

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Present: Bill Hadley, Julie Guy, Ira Hyman, Jane Blume, Jim McCabe, Mike Anderson, John Hymas, Adrienne Lederer

Absent: Harry Allison, Tom Barrett, Stan Snapp

Staff: Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager
Tim Wahl, Greenway Program Coordinator
Jonathan Schilk, Park Landscape Architect
Dick Henrie, Recreation Manager
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary

Presenter: Samantha Desoer, Chuck Nafzinger, Karen McMains; Project Labyrinth

Attending: Laurel Cook, Greenway Advisory Committee Chair
Louise Bjornson, City Council Member
Jack Weiss, Greenway Advisory Committee Member

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Closed Session from 7:00-7:20 a.m.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTION: In open meeting following the Executive Session, Julie Guy moved, and Jim McCabe seconded the motion, to recommend to City Council the purchase of a parcel of property along Padden Gorge at the price of \$135,000.00 funded with proceeds from the Greenway III Levy as a new Southside Property Acquisition line item. The motion carried unanimously.

III. MARCH AND APRIL MEETING MINUTES: Mike Anderson moved, and Jane Blume seconded the motion, to approve both the March and April meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Greenway Committee Update: Laurel Cook shared the adopted acquisition guidelines that the Greenway Advisory Committee will use to evaluate all potential property purchases to ensure a consistent decision making process. The acquisition guidelines will be included in the GAC's year-end report to City Council. Laurel also reported that a new GAC member, Dan Remsen, was appointed by City Council to finish the remainder of John Wilson's term, who had to step down due to personal time constraints.

B. North Bellingham Park/Open Space Update: Julie Guy reported that Mayor Tim Douglas announced at the Guide Meridian Neighborhood Association meeting on May 8 that the City has acquired a 20 acre lot from Trillium on Aldrich Road for a new park. Paul Leuthold clarified that the purchase has not been finalized yet, but the process is close to completion. The purchase price is \$1 million and will be funded with Real Estate Excise Tax dollars. Once the sale is official, a steering committee will be formed to start a master plan for the site. Trillium has offered to do the initial clearing of the property in accordance with park plans for a fee.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Old Village Trail: Jonathan Schilk, Park Landscape Architect, reported on plans for a project to renovate the existing Old Village Trail link between Broadway Avenue and Maritime

Heritage Park. Once approved by Council, the project will be put out to bid in late-June, with construction beginning in late September. The portion of the trail between D Street and E Street is not included in the renovation at this time due to adjacent mixed use development.

The project will improve walking surfaces, add wayfinding posts to help trail users find a route, add a trailhead sign at Broadway Avenue, add striped street crossings on F Street and Broadway, minimize on street routes and preserve wildlife corridors by eradicating invasive plants and replacing them with native plants. The project will also employ fold down bollards in places as buffering to restrict vehicular access to the trail. If funds allow, the project will include planting trees as added buffering.

Construction cost is estimated to be \$196,400.00, not including a 10% construction contingency. The project is funded with a Neighborhood Initiative Program Grant, with a donation of Parks and Recreation staff time. Also, the striped crossing on Broadway will be funded by Public Works Traffic Improvements.

Mike Anderson moved, and Jane Blume seconded the motion, to recommend the approval of this project to City Council. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Recreation Update: Dick Henrie, Recreation Manager, reported that the 2007 Summer Leisure Guide set a record high this year at 96 pages with over 60 agencies advertising. He distributed a Leisure Guide Statistical History from the first Leisure Guide published in 1979 through the current in 2007 that shows that over the years the Leisure Guide has grown from 12 pages with 11 agencies to the current 96 pages and 60+ agencies. There were approximately 41,000 Summer Leisure Guides distributed in the community.

Dick also reported that the recreation staff had a retreat this Spring that was very successful and that as a team, they drafted the following Recreation Division Vision Statement: "Our Vision is to build community through recreation. We value the people within the community. We support and encourage personal growth through stewardship of our natural and community resources. We create and foster programs and facilities that provide fun, educational, accessible and safe environments for people of all ages and abilities. We embrace these values to improve the quality of life – Quality of Play! Quality of Life!"

The current difficult issues the Recreation Division is facing is a shortage of staff at the Arne Hanna Aquatic Center and a shortage of storage space while Joe Martin Stadium is under construction.

VI. PRESENTATION: Samantha Desoer of Project Labyrinth presented a proposal to construct a permanent walking labyrinth in Fairhaven Park. Samantha reported that Project Labyrinth has hosted three temporary labyrinths in Bellingham that were very successful with over 200 citizens participating in each during the 3 to 4 hour time period that each labyrinth was open.

Samantha defined a labyrinth as a circuitous path with a multitude of turns that leads to a center space. It is similar to a maze, but different in that it has a set path in and out without dead ends. Labyrinths have been created throughout history by various societies and religions as a structured

path for meditation. She shared examples of permanent labyrinths created in other cities, such as New Orleans and Everett, WA.

The criteria for the planning of the proposed labyrinth in Fairhaven Park are: 1) It must be aesthetically pleasing, 2) It must be handicap accessible, 3) It must be vandal resistant, and 4) It must be very low maintenance. Chuck Nafzinger of Project Labyrinth reported that the plan for the proposed site in Fairhaven Park is to build the labyrinth on top of 3 inches of gravel covered by a layer of sand, with sand in between pavers that will be flush with the ground. Due to poor site drainage, the proposal also includes a rain garden to help collect rain water and keep it from flooding the site. The rain garden could consist of a planting bed, or be planted with grass.

Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager, reported that he feels that the proposed site in Fairhaven Park is appropriate and he does feel that Park Operations can work with Project Labyrinth to develop a plan that is easy to maintain. Marvin did report that his staff could not maintain any additional planting beds, but they will continue to mow the grass and the design of the labyrinth will work well because it is flush with the ground and can be mowed over.

Project Labyrinth has established itself as a 501(c)(3) non profit organization under the umbrella of A W.I.S.H. foundation. They hope to build the labyrinth with in-kind donations of construction supplies and volunteer labor as a community-building project.

John Hymas moved to approve the proposed site in Fairhaven Park and authorize Project Labyrinth to move forward in working with the Parks & Recreation Department in plans for construction. Jane Blume seconded the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

VII. **BOARD REPORTS:**

Big Rock Garden: Jim McCabe reported that the Annual Mother's Day Sculpture Exhibit will be happening at Big Rock Garden on May 13 from 1 to 4 p.m. Mark Asmundson will be the master of ceremonies and Mayor Tim Douglas will be presenting a *Lifetime Community Service Award* to the late Joan and Dick Beardsley.

Urban Forestry: John Hymas reported that Urban Forestry Advisory Committee is in the process of drafting a Heritage Tree Ordinance for Bellingham. They are reviewing ordinances adopted by other cities and will draft one for Bellingham that will be presented to the Park Board at a later date.

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.

VIII. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** No Public Comment.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Paul Leuthold reported that City Council adopted the proposed 2007 Park Impact Fee at the existing level of 35% at their April 30 meeting. While the fee level percentage was not raised, the value of the Existing Level of Service of parks per type of housing unit has increased, which means that in 2007, a single family dwelling will be charged approximately \$1000 more in Park Impact Fees than in 2006.

Paul also reported that Bellingham Parks & Recreation won a spotlight award for Taylor Dock in the Park Facility Category at the annual Washington Recreation & Park Association conference in Semiahmoo in April.

- X. **ADJOURNMENT**: The May 9, 2007 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent.

Approved: Ira Hyman, Chair
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary