attending: Ralph Black and Mike Black, Alliance Properties; Adrienne Lederer, Park Advisory Board; Greg and Cyndy Anderson

Agenda Review: John Blethen moved New Business before Old Business.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Jim McCabe noted a typo on page 3 under PRO Plan Steering Committee, third sentence. The minutes referenced the 1992 PRO Plan; it should have been the 2002 PRO Plan. Motion made and carried to accept the March 21, 2008 minutes as amended.

Public Comment Period: There was no public comment.

New Business:

Discussion of Parks, Trails and Open Space in King Mountain Area:

Ralph Black of Alliance Properties introduced himself and stated that he attended the March GAC meeting and at that time offered to come back and share his plans to incorporate the North Bellingham Trail Plan into his planned development in the King Mountain area. Ralph shared a PowerPoint presentation that laid the North Bellingham Trail Plan map over a GIS map of the King and Queen Mountain area that shows how the Trail Plan relates to his planned development and to the Cordata area west of the Guide Meridian. Ralph stated that the Guide Meridian is the most obvious hurdle that he sees in implementing the North Bellingham Trail Plan. In order to link the proposed parks and trails in Cordata west of the Guide to the proposed parks and trails in the King and Queen Mountain area east of the Guide, a way to cross the Guide Meridian must be provided. Ralph stated that his vision to cross the Guide is a pedestrian overpass, similar to the one on Alabama Hill. The overpass is included in the North Bellingham Trail Plan.

Ralph's presentation continued with photos showing the beautiful viewpoints along the proposed trail routes in the North Bellingham Trail Plan. Ralph pointed out that while he owns a large portion of land in the King Mountain area, he is not the only property owner in the area and additional acquisitions and/or trail easements will be necessary to

implement the North Bellingham Trail Plan. Ralph stated that if the North Bellingham Trail Plan is implemented as proposed with the necessary land acquisitions annexed to the City, there is the potential for 150-200 acres of parks and open space in the King and Queen Mountain area. Eric Hirst pointed out that the large areas of proposed parks and open space on the map wrap around Alliance Property's planned development on King Mountain.

Steve Walker asked Ralph what his planned development entails. Ralph responded that they plan for approximately 1000 mixed-use units including single family dwellings, an urban center and brownstones. There are trails planned through the development that follow the existing social trails on King Mountain. The top of King Mountain will remain undeveloped open green space.

Ralph re-stated that he believes that the most important key to a connected parks and trails system in North Bellingham will be getting across the Guide Meridian with a pedestrian overpass. Ralph suggested that this project could be funded with a combination of public and private funds. Ralph suggested that some funds could come from the Washington State Department of Transportation and that federal funds should be sought as well. Edie Norton asked Ralph what he can do to contribute to this project. Ralph responded that he can request that the fees that he is required to pay as he develops his property, such as park impact fees and transportation fees, be earmarked for this project.

Kenni Merritt asked Marie Kimball if the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee could include the pedestrian overpass in the list of projects in the Transportation Improvement Plan. Marie responded that in the future they could, but had some questions for Ralph about the proposed overpass. Marie pointed out that the Guide Meridian is a state highway used by commercial trucks so an overpass over the Guide would need to be much taller than the Alabama overpass. Ralph responded that the overpass would need to be taller and that the height is regulated by Washington State DOT. In order to make a taller overpass, the ramps on either side would need to be longer. Marie stated it seems that this would make the Guide Meridian overpass more expensive to build than the Alabama overpass. Ralph responded that there is room for longer ramps on VanWyck Road and that when he looked into the construction cost a number of months ago, it was not that much higher. Marie also stated that it took many years of planning, trail construction and neighborhood negotiations to build the Alabama overpass. Marie commented that the Guide Meridian overpass is quite visionary in that there are currently no parks or trails in the area yet and the creation of these trails is necessary before the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee will consider this project for the TIP.

Jim Zander asked if Park Impact Fees can be used to help fund the pedestrian overpass. Leslie Bryson responded that they could if the overpass is in the Park Capital Facilities Plan. In order to get it in the Park Capital Facilities Plan, a number of things need to happen. The North Bellingham Trail Plan needs to be incorporated in the City's Comprehensive Plan, the trails leading up to the overpass need to be constructed, and funding for the overpass will have to be identified before it becomes part of the Capital

Facilities Plan. The North Bellingham Trail Plan is already scheduled to be incorporated in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The next step is to acquire the land necessary to make the needed trail connections. John Blethen suggested that the City seek agreements from other project stakeholders before acquiring the land to ensure that the acquisitions will not be wasted if the project is not approved.

Old Business:

GAC Vacancy: There are no applicants yet for the vacancy on the Greenway Advisory Committee. Liz sent an email announcing the vacancy to the Greenways Interest Group; citizens who have attended public meetings and have requested meeting notifications. Marie Kimball reported that she received the email and forwarded it to someone she thought would be a good candidate.

Sub-Committee Reports: There were no sub-committee reports.

Executive Session: Executive Session was held from 7:40 p.m. to 8:55 p.m.

Vote in Open Session following Executive Session:

In open meeting following Executive Session, Edie Norton moved to recommend approval of the Greenway Advisory Committee's South side priority acquisition list to the Park Advisory Board and to City Council. Jim Zander seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously. Also, Dan Remsen moved to recommend approval of the Greenway Advisory Committee's North side priority acquisition list to the Park Advisory Board and to City Council. Jack Kimmes seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Announcements:

Jack Kimmes announced that his term of service on the Greenway Advisory Committee expires on May 31, 2008 and he will not seek re-appointment.

Leslie Bryson announced that she spoke with Dick McKinley, Public Works Director, and he told her that they plan to put \$750,000 in the Transportation Improvement Plan for the Whatcom Creek Trail corridor, I-5 to Ellis.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.