

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, March 9, 2011

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

Staff: Leslie Bryson, Park Design & Development Manager
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager
Tim Wahl, Greenway Program Coordinator
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary
Jonathan Schilk, Park Landscape Architect
Rae Edwards, Park Volunteer Program Coordinator

Attending: Mayor Dan Pike
John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Executive Session was held from 7:00 a.m. to 8:12 a.m. Liz Haveman arrived at 7:05 a.m. Jonathan Schilk arrived at 7:30 a.m. Dominique Zervas excused herself at 8:05 a.m.

II. FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES: The February minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

III. NEW BUSINES:

A. Maritime Heritage Park Master Plan Amendment: Jonathan Schilk reported that the old playground equipment located near the fish hatchery building in Maritime Heritage Park was removed in 2010 because it did not comply with safety standards. There are life threatening hazards with the equipment itself and the placement of the equipment did not allow for any clear lines of sight to deter crime. After the play equipment was removed, the area was graded and planted with grass. Jonathan reported that a committee was formed and two public meetings were held to determine whether or not a new playground in Maritime Heritage Park was desired, and if so, where in the park it should be situated.

Rae Edwards arrived at 8:20 a.m.

Jonathan stated that the committee reviewed three different locations for a possible new playground site and determined that the best location would be an open grass area situated between the Amphitheatre and the Boss Tweed Restaurant property. This site would leave the large open grass area on the other side of the Amphitheatre available as a gathering space for large groups, and would still have clear lines of sight from all directions, which is very desirable to the Bellingham Police Department. Jonathan reported that Maritime Heritage Park is located in an underserved area and explained that a new playground might encourage more people to live in the area, might impede less desirable activity in the park, and could increase use of the park.

George Drake arrived at 8:25 a.m.

Jonathan stated that to be compatible with this site, the playground design would need to be relatively linear, compact and cost efficient with equipment for 2 to 5 year olds and school age children. Jonathan said that because the playground will be constructed on landfill, the equipment will need to be anchored in a concrete pad topped with rubber in order to protect the cap of the landfill. This will slightly increase construction cost. Jonathan showed a conceptual drawing with an adjacent picnic table that could help impede children from running from the playground to the street. Leslie Bryson explained that the design for the specific playground equipment has not yet been done and currently, no funding has been identified to build a new playground. However, staff would like the Board to vote to approve the amended Maritime Heritage Park Master Plan so that if the economy turns around and funding becomes available, the park Master Plan allows for the construction of a new playground.

Jane Blume moved to approve the amendment of the Maritime Heritage Park Master Plan to include a playground at the indicated location. Julie Guy seconded the motion. Rosalie Nast asked if there are any other parks planned in the area, including the waterfront, that would also have a playground to serve this neighborhood. Leslie Bryson responded that there are other parks planned in the future along the waterfront, but master plans for those parks have not been completed and they may not necessarily have playgrounds. Leslie stated that with main arterials such as Holly and Roeder streets separating Maritime Heritage Park and any future waterfront parks, it would be appropriate to have playgrounds in both locations.

The motion passed unanimously.

- B. Board Liaison Roles:** Geoff Middaugh requested that Leslie Bryson and Liz Haveman create a list of current liaison roles to be emailed to Board members along with a brief statement of what the responsibility of the liaison is. Geoff suggested that the Board have an email dialogue to determine what liaison positions are needed and what information the liaison is expected to report back to the Board as a whole. Pam Holladay suggested that if the liaison role is to another committee that has a regular meeting, the meeting schedule and contact person for that committee be included in the list. Leslie Bryson explained that many of the liaison roles grew out of personal interest of past Board members, and that the liaison positions have changed as various projects have changed. For example, during a new construction project, staff will ask for a Board liaison for that project. Once the project is complete, the liaison role goes away. Leslie Bryson said that in addition to circulating a list with the liaison roles and responsibilities, staff will work on compiling the various City policies that impact the Park Board. For example, the Arts Commission acquisition policy names Park Board responsibilities. It would be helpful, particularly for new Park Board members, to have a copy of these policies to explain their role in the decision making process.

Jane Blume excused herself at 8:40 a.m.

- C. Big Rock Sculpture Donation:** Marvin Harris introduced George Drake and explained that the process for accepting a donated sculpture for Big Rock includes approval from the Big Rock Committee, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and the Arts Commission. George Drake stated that while he appreciates the long term planning that the various City

boards and commissions are undertaking, spontaneous opportunities cannot be ignored, such as the opportunity for the City to acquire “*Nootka*”, a 7 foot tall sculpture in blue/green marble weighing 5 tons crafted by David Marshall. George reported that David Marshall was an internationally known Canadian sculptor who created four massive stone sculptures, one of which is located in Van Dusen Botanical Garden in B.C., one is located in Sweden, and one is located in Croatia. The fourth sculpture is currently located in Marshall’s garage. George reported that David Marshall passed away last year and that they were close personal friends. George recently met with David Marshall’s wife, Carel, who offered to give “*Nootka*” to the City of Bellingham for placement in Big Rock Garden.

George stated that he offered to pay all of the costs for transportation and installation, which he estimates will be around \$3000. George stated that this will not cost the City of Bellingham anything; he will raise the funds or pay them out of his own pocket. George said that because Carel Marshall’s health is failing, he would like to see it transported to Bellingham within the next month. Because of the City’s approval process, George is going to ask Carel to donate “*Nootka*” to Allied Arts for placement in Big Rock Garden. That way the piece can be moved to Bellingham and temporarily stored until it is approved by the Arts Commission and the Big Rock Garden Committee. George stated that he is on the agenda for the next Arts Commission and Big Rock Garden Committee meetings. Marvin Harris reported that there were 2 Big Rock Committee members in the office when George initially called and sent images of the sculpture, and they seemed very agreeable to the donation. George stated that if the City does not approve the donation, he would have no problem getting it installed in Seattle or Van Dusen.

Bill Langley asked what risk or liability there would be for the City in accepting this donation. Marvin Harris responded that he believes the piece to be very vandal proof because of its size and weight, but he knows that the Arts Commission is concerned about the maintenance obligation for the entire collection. Marvin also stated that the Arts Commission and Big Rock Committees would review the installation plan to ensure that it is structurally sound prior to approval. Leslie Bryson stated that the Arts Commission also likes to have a deaccession agreement prior to accepting artwork.

Mike Anderson moved to support the acquisition of “*Nootka*” with the caveat that the Big Rock Garden Committee also supports it. Rosalie Nast seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: The March 2011 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:05 a.m.

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