

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

**Present:** Bill Hadley, Geoff Middaugh, Mike Anderson, Dominique Zervas, Jane Blume, Rosalie Nast, Adrienne Lederer, Julie Guy, Pam Holladay, Bill Langley

**Staff:** Leslie Bryson, Park Design & Development Manager  
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager  
Tim Wahl, Greenway Program Coordinator  
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary

**Attending:** John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee

**I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive Session was held from 7:05 to 7:35 a.m. In open meeting following executive session, Dominique Zervas moved and Jane Blume seconded the motion, to recommend purchase of parcel 269, property located near Bear Creek, in the amount of \$77,000. The motion passed unanimously. Dominique Zervas also moved, and Rosalie Nast seconded the motion, to recommend purchase of parcel 554, located near the Van Wyck Road park site, in the amount of \$253,000. The motion passed unanimously. Dominique Zervas also moved, and Jane Blume seconded the motion, to recommend purchase of a 4.6 acre parcel of property located near Woodstock Farm in the amount of \$500,000, and to approve an adjacent 50-year view easement near Inspiration Point in conjunction with the acquisition. The motion passed unanimously. Mike Anderson also moved, and Rosalie Nast seconded the motion, that staff pursue due diligence on a parcel of property located along Whatcom Creek. The motion passed unanimously.

**II. JANUARY MEETING MINUTES:** Pam Holladay inquired about the last two sentences on page 3 of the January minutes that state, "John Blethen asked if the current discussions include acquisition of the Washington Federal property near Galbraith and Lookout Mountain in addition to Chuckanut Ridge. The Mayor responded that they do not at this time." Pam stated that she would like to see more detail in the minutes about the Mayor's response. John Blethen and Board members who attended the January meeting responded that the minutes are an accurate reflection of what was said. The January minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Greenway Advisory Committee Update:** Pam Holladay reported that the Greenway Advisory Committee changed their meeting time to the first Thursday of the month in order to meet the week before the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board meets so that there would be less lag time for staff to receive board decisions from both committees. Pam also reported that the Greenway Committee held an executive planning session on February 5.

John Blethen reported that Linda Grant is the new Greenway Advisory Committee Chair, and he will serve as the Greenway liaison to the Park Board. John also reported that he is going to meet with Leslie Bryson, along with Linda Grant, Geoff Middaugh and Pam Holladay to review the role of each committee and the acquisition policy in order to clarify roles and processes. Geoff Middaugh stated that this sub-committee will report back to the Park Board after they meet.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. Bayview Cemetery Pricing:** Marvin Harris reported that the Parks Department is requesting that City Council increase some pricing for goods and services at Bayview Cemetery in order to stay current in the competitive market. Marvin also reported that the buy one, get one half price limited time sale on grave sites was so successful last year that they are requesting Council to approve another such sale in 2011. Marvin stated that he anticipates this fee increase proposal will be on the Council agenda sometime in March. Pam Holladay expressed some concerns about the proposed fee increases such as the surcharge for a pre-need weekend service and the weekend overtime charge. Marvin stated that he believes that clients would pay one or the other of these fees and not both, but said that Marcia Wazny could come to a future meeting to clarify this and other fee increase questions. Pam said that she also wondered why the monument fee increases are all the same even though some monuments would seem to be more time intensive than others, and why there is a variance in fees for different urn sites. Marvin responded that the monument fee increases are not the same; they do vary, and that he believes the urn site fees vary depending on placement on the wall. However, Marvin stated that Marcia Wazny would be able to explain the various fee increases in detail at a future meeting if the Board would like. Dominique Zervas stated that she is comfortable deferring to Marcia Wazny's expertise in the market and would vote to approve the proposed rate increase. Rosalie Nast stated that she feels the same and also that it is important for the City's fees to stay in line with the fees of other cemeteries in the area. Mike Anderson moved to approve the proposed fee increase. Dominique Zervas made a friendly amendment to Mike's motion to ask Marcia Wazny to come to a future Park Board meeting to explain Bayview Cemetery's services and fees. Mike Anderson accepted the friendly amendment and the motion was approved unanimously.
- B. Interview of Park Board Candidate:** The Park Board informally interviewed Diane Blake, candidate for vacancy on the Board.
- C. Park Board Candidate Recommendation:** Following the interview and discussion, the Board voted unanimously to recommend Diane Blake to the Mayor for appointment to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.
- D. Community Rowing Proposal:** Bob Diehl introduced himself as a member of the Whatcom Rowing Association, as well as Lindsay Mann-King and Steve Brinn. Bob also introduced Pasha Spencer, the director of the Everett Rowing Association. Pasha Spencer gave a presentation on the sport of rowing and the success of the Everett Rowing Association's programs.

Bob stated that the Whatcom Rowing Association would like to build a rowing program in Bellingham similar to Everett's program and that they would like to be based at Bloedel Donovan Park. Bob stated that Whatcom Rowing Association's program would be self supporting with costs covered by fees paid by participants in the program. They will purchase rowing equipment with donations and they will also be seeking some grant funding from the Northwest Rowing Council. The program will be open to the public with a membership fee, and will serve youth and adults with both recreational and competitive programs. The program will be largely volunteer driven, with one paid staff, Lindsay Mann-King. They will be insured through the U.S. Rowing Association, and they will provide any

other insurance coverage deemed necessary. They plan to widely advertise their program and promote it with the Bellingham School District.

Bob stated that they would like to construct a temporary storage area at Bloedel Donovan Park measuring 20 feet by 80 feet that will consist of racks surrounded by fence, and they would eventually like to construct a permanent building. They are proposing that the 20 ft. by 80 ft. fenced storage area be located in a now vacant open space behind the steam engine. Bob stated that they will work with the Lummi and Nooksack Tribes who also have a canoe storage area at Bloedel Donovan Park to ensure that their practice and program times do not conflict. Bob stated that they would like to have their fenced storage area constructed by the end of April, and that they plan to host a few "Learn to Row Days" in May, with rowing classes starting in June of 2011.

Dominique Zervas asked if this is being proposed as a lease agreement between the Whatcom Rowing Association and the City. Leslie Bryson responded that all of the details have not been worked out yet, but there will be a license of some sort and fees have not yet been discussed. Leslie also stated that a non-motorized boat operation at Bloedel Donovan Park has been in the City's Comprehensive Plan since 2002.

Dominique Zervas excused herself at 8:50 a.m.

Bob Diehl stated that Whatcom County Parks & Recreation has offered them a spot on Lake Samish, but they would prefer to be at Bloedel Donovan Park if a mutually acceptable agreement can be made. Pam Holladay asked if the Planning Department has reviewed and approved of the request to build their structure near the lake. Bob responded that he has met with the Planning Department and there is not a large permitting process for the temporary fenced structure. The temporary structure will not disturb any soil and the surface will be covered in pervious wood chips. The future, permanent structure that they would like to build many years down the road would require extensive permitting. Leslie Bryson stated that Park Staff will review and approve all plans prior to construction of both the temporary and any future structures.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Bill Black introduced himself as a citizen who has lived in the Silver Beach area for 22 years and stated that he brings his dog to Bloedel Donovan Park frequently, particularly over the last 5 years. Mr. Black stated that he is appalled at how the Parks Department maintains the grounds at Bloedel Donovan Park. He stated that he believes that everything is sprayed with Roundup including the sidewalks and the base of the trees. Mr. Black also stated that he is concerned about plans he has heard of that will decrease the flow of water from the lake into Whatcom Creek as he feels that would make Bloedel an even more contaminated place to swim. Mr. Black also stated that he believes that the problem with muddy turf at Bloedel Donovan Park is due to the spraying of pesticides that kills all of the moss, rather than off leash dogs. Mr. Black stated that he would like to see the Parks Department be more environmentally sensitive.

#### **VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED...**

- A. Joe Martin Stadium Improvements:** Dick Henrie, Recreation Manager, reported that the new owner of the Bellingham Bells baseball team inherited a \$35,000 responsibility for

capital improvements to Joe Martin Stadium from the previous owner. The previous owner, Brett Sports & Entertainment, had a \$50,000 commitment for capital improvements in their contract with the City for use of Joe Martin Stadium, of which they completed \$15,000. The new owner, Eddie Poplawski of Bellingham Baseball Club, LLC, assumed the remaining \$35,000 responsibility when he bought the team and would actually like to do more than the contract requires and has proposed approximately \$100,000 worth of improvements.

Dick stated that Eddie Poplawski is proposing three immediate projects that will cost approximately \$35,000, and the remaining improvements that he would like to do are pending extensive Parks Department review and approval. The three immediate projects include seat replacement, the creation of a small paved plaza, and fencing along the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line to make the plaza a safe picnic area during games. Julie Guy asked if any of this is part of a written agreement. Dick responded that the \$35,000 responsibility is in their Facility Use Agreement contract. The specific projects themselves will each be reviewed by Park Staff either in the form of writing or plans and approved prior to construction.

**VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Geoff Middaugh asked how the direction of the Parks Department is going in the absence of a Department Head. Leslie Bryson responded that the three Parks Department Managers; herself, Dick Henrie and Marvin Harris, meet weekly and David Webster attends when he is available. Leslie stated that they have been working together for many years and that they feel that things are going well. Leslie attends the Department Head meetings and Marvin has taken over Paul's role on the Sehome Hill Arboretum Board. All three managers are authorized to sign contracts and all contracts are reviewed by the City's Legal Department. If the managers find themselves in a position where someone needs to make a decision that they do not feel comfortable making, the Mayor's Office is available to do that.

Jane Blume excused herself at 9:05 a.m. John Blethen excused himself at 9:06 a.m.

Geoff Middaugh expressed concern about the Parks Department being run by committee and stated that he would like to see an Interim Director appointed. Leslie Bryson encouraged him to share his concerns with the Mayor's Office. Geoff suggested that a Board discussion be held at the February Park Board meeting about Parks Department leadership and employee morale issues due to the lack of a Parks Director.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:** The February 2011 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:08 a.m.

Approved: Geoff Middaugh, Chair  
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary