

Langley Parks & Open Space Commission minutes of 6-11-15 meeting

present were: Gail Fleming, Nancy Rowan, Marianne Edain recording

in the audience were 2 potential commission members, Guy Burnalko (?) and Dan Haldeman

The meeting began with Guy and Dan introducing themselves and talking a bit about their interest in the POS.

Gail brought up the work plan, including the proposed trail from the Highland to the city's well-head, the wetland behind the middle school, and the wish to finish that as a loop trail. We still need to map the wetlands to be able to lay out the trail.

Dan suggested seeking state or federal recreational funding for an inter-connected trail system.

Marianne pointed out that some of these trails are outside Langley's city limits and suggested approaching Island County about partnering on such a system.

Nancy suggested including South Whidbey Parks & Rec in such a partnership.

Dan spoke of wanting a skateboard park. He was not clear on the difference between city and county.

Nancy stressed the political history and lack of funding. She said that we need to define what we're doing and revise and publicize our work – and the next mayor will have a whole new agenda.

Dan brought up how people use the waterfront park(s) and the lack of connection between city and waterfront. He definitely does not want a funicular but does want a connection.

Gail mentioned the Seawall Park to Marina issue and the eminent domain controversy.

Nancy talked about the Middle Langley trail, the 4th and Park right of way, and how they are unknown to the public so unused. She mentioned the simple proposal to move the many benches from in front of the post office to other viewing locations and the inertia which has prevented that.

Dan asked how the public can make its wishes known.

We all agree that they should come to POS meetings and address the commission.

Dan says he's been telling the kids to come to city council meetings.

Guy suggests speaking at the high school and to KSER radio. He is more interested in eco-social philosophy, and in Langley based unpaved trails.

Gail reports having reached out to the high school arts classes for the POS logo and brochure, with varying degrees of success.

Guy suggests inviting Skagit Valley College students, which we all find an excellent idea.

Nancy says that with a new school administration there is a different attitude, which might allow for rehab at the middle school. And there is also new fair management.

Guy reports that the new fair manager is in fact looking for ideas.

It is agreed that the middle school and fairgrounds offer potential.

Guy asks how many hours per month he might be expected to put into service on POS, as he is jealous of his time.

Gail responded that it is up to the individual, that some people take on independent projects, and there is no pressure.

Nancy talks about communicating with city council on issues such as Noble Creek.

Guy asks if he could attend meetings without joining the board and is assured that he is most welcome.

Gail explains the application and appointment process which involves submitting an application which is first reviewed by Public Works director Stan, then by Mayor Fred, and finally approved by council.

There was a discussion of trails from upper Langley to Coles Road and the fact that there is some confusion about whether the public is free to walk across the lands of Talking Circle. Sometimes people are welcome and at other times they are challenged. The policy at Talking Circle on this question appears to be in flux.

Gail raised the issue of the brochure with map, and the need for landowner permission if a trail across their property was to be included in the map. This led to a discussion of the various issues around such permission, having to do with liability, adverse possession, and privacy, among others.

Guy brought up the public health aspects of having a trail system and encouraging outdoor exercise, along with keeping pedestrians separated from motor vehicles.

Gail and Marianne talked about inviting Kate Wolf to speak in Langley on the benefits of green spaces and the health impacts of access to the outdoors.

There was a discussion of scheduling upcoming meetings. It was decided that the 2nd Thursday of the month, from 3:00 to 5:00 would work for all present, as well as for Stan. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 9.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15.