

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

Present: Bill Hadley, Jane Blume, Tom Barrett, John Hymas, Adrienne Lederer, Julie Guy, Mark Peterson, Mike Anderson

Absent: Jim McCabe, Harry Allison

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

Attending: Edie Norton, Greenway Advisory Committee Liaison
Louise Bjornson, City Council

- I. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive Session was held from 7 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.
- II. **VOTE IN OPEN MEETING FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION:** In open meeting following executive session, Mike Anderson moved, and Adrienne Lederer seconded the motion, to direct Park Staff to move forward with negotiations on a parcel of property at the base of Lookout Mountain.
- III. **JUNE MEETING MINUTES:** Motion made and unanimously approved to accept the June 2008 Park Advisory Board meeting minutes as submitted.
- IV. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - A. **Greenway Committee Update:** Edie Norton reported that Joe Yaver of Responsible Development attended the June Greenway Advisory Committee meeting and requested a meeting with the Chuckanut Ridge Research Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee agreed to a meeting in the near future and they will report back to the Committee as a whole. Edie also reported that the Greenway Committee is in the early planning stages for a picnic in September with the Parks Board and staff, and with Whatcom County Parks & Recreation staff and board. More details will follow. The Greenway Committee is continuing to work on their written strategic plan; they hope to approve it at their August meeting and will then forward it to the Parks Board and City Council. Edie also reported that the July 17 Greenway Advisory Committee meeting is cancelled.
- V. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - A. **Cordata Park Master Plan and Resolution supporting Grant Application:** Leslie Bryson introduced Jonathan Morley and Andy Mitton from the Berger Partnership, the consultant firm hired to develop a master plan for the 20 acre park parcel in Cordata. Leslie reported that regular monthly public meetings have been held since March at Birchwood Church to develop a master plan. Leslie distributed copies of the City policies on adoption of park master plans and on the naming of City parks. Leslie stated that Jonathan Morley and Andy Mitton came to share the proposed master plan with the Parks Board, who then need to schedule a formal neighborhood meeting to review the proposed plan per the policy on adoption of park master plans.

Jonathan Morley and Andy Mitton introduced themselves and proceeded to show a PowerPoint presentation that summarized the public process in the creation of the proposed plan, the park site analysis, three different site plan alternatives, and a refined proposed master plan made up of the neighborhood's favorite components of each of the three alternatives.

Jonathan stated that to date, four public meetings have been held to gather ideas about the park site, refine the preferred park elements, review three conceptual ideas for the layout of the park elements, and to review a refined plan. The next scheduled public meeting is set for July 10, 2008, which could be the formal neighborhood meeting per the policy on adoption of park master plans if the Park Board approves.

Andy Mitton gave a summary of the park site analysis, including location of the park next to a 7 acre parcel currently owned by the County in process of being transferred to the City and bounded by Horton and Aldrich Roads. Andy reported that the east side of the property is primarily wetlands, and the west side of the property closer to Aldrich Road is drier and developable. The limited upland developable areas on the west side direct how and where the park amenities can be situated on the site. Andy showed three different site plan alternatives; one that maintains the most forested area, one with a large open space area, and one with clustered activity amenities. Andy reported that they received positive feedback from the neighborhood about different elements of each of the three alternatives that they drew into their refined plan, including trail circulation through the site with good links to trails coming into the site, and a strategically located restroom/picnic shelter building in the heart of the park near a playground and a skate element that looks out to an open field area. Leslie Bryson stated that the details of the park amenities will be decided during the park's design and development phase; the master plan determines the layout of the amenities.

Julie Guy stated that she was under the impression that in order for this park development to take place, the City needs to do a few things. Leslie Bryson responded that Julie is correct; the area needs to be annexed to the City and Horton Road needs to be built through before park development beyond the building of trails can take place.

Mike Anderson inquired if the funding required to develop the park is in place. Leslie stated that the Berger Partnership will do a cost estimate to determine how much funding is needed, but a good portion of it is in place. Jonathan Morley stated that they expect that the park will be developed in two or three phases. Leslie stated that close to \$1 million in Park Impact Fees has been designated for this park's development, and the City is in the process of applying for a grant for more development funds. Leslie Bryson asked the Park Board to consider a Board Resolution supporting the Cordata Park Grant Application to show support for the project.

John Hymas inquired about the status of the transfer of the 7 acre parcel of County land to the City. Leslie Bryson responded that Julie Guy, Edie Norton, Kenni Merritt, and some others including Dan Taylor from the Whatcom County Parks & Recreation board met with Pete Kremen and Dewey Desler a number of months ago and requested the transfer. Pete Kremen and Dewey Desler agreed to the transfer if the City would take over maintenance of the nearby detention pond. Paul Leuthold met with Dick McKinley, Director of

Bellingham Public Works, who agreed to take over the maintenance. Now the City is awaiting the transfer process to be completed on the County's end.

Tom Barrett asked if there are any other open space parcels nearby that the City might consider acquiring. Leslie responded that there are additional parcels of property nearby that the City may consider and noted that the Bellingham School District has agreed to a trail corridor on their property and Birchwood Presbyterian Church has expressed interest in allowing a trail corridor on their property that could connect the Cordata area park to the Durham property, another recent North end acquisition.

Mike Anderson moved, and Julie Guy seconded the motion, to pass a Resolution supporting the Cordata Park Grant Application. The motion passed unanimously. Julie Guy moved, and Mike Anderson seconded the motion, to set the required public meeting for the Codata area park master plan approval for July 10, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. PRESENTATION:

A. Boulevard Park Shoreline & Over Water Walkway update: Leslie Bryson reported that on June 26, 2008, a public meeting was held for the public to view plans and ask questions about the proposed Boulevard Park shoreline improvements and a new over water walkway. Leslie stated that there are four parts to this project: 1) Repair shoreline erosion due to storm damage and provide some pocket beaches; 2) Repair the narrow, uneven trestle just south of Woods Coffee; 3) New over water walkway connecting the foot of Cornwall Avenue to the north end of Boulevard Park; and 4) Clean up of a contaminated substance found at the north end of Boulevard Park. Leslie stated that the City hired Reid Middleton Inc. as the consulting firm for this project and showed the PowerPoint presentation put together by Reid Middleton for the June 26 public meeting.

Leslie stated that this project has been in discussion for quite some time; it was in the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan in 2002 and in the Waterfront Futures Group Plan in 2004, as well as the 2007 Shoreline Master Plan, the 2007 Greenways Levy III, and in the latest 2008 update of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. Funding for this project is allocated as follows: \$1.5 million for heritage park improvements from Greenways Levy III, \$4 million for a waterfront redevelopment trail from Greenways Levy III, \$1.6 million from a 2005 Federal Enhancement Grant, \$150,000 in Real Estate Excise Tax, and a Department of Ecology Remediation Grant matching contamination clean-up funds. The proposed schedule for the project is to complete feasibility studies in 2008, improvements to Pattle Point trestle in 2009, shoreline improvements in 2010, complete permitting for over water walkway in 2011, and contamination cleanup in 2012.

Leslie reported that a number of site background studies are necessary before the project can proceed, including a shoreline assessment, Pattle Point condition assessment, cultural resources assessment, focused environmental site assessment and geotechnical study, remedial investigation and feasibility study, and an eelgrass study. Eelgrass is present in the proposed new over water walkway area and in the Pattle Point area. Eelgrass is a very important aquatic habitat for a range of aquatic species including salmon. The study provides a basis for avoiding and minimizing damage to the eelgrass.

The Boulevard Park shoreline improvements will enhance public access to the water by creating gradual sloped pocket beach areas, similar to what was done at Marine Park. This will involve removal of concrete and rock rubble and minor trail relocation. The Pattle Point trestle renovation will improve the uneven walking surface and make it ADA accessible. The superstructure will need to be replaced, but the piling and pile caps can be reused. The plan is to increase the width to 12 feet and add some bench areas, similar to those on Taylor Dock.

Leslie showed two layout options for the proposed over water walkway that will connect the north end of Boulevard Park to the foot of Cornwall Avenue; an arc style and an "s" curve style. Leslie reported that public feedback at the June 26 meeting favored an "s" curve style, but a little less pronounced. Some citizens at the public meeting were concerned that the new over water walkway would eliminate an area where they currently anchor their boats, but the Department of Natural Resources have responded that it is illegal to anchor boats in that area for more than a few days anyway. The proposed walkway is planned to be 14 feet wide with bench areas, a handrail and low level security lighting. The decking could be a combination of grating and solid concrete surfacing to allow some light to filter through the grated areas to reach the sea bed below.

Leslie stated that the typical land use and shoreline permitting process is quite involved and requires multi-agency relationships, including the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Department of Ecology, the Port of Bellingham, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The permitting process is expected to take at least 3 years, which is why the City is starting on this project early. Mark Peterson asked what the overall cost estimate for this project is. Leslie Bryson responded that Reid Middleton will complete a cost estimate, but she expects it to be approximately \$6 million. This project will require quite a bit less clean up than the Taylor Dock project, but this over water walkway is longer than Taylor Dock and construction costs have increased.

Eddie Norton asked if this project is expected to have much of an impact on waterfront development. Paul Leuthold responded that he expects that this project will have a major impact on waterfront development as it will connect the waterfront to Fairhaven. Paul stated that State lobbyists are very interested and supportive of this project; completing all of the studies and coming up with a conceptual design makes it easier to apply for and receive additional grant funding for the project. Eddie stated that she views this trail as a vital link to the waterfront for citizens of Bellingham who are not going to be living and working there. Paul agreed; citizens have repeatedly asked for more access to the waterfront and this trail will provide major public access.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Paul Leuthold reported that the City received 3 responses to the Request for Proposals for the Fairhaven Park Rose Garden House; 1 proposal to renovate the house and keep it on site; 2 proposals to remove the house from the site. Paul stated that the next step is to create a scoring sheet for the rating of the proposals. Paul asked the Board for direction on scoring priorities; should keeping the house on site be a higher priority than moving it, or vice versa? Marvin Harris asked the Board to also consider whether or not they want to revise the park master plan for the area, as the proposal to keep the house on site would require a revision of the park master plan. Paul stated that the process to revise the

park master plan is not real difficult; it follows the same City policy that the Board received in reference to adopting the Cordata area park master plan.

The general consensus of the Board following discussion is that they would like to see the house kept on site as long as it is properly renovated and maintained. They do not want to see funding fall through and the house remain on the property in its dilapidated condition.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENT: Bill Hadley passed out invitations to the Arts Commission show entitled, "VELoCITY", an outdoor show with an opening reception on Wednesday, July 30, at 5:30 p.m. at Mindport Exhibits, 210 West Holly Street.

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

Approved: Jane Blume, Vice Chair
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary