

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Present: Ira Hyman, Jim McCabe, Bill Hadley, Jane Blume, Tom Barrett, John Hymas, Mike Anderson, Adrienne Lederer, Harry Allison, Julie Guy

Staff: Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director
Leslie Bryson, Design/Development Manager
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary

Attending: Edie Norton, Greenway Advisory Committee member
Louise Bjornson, City Council
Stan Snapp, City Council
Mark Peterson, Park Advisory Board candidate
Michael Lilliquist, Park Advisory Board candidate
Myron Wlaznak, Park Advisory Board candidate

I. AGENDA REVIEW: Ira Hyman added 2008 Officer Elections under New Business.

II. NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES:

Motion made and carried unanimously to accept the November meeting minutes.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Greenway Committee Update: Leslie Bryson reported that the Greenway Advisory Committee has filled two vacancies; one from Laurel Cook who completed her two consecutive terms and one from Jack Weiss who will be on the City Council come January. Glenn Merrill will fill the vacancy left by Laurel Cook beginning in December and Jim Zander will complete Jack Weiss' term beginning in January 2008.

Edie Norton reported that the Greenway Committee has been primarily working on maps of potential property acquisitions. Leslie reported that Matt Burke, Parks Property Acquisition Specialist, has built a database of all potential property acquisition statistics that can eventually be linked to a GIS mapping system.

B. Selection of Greenway Committee Liaison: Jim McCabe volunteered to be the liaison to the Greenway Advisory Committee, but not in addition to the Big Rock Committee. A new Big Rock Committee liaison will be selected at the January Park Board meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. NRPA Memberships: Paul Leuthold reported that 2008 National Park and Recreation Association membership fees are due. An agency membership can be purchased for \$510.00 that includes 3 professional memberships for himself, Leslie Bryson and Marvin Harris, as well as 10 citizen memberships for the Park Advisory Board members. If Park Advisory Board members do not find the magazine that comes with membership useful, Paul could opt for an individual professional membership for just himself for \$135.00. Park Advisory Board members agreed that they do find the magazine useful and would like to renew the agency membership for 2008.

B. PRO Plan Overview: Leslie Bryson reported that the Request for Qualifications for a firm to do the PRO Plan update resulted in 4 firms that were interviewed. Hough, Beck & Baird (HBB) from Seattle was selected as the top firm. HBB has worked on a number of other plans for Bellingham Parks including Northridge Park, Maritime Heritage Park, and the Old Village Trail renovation. Leslie reported that Park Advisory Board members will make up the main body of the steering committee for the PRO Plan update, along with Edie Norton from the Greenway Committee, Judy Hoover from the Planning Commission, and Sue Taylor, who participated in the last PRO Plan update. Julie Guy is the Park Advisory Board member liaison who participated in the selection of the top firm.

The State of Washington requires a Plan update every 6 years in order to be eligible for grants through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The PRO Plan is also chapter 7 of Bellingham's Comprehensive Plan. Goals of the PRO Plan update include addressing level of service calculation issues in the current Plan, as well as consolidation and simplification of the Plan to make it easier to read and locate particular neighborhood information.

The role of the steering committee is to oversee the update process and make recommendations. The steering committee will have their first meeting in January 2008 and will continue to meet monthly for 5 months. Meeting dates were set for January 16, February 6, March 5, April 2 and May 7. The meetings will be held in the Mayor's Boardroom from 5-7 p.m. The first public meeting will be scheduled for late January or early February.

Leslie reported that part of the Plan update will include a household survey that will be conducted by a subcontractor. Leslie has worked with Applied Northwest Research, a local company, previously and has contacted them about the upcoming survey. She would like to name them as a subcontractor in the contract with HBB

Leslie hopes that the public meetings for the Plan update will be better attended than last time because most neighborhoods are currently working on their neighborhood plan updates. She will attend the MNAC meeting in January to talk about the PRO Plan update.

The updated PRO Plan will likely be presented to City Council as a draft in May 2008 as it is due to the State in June. The PRO Plan will then be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by City Council later in the year as an amendment to the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.

C. 2008 Officer Elections: Ira Hyman stated that he will not be available to serve as the Advisory Board Chair in 2008 as his term will be complete in July. Tom Barrett nominated Jim McCabe to serve as Chair in 2008; Jim was unanimously elected as Chair. Jane Blume volunteered to serve as Vice Chair in 2008; Jane was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

D. Interviews of Park Advisory Board candidates: Interviews of 3 candidates for the 1 vacancy on the Park Advisory Board were conducted in the following order:

- 8:00 am: All candidates present for Board introductions
- 8:10-8:20 am: Mark Peterson
- 8:20-8:30 am: Michael Lilliquist
- 8:30-8:40 am: Myron Wlaznak

Following the interviews and Board discussion, it was decided to recommend Mark Peterson to the Mayor for appointment. It was noted that all 3 candidates were qualified and that Michael and Myron should be notified of the vacancy coming in July when Ira's term is complete and invited to interview again at that time. Advisory Board members asked Parks Staff to compile a list of standard interview questions for future interviews.

V. BOARD REPORTS:

Jim McCabe reported that the Big Rock Committee is looking to fill 2 vacancies. The Committee is primarily working on the upcoming 2008 sculpture show.

Paul Leuthold reported that the replacement of the infield mix and the construction of a storage building at Joe Martin are in their final stages. Leslie Bryson reported that 2 final Civic Field improvement projects are going to bid next year; Joe Martin entryway fencing and new handrails and concrete repair at Civic South grandstand. Leslie also reported that the WHIMPS continue to work on the dirt jump park renovation and some money will be spent on hydro-seeding when they are done. John Hymas inquired about artificial turf for Joe Martin. Paul stated that artificial turf was eliminated from the project due to bids coming in over budget. However, improved drainage and new turf have been installed at Joe Martin and these have made substantial improvements. Paul also reported that Grandslam Management may be selling the Bellingham Bells to the Brett brothers, who own a number of other minor league baseball teams in Washington and Oregon. Grandslam Management needs to sign the lawsuit settlement agreement before the sale is made. The new owners will likely want to re-negotiate their own contract.

Paul also reported that a lease agreement for the Lake Padden Golf Course has been signed, but was not received until the day after the last City Council meeting for 2007. The lease agreement will go to Council for approval at their January 14, 2008 meeting. Until the agreement is approved by Council, the current agreement will be in place.

Leslie Bryson reported that while the North Bellingham Trail Plan is being utilized currently when new projects are reviewed, it needs to be formally adopted as part of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. Leslie is talking with Planning Director, Tim Stewart, about the possibility of getting it formally adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as soon as possible in 2008.

Marvin Harris reported that drainage at Squalicum Creek Park is being monitored and so far the site appears to have no drainage problem. In the spring if drainage continues to look good, the Grateful Dogs Association could look at raising funds for fencing for an off-leash area. There is no money in the budget for fencing in this phase of construction. Bill Hadley asked if Phase I construction is completed. Leslie responded that the contractor was not able to seed the ballfield in October because of the rain and they are currently shut down for the winter. They will complete the project in the spring.

The Trails Sub-Committee does not currently have an active project, though the "Share the Trails" spot is still being shown on BTV10. Jim McCabe will work with the Trails Sub-Committee on a 2008 project.

John Hymas reported that there was no Urban Forestry meeting last month, but John Wesselink did an excellent presentation on his favorite 57 trees in Bellingham. John Hymas also reported that the Happy Valley neighborhood had their annual tree planting party last week. The neighborhood has planted approximately 350 trees since they have started the annual parties. Some of these are replacement trees. John reported that the Heritage Tree Ordinance has been put on hold while they are focusing on enforcing the Urban Forestry Municipal Code.

Julie Guy inquired about the status of the 7-acre county property transfer in North Bellingham near the new Cordata park. Paul responded that the next step is approval from the County's land advisory group that meets quarterly. Mike McFarlane with Whatcom County Parks & Recreation does not expect any issues with approval. Julie also asked about the status of a plan for the Cordata park. Leslie responded that the project is funded in 2008. Gina Gobo will be the project manager. She will begin by putting out a Request for Qualifications for a firm to develop a master plan and she will look for citizens to join a steering committee.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The December 2007 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:05 a.m.

Approved: Ira Hyman, Chair

Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary