

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, September 8, 2010**

**Present:** Adrienne Lederer, Bill Hadley, Pam Holladay, Dominique Zervas, Geoff Middaugh, Jane Blume, Mike Anderson

**Excused:** Mark Peterson, Julie Guy

**Staff:** Paul Leuthold, Parks & Recreation Director  
Leslie Bryson, Design & Development Manager  
Tim Wahl, Greenway Program Coordinator  
Gina Austin, Parks Project Engineer  
Liz Haveman, Board Secretary

**Attending:** Nadine Kaaland, Big Rock Garden Committee  
Mary Anne Crawford, Big Rock Committee

- I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive session was held from 7 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. In open meeting following executive session, Dominique Zervas moved to approve that the status of two parcels on Whatcom Creek be changed from "Active Monitoring" to "Action Approved" in order to pursue purchase of one parcel and trade portions of it for portions of the other to secure improved alignments for a trail. Adrienne Lederer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Dominique Zervas also moved to update the status of three parcels of property between Roosevelt Park and the Whatcom Creek Trail to "Action Approved" in order to secure a walking and bicycling corridor. Pam Holladay seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Dominique Zervas also moved to change the status of three parcels of property in the Bear Creek corridor between Cordata Park and the "Riley" park site to "Action Approved" in order to pursue purchase and trades. Adrienne Lederer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Dominique Zervas also moved to update the status of one parcel located near King and Queen Mountains to "Action Approved" in order to respond to an offer of sale by the property owner. Pam Holladay seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Dominique Zervas also moved to update the status of two parcels on Samish Hill to "Action Approved" in order to eliminate inholdings in the present park and provide a better alignment for the 2011 phase of the Samish Crest Trail project with funding from the "Beyond Greenways" Samish Crest Trail allocation. Mike Anderson seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Pam Holladay moved to update the status of two parcels in the King and Queen Mountain area to "Action Approved" in order to respond to promising offers from the property owners. Adrienne Lederer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Following the votes, Dominique Zervas commented that a discussion was recently held at an Arts Commission meeting about not acquiring any art even though some funding exists because of how it may appear to the public in light of the City's budget concerns. Dominique commented that she has heard similar concerns expressed by members of the public about park property purchases. Tim Wahl responded that he also has heard this concern voiced, but noted that now is strategically the best time to be looking ahead and purchasing property with the levy funds that were approved by tax payers for this very purpose. Paul Leuthold agreed that the Parks Department has a responsibility to spend the Greenway Levy dollars and Park Impact Fees, but noted that there is a concern about maintaining property as even open space

requires a certain level of maintenance. Geoff Middaugh suggested that Park staff use the City's information systems to communicate this information to the public.

- II. **AUGUST MEETING MINUTES:** Motion made and approved to accept the August 2010 meeting minutes as submitted.

III. **OLD BUSINESS:**

A. **Greenway Advisory Committee Update:** Dominique Zervas reported that the Mayor attended the August Greenway Advisory Committee meeting. A discussion was held on the status of his negotiations to acquire the Chuckanut Ridge property. Dominique stated that the Mayor reported that he has made an offer on both Chuckanut Ridge and Lookout Mountain, but the bank is still working out land ownership issues. Since Washington Federal took over Horizon Bank, there are many legalities that must be resolved before they can turn around and sell the property. Paul Leuthold reported that he understands that the Mayor is trying to keep his offer to purchase within the amount of money designated for south side purchases in the Greenway Strategic Plan. Paul also reported that the Mayor has suggested that some creative financing, such as additional funding provided by supporters of the Chuckanut Ridge acquisition, or only purchasing a portion of the property, or purchasing all of the property and selling part of it, may be necessary. Leslie Bryson reported that the Mayor also explained that he had no role in the extension of the Chuckanut Ridge EIS. The Mayor explained that the Planning Director operates SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) independently and that the Planning Director was following Council policy adopted last year to allow permit extensions due to the economy and funding problems being experienced by all developers. Leslie Bryson reported that the Mayor also said that he would like to reserve all of the money in the south portion of the Greenway Strategic Plan for these two parcels should it all be needed. Geoff Middaugh expressed concern about the lack of public disclosure on the part of the Mayor about these negotiations.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Big Rock Garden Committee – Goals and Accomplishments Update:** Nadine Kaaland introduced herself as a former Parks & Recreation Advisory Board member and current member of the Big Rock Garden Committee. Nadine stated that she first got involved with the Big Rock Committee when she was the Park Board liaison to the Big Rock Committee, and she developed a lasting passion for it. Nadine distributed a list of recommendations for Big Rock Garden created by the Big Rock Committee in 2006 and reported that some items on the list have already been completed. However, due to lack of City funding, the Big Rock Committee is now focusing on fundraising and long term planning in order to complete the other goals on the list.

One fundraising plan is to use the greenhouse at Big Rock for plant sales. To date, the Big Rock Committee has held cookie sales at the Big Rock concerts and they gave away potted herbs propagated in the Big Rock greenhouse for donation at the 2010 Mother's Day Garden Party. Nadine reported that the Big Rock Committee has more plans to use the Big Rock Greenhouse. Sue Taylor, Big Rock Committee member and master gardener, propagated over 500 native plants and transferred them to the Parks Department's nursery. Sue also worked with volunteers to remove dying plants from some of the planting beds at

Big Rock and restore them in the Big Rock greenhouse for re-use elsewhere in the Park system.

Nadine reported that the Big Rock Committee is currently working on the Mother's Day Garden Party for 2011, dependent on whether or not Parks Department vans will be available for their use for a shuttle. Nadine stated that there is virtually no parking at Big Rock and the success of the Mother's Day Garden Party is dependent on the shuttle from Bloedel Donovan Park to Big Rock. Nadine reported that the 2010 Mother's Day Garden Party was a success despite lack of Parks Department funding for the event due to artists who donated their pieces for the show, volunteers who baked cookies, and the "End of the Road" string band that donated their services.

The Big Rock Committee is also working on becoming part of the Pacific Northwest National Park Service Garden Program in order to receive national recognition and begin a planned giving program that will encourage people to donate regularly and/or name Big Rock Garden in their estate planning. Nadine said that ultimately, the Big Rock Committee would like Big Rock Garden to be self sustaining. They do have some capital needs; the most pressing of which is a replacement fence. A fence is necessary to protect the plant life from deer and to protect the sculpture from vandalism. Nadine reported that the cost to replace the existing fence with something similar could be as much as \$200,000 to \$500,000.

Mike Anderson excused himself at 8:35 a.m.

- B. Little Squalicum Park Cleanup Activity Update:** Gina Austin reported that the Environmental Protection Agency has begun cleanup activity at Little Squalicum Park. Gina said that Park staff provided as much input as possible to EPA about the cleanup activity before it began. Park staff requested that the cleanup activity be compatible with the park master plan and that the contamination be completely removed from the park. Gina reported that Oeser employees and contractors are completing the work under the oversight of EPA. At this point in time many of the trees on site have been removed and they are beginning to dig out the contamination and move it to a landfill on the Oeser site. As part of this process, the upper creek will be re-routed via an underground pipe to the historic creek channel. Gina reported that the bulk of the contamination exists in both the historic and current creek channels. The depth of the contamination varies by location, approximately 6 to 8 feet in the upper park and 2 feet in the lower part of the park near Bellingham Bay. As the contamination is dug out, EPA is working to discover if the contamination arrived through groundwater as well as the creek. Gina also reported that the City of Bellingham Public Works Department will be performing additional cleanup of an old municipal landfill in the park separate from the EPA activity. Jane Blume asked how the contamination will be kept from leaching out of the landfill on the Oeser site. Gina responded that this is a concern that will need to be monitored.

Gina stated that the area disturbed by the cleanup activity will be seeded and replanted. Oeser is using the master plan's proposed future trail routes to truck the contamination out of the site. These truck routes will be restored as trails. At a later date, the creek culverts may be removed and replaced with a bridge and an estuary may be developed. Geoff Middaugh asked if the contaminated material being removed will be replaced. Gina

responded that clean material is proposed to be taken from the future estuary to backfill and some new material may be imported as well.

Geoff Middaugh also asked if the City has consultants monitoring the cleanup activity. Gina responded that the City has hired Mark Herrenkol, a private consultant who was part of the group that did the initial remedial investigation of the contamination at Little Squalicum Park. Gina stated that the City also has hired an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> party consultant for daily monitoring of the activity on site to keep the City informed. Gina stated that when Oeser is done with the cleanup activity, the park will be a big open site that has been reseeded. The Parks Department will be awarding a contract to replant vegetation only along the historic creek channel to restore the wetlands. This work is funded by the Oeser Settlement Fund. Geoff Middaugh commented that it will be important to ensure that the right trees are planted. Geoff said that many of the trees on the site previously were cottonwoods and asked what was done with them when they were removed. Gina stated that the trees that were not contaminated remain on site; smaller trees were chipped and reused on site. Trees located in the contaminated areas were sent to a landfill. Gina stated that the EPA estimates that Oeser will complete the cleanup activity by the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of October.

**V. BOARD REPORTS:**

- A. Cordata Park:** Adrienne Lederer reported that trail construction in Cordata Park is close to completion. The neighborhood is planning a dedication, but the date has not yet been set. Adrienne brought photos of the bridge construction at Cordata Park for those interested in viewing them.
- B. Boulevard Over Water Walkway:** Geoff Middaugh asked when Pattle Point Trestle will be closed for renovations. Gina responded that the contractor proposes to close it beginning Monday, September 13.

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Jane Blume announced that Mark Peterson is resigning his position as Board Chair due to family time constraints. Jane asked Board members to consider serving in this capacity. Nominations and the vote for a new Chair will take place at the October meeting.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:** The September 2010 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was adjourned by consent at 9:03 a.m.

Approved: Jane Blume, Acting Chair  
Attest: Liz Haveman, Secretary