

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

**Present:** Adrienne Lederer, Jim McCabe, Jane Blume, Bill Hadley, Mike Anderson, Dominique Zervas

**Absent:** Julie Guy, Mark Peterson

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

**Attending:** Louise Bjornson, Bellingham City Council  
John Blethen, Greenway Advisory Committee

**I. JULY MEETING MINUTES:** It was noted that Mike Anderson was absent at the July meeting. Motion made and approved to accept the July 2009 meeting minutes as amended.

**II. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive session was held from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. Following Executive Session it was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that staff pursue due diligence on two properties in the Birchwood neighborhood and two properties in the Guide Meridian/Cordata neighborhood for potential acquisition.

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

**Greenway Committee Update:** The August Greenway Advisory Committee meeting was cancelled.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Evaluation of Roles & Functions of the Greenway Advisory Committee and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board:** Paul Leuthold reported that the goal of the Fiscal alternatives for Stability Task Force (FAST) was to evaluate City services and make recommendations on how to reduce budget expenditures. One of the City services evaluated by FAST was the staff support and associated cost provided to the numerous City Boards and Commissions. One suggestion was to combine the roles and functions of both the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board with those of the Greenway Committee. Since the Park Board is currently short three members, it might be a good time to implement such a change. One possibility is to transfer three Greenway Committee members to fill the three vacancies on the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. These three Greenway Committee members could form a Greenway Sub-Committee of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. This might be a way to save money in the budget by eliminating staff time and streamlining committee processes. Paul stated that the Greenway Committee did an excellent job creating the Greenway Strategic Plan to drive land acquisition decisions and asked Parks & Recreation Advisory Board members if they felt that they could proceed with property acquisition approval with the Greenway Strategic Plan and a Greenway Sub-Committee. Dominique Zervas expressed concern about eliminating the Greenway Committee because they are a passionate, independent focus group. John Blethen stated that his concern is that a group of individuals who are educated on the history of the Greenway Program will be needed to get future effective Greenway levies. Jane Blume

commented that while she would hate to see the Greenway Committee disbanded, she understands the need to make difficult decisions during tough budget times. Paul Leuthold responded that he heard their concerns and will go to the Greenway Advisory Committee meeting to discuss this on September 17.

**A. Inspiration Point Overlook Reconstruction: Jonathan Schilk, Parks Landscape Architect, gave a presentation** on the Inspiration Point Overlook reconstruction project. Jonathan stated that Inspiration Point was acquired by the City in 2004 as part of Woodstock Farm. Jonathan stated that the goal of the Inspiration Point Overlook project is to restore the historic overlook, improve the driveway to Woodstock Farm, add handicap parking, build a wheelchair accessible trail that connects the parking area to the overlook and restore a light fixture. Jonathan reported that this project is funded with a \$500,000 Washington State Department of Transportation grant and a portion of the \$600,000 Woodstock purchase reimbursement grant from the State. Jonathan estimates that this project will cost \$678,000. The remaining funds will be used for the Woodstock Farm Master Plan. Louise Bjornson asked if there are benches planned in the overlook. Jonathan responded that he was not planning on benches, but stated that he would look into including benches at Louise's request.

Dominique Zervas and Jane Blume had to excuse themselves due to prior engagements. The vote for approval of this project was delayed until the October meeting due to lack of a quorum.

**B. Submission of "Form of Chain" for Big Rock Permanent Collection:** This agenda item was delayed until the October meeting due to lack of a quorum.

**V. Director's Report:** Paul Leuthold gave an update on the Parks Department's budget. Paul reported that City revenues are still down and all departments were instructed to keep their 2010 budgets status quo by absorbing salary and benefit increases. Departments were also asked to make further sustainable cuts to their budgets. Paul stated that the Parks Department eliminated 12 positions that equal 6.51 full time equivalents. Paul stated that the Parks Property Acquisition Specialist was cut, as well as a Recreation Coordinator and a number of positions at the Arne Hanna Aquatic Center. The Arne Hanna Aquatic Center is also reducing their hours of operation and will implement a non-resident fee in 2010. Paul reported that the Parks Department's scholarship policy is also changing in 2010; only City residents will be eligible to receive a scholarship. Paul stated that he is concerned that the non-resident fee and the change in the scholarship policy will result in fewer participants, which could cause some programs to be cancelled due to lack of registration. Paul stated that staff will closely monitor registration numbers when the non-resident fee and the new scholarship policy go into effect. Paul also reported that there are few capital projects in the 2010 budget due to decreased availability of Real Estate Excise Tax funds.

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

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