

**Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2008**

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

Members Excused: Scott Dorough, Janie Pemble

Staff Present: Tim Wahl, Leslie Bryson, Marvin Harris, Rae Edwards, Liz Haveman

Board Liaisons Attending: Jim McCabe, Park Advisory Board liaison

Guests Attending: Barry Buchanan, Bellingham City Councilman; Joe Yaver, Responsible Development

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:

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

Agenda Review: No new items were added to the agenda. Eric Hirst announced that he received a phone call from Janie Pemble earlier in the day. Janie told him that she will need to resign from the Greenway Advisory Committee due to personal time constraints. Janie will send in a formal resignation letter.

Public Comment Period: Joe Yaver introduced himself as a member of Responsible Development committed to preserving Chuckanut Ridge. Joe distributed copies of an article entitled, "Old Growth Forests are Valuable Carbon Sinks" from the journal *Nature*. Joe also distributed an email from Larry Horowitz that summarizes Larry's analysis of parks, housing and population data by region, as well as a Land Supply Analysis table taken from the September 3, 2008 PRO Plan Draft and a map of the City of Bellingham. Joe stated that when he moved to Bellingham approximately 35 years ago, half of the space on the City map was undeveloped, which shows that the City has gone a long way in the wrong direction. Joe also stated that he is looking forward to meeting with the Chuckanut Ridge Research sub-committee of the Greenway Advisory Committee. Kenni Merritt asked who will be in attendance at that meeting. John Blethen responded that as far as the sub-committee goes, it will be himself, Dan Remsen and Eric Hirst. Joe Yaver stated that he will be in attendance, as well as a civil engineer who has created a Powerpoint presentation on fundraising, and a couple of Responsible Development board members. Joe Yaver also stated that he has invited Barbara Ryan to attend the meeting. John Blethen stated that he and Joe have agreed that the focus of the meeting will be on fundraising issues; they are in agreement that the property is wonderful and worth acquiring.

New Business:

Endowment Fund Request: Rae Edwards introduced herself as the Parks Volunteer Coordinator and distributed a handout summarizing recent projects that were funded by the Greenway Endowment Fund. \$36,000 was granted in 2007 and \$15,000 was granted in 2008. This money has been used to fund AmeriCorps positions, complete several fencing and invasive removal and planting projects at Woodstock Farm, and the planting of over 800 trees at Squalicum Creek Park. Another Americorps position will start October 1, 2008 and run through August 15, 2009 that will use up the remainder of the 2008 granted funds.

Rae requested a total of \$5000 of Endowment Funds to be granted for 2009. This money will fund an AmeriCorps position that will run from October 1, 2009 to August 15, 2010. Eric Hirst asked Rae if she could use two AmeriCorps positions, rather than just one. Rae responded that having just the one position is working well; she does not have office space or enough vehicles to transport additional AmeriCorps positions. Damon Gray noted that Rae's 2009 request is reduced by two thirds from the year before and asked why. Rae responded that the 2008 funds were used to purchase mulch and trees as well as fund the AmeriCorps position. Rae has received other grant funding to purchase trees and also has a supply of trees in the Park Operations nursery. She does not feel that she needs more.

John Blethen stated that Rae's Parks Volunteer Program and the AmeriCorps positions are one of the best investments that the City can make; the returns on the program far outweigh the miniscule cost. Eric Hirst moved to approve Rae's 2009 Endowment Fund request of \$5000. Steve Walker seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Chuckanut Ridge Research: John Blethen stated that the Chuckanut Ridge Research sub-committee is meeting next week at Dan Remsen's home with members of Responsible Development. They intend to mainly listen to what Responsible Development has to say and learn from their research. Joe Yaver stated that they appreciate their willingness to listen and he also hopes that they will be able to engage in brainstorming fundraising ideas.

Greenstreets Committee: Jim McCabe stated that as far as he knows, Kim Brown is working on generating a report of findings from the Greenstreets meetings, but has been tied up with other duties and has not had time to complete it yet.

PRO Plan Update: Leslie Bryson reported that the Planning Commission asked staff to take the comments received during their public hearings back to the PRO Plan Steering Committee to see if they want to change their recommendation. Leslie stated that the Steering Committee did meet and review all of the comments and decided to change some maps, but decided not to change their level of service recommendation. The PRO Plan will go back to the Planning Commission on October 2, 2008, and will go to City Council on October 20, 2008.

Guest Invitations:

Kenni Merritt reported that she has invited City Council President Barbara Ryan to attend the October GAC meeting.

Monthly Walk: Glenn Merrill reported that now that the sun is setting earlier, there will not be any more evening walks. Glenn asked Committee members which Saturday of each month would be best for walks. Committee members generally agreed that the first Saturday of each month would be best; they will meet at 9 a.m. and Glenn will continue to email walk destination and meeting location to Committee members.

Northridge Park: Leslie Bryson reported that a public open house was held last week for review and comment of the proposed second phase of development for Northridge Park. Leslie stated that many of the park's neighbors have concerns about developing the park, including increased traffic and crime. Leslie encouraged Committee members to attend upcoming public meetings and voice their support for the project. Steve Walker asked if Leslie could email Committee members the plans for the park. Leslie stated that she would. Glenn Merrill asked when the next meeting is. Leslie stated that it has not yet been scheduled.

Whatcom Creek Trail Racine to Ellis: Leslie reported that the Whatcom Creek Trail connection between Racine and Ellis Streets is almost complete. They expect the work to be done within one month, depending on the weather.

North Bellingham Trail Plan: Leslie Bryson reported that there is a City Council public hearing on the North Bellingham Trail Plan on Monday, October 6, 2008. Leslie also reported that the transfer of the 7.5 acres adjacent to Cordata Park from the County to the City is now complete.

Executive Session: Executive Session was held from 7:40 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Committee invited Barry Buchanan, Bellingham City Councilman, to attend executive session.

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