

**Greenway Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
December 20, 2007**

**Members Present:** Janie Pemble, John Blethen, Jack Weiss, Jack Kimmes, Eric Hirst, Tom Chisholm, Kenni Merritt, Glenn Merrill

**Members Excused:** Dan Remsen, Edie Norton, Steve Walker

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

**Park Board Liaisons Attending:** Jim McCabe, Bill Hadley

**Guests Attending:** Joe Yaver, Responsible Development board member; Jim Zander, GAC-elect

**Agenda Review:** No changes.

**Review of Previous Meeting Minutes:**

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

**Public Comment Period:**

Joe Yaver asked Eric Hirst if Chuckanut Ridge is an official item of interest for the Greenway Advisory Committee. Eric responded that Chuckanut Ridge is on the Committee's priority interest list. Joe inquired as to whether or not it is under active consideration with negotiations currently underway. Eric responded that there are not current negotiations underway; action will begin after the Environmental Impact Statement determines what will and will not be protected.

Joe Yaver also distributed copies of a handout entitled "How Ecologically significant is Chuckanut Ridge?", along with an unpublished Bellingham Herald guest column by John McLaughlin (06/10/06), a handout entitled "Growth Management Act Planning Goals; Which alternative is more consistent with the goals of the GMA? Develop Fairhaven Highlands or Preserve Chuckanut Ridge?", and a handout entitled, "Successful Infill Development vs. Unsuccessful Infill Development & Sprawl". Mr. Yaver stated that these handouts make Responsible Development's case for the preservation of Chuckanut Ridge.

Joe Yaver stated that Responsible Development has raised \$100,000.00 in informal contribution designations for the acquisition of Chuckanut Ridge, and they are beginning a formal fund raising campaign. Joe also stated that Responsible Development has hired their own firm to perform an Environmental Impact Statement separate from the firm hired by the City. Joe also announced that there will be a meeting on January 16, 2008 at Bellingham Municipal Court on the scoping of the City's Environmental Impact Statement.

## **New Business:**

Collaborations & Partnerships with Bellingham School District: Ron Cowan, Bellingham School District Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations, stated that he is in charge of all non-educational aspects of the Bellingham School District; buildings, grounds, buses and food service. Leslie Bryson reported that she has worked with Ron and the School District on a number of projects over the years including the Roosevelt nature area, the trail to Big Rock Garden near Silver Beach Elementary School, Connelly Creek trails, and most recently, on trails connecting the future school site on Aldrich Road to the new Cordata area park site. Bellingham Parks & Recreation also has an interlocal agreement with Bellingham School District that allows for facility sharing and sports programming in the schools. Leslie also reported that the City has budgeted \$150,000 to help construct a full size gymnasium at the new elementary school site on Aldrich Road that can be used for adult sports leagues and other community events after school hours.

Ron brought with him the plans for the new school on Aldrich Road that is scheduled to open Fall 2009. He reported that the process for annexation is currently underway. Bellingham School District will provide trail access through the site to connect to neighboring parks and trails. John Blethen asked if there will be safe routes for kids to walk to school. Ron reported that there will be a trail for the kids coming from the developments south of the site, but kids coming from other directions will need to be bussed or walk along a street sidewalk.

Eric Hirst informed Ron that the GAC has had discussions recently and is concerned about linking trails to sidewalks and providing crosswalks. He asked if there is something more that the GAC and the Bellingham School District could do together to ensure safe walking routes to schools. Ron responded that the School District is very open to more collaborative projects, but they do not have the expertise to take the lead on trails projects; their primary focus is education, but they are willing to collaborate on projects that the City brings to them.

Tom Chisholm stated that he had heard that there will be trails leading to the new elementary school on Yew Street Road. Ron responded that he has not heard this; he expects that kids will have to walk sidewalks or be bussed in until trail routes are built. Leslie reported that there is an annexation proposal in the area of the Yew Street School and staff will recommend that a trail to the school from the Samish Crest Trail be required with development.

Jack Weiss mentioned that another future trail connector of particular interest would be from Northridge Park through the Squalicum High School site to connect to the Dewey Valley and Bay to Baker Trail.

Leslie Bryson stated that the School District has been very receptive on trail collaborations, including moving the fence line near the bus barn to accommodate the Whatcom Creek Trail. Jack Weiss reported that he recently met with Dick McKinley, Bellingham Public Works Director, about the Whatcom Creek Trail west of the bus barn

and Dick said that Public Works does have money to fund this project, and Jack should remind him in January.

Recognition of Jack Weiss for service on GAC: Committee members thanked Jack Weiss for all of his work on the Greenway Advisory Committee throughout the years and expressed anticipation to work with Jack in his new position as a City Councilman.

### **Old Business:**

Chair and Vice Chair for 2008: Eric Hirst reported that Dan Remsen has declined to be Vice Chair due to personal time constraints, but that he would be happy to serve on a sub-committee. Jack Weiss moved to elect John Blethen as the Greenway Advisory Committee Chair and Eric Hirst as the Vice Chair for 2008. Tom Chisholm seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Park Board Liaison: Eric Hirst reported that Edie has volunteered to be the Greenway liaison to the Park Advisory Board. Edie attended the December Park Advisory Board meeting and sent excellent notes from the meeting to GAC members.

Formation of Sub-Committees: Eric Hirst suggested that GAC members form several different sub-committees to help alleviate the workload of the Committee Chair and Vice Chair, and to accomplish tasks outside of the regular monthly meeting time. Suggested committees were:

- Guest Invitations: Inviting officials and other persons of interest to speak at future GAC meetings.
- Public Outreach: Providing signage in particular, as well as other activities to inform the public of recent land acquisitions
- Strategic Planning: Developing priorities for properties, corridors and connections
- Monthly Walks: Jack Kimmes has been doing a great job and has agreed to continue to plan monthly walks.
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Liaison: Edie Norton has agreed to do this.
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan: Edie Norton has already been serving as the Greenway liaison to the PRO Plan update committee.
- Greyway Connectors: Work with the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee on creating greyway connectors to greenway trails

Committee members will consider the options and decide at their January 17 meeting which sub-committee they would like to serve on.

### **Executive Session:**

Executive Session was held from 7:55 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. to discuss potential real property acquisition.

### **January Walk:**

The January walk will be on Saturday, January 5 at 8:30 a.m. Jack Kimmes will email Committee members the time and meeting location.

**Identification of Topics for Next Meeting:**

Kim Brown will attend the January meeting to discuss the process and criteria for recommending needed crosswalks to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee for funding through Public Works. Jack Weiss will also attend to discuss greyway connectors to greenway trails.

John Blethen will invite Dewey Desler, Whatcom County Director of Administrative Services, to the February meeting.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.