

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Present: Adrienne Lederer, Jim McCabe, Jane Blume, Bill Hadley, Mike Anderson, Dominique Zervas, Julie Guy and Mark Peterson

Absent:

Staff: Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director
Leslie Bryson, Design & Development Manager
Marvin Harris, Park Operations Manager
Gina Austin, Project Engineer

Attending: Louise Bjornson, Bellingham City Council
Jim Zander, Greenway Advisory Committee
Bob Walsh, Belt Collins Consulting
Chris Moench, Local Artist
Steve Wilson, Mary Mullen, and Marinus VandenKamp from the Center for Local Self Reliance

I. SEPT MEETING MINUTES: Motion to approve the September 2009 minutes was made by Bill Hadley and seconded by Jane Blume. Motion carried unanimously.

II. OLD BUSINESS: Inspiration Point Overlook Reconstruction: The Inspiration Point Overlook Project was discussed at the September meeting but action was not taken due to a lack of quorum. Motion to approve the Inspiration Point overlook project was made by Bill Hadley and seconded by Adrienne Lederer. Motion carried unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. November meeting Date: The November Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 11 which is a legal holiday. The Board approved rescheduling the November meeting date to **Wednesday, November 18.**

B. Little Squalicum Park Master Plan: Parks Project Engineer, Gina Austin explained the Master Planning process that has been taking place since March 2009. Gina provided a brief history of the 24 acre park that borders BTC, an industrial area, single family homes and the Port of Bellingham owned beach. She also elaborated on the public input process that included five stakeholder meetings and two public meetings. The final public meeting is scheduled for November 12 and she indicated that she would return to the Board in December to obtain approval of the Master Plan. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has taken control of the site for environmental cleanup and plan to complete cleanup actions by September 30, 2010. Gina then introduced Bob Walsh, a consultant with Belt Collins, who was hired to assist with the Master Planning process. Three alternative concepts were introduced which include A) retaining the site in a very natural condition (rock benches, minimal signage, minimal land disturbance) but incorporating a saltwater estuary on the Bay. 2. Slightly more development to include a picnic shelter, environmental art components, enhanced connectivity to the estuary, interpretive signage, and access to the Tilberry Pier. Lastly, a "preferred alternative" was identified which includes a combination of both A and B alternatives.

All public comments regarding the Plan are being recorded and will be included in the final report. There was considerable discussion about various public safety aspects of the site. Gina will return for approval from the Advisory Board at their December meeting. The next public input meeting is scheduled for November 12, 7:00 PM in the Fireplace Room of the Municipal Court Building.

Motion to set the public meeting date of November 12, 2009 for consideration of the Preferred Alternative Master Plan for Little Squalicum Park was made by Dominique Zervas and seconded by Jane Blume. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Submission of “Form of Chain” for Big Rock Permanent Collection: Park Operations Manager, Marvin Harris, explained the request by artist Kenji Gomi to donate the sculpture entitled “Form of Chain” into the permanent collection of Big Rock Garden Park. Both the Big Rock Garden Committee and the Bellingham Arts Commission endorsed this recommendation and the Park and Recreation staff concurs with this recommendation. Motion to accept this sculpture into the Big Rock Garden permanent exhibit was made by Dominique Zervas and seconded by Adrienne Lederer. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Whatcom Creek Trail Restoration Prayer Wheel: Design and Development Manager Leslie Bryson introduced local artist Chris Moench who displayed a brass prayer wheel that he would like to donate to the City as a memorial to the Whatcom Creek pipeline tragedy that occurred in 1999. The prayer wheel would be prominently displayed along Whatcom Creek. The wheel portrays various aspects of the pipeline tragedy and will be filled with various prayers and permanently sealed. It will be displayed on a plinth or rock slab near the Whatcom Wayside overlook near Prospect Street. This donation has been discussed by the Bellingham Arts Commission and was conditionally recommended for approval. Three locations were discussed as well as long-term maintenance responsibilities.

Motion to approve the installation of the prayer wheel was made by Mark Peterson and seconded by Mike Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Fairhaven Rose Garden House Master Plan: Steve Wilson, representing The Center for Local Self Reliance, presented a Master Plan for the Fairhaven Rose Garden and caretaker’s house. He explained that they obtained a City “Small and Simple Grant” for assistance in preparing the Master Plan.. The Plan is based on a design charette held in April 2009 as well as a public meeting and other technical meetings. He explained that according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City, they are responsible for fundraising and in-kind donations of \$75,000 and, at this time, they’ve secured approximately \$60,000, \$14,000 of which is cash. They’ve also submitted paperwork to become a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. The Plan included various gardens, trails, greenhouses and sheds. Also included are parking areas, an ingress/egress drive and a bus shelter. Although plans for the caretaker’s house were not delineated it includes replacement of the roof, and ADA access. A pre-application meeting has been conducted with the City permitting department and all improvements will require permits. Their goal is to make the facility “occupancy ready” but without ADA accommodation and adequate driveway access/parking classes would not be able to be conducted. They would also like to make the facility accessible from the Interurban Trail. The Board and staff reiterated that

the house cannot be occupied as a resident under the terms of the MOU. It was suggested that a clear narrative of the phasing be provided. It was explained that there are actually 4 phases of house remodeling that must include:

1. Streetscape improvements
2. Repair of the house to minimize deterioration
3. Exterior work including ADA ramp and parking
4. Remaining work including kitchen and library

The Board is concerned about their ability to generate adequate funding as well as delineation of the various tasks included in each development phase.

Motion to approve the Master Site Plan concept was made by Dominique Zervas, in an effort to facilitate the permitting process, with the understanding that the Center for Local Self Reliance will provide a written phasing plan to the Board. Motion seconded by Mike Anderson. Motion carried with Mark Peterson abstaining.

IV. ADJOURNMENT: The October 2009 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 8:55 a.m.

Approved: Jim McCabe, Chair
Attest: Paul Leuthold