

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, February 14, 2007**

**Present:** John Hymas, Tom Barrett, Ira Hyman, Scott Fleenor, Jane Blume, Julie Guy, Jim McCabe, Harry Allison, Mike Anderson, Stan Snapp

**Absent:** All in Attendance. One vacancy.

**Staff:** Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director  
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager  
Jonathan Schilk, Park Architect  
Judy Spear, Board Secretary

**Presenter:** Clare Fogelsong, Environmental Resources Manager

**Attending:** Laurel Cook, Jack Weiss, Greenway Committee  
Sue Taylor, Watershed Committee  
Reporter from the Bellingham Herald

**I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** No Executive Session.

**II. DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES:** A motion was made by Stan Snapp and seconded by Tom Barrett to approve the December 2006 minutes. Motion Carried.

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. Greenway Committee Activity:** Laurel Cook, Greenway Committee Chair, provided a written recap of the January 31, 2007 Public Input Meeting and briefly discussed the three areas of recommendations which were: 1) Philosophical Suggestions. 2) Generic Acquisition Recommendations. 3) Specific Acquisition Recommendations. Laurel also reported that the Greenway Committee will be scheduling a Retreat (to identify goals) later this month and another Public meeting in early March. The Committee is scheduling monthly "walks" for the new greenway members and will advertise the non-executive walks to the public. The Greenway Website is receiving many suggestions.
- B. Squalicum Creek Park:** Jonathan Schilk, Parks Landscape Architect, provided the following information: The bid opening for the Squalicum Creek Park Project is March 5, 2007. It is anticipated that construction will begin in April with the Park being available for public use in Spring of 2008. Phase 1 construction will focus on the 35 acre parcel previously occupied by Pacific Concrete and include construction of one baseball field (it will take approximately 1 year for the ball field turf to mature prior to use), a restroom building with storage space, a lighted 54 car parking lot, bicycle parking, picnic tables and park benches. Phase 1 will also include demolition of up to 4 existing site structures and concrete pavement, site grading and improvement and installation of utility infrastructure. Jonathan also explained that there will be some revisions to the restrooms to fit the budget but they will still evoke the prevailing architecture of the Columbia and Birchwood neighborhoods. As a point of information, the project was delayed one year due to water right issues. The Department had to prove that ground water was used by Pacific Concrete (had to go back to 1930) and that the water was "put to good use". In 1970 there was a change in the water right flow requirement which requires demonstrating "beneficial use". The water use will need to be metered and reports sent to the State. The cost to install pumps is estimated at \$32,000. There is enough water on the site to pump 250 gallons per minute but it is anticipated that only 100 gallons per minute will be needed to meet the irrigation needs of the site.

**B. Squalicum Creek Park: (cont)**

The creek project may be delayed until after the ball fields are built to avoid setback issues. The mound of dirt on the property is to provide fill for the ball field grading. Staff is currently negotiating for the purchase of the railroad spur adjacent to the site.

The Board expressed concern over the high density rezone of Alsop which allows fewer parking spaces and the potential of Alsop patrons using the Squalicum Creek Park for overflow parking. It is hoped that the required setback and the utility area (which cannot be built upon) will create a buffer between the two properties which will discourage this use. Alsop will be making their proposal to City Council on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Marvin Harris mentioned that the parking lot will be signed "no overnight parking" and will be lighted. In response to questions about an off leash dog area in Phase I, Jonathan stated that there are no funds to fence the area nor provide other amenities such as water, but a wood fiber mulch surface can be provided and would be usable. Laurel Cook, Greenway Committee, mentioned that representatives from the dog-off leash group are now saying they do not want fenced off-leash areas.

Paul Leuthold informed the Board that while there is some money for Squalicum Park in the Greenway III levy, the Greenway Committee would rather focus on acquisition rather than development. Phase 2 will include a second ball field, basketball court, picnic areas and playgrounds. When Phase 2 begins will depend entirely on funding. Staff anticipated 3 or 4 phases to complete the Master Plan.

**C. Share the Trails Campaign: The Board needs to meet with staff to coordinate the campaign. Tom and Ira will meet again with the Grateful Dogs, Leslie Bryson will talk to BTV10. Now is the time to identify groups who might wish to become involved in the campaign (WWU, MNAC, High School Senior Projects). Need to design and print a laminated "Share the Trails" informational handout (need to review the wording on #6 regarding who yields to who).**

***At the March meeting, Board members will come prepared to volunteer for whatever phase of the Campaign they are interested in.***

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Bayview Cemetery 2007 Fees and Charges:** Marvin explained to the Board that there is no funding source for Perpetual Care (\$225,000 annually) which currently comes from the General Fund and further reported the City Budget Committee recommended that means be sought to reduce the City subsidy for the Cemetery. To that end, the proposal before the Board will increase fees (8% to 10%). The last fee increase was in 2005. Also, plans are underway to reduce the maintenance required at the Cemetery. The goal is to reduce the City subsidy by \$20,000 to \$30,000. Included in the packet was a Cemetery Price Survey which shows Bayview in the middle for price of services and materials.

**B. Board Vacancy:** Interviews will be scheduled for the March meeting.

**V. PRESENTATION:**

**A. Watershed Protection Program:** Clare Folgelsong, Environmental Resources Manager, distributed a listing of Watershed Property Acquisitions as well as a map of protected watershed properties and Washington State Ownership in the Watershed and provided the following update:

A portion of the City utility bill (\$5/mo) funds the acquisition of the watershed properties. Total acreage acquired to date is 1,243.61 acres. The overseer's for the Watershed program are Clare and Patti Fernandez (purchasing agent) as well as the Watershed Advisory Board (WAB). The WAB has presented their recommendations for use of the property to City Council

5% of the acquired land is within City limits. A wide variety of properties have been acquired including neighborhood type lots, lots in Sudden Valley, wooded and steep sloped properties (particularly sought after to prevent logging and removal of vegetation). Acquisition of lots near preserves (ie: Stimpson property and 3 Creek preserve) are also a high priority. Main focus for future use of the properties is to implement the recommendations of the Watershed Advisory Board rather than recreational park use.

Discussion included: 1) The need to direct social use of the properties to reduce the impact on the vegetation. 2) Recent re-forestation project included the removal of invasive species around Anderson Creek. 3) Ongoing concerns over misuse of the properties including bike jumps and dump sites. 4) P&R Staff worked with Public Works on the job description for a Watershed Land Steward but the plan was not approved by City Council. Council allotted \$60,000 to oversee the property but neither Public Works or Parks have a project manager position. Besides acting as steward for the properties, the position needs to leverage additional funding (ie matching grant funding) to augment the monies coming from utilities. The steward would also need a vehicle. 5) Properties owned by other governmental agencies is protected from development but timber can be sold from the sites 6) A plan is needed for passive recreational trail use, keeping in mind that trail use is contradictory to forest preservation but that environmentally compatible recreation programs can create a natural stewardship of the properties

Questions from the Board: 1) Could Greenway monies be used to purchase watershed properties? Perhaps, but the goals of watershed preservation are very different from greenways park and open space goals. 2) The Board asked if they could make recommendations on the use and stewardship of the Watershed properties and Clare assured them he would take the lead in passing those recommendation along. 3) Could the Parks Department manage the properties which are closer to city limits which are already experiencing high use? 4) The Board would like to be pro-active in identifying properties that Parks could manage and take that proposal and estimated cost to City Council. Part of the proposal would be to double the amount allotted to Public Works from \$60,000 to \$120,000 and allot it to the Parks Department.

**A. Watershed Protection Program (cont)**

5) The Board suggested that a meeting be arranged with Parks and Public Works and representatives from the Parks and Recreation Board and the Watershed Advisory Board to establish a common goal for use of the property and hiring of a steward. 6) How does the recent ruling by the City Attorney that the Watershed Properties could not be used for Parks & Recreation activities effect any proposal for the Parks Department in supervising stewardship of the properties?

**VI. BOARD REPORTS:**

**Big Rock Garden Sculpture:** Jim McCabe submitted the following report: The "Friends Wall" is essentially complete and will be installed shortly. It has morphed from a wall into a metal tree sculpture with the names on the leaves. It was done by committee member/artist Shirley Erickson, Don Anderson and Kirk Swink. The committee is considering selling leaves as a fundraiser. Preparations are continuing for the Mother's Day sculpture show as entries are arriving.

**Squalicum Creek Park:** See Old Business: Squalicum Creek Park

**Trails Sub-Committee:** See Old Business "Share the Trails Campaign".

**Watershed Advisory Board:** See Presentation "Watershed Protection Program"

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT:** No Public Comment.

**VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Paul Leuthold updated the Board as follows: 1) Bids for the Wayfinding signage and skatepark were awarded by City Council. 2) Department received a favorable hearing from the Growth Hearing Board, in the case of a citizen challenging the City Open Space Plan saying the City overstated the amount of park and open space land needed to handle the projected growth in the Urban Growth Area (833 acres). 3) New indoor restroom has been completed at the Maritime Heritage Center. 4) Remodel of Joe Martin Concession is replicating or exceeding the needs expressed by the Bellingham Bells. 5) Fairhaven Park Hostel is in very poor condition (roof leaks causing damage inside) with no parking. Options include re-locating the building or demolition. Demolition should be considered as last resort as the facility has historic architectural significance. This item will be place on the March agenda for Board information and discussion.

**V. ADJOURNMENT:** The February 14<sup>th</sup> 2007 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent.

Approved: Ira Hyman, Chair  
Attest: Judy Spear, Secretary