

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Present: Bill Hadley, Jane Blume, Jim McCabe, Mike Anderson, John Hymas, Adrienne Lederer, Tom Barrett, Stan Snapp

Absent: Julie Guy, Harry Allison, Ira Hyman

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

Presenter: Steve Paus, Joan Tezak; Woodstock Farm Conservancy
Mark Peterson, Mike Metzger; Dirt Jump Park request

Attending: Louise Bjornson, City Council Member
Freeman Anthony, Bellingham Public Works Project Engineer

Agenda

Review: Executive Session and Minute Review were moved after the presentations.

I. **PRESENTATION:** Joan Tezak and Steve Paus introduced themselves as members of a board they have formed called "The Woodstock Farm Conservancy". The Conservancy presently consists of five board members: Steve Paus (President), Joan Tezak, Paul Barkley, Earl Cilley and Sue Ellen Heflin. The Conservancy has been meeting for approximately 1 year. Their Mission Statement was formulated in response to Councilman Deger's comments upon purchasing Woodstock Farm that citizen involvement will be necessary to work with the City to restore and program the Woodstock Farm site. The Woodstock Farm Conservancy mission states,

"The Woodstock Farm Conservancy seeks to: Protect and recall the heritage and character of Woodstock Farm and Inspiration Point. Foster compatible community use of Woodstock, through environmentally sustainable activities. Promote community awareness, support and stewardship of the Farm and its related sites and landscapes."

The Conservancy has filed for Washington State non-profit status, as well as Federal non-profit 501(c) 3 public charity status. The 501 (c) 3 status will be necessary for donors to receive a tax write-off for monetary donations.

Steve Paus is also the founder of the Home Port Learning Center, a private non-profit experiential alternative school. Approximately 1 year ago Steve wrote a proposal for what Home Port can do for Woodstock Farm. They have worked with Park staff to build six gates and relocate the sheep to a lower pasture, clearing the old tennis court to be a premier gathering spot on the Farm site. They are currently building a new sheep shed and hope to build a bridge across the creek on the site in cooperation with Park Operations staff. Steve said that the goal of the Home Port Learning Center's projects, and the goal of the Woodstock Farm Conservancy is to help take some of the weight of restoring and programming the site off the shoulders of the Parks Department, while working in cooperation and compliance with the wishes of the Parks Department.

Joan Tezak stated that the Conservancy will be co-hosting a design charette at the Woodstock site in the fall. The charette will consist of professionals touring the site to recommend various potential site uses and re-design projects to accommodate the potential use.

Park Board members expressed a concern that while the site is now open for public access, they have felt as though they are intruding on private property when they have visited the site because of the buildings being rented to tenants and the lack of vehicular access to the site. Leslie Bryson stated that the Parks Department has received a \$500,000 transportation enhancement grant which along with the \$600,000 acquisition reimbursement grant will be used to help improve public access to the Woodstock Farm site and Inspiration Point. This grant may be used for improved trails, signage and parking on the site.

The Conservancy is not an official Mayor's Board; they govern themselves. However, they work in cooperation with the Parks & Recreation Department and all work projects at the site are pre-approved by the Parks Department.

The Conservancy meets monthly and Joan Tezak emails interested parties the meeting schedule. The meetings have been held at a variety of locations, but the plan is to begin holding them at the Woodstock Farm site. Park Board members were invited to attend the meetings; Adrienne Lederer volunteered to be the liaison from the Park Board to the Woodstock Farm Conservancy.

- II. NEW BUSINESS:** Mark Peterson introduced himself as the President of the WHIMPS Mountain Bike Coalition, the National Advocacy Director for Kona Mountain Bikes, and a former Park Board member. Mike Metzger works for the Transition Bike Company and is a professional competitive mountain biker. The Dirt Bike Jump Park, located next to the Skate Park on Puget Street near Civic Field, was constructed 5 years ago with donations of materials, money, labor and volunteer hours. When initially constructed, fill dirt was donated and used that contained a large amount of rocks. The rocky fill dirt was used and covered with a veneer of higher quality dirt. However, over time, the good dirt has shifted and eroded and large rocks are finding their way to the surface of the dirt jump track, making it dangerous for beginner bikers. Mark Peterson and Mike Metzger have met with Marvin Harris and Leslie Bryson, as well as Freeman Anthony, to plan a site re-design to make the park safer and more useable for all biking ability levels.

The site re-design plan includes re-grading the site to slope to the north east so that rain water will continue to channel to bio-swale placed there. A more advanced track will be constructed on the east side of the park. Currently, the advanced track is on the west side of the site next to Puget Street and the larger jumps block the view of the beginner track from Puget Street. An intermediate track will run through the middle of the site and a beginner track will be placed closest to Puget Street to avoid cross traffic with the advanced track and to be in clear sight of parents watching from Puget Street. High quality dirt will be donated by RAM Construction along with the equipment to perform the heavy labor. Approximately \$2000 is needed to pay the trucking fees for the transfer of the dirt to the Dirt Bike Jump Park site. The dirt is coming from a construction site in Ferndale. It would cost approximately \$4000 to purchase dirt rather than pay the trucking fees to transfer the donated dirt.

The Dirt Bike Jump Park is maintained by volunteers who re-shape the jumps, weed eat, and clean out the bio-swale periodically. Leslie Bryson reported that to date, no City funds have been used in the construction of the Dirt Bike Jump Park site, with the exception of staff time and permit fees. She recommended allocating \$10,000 to the project to make sure that it gets completed to a quality standard. The \$10,000 would come from money that was budgeted for the Civic Field improvements that came in under budget. Once Park Board approval is obtained, the request for

the \$10,000 will go to City Council for approval and the site re-design plan will go through the public process before being built.

Stan Snapp moved to recommend the allocation of up to \$10,000 to renovate the Dirt Bike Jump Park. Jane Blume seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Closed Session from 8:10-8:20 a.m.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTION: In open meeting following the Executive Session, Adrienne Lederer moved, and Mike Anderson seconded the motion, to recommend to City Council the funding recommended by Park Staff (part coming from Real Estate Excise Tax and part coming from Greenways Levy III) to acquire a parcel of land in Cordata. The motion carried unanimously.

V. APRIL & MAY MEETING MINUTES: Jane Blume moved, and Mike Anderson seconded the motion, to approve both the April & May meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Greenway Committee Update: Leslie Bryson reported that the Greenway Committee approved the same executive session motion just approved by the Park Board at their May meeting. Greenway Committee members are taking monthly hikes to potential properties for purchase and Park Board members are invited to attend. The Greenway Committee invited Dick McKinley, the Public Works Director, to their April meeting and Tim Stewart, the Planning Director will be attending their June meeting. The Committee is exploring how the Greenway Program works in cooperation with Public Works and Planning to create parks and green spaces in the community.

VII. BOARD REPORTS:

Big Rock Garden: Jim McCabe reported that the Annual Mother's Day Sculpture Exhibit was a success and many citizens attended. The sculpture entitled "Family Portrait" won the jury's choice award and "Reclining Nude" won the people's choice award. A new sculpture called "Friends Grove" has been installed and serves as a central location for plaques and memorials in Big Rock garden. Selling engraved leaves on the "Friends Grove" tree may be a future fund raiser.

Civic Field: All items identified for funding in the Civic Field renovation have been awarded to contractors. The Skate Park renovation came in over budget, but the rest of the project came in under budget. Track resurfacing will take place during the month of July, during which Civic Field will be closed to the public. A storage building at Joe Martin will be constructed after the Bells baseball season. Park Operations has completed construction of new concession stands at Joe Martin. The Parks Department's Civic Field crew has taken over turf maintenance at Joe Martin and play-ability and turf quality has improved under their care. The Parks Board extended thanks to the Park Operations and Civic Field crews who took on extra duties to complete the Civic renovation on top of their routine maintenance duties.

Lake Padden Golf Course: Marvin Harris reported that Park staff is in the process of developing a Request for Proposal for one organization to run Lake Padden Golf Course

management and greens maintenance. The RFP will be presented to the Park Board for review possibly in July 2007.

North Bellingham Trails: A trail plan has been developed but not yet finalized. The plan will go back to City Council for approval and will become part of the updated Park & Recreation Open Space Plan. A large amount of effort was put into the plan on behalf of the neighbors and the plan has received attention from local media, which makes for increased awareness and local developers are also looking at the plan.

Trails Subcommittee: BTV10 aired a segment on the newly adopted Share the Trails guidelines and they are ready to be distributed to all trail user groups. Park Board members will be emailed the final list of guidelines to share with their particular interest groups.

Urban Forestry: John Hymas reported that October is Urban Forestry Month. In preparation of Urban Forestry Month, an Arbor Day celebration will be held at Elizabeth Park on September 29 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The celebration will consist of tree tours, a climbing demonstration by the Park Arborist, and a presentation by the Mayor. A Heritage Tree bike tour is also being planned to depart and return to Elizabeth Park during the celebration.

Watershed Advisory Board: Leslie Bryson reported that a parcel of watershed property near Big Rock Garden is under review by the neighborhood as part of their Neighborhood Plan update. Public use of the property for social trails and bike trails is taking its toll on the trees and wetlands and the neighborhood would like to see formal trails built and social trails shut off to preserve the forest and wetlands on the property. Bill Hadley volunteered to be the Park Board liaison to the Watershed Advisory Board.

- VIII. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** No Public Comment.
- IX. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Paul Leuthold reported that 2008 City Department budgets are being planned and must be submitted by June 22.
- X. **ADJOURNMENT:** The June 13, 2007 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:00 a.m.

Approved: Jim McCabe, Chair of June 13 meeting
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary