

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, November 14, 2007

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

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

Attending: Eric Hirst, Greenway Advisory Committee Acting Chair

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Closed Session from 7:00-7:50 a.m.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTION: In open meeting after executive session, Mike Anderson moved that the property presented by Park Staff in Northwest Bellingham be recommended to City Council for the potential priority acquisition list; Jane Blume seconded the motion, the motion passed 7-1, Tom Barrett opposed.

III. OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES:

Motion made and carried unanimously to accept the October meeting minutes.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Greenway Committee Update: Eric Hirst reported that the Greenway Advisory Committee has advertised two vacancies; one from Laurel Cook who completed her two consecutive terms and one from Jack Weiss who will be on the City Council come January. Eric reported that only two applications have been received and the two applicants will be interviewed at the November 15 Greenway meeting. Eric reported that the two applicants have both been active in attending Greenway meetings and volunteering and he expects that they will both be recommended for the Committee.

Ira Hyman reported that in follow-up to the meeting at Hovander Park in September of City and County Park staff and boards, Del Lowery from the Whatcom County Park Board has requested a couple of City Park Board volunteers to continue to meet so that the City and County can work cooperatively to ensure parks and open spaces in the land development process in the Urban Growth Area. Adrienne Lederer, John Hymas and Bill Hadley volunteered. Ira will give their names to Del, who will contact them with the meeting time and location.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Lake Padden Golf Course Lease: Paul Leuthold reported that the current lease agreement for the Lake Padden Golf Course expires December 31, 2007. The current agreement consists of two separate contracts; one for course management and one for course maintenance. While the current agreement has been successful in maintaining the golf course's status as a 100% enterprise operation, the cost to the City in administrating the golf course has been high. Strict auditing has been necessary under the current contract as the contracted party has been collecting public funds. Also, public funds cannot be gifted so the contracted party has not had the ability to reduce or waive greens fees as a marketing tool.

In order to come up with a more profitable lease agreement for both the City and the contracted party, the City desires to enter into a non-concession based lease contract. The City will receive a monthly lease rental fee and the contracted party will retain all revenue above and beyond the monthly lease rental fee, the financial obligations noted in the specifications, leasehold tax, B & O tax and utilities.

The contract has strict, specific maintenance guidelines that must be followed by the contracted party, as well as criteria for increasing greens fees. Historically, the City has increased greens fees by approximately 3% per year. The contracting party has proposed a 6.2% cumulative increase in greens fees for 2008. The City has agreed to this cumulative increase on the condition that it must cover a 2-year period; 2008-2009. The greens fees may not be increased again until 2010 and from that point forward, they may only be increased by 3% per year. Paul noted that the cumulative greens fee price increase means that overall the greens fees are being increased; not that each individual greens fee will be increased. Some will remain the same.

The contract is for a 10-year period. The annual lease fee for 2008 will be \$178,600, which will be paid in 12 monthly installments. The lease fee will increase by 3% annually throughout the term of the contract. The final annual lease fee in 2017 will be \$266,937. The contract also provides the option of one additional 10-year lease term extension.

Eric Hirst inquired as to whether the agreement will create more or less revenue for the City per month. Marvin Harris reported that monthly revenue will remain the same. Paul Leuthold stated that the contracted party will be required to provide the City with an annual profit/loss statement in order to help create future lease agreements. Mike Anderson reported that the Lake Padden Golfers Committee is pleased with the contract; the only big change as it relates to golfers is that the contracted party will have the ability to meet the market by reducing greens fees at off-peak times. The Golfers Committee will continue to meet with the contracted party as an auxiliary unit to ensure that the greens are maintained to specification and to address other issues that may arise. The Lake Padden Golfers Committee voted unanimously to approve the contract on November 12.

John Hymas moved to approve the Lake Padden Golf Course management contract; Mike Anderson seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Park Board Vacancy: Ira Hyman reported that one board vacancy has opened following Stan Snapp's election to City Council. The opening has been advertised by the Mayor's Office. Park Board members are encouraged to spread the word to interested parties and interviews for the vacancy will occur at the December Park Board meeting.

Greenway Advisory Committee Liaison: Stan Snapp served as the Park Board liaison to the Greenway Advisory Committee. A new liaison will be needed. The Greenway Committee meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 7-9 p.m. in the Fireplace Room located at 625 Halleck Street (in the Municipal Court building). A liaison will be appointed at the December meeting.

VI. BOARD REPORTS:

Bill Hadley reported that the Arts Commission elected officers for 2008 and Alex Wiley will continue as the Chair. The Arts Commission is working on their Civic Center Art Show and they have asked the Whatcom Museum curator to assist.

Ira Hyman inquired about bike racks in City parks. He has noticed that they are intermittently placed and more would be helpful, particularly in Boulevard Park. Marvin Harris responded that one at Boulevard Park is needed, but he wants to first make sure that it is not placed in a spot that will occupy needed trail or open space. Marvin also said that the Bike Advisory Committee has an idea for a memorial bike rack donation program that he may be able to adapt for the Parks.

Jim McCabe reported that the Big Rock Committee is working on a presentation that they will give to the Park Advisory Board next year to highlight their funding needs. Jim also reported that the Big Rock Committee currently has two vacancies and they would like to see artists apply as the vacancies were previously filled by artists Shirley Erickson and Kirk Swink.

Paul Leuthold reported on the following Civic Field improvement projects: The renovation to the bicycle dirt jump park is in progress by volunteers; the storage building at Joe Martin Stadium is currently under construction; the infield mix at Joe Martin was too sandy and is being removed and replaced with a better mix. Paul also reported that the Bellingham Bells baseball team is for sale and he has met with a prospective buyer to answer questions regarding the Bells' contract agreement. The sale may happen in the next couple of months.

Paul reported that the North Bellingham Trail Plan still has narrative that needs to be completed before it is presented to City Council for adoption. He reported that Leslie Bryson is working on this and she may hire someone to complete this.

Paul reported that a committee consisting of himself, Leslie Bryson, Julie Guy from the Park Board, Edie Norton from the Greenway Committee, Judy Hoover from the Planning Commission, and Greg Aucutt from the Planning Department interviewed firms to complete the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. They will select a firm and make the recommendation to the Park Board.

Ira Hyman asked Marvin Harris about drainage at Squalicum Creek Park and whether or not it is being monitored in the future dog off leash area. Marvin responded that overall site drainage is good and he will work with Jonathan Schilk to monitor drainage specifically in the dog off leash area throughout the winter.

Adrienne Lederer reported that the Woodstock Farm Conservancy is currently working to address some site drainage issues at Woodstock.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The November 2007 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 8:45 a.m.

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