

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Present: Jim McCabe, Bill Hadley, Jane Blume, Tom Barrett, John Hymas, Adrienne Lederer, Julie Guy, Mark Peterson, Harry Allison

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

Attending: Edie Norton, Greenway Advisory Committee Liaison
John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee Chair
Louise Bjornson, City Council
Stan Snapp, City Council
Dan Taylor, Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation
Daniel Tepper, Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation
Juliet Vong, Hough, Beck & Baird consultant for PRO Plan Update

I. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive Session was held from 7:00 to 7:50 a.m.

II. **APRIL MEETING MINUTES:** Motion made and unanimously approved to accept the April 2008 Park Advisory Board meeting minutes as submitted.

III. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. **Greenway Committee Update:** Edie Norton reported that Ralph Black, of Alliance Properties LLC, attended the April Greenway Advisory Committee meeting and reported on his plans for development in the King Mountain area and how his plans relate to the North Bellingham Trail Plan. Edie stated that a good part of the discussion regarded a proposed Guide Meridian pedestrian overpass to link trails east and west of the Guide Meridian, similar to the one over Alabama Street. Edie also reported that the Greenway Committee will be interviewing four candidates for the two committee vacancies at their May meeting.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation Project:** Dan Taylor and Daniel Tepper with the Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation introduced themselves and gave a short history of the Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation (WPRF). WPRF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization devoted to encouraging private or public donations of funds or land for the acquisition, development and enhancement of parks and recreation facilities in Whatcom County. WPRF was started approximately 17 years ago. Historically, Bellingham Parks & Recreation has used WPRF as a holding account for donated funds designated for particular park projects or programs, such as the specialized recreation greenhouse gardening program at Big Rock Garden.

Dan Taylor and Daniel Tepper, on behalf of WPRF, invited Park Staff, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board members, and Greenway Advisory Committee members to a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at 6 p.m. at the Tennant Lake Interpretive

Center. The purpose of this meeting is to bring park staff and advisory groups from Whatcom County and the cities of Bellingham, Ferndale and Lynden together to discuss whether WPRF might play a helpful role in the completion of the Bay to Baker Trail. Daniel Tepper stated that this loop trail project that runs from Bellingham along the Nooksack River to Ferndale to the Dewey Valley has been discussed and planned for at least 20 years, but the project has not been completed for a variety of reasons including a lack of funding and coordination between agency stakeholders. WPRF is looking for a project to take on and would like the various agency stakeholders to get together to discuss whether WPRF could assist in this project and in what capacity. Daniel also stated that a PowerPoint presentation on the Olympic Discovery Trail project will also be shown at this meeting in order to learn how that project, similar in scale, succeeded.

- B. Draft PRO Plan Update:** Leslie Bryson reported that following the last PRO Plan Update Steering Committee meeting, she and Juliet Vong reviewed all of the comments they received and incorporated most of them into the latest draft of the 2008 Proposed PRO Plan. The latest draft is going to be presented to City Council by Park Staff on Monday, May 19. Park Staff will ask City Council to pass a resolution to send the updated PRO Plan to the Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office so that Bellingham Parks & Recreation can stay eligible for State grant funding. While the State does not require local park plans to be part of a municipal comprehensive plan, the City of Bellingham does incorporate the PRO Plan as a Chapter 7 of its Comprehensive Plan. The process to incorporate the updated PRO Plan into a Comprehensive Plan amendment will involve public Planning Commission hearings and additional City Council public hearings and approval. Leslie Bryson reported that there will be time before the Comprehensive Plan amendment to incorporate additional changes if needed. If significant changes are made to the updated PRO Plan during the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, an updated version will be sent to the State.

Marvin Harris distributed a list of his suggested changes for maintenance issues addressed by the PRO Plan. Leslie reported that she had already incorporated a number of Marvin's changes into the draft that will be presented to Council on May 19. Julie Guy also distributed some further suggested changes and stated that her suggestions aren't necessary for the May 19 Council resolution, but could be considered as changes before the Comprehensive Plan amendment process. Park Advisory Board members agreed that an additional PRO Plan Steering Committee meeting prior to the Comprehensive Plan amendment process would be helpful. Leslie stated that she will work on scheduling an additional meeting in June, possibly the 1st or 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Advisory Board members spent the remainder of the meeting reviewing and discussing further suggested changes to the updated PRO Plan. Leslie and Juliet made a list of the changes that would be presented to City Council with the draft PRO Plan including a paragraph discussing the funding shortfall and suggestions for off-setting the shortfall, adding the North Bellingham Trail Plan as an appendix, and adding a statement to explain that the acres per thousand statistic must be figured system-wide, rather than within each immediate neighborhood.

Following discussion, Mark Peterson moved, and Julie Guy seconded the motion, to recommend the Updated PRO Plan as amended, to City Council to pass a resolution to

submit the Plan to the Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office. The motion passed unanimously.

V. BOARD REPORTS:

A. Big Rock Garden Committee: Adrienne Lederer thanked the Big Rock Committee for their work on the May 11, 2008, Mothers Day sculpture exhibit opening. The juried sculpture exhibit will be on display until October. A large crowd attended to view the sculpture, speak to the artists, and enjoy the blooming horticulture, live music and refreshments. Adrienne encouraged Park Board members to invite friends and family to visit Big Rock Garden Park.

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

Approved: Jim McCabe, Chair
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary