

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, May 11, 2011

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

Excused: Geoff Middaugh, Bill Langley

Staff: Leslie Bryson, Park Design & Development Manager
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary
Rae Edwards, Parks Volunteer Coordinator

Attending: John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee

I. AGENDA REVIEW: No changes were made to the meeting agenda.

II. APRIL MEETING MINUTES: Dominique Zervas requested that her quote on page 5, paragraph 6, sentence 4, be amended to read, "Dominique Zervas commented that she understood George was upset about what he perceived to be a public meeting violation that took place at the Big Rock Committee Meeting when they excused him to go into executive session." The minutes were approved as amended.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Greenway Advisory Committee Update: John Blethen reported that the Greenway Committee is working on updating the Greenway Strategic Plan to go back to Council for approval. John stated that they are updating the plan to reflect properties purchased and to create a Citywide, integrated plan, rather than a North/South plan. Leslie Bryson reported that she thinks the plan updates will be presented to the Park Board at their June meeting, prior to going to Council. Leslie also reported that there are currently 3 vacancies on the Greenway Committee. Dominique Zervas suggested that the Greenway Committee, and the Park Board try to actively recruit younger members to fill committee vacancies in an effort to have a broader spectrum of membership.

B. Park Board Liaison Positions: Julie Guy opened a Board discussion on Park Board liaison positions. The list of current and potential liaison positions that was discussed at the April meeting was also distributed in the May meeting packet. Rosalie Nast stated that as a new member, she would like to be assigned to a liaison position and asked if the liaison should be a participating member of another board or committee, or should simply listen and report back to the Park Board. Leslie Bryson responded that it depends on the liaison role. For example, if it's a liaison to another City board or commission, such as the Arts Commission or the Watershed Advisory Board, board members are appointed by the Mayor and the liaison would listen and report back. If the liaison is to a non-official friends group, like Big Rock Garden or Woodstock Farm Conservancy, the Park Board liaison could actively participate in the group. Dominique Zervas commented that as the Park Board liaison to the Arts Commission, her role has been to listen and report back, as well as fill in the Arts Commission on Park Board business. Dominique stated that she has

been careful to report on the public portion of the Park Board meetings and not be the voice of the Park Board in decision matters.

Dominique stated that she has interest in serving as the Park Board liaison to either the Planning Commission or the City Council meetings when topics of Parks interest appear on their agendas, and would switch to one of those if someone else was interested in the Arts Commission. Dominique stated that Bill Langley also expressed interest and they would decide between themselves who would do what and they could back each other up in case of schedule conflict. Diane Blake volunteered to be the new Arts Commission liaison.

Leslie Bryson stated that she would like to see someone volunteer to be a liaison to the Transportation Commission. Pam Holladay stated that she would like to continue to be the Park Board liaison to the Greenway Advisory Committee, but that she could also serve as the liaison to the Transportation Commission because they deal with some overlapping issues. Leslie Bryson reported that the Transportation Commission is starting to put together a pedestrian plan and they have asked for a Park Board member to sit on that steering committee. Pam volunteered to fill that role. Diane Blake offered to serve as a back-up for Pam in case of a scheduling issue for the Transportation Commission's regular meetings.

Bill Hadley stated that he will continue in his role as the liaison to the Watershed Advisory Board and also volunteered to be the liaison to the Samish Crest Trail project. Adrienne Lederer will continue as the liaison to the Big Rock Garden Committee, and Rosalie Nast volunteered to take over as the liaison to the Woodstock Farm Conservancy. Julie Guy suggested that Geoff Middaugh may be interested in being the liaison to the Boulevard shoreline renovations since he is the liaison to the Over Water Walkway and he has done a good job of staying on top of the related issues with that project.

Julie Guy asked the Board for their consensus to add ongoing liaison positions to City Council, Planning Commission and Transportation Commission, and temporary liaison positions to Boulevard shoreline renovations and Samish Crest Trail for the duration of the projects. Jane Blume moved to officially accept these liaison positions. Adrienne Lederer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **Volunteer Support Group Role and Responsibilities:** Leslie Bryson stated that the Big Rock Garden Committee, Treekeepers and the Woodstock Farm Conservancy are all volunteer "friends" groups rather than official City boards or commissions. Leslie reported that these friends groups have helped with fund raising and planning efforts, as well as advising Park staff on various related issues. For example, the Treekeepers have worked on vegetation plans, grant application assistance, and advising City staff on tree regulation issues. The Woodstock Farm Conservancy was formed after Woodstock Farm was purchased to raise funds and volunteer efforts to improve and rehabilitate the property. Leslie reported that the Woodstock Farm Conservancy is hosting an event at Woodstock Farm on May 21 that is open to the public with wine and hors d'oeuvres to help raise funds for the construction of a public restroom at the Farm.

Leslie invited Nadine Kaaland and Becky Hutchins, members of the Big Rock Garden Committee, to talk about the role and responsibility of the Big Rock Garden Committee. Nadine reported that the City purchased Big Rock Garden from the Drake family in the early 1990's. Originally, a private group used the property for the sale of art. The Big Rock Garden Committee formed as a subcommittee to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board to put out an annual call for art and help determine placement of artwork for public exhibit. Nadine stated that over the years, the Big Rock Garden Committee has looked for members with gardening expertise in order to focus on the plant aspect of the park as well as artists to focus on the artwork. Nadine stated that the Big Rock Committee is currently focusing on fundraising efforts in order to build a new fence around the garden as the existing fence is in dire need of replacement. Nadine introduced Becky Hutchins, another Big Rock Committee member, and former director of Allied Arts.

Becky Hutchins reported that she has served on the Committee for 3 years. Becky stated that in addition to the roles that Nadine mentioned, the Big Rock Garden Committee takes maintenance of the garden's artwork seriously in order to preserve and maintain the collection. Rae Edwards, Parks Volunteer Coordinator, reported that the Big Rock Garden Committee has researched sculpture cleaning procedures for the Big Rock collection, and have shared this information with the Arts Commission, which has been working on cleaning the rest of the City's outdoor public art collection. Rae reported that the Big Rock Committee has entirely taken over the annual Mother's Day sculpture exhibit opening since funding for the event was cut from the Parks Department's budget. The Committee puts a huge volunteer effort into providing refreshments, entertainment and a plant sale as part of the event.

Dominique Zervas asked if the Big Rock Garden Committee needs to be established as an independent committee, rather than a Park Board subcommittee. Leslie Bryson responded that they do not; official City Boards and Commissions are formed by City policy and require terms, by-laws and City staff time. Volunteer friends groups like the Big Rock Garden Committee do not have these requirements and are able to make recommendations to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Arts Commission and City staff. Any of their recommendations would be vetted by the Park Board and/or Arts Commission, and City staff, who ultimately make any decisions, so there is no liability for the Big Rock Committee to continue as a friends group. Park Board members generally agreed that a discussion to clarify and formalize a statement on the role and responsibility of the Big Rock Garden Committee should be on the next Park Board meeting agenda.

V. BOARD REPORTS:

Dominique Zervas suggested that the Park Board consider changing to an emailed meeting packet, rather than a printed and mailed paper packet, in order to save on printing and mailing costs. Leslie Bryson responded that staff would poll members to see if there is a preference.

A. Arts Commission: Dominique Zervas reported that the Arts Commission is working on making an inventory of all sculpture in the City. They have created informational cards on each piece and have determined that 12 pieces will be moved or decommissioned.

- B. Big Rock Garden Committee:** Adrienne Lederer reported that the Mother's Day garden party was very successful with good attendance.
- C. Cordata Park:** Julie Guy reported that the Cordata Park Trail extension to Meadowbrook Court is going out to bid this week.
- D. Watershed Advisory Board:** Bill Hadley reported that the Watershed Advisory Board is planning to ask City Council for more funding to acquire additional watershed properties. Dominique Zervas asked if staff could do a report at the next meeting about comments that Clare Fogelsong made at a Whatcom County Council meeting about City funds that could be available for maintaining watershed properties outside of City limits. Dominique wondered if those funds might also go to maintain City park properties that are located in the watershed. Leslie Bryson said that she would clarify this with Clare Fogelsong and report back at the next meeting.
- E. Woodstock Farm Conservancy:** Adrienne Lederer distributed invitations for the May 21 event at Woodstock Farm to celebrate the driveway and Inspiration Point renovations, and to raise funds for further improvements to the Farm. The event will be held from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

- VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Leslie Bryson reported that the Parks Director position will be posted by Human Resources by the end of the week. The deadline for application will be in June and final interviews are scheduled to take place the 3rd week in September.

Leslie also reported that City departments are preparing their capital budgets for 2012. Leslie stated that she would report to the Park Board at their next meeting on the Parks capital requests for the next 6 years. Leslie also reported that she recently read that real estate excise tax funds may now be used for capital maintenance, however, real estate excise tax funds are down with the economy.

Leslie reported that the policy permitting some sale and consumption of alcohol in City parks is still a work in progress. Sustainable Connections has been granted permission by the Mayor's Office to get a liquor license for a conference dinner at the Fairhaven Village Green in June that will serve as a test case, and it is anticipated that members of the public will still be allowed to walk through the park. Conference attendees will be issued a badge, and only attendees may purchase and consume alcohol at the Village Green in compliance with Washington State Liquor Control Board regulations. Leslie stated that she anticipates that the policy will allow for the sale and consumption of alcohol in enclosed park facilities; outdoor venues like the Fairhaven Village Green will be by special permission only.

- VII. ADJOURNMENT:** The May 2011 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 8:42 a.m.

Approved: Julie Guy, Acting Chair
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary