

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, March 10, 2010**

**Present:** Adrienne Lederer, Jim McCabe, Bill Hadley, Julie Guy,  
Mark Peterson, Geoff Middaugh, Pam Holladay, Jane Blume

**Excused:** Dominique Zervas, Mike Anderson

**Staff:** Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director  
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager  
Leslie Bryson, Parks Design & Development Manager  
Tim Wahl, Greenway Program Coordinator  
Katie Franks, Community Development Specialist  
Liz Haveman, Recording Secretary

**I. JANUARY MEETING MINUTES:** Motion made and approved to accept the January 2010 meeting minutes as written.

**II. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Greenway Advisory Committee Update:** Jim McCabe reported that two new candidates have been recommended to the Mayor for appointment to the Greenway Committee. Leslie Bryson reported that both Damon Gray and Dan Remsen resigned due to time constraints and Alex McLean and Charles Matthews have been approved by the Mayor. Their appointment will go to City Council on March 15. Leslie Bryson also reported that the Greenway Committee voted to approve amendments to the north Bellingham portion of the Greenway Strategic Plan.

**B. Fountain Plaza Update:** Leslie Bryson distributed copies of the master plan for the Fountain Plaza renovations that the Park Board approved in 2008. Leslie noted that the Park Board's approval of the master plan did not include the possible closure of Monroe Street. Leslie stated that the master plan was put together after the ReStore received a grant to host public meetings to come up with a neighborhood accepted plan to renovate the Fountain Plaza. Park Board members also received information in their packet with conceptual illustrations showing the proposed renovation plan keeping Monroe Street open and the option for a temporary Monroe Street "festival" closure. Leslie reported that the goals of the Fountain Plaza renovations are to improve the function of the place to provide outdoor dining opportunities and a community gathering space. Katie Franks reported that last September, the neighborhood hosted a place making event with support from Community Development that included live music, food and a harvest exchange. The purpose of the event was to increase public awareness in order to fundraise for the renovation project. Katie reported that Community Development is applying for a grant that would help fund more design work for the Plaza renovation because the Parks Department does not have money budgeted for this project. Leslie Bryson asked Katie if the ReStore is still actively involved in fundraising for the project. Katie responded that her contact at the ReStore has stepped back a little due to constraints on his time, but that he is still very interested in networking and helping as he can.

Pam Holladay stated that she understands that the Fountain Plaza has rich historical significance and asked if the renovation of the site will take that into effect. Leslie Bryson

responded that the original deed to the City stipulated that the site must have always water available for “man and beast,” so a fountain will remain on site. Leslie also stated that Meridian Street used to be a plank road and the master plan includes stamped concrete to look like plank road. Leslie stated that many of the design details will be worked out once funding is in place to do the construction; often ideas change by the time funding is available. Katie stated that more information about the Fountain Plaza renovation project is available on the City’s website, including background historical information.

Mark Peterson inquired if any concerns about parking have been expressed by neighbors or businesses if Monroe Street were closed. Jane Blume stated that she lives in this neighborhood and many of her neighbors do not have garages and rely on street parking. Katie stated that a parking survey was done as part of the planning process and the results are available on the website. The need for additional parking for nearby restaurants and the ReStore has been expressed. Katie suggested that over time, after the Fountain Plaza is renovated to be a more attractive, useable space and with an improved street crossing, people may be more willing to walk and neighboring businesses may eventually see a future Monroe Street closure as an asset if the Plaza attracts more people to the area. Katie stated that the main concern is creating the best possible plan for the area and that she is very interested in receiving comments and feedback on the proposed renovation plan. She encouraged Park Board members to email her at [kfranks@cob.org](mailto:kfranks@cob.org) or call her at (360) 778-8388.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Greenway Strategic Plan Updates & Amendments:** Leslie Bryson reported that when the Greenway Levy III was passed, there was not specific ballot language for linkages to be acquired apart from money designated to large areas, such as North Bellingham and South Bellingham. In order to determine specific priorities for land acquisition, the Greenway Committee and staff held a number of public input meetings and did an online survey. They incorporated the input they received into the Greenway Strategic Plan. City Council approved the North and Whatcom Creek portions of the Greenway Strategic Plan and tabled the South portion. Once the North portion of the Plan was approved, staff went to work acquiring properties as opportunities arose. Tim Wahl explained that the table distributed in the Park Board meeting packet shows where money in North Bellingham was originally allocated in the Greenway Strategic Plan, and how staff and the GAC recommend reallocating the remaining funds to reconcile purchases made and current opportunities and priorities. Tim Wahl stated that during creation of the Strategic Plan, the three 40-acre parcels owned by the Department of Natural Resources appeared to be a priority for acquisition. Upon further research, it has been discovered that these properties are primarily critical areas with steep slopes, wetland and wetland buffers having limited development potential. Tim also stated that the major properties of interest in the Bay to Baker railroad corridor are appraising lower than anticipated and we have adequate funds remaining for the rest of the corridor. Therefore, staff is recommending that money allocated to purchase the DNR 40’s and a portion of the money allocated for the Bay to Baker Trail corridor be re-allocated to the Cordata and the King and Queen Mountain areas. Tim reminded the Park Board that they, the GAC and City Council approved overspending in the easterly King and Queen Mountain area when they voted to acquire the property on VanWyck Road. This reallocation will cover the overspending.

Pam Holladay excused herself at 7:55 a.m.

Geoff Middaugh asked about the money allocated for Cornwall Park expansion. Tim Wahl mentioned that the land owner has dedicated an easement to the Whatcom County Land Trust that preserves the property for urban agricultural use including trails and is not in current danger of being purchased by someone else because of the development restrictions on the site. Tim responded that eventually the Parks Department may want to own the property so he is not recommending reallocation of these funds at this time. Parks also owns a 4 acre parcel to the east of the proposed expansion property.

Jane Blume moved to approve the staff recommended North side reallocations. Jim McCabe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. BOARD REPORTS:

- A. **Arts Commission:** Dominique Zervas prepared a written report on the activities of the Arts Commission that was distributed in the meeting packet. Adrienne Lederer reported that the "Lipchitziana" sculpture by Sebastian will be moved back to Big Rock Garden permanently and not be displayed downtown with the other Sebastian pieces currently on display through October 2010. Leslie Bryson reported that Park Board members will likely hear a presentation on the proposed donation of a bronze bell for Maritime Heritage Park at their April meeting.
- B. **Big Rock:** Adrienne Lederer reported that the Big Rock Committee is working on their Mother's Day sculpture exhibit opening. The event will be scaled back this year due to lack of funding, however, Committee members are baking cookies and a shuttle will run between Bloedel Donovan Park and Big Rock. The Arts Commission granted the Big Rock Committee some money to pay artist stipends. Adrienne also reported that some students from the WWU graphic design program are creating a new sign for Big Rock Garden.
- C. **Boulevard Over Water Walkway:** Geoff Middaugh reported that he met with Gina Austin to get a project update. Geoff stated that the Pattle Point Trestle will be closed for construction this summer and that signs are currently up at the park to warn trail users. Geoff stated that he shared this information at his neighborhood meeting and is concerned about how to effectively communicate this planned trail closure for public awareness. Jim McCabe suggested that some communication be done at the monthly MNAC meeting to help spread the word. Jane Blume asked when construction will begin on the new over water walkway. Leslie Bryson responded that it was originally planned for 2011, but may not start until 2012. Leslie stated that currently, the project funding is short \$2 million and the project is in the permitting stage and things may be changed during permit review. For example, the Department of Fish & Wildlife is asking that the new over water walkway alignment be pushed out to protect eel grass. Leslie also stated that the contamination on the North end of Boulevard Park should be addressed before the new walkway is constructed.
- D. **Cordata Park:** Julie Guy reported that construction of a trail in Cordata Park is scheduled to begin in May and the bid was awarded to Razz Construction. Julie stated that the bid came in lower than expected and asked Leslie Bryson what would happen with the rest of the money budgeted for the project. Julie asked if it could be used for a trail connection to Birchwood Church as the church is constructing a playground that will be open to the

public. Leslie Bryson responded that this trail connection has not yet been designed and is not currently on their 2010 work plan. There are wetlands and mitigation to be taken care of.

- C. Lake Padden Golfers:** Marvin Harris reported that the Golf Committee only meets once per quarter now that the course is being leased. Marvin stated that the condition of the course under the leaseholder has received many compliments and that due to the fair weather, the leaseholder is looking at a banner year so far.
- D. Northridge Park:** Paul Leuthold reported that he has received much positive feedback about the new trails in Northridge Park and stated that there are incredible views of the bay during this time of year when the foliage is off the trees.
- E. Woodstock Farm:** Adrienne Lederer reported that the Woodstock Farm Conservancy is planning for an art show at the farm in September. Paul Leuthold stated that the construction at Woodstock may not be complete by then. Paul reported that all of the caretaker leases expire on March 31, 2010. Paul stated that when construction is complete, he would like to find one caretaker to live in the Cook's House and that he will be doing a Request for Proposals for the rest of the site.
- F. Watershed Advisory Board:** Bill Hadley reported that the Watershed Advisory Board is looking at acquiring properties, but this is all done in executive session and there is nothing to report publicly at this point.
- V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Paul Leuthold reported that he will be attending a meeting tonight of the City's newly formed Capital Projects Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to look at all of the capital projects for the City and come up with an overall prioritized plan for funding them. Paul stated that he will be giving a presentation at the meeting on how the Parks Department approaches capital projects, particularly how we get public input and prioritize our own projects.
- VI. ADJOURNMENT:** The March 2010 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 8:35 a.m.

Approved: Mark Peterson, Chair  
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary