

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, January 9, 2008

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

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

Attending: John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee Chair
Edie Norton, Greenway Advisory Committee Liaison
Louise Bjornson, City Council
Stan Snapp, City Council

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Tim Wahl conducted an executive session discussion on a potential property acquisition along Fairhaven Parkway. In open meeting following executive session, Ira Hyman moved to recommend that the Parks Department coordinate with the Public Works Department on the plan for daylighting Padden Creek prior to Park Board recommendation on land acquisition. John Hymas seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

II. DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES:

It was noted that the word "fending" should be corrected to "fencing" on page 3 under the Civic Field improvement projects report. Motion made and carried unanimously to accept the December meeting minutes as amended.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Greenway Committee Update: John Blethen reported that the Greenway Committee elected 2008 officers; John will serve as Chair and Eric Hirst will continue as Vice Chair. John reported that one of his goals as Chair will be maintaining a closer working relationship with the Park Advisory Board. John reported that Greenway Committee members take monthly executive session walks, usually on the first Saturday of the month, to a property under consideration for acquisition. Park Board members will be invited to these monthly walks in the future so that they can view and consider the potential acquisition together.

John also reported that the Greenway Committee will be forming various sub-committees to handle issues such as public outreach and education and liaisons to other communities. Edie Norton will serve as the Greenway Committee Liaison to the Park Board.

Tom Barrett noted that he read in the Greenway Committee minutes that Responsible Development has requested to attend a Greenway executive session to discuss Chuckanut Ridge and asked if a decision has been made as to whether or not this is allowable. Leslie Bryson responded that by definition, executive sessions need to remain closed unless someone is invited for a specific reason. John Blethen stated that he plans for the Greenway Committee to form a sub-committee specifically to consider Chuckanut Ridge and meet with interested citizens, including Responsible Development.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Selection of Big Rock Committee Liaison:** A new liaison to the Big Rock Committee is needed as Jim McCabe has been re-assigned as the Park Board Chair and the Greenway Committee liaison. Jim reported that the Big Rock Committee meets on the 4th Thursday of each month. Issues addressed by the Big Rock Committee include the annual sculpture exhibit and fund raising opportunities. The Committee is currently working on a presentation that will be given to the Park Board on future funding needs. Adrienne Lederer volunteered to be the Big Rock Committee liaison.
- B. Selection of Standard Interview Questions:** Paul Leuthold distributed sample interview questions that were compiled from the interviews of candidates conducted at the December Park Board meeting. Following discussion, the group consensus was to generalize the question, "How do you view the adequacy of the Park system for small children?" by changing it to, "How do you view the adequacy of the Park system for children of various ages?" Two additional questions were added: "Are there any particular user groups that you think are currently under-served by the Park system?" and "Do you have time to serve as a liaison to another board or committee?" Before the next candidate interviews, Park Board members will determine who will ask each question and whether or not the questions will be provided to the candidates in written form before or during their interview.

V. PRESENTATION: Project Status Report

Paul Leuthold gave a Powerpoint presentation that he re-named "2008 Work Plan" because it addressed the "behind the scenes" work of the Parks & Recreation Department that happens in conjunction with the various projects. The presentation highlighted work performed on a daily basis by Park Administration staff, Recreation staff, and Park Maintenance staff, as well as the current and future projects directed by Park Development staff. The presentation highlighted the following statistics and project updates:

- Administration Staff conducted approximately 13,000 registrations for the 352 programs set up in registration software and receipted \$766,000.00 in program registration fees in 2007. Administration Staff also completed approximately 6,000 facility bookings and receipted \$172,000.00 in facility rental fees in 2007.
- There are approximately 2,000 people with disabilities that participate in our Specialized Recreation program offerings each year.
- The Arne Hanna Aquatic Center gets approximately 200,000 visits each year.
- There are approximately 7,000 to 10,000 people who attend the summer concerts each year.
- There are approximately 2,800 participants in youth sports programs each year.
- Park Operations cares for 3,700 street trees in Bellingham.
- The athletic field maintenance crew maintains 10 athletic fields on a daily basis during the spring and summer.
- The Civic Field improvement projects are nearing completion; remaining projects include fencing, concrete and handrail repairs, and if funding allows, the replacement of some grandstand seating.
- A 1000 square foot storage facility has just been completed at Joe Martin Stadium that will house field maintenance equipment.
- The Old Village Trail renovation project has just been completed.

- The restroom at St. Clair Park is being renovated by Park Operations staff as time allows around their daily work schedules.
- Four playgrounds will be replaced in 2008 to accommodate safety and ADA accessibility standards: Carl Lobe, Franklin Park, Cornwall South, Whatcom Falls lower. Maritime Heritage Park will be evaluated for an appropriate relocation site for replacement of the existing playground in a more visible and frequently visited area of the park.
- In conjunction with the playground replacement on the lower side of Whatcom Falls Park, a new ADA accessible restroom will be built.
- A new portion of the Whatcom Creek Trail will be built from Racine to Meador, under I-5.
- Feasibility studies are being conducted on the repair of the eroding shoreline and an improved beach area at Boulevard Park, as well as a future over-water walkway from the north end of Boulevard Park to the waterfront redevelopment area.
- A master plan for the new park site near Cordata in north Bellingham will be developed.
- The Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan will be updated.
- Phase II of the development of Northridge Park will be designed; Phase II includes north and south nodes with parking, amenities and trail connections..
- Phase I of Squalicum Creek Park is nearing completion; Phase I included grading, one ballfield, a parking area, and restroom.
- Arne Hanna Aquatic Center will be improved with installation of ceiling acoustic tiles and enclosure of the patio.
- Negotiations and planning for the New Whatcom Waterfront will continue; Park staff are working to ensure that adequate park and green spaces are allocated for public access.
- Funds budgeted for land acquisition in 2008 are allocated as follows: \$3,300,000 Greenways Levy III, \$400,000 Beyond Greenways, \$1,000,000 Park Impact Fees.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The January 2008 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:10 a.m.

Approved: Jim McCabe, Chair
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary