

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, November 10, 2010

- Present:** Adrienne Lederer, Bill Hadley, Pam Holladay, Geoff Middaugh, Mike Anderson, Julie Guy
- Excused:** Mark Peterson, Dominique Zervas, Jane Blume
- Staff:** Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary
- Attending:** Seth Fleetwood, Bellingham City Council
John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee
Rosalie Warden Nast, Park Board candidate
Dan Pike, Mayor

I. **OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES:** Motion made and approved to accept the October 2010 meeting minutes as submitted.

II. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- A. **Greenway Advisory Committee Update / Letter to Council regarding Greenway Strategic Plan update:** Seth Fleetwood stated that the letter the Park Board sent to the City Council requesting adoption of the south portion of the Greenway Strategic Plan, coupled with Eric Hirst's resignation from the Greenway Committee, brought the Council's attention back to this issue. Seth said that he requested that the Greenway Strategic Plan be put on the November 1 Council agenda. Park Board members expressed confusion about what happened at the Council meeting that tabled the discussion. Seth explained that Terry Bornemann tabled the discussion as a point of order under "Robert's Rules of Order". At the Council meeting, Terry stated that under "Robert's Rules", the Council could not reconsider the motion to table approval of the south portion of the Greenway Strategic Plan until such time that the offer made by the Mayor to acquire Chuckanut Ridge was resolved, or the four Council members who supported the motion to table approval of the south portion of the Plan voted to reconsider. Seth stated that he followed up Terry's point of order with a motion to re-open the matter for consideration, but failed to receive a second for his motion.

John Blethen thanked Geoff Middaugh and the Park Board for taking the lead on writing the letter to Council and explained that he chose not to write a letter because he has taken a stand on Chuckanut Ridge and he feels that a letter from him on the Strategic Plan would not have the same impact as a letter from the Park Board. John stated that he would love to have Chuckanut Ridge in the park system, but does not feel that the City can afford to buy developable property at top dollar. John also stated that Council has not barred staff from bringing forward potential acquisitions on the south side and that the Greenway Committee is still operating under the Greenway Strategic Plan though it has not been fully adopted by Council. John also reported that the Mayor has stated that he intends to give the bank that owns Chuckanut Ridge a deadline on his offer. John suggested that it may

be time for the Greenway Committee to review and update the Greenway Strategic Plan as many acquisitions in the north portion of the Plan have taken place. John suggested that an updated city-wide plan, rather than a regional plan, may be in order.

Geoff Middaugh commented that his concern is about having a framework to operate under, and is not about the particular merits of individual pieces of property. Geoff stated that the Greenway Strategic Plan was put together by a group of dedicated citizens appointed by the Mayor to act on such issues in an advisory capacity. Geoff said that he feels that the Plan was based on public input and was thoroughly vetted, and is concerned about the lack of progress in adopting the Plan, or receiving direction from Council to come up with a different plan. Seth Fleetwood commented that he believes that the Mayor is going to give the bank a deadline of the end of the year, and that this would resolve Terry Bornemann's point of order at the Council meeting. Seth stated that he would put the adoption of the Greenway Strategic Plan back on the Council agenda after the first of the new year, and that he believes there would be four supporting Council votes to adopt the south portion of the Plan. Park Board members generally agreed to call Council members on their own to urge them to adopt the entire Greenway Strategic Plan.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Interview of Parks & Recreation Advisory Board candidate: The Park Board informally interviewed Rosalie Warden Nast, candidate for vacancy on the Board.

B. Park Board Candidate Recommendation: Following the interview and discussion, Adrienne Lederer moved to recommend Rosalie Warden Nast to the Mayor for appointment to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Julie Guy seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Geoff Middaugh announced that the dedication of the new trail in Cordata Park was a huge success, thanks to Adrienne Lederer and Julie Guy for their hard work and dedication. Adrienne Lederer thanked Paul and his staff for their work in a well designed and constructed trail that is already being heavily used by her neighbors.

VI. BOARD REPORTS:

A. Woodstock Farm Conservancy: Adrienne Lederer reported that the Woodstock Farm Conservancy's projects are all on hold pending completion of the Inspiration Point reconstruction and access improvements to Woodstock Farm. Paul Leuthold reported that these construction projects are taking longer than anticipated. Paul also stated that once construction is complete, Park Staff will need to come up with a plan to repair or replace septic systems that are all failing. The next step will be a Request For Proposals for one caretaker to live in the Cook House to perform site maintenance and disseminate information to site visitors. A Request For Proposals for use of the main house will also be done once a caretaker is in place.

B. Boulevard Overwater Walkway: Paul Leuthold reported that the Boulevard Overwater Walkway project is going before the Hearing Examiner on November 17, at 6 p.m., in Council Chambers. Paul stated that there are some citizens concerned that the proposed Overwater Walkway is not needed as it duplicates the South Bay Trail, and there are also some citizens concerned about the environmental impacts of the project. Paul reported

that Park staff have completed the SEPA and JARPA processes, but did not do a full EIS as it was not mandated, and this has sparked some of the citizen environmental concern. Paul stated that there were similar concerns prior to the construction of Taylor Dock, but it turned out that the eelgrass grew back at a much faster rate than expected, and tons of garbage was removed from the bay during construction. The contractor closely followed all of the environmental regulations to ensure that the old pilings that were removed did not disturb sensitive plant and animal life. Paul also stated that the new Overwater Walkway has been in the works since the dedication of Taylor Dock. It was identified in the Waterfront Futures plans, in the last Greenway levy, and Senator Murray has allocated a \$2 million dollar grant for the project. Some other issues that need to be worked through prior to construction are the concerns about shoreline access for the boats that are illegally anchored in the area and concerns from the Lummi Tribe about loss of fishing grounds. Julie Guy asked if Park staff have presented this project to the Economic Development Board. Paul responded that he will ask staff to look into this.

- B. Watershed Advisory Board:** Bill Hadley reported that the Watershed Advisory Board recently acquired a 24 acre parcel of wooded property on the uphill side of Lake Whatcom Boulevard approximately halfway between Strawberry Point and Sudden Valley. This parcel is located in the UGA and is adjacent to the Stimpson Family Preserve.
- C. Lake Padden Golfers:** Mike Anderson reminded the Board that the loan for the clubhouse renovations at Lake Padden Golf Course will be paid off at the end of December this year. A sub-committee has been formed to determine the most pressing capital maintenance projects that could be completed now that the funds that were going toward the monthly loan payment will be freed up. The committee is very concerned that this money generated by golfers stay at the golf course to do much needed maintenance improvements. At this time, the maintenance projects at the top of the list include a bioswale or similar mitigation between the maintenance facility and the creek to avoid contaminated run-off, and a solution to stormwater run-off at the golf cart storage area. Paul suggested that the committee put together a list of maintenance needs and present it to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. This will be done at the December meeting.

Mayor Dan Pike arrived at 8:50 a.m. and apologized that he was not able to come earlier due to schedule constraints, but he wanted to address the Board's concerns regarding his request to the Council to delay adoption of the south portion of the Greenway Strategic Plan. Mayor Pike reported that he made an offer for both Chuckanut Ridge and Lookout Mountain to the bank that owns both in February of 2010. His offer amounted to a little less than \$6 million. At that time, the bank responded that they were interested in this offer and that they would get back to him with a counter offer, which they have not done.

Mayor Pike also addressed the Planning Director's decision to extend the SEPA permit for Chuckanut Ridge. He stated that the Planning Director is the SEPA Director and he operates in this capacity independently of the Mayor's authority. It would be both illegal and unethical for the Mayor to try to require the Planning Director to deny the permit extension. The Planning Director did approve a 90 day extension that expired at the end of October. The bank has requested an additional extension. Mayor Pike reported that he checked with both the City's Legal Department and outside legal counsel and was advised that the City would be susceptible to a lawsuit if the permit is not extended due to a clerical error done during the first extension. The applicant

overpaid the City approximately \$45,000 for the Environmental Impact Statement review work. This error has been corrected, but provides reasonable grounds for a permit extension. Mayor Pike stated that he plans to send a letter to the bank withdrawing his offer on both parcels of property effective the end of this year in order to get some resolution to the delay one way or the other.

Mayor Pike also reported that he is also looking into the potential acquisition of Galbraith Mountain outside of Greenway and Park Impact Fee dollars. He stated that the City would require partners in this venture that would produce revenue, such as sustainable forestry and mountain biking tourism. His idea is that the City would contract with the sustainable forestry partner for the management of the land, and they would in turn sub contract with mountain bike and other user groups, under the oversight of a citizen advisory committee. At this point in time, the current land owner is anxious to sell, and the necessary partnerships in order to complete this acquisition may not come together fast enough for the current owner.

Geoff Middaugh expressed concern about trade-offs that result when land negotiations are made outside the framework of an acquisition plan. He stated that something must be given up in order to make these other negotiations possible. Geoff stated that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board recognizes their position as advisory, but that they stand behind their request for adoption of the Greenway Strategic Plan as it was thoughtfully created through public process and well vetted. Mayor Pike responded that his request to Council to delay adoption of the Plan was in no way intended as a slight to the citizens who volunteered their time to create the Plan and was a means of showing the seriousness of his offer to the bank. Mayor Pike also stated that he is happy to explain his reasoning behind his actions and that he wants the Board to be clear that no south side opportunities have been lost. Park staff have still brought forward parcels of property in south Bellingham and have been approved to perform due diligence. Mayor Pike stated that the letter to the bank withdrawing his offer on Chuckanut Ridge and Lookout Mountain will likely go out by the end of this week or early next.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The November 2010 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:10 a.m.

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