

Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2007

Members Present: Janie Pemble, Steve Walker, Edie Norton, John Blethen, Dan Remsen, Jack Weiss, Laurel Cook, Jack Kimmes, Eric Hirst, Tom Chisholm

Members Excused: Kenni Merritt

Liaisons Present: Stan Snapp, Park & Recreation Advisory Board

Staff Present: Paul Leuthold, Tim Wahl, Leslie Bryson, Liz Haveman

Guests Attending: Joe Yaver, Responsible Development board member; Larry Horowitz, Responsible Development board member; Glenn Merrill

Agenda Review: The following items were added under New Business: 1) Question About Crosswalks (Steve Walker), 2) Padden Creek Daylighting (John Blethen), 3) Signage of Greenways properties (John Blethen), 4) North Bellingham Trail Plan Status (Edie Norton), 5) Trail Width Standard (Jack Weiss), 6) Red Tail Reach Project Update (John Blethen)

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:

It was noted that Janie Pemble also volunteered to help with the North Bellingham acquisition celebration. Motion made and carried to accept the September 20, 2007 minutes with this inclusion.

Public Comment Period:

Joe Yaver stated that he and Larry Horowitz came in order to respond to any questions that Committee members might have about the letter written by Larry that was handed out at the September GAC meeting.

Eric Hirst asked about the status of the Chuckanut Ridge Environmental Impact Statement that Joe spoke about at the September meeting. Joe responded that he understands that the City has not yet signed a contract with the consultant selected by the City to prepare the EIS. Joe said that Responsible Development has asked the City to hold off on signing the contract because Responsible Development objects to that consultant. As to the release schedule for the EIS, Larry Horowitz expects that scoping may be completed in approximately 30 days and a draft EIS may be publicly released in approximately 60 days. Laurel Cook asked if Responsible Development is planning on hosting a public meeting after the EIS is released and Joe responded that they will. Responsible Development is planning a peer review of the EIS and they would like to enter into dialogue with the Greenway Advisory Committee once the EIS is released.

Dan Remsen inquired about the reference in the letter to a percentage of Chuckanut Ridge that will be set aside as a greenway without the exchange of funds. Larry Horowitz replied that due to wetland mitigation, they do expect a percentage to be set

aside as a greenway; this land will not be purchased. Dan commented that the development plans that he has seen for Chuckanut Ridge show housing in these wetland areas and asked if these plans were legitimate. Larry responded that he believes that the plans are not legitimate; the developer's plans do not meet the minimum wetland buffer. Larry commented that the City's Comprehensive Plan has a land use policy that provides for the protection of hillsides, neighborhood quality and single family zoning. Larry said that the City up-zoned Chuckanut Ridge in order to get a road built through Chuckanut Ridge at the developer's cost. Larry commented that the land is overpriced; the value of the land is in the density the developers are hoping for.

New Business:

2008 Officers:

Laurel Cook stated that since this meeting marks the end of her Greenway Advisory Committee term, Vice-Chair, Eric Hirst, will serve as the Chair of the Committee in November and December 2007. 2008 Officers will be nominated at the November meeting, voted upon at the December meeting and will take office in January 2008. Laurel stated that due to other commitments, Kenni Merritt has stated that she is not a candidate. Eric Hirst said that if the Committee approves, he is willing to continue as Vice-Chair, but also due to other commitments, he is not available to be the Chair. Eric suggested that Committee members engage in an e-mail dialogue before the November meeting on possible candidates.

Potential Candidates for GAC:

Laurel Cook reported that 2 openings on the Greenway Advisory Committee have been advertised; one opening for her position and one opening in January when Jack Weiss will be on City Council. The Mayor's Office has advertised the openings in the "Just So You Are Aware" newsletter to the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committees and has or will advertise them in the Bellingham Herald. An email was also sent to all of the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committees. There are still two current applications on file from previous openings; one from Jim Zander and one from Glen Merrill. Both Jim and Glen have said that they are still interested. Committee members will help spread the word to other interested citizens who would be interested in applying. Interested parties should contact the Mayor's Office to apply. It was noted that currently there are 5 Committee members from Ward 6 and Committee members would like to see new members from other Wards.

Boulevard Park /New Whatcom Consultant Selection Process:

Leslie Bryson reported that John Blethen is serving as the Greenway Advisory Committee representative on the committee to select a consultant for the Boulevard Park shoreline renovation and the over-water boardwalk connecting Boulevard Park to the waterfront redevelopment project. John reported that there are 4 consultant applicants and at first glance, they all look good. John will report back as the process proceeds.

Question about Crosswalks:

Steve Walker inquired as to whether or not crosswalks are considered a part of the Greenway Trail System when they are connected to trails. Steve has noticed a number of trails in Bellingham where crosswalks are missing, particularly on Pine Street connecting to the South Bay Trail. Leslie reported that Public Works is responsible for crosswalks, but on new trail projects, crosswalks are often included in the project design, construction and cost. Steve suggested that Committee members compile a list of crosswalk connectors that are missing and work with the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee to send a letter to Public Works requesting connecting crosswalks.

Padden Creek Daylighting:

John Blethen reported that there is a piece of property located on 20th Street along the Padden Creek corridor that is currently for sale that has posed an interest to the Committee in years past in the effort to daylight Padden Creek. John reported that Bill Reilly with the Public Works Department is working on a stormwater drainage project in this area and he understands that \$1 million has been allocated by Harriet Spanel in transportation money for this project. John suggested that Park staff work with Bill Reilly to acquire this piece of property that would create a park in the Happy Valley neighborhood that is currently under-served.

Signage for Greenways Properties:

John Blethen reported that some years ago, he created wood signs in his shop that were installed on properties purchased with Greenway funds to advertise the purchase. These signs served to educate the public on the new acquisition as well as celebrate a levy accomplishment. John reported that the signage served an important role and he would like to see the project continued. Leslie Bryson reported that metal signs could be ordered and installed on future purchases and the cost for the sign could be built into the acquisition cost. The signs cost approximately \$50 each (not including the post and installation), but a discount is available for signs ordered in bulk. Committee members agreed that properties purchased that are not currently signed should get signs. John Blethen moved to begin signing Greenway properties; Eric Hirst seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

North Bellingham Trail Plan Status:

Edie Norton inquired as to when the North Bellingham Trail Plan will go to City Council for approval. Leslie reported that there are some written portions that need to be completed on funding, implementation, design and stewardship before it can go to Council for approval. Edie Norton volunteered to assist with that if it is something she can help with.

Trail Width Standard:

Jack Weiss inquired about the trail width standard. He commented that the current standard is wide enough to allow a maintenance vehicle to drive down the trail which is beneficial for trail maintenance, but makes the trails look like roads. John Blethen suggested that some smaller equipment might be used so that narrower trails could be built and maintained. Leslie Bryson suggested that this discussion take place during the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan update.

Red Tail Reach Project Update:

Plans of the new trail route through Red Tail Reach were distributed and John Blethen reported that the new route meanders through the property a little more than what was originally proposed. The trail will be 10 feet wide. Cyclone fencing has been installed along the south boundary of the Red Tail Reach property. Once vegetation is planted there will be a bit of a buffer between the trail and the fence.

Old Business:

Update on Celebration of North End Acquisitions: Laurel Cook reported that she met with Edie Norton and Janie Pemble and they decided that they would postpone the Celebration of North end Acquisitions until more properties are acquired and a large celebration can be planned. They also decided to wait for better weather. Stan Snapp asked if there are any other North Bellingham events coming up that the Celebration could be combined with. Committee members did not know of any, but Edie will look into it.

Update on Meeting with Pete Kremen:

Laurel Cook reported that on October 15, 2007 she, along with Dan Taylor (Whatcom County Parks Commission), Julie Guy (Bellingham Parks Board), Jim Zander (Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood Assn) and Kenni Merritt (Greenway Advisory Committee), met with Whatcom County Executive Pete Kremen to discuss the 7-acre parcel that the County owns adjacent to the new 20-acre Cordata park site. Pete was very agreeable to the City's acquiring the 7-acre parcel and said that he needed to make sure that the transfer of the property to the City was legal; that it would not be a gift of public funds. Pete said that it made sense for the City to acquire the property, and that the County would grant a trail easement to the City while the County and City work out the legalities of the transfer if need be. Pete said that he would be interested in participating in a celebration of North Bellingham park acquisitions where the 7-acre parcel could be included in a public announcement about the recent park and open space acquisitions.

Paul Leuthold reported that he spoke with Mike McFarlane, Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Director, after this meeting and Mike said that the County is willing to transfer ownership of the 7-acre parcel to the City if the City will assume the long term maintenance of the pond at the detention facility nearby. Paul will work with Bellingham Public Works to see if they will be able to assume this maintenance.

Revised Endowment Fund Guidelines:

Eric Hirst reported that he edited the Endowment Fund Guidelines in an effort to update them and make them consistent with the new Endowment Fund Ordinance that combined the Beyond Greenways Endowment Fund with the Greenway III Endowment Fund. Eric brought the Committee's attention to the bullet point on page 3 of the draft that stated that public awareness campaigns and publications promoting stewardship and volunteerism would be eligible for Endowment Fund support. Eric suggested that this bullet be removed because the bullet above it states that volunteer support,

supervision and coordination are eligible for Endowment Fund support. Eric felt that public awareness and publications promoting stewardship can fall under this point. Eric Hirst moved that the edited Endowment Fund Guidelines be approved with this bullet point removed; Jack Kimmes seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session:

Executive Session was held from 8:20 p.m. to 9:20 p.m. to discuss potential real property acquisition.

Vote in Open Meeting Following Executive Session:

In open meeting following the Executive Session, John Blethen moved, and Dan Remsen seconded the motion, to direct Park Staff to pursue acquisition of a 5-acre parcel of property in the Birchwood neighborhood through a partnership of Greenways and other funding sources. The motion passed unanimously.

November Walk:

The November walk will be on Saturday, November 3. Jack Kimmes will email Committee members the time and meeting location.

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