

Langley Parks & Open Space Commission 8-13-15 4:00 pm minutes

present were: Nancy Rowan, Gail Fleming, Marianne Edain recording
staff: Public Works director Stan Berryman, Planning director Michael Davolio
audience: Guy Berneko, Arts Commission chair Frank Rose

Nancy read the minutes of the 6-11-15 meeting. Guy Berneko asked that the spelling of his name be corrected. The minutes were approved with that one correction.

Mr Davolio explained that Frank Rose was representing the Arts Commission, which wishes to have a liaison with other city boards.

Mr Davolio handed out copies of the Parks, Open Space, and Trails element of the city's comprehensive plan. He asked the POS to review and critique the element, and to submit comments to the PAB.

Gail asked for consistency in the city's language. Some documents continue to refer to a Parks, Open Space, and Waterfront element. The proper reference is Parks, Open Space, and Trails.

The POS members agreed to read and critique the element individually. These will be posted to Stan, who will compile and distribute. At a subsequent meeting a final draft will be produced for presentation to the PAB.

Mr Rose introduced himself and said that the Arts Commission is tasked with bringing new and exciting public art to Langley. They have thus far installed the art on 2nd Street and produced a walking guide. They are now considering Seawall Park as a site for public art. The Arts Commission would like to work together with POS to identify appropriate sites. The Arts Commission is currently seeking a grant to fund a 6 year plan/ Seawall Park package. They are looking for a consortium of artist, architect, and engineer to devise a plan. They will need to maintain views, make the art handicapped accessible, and help generate revenue for the city. This could be accomplished by providing a venue for weddings, picnics, and special events. They are looking into something which would draw children, perhaps a water feature. The city would charge for use of the space for scheduled events. POS looks forward to working with the Arts Commission. Mr Rose asked that the Arts Commission receive POS meeting notices and agendas, and offered reciprocity. The Arts Commission meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 9:30 am in city hall.

This led to a discussion of how this might impact private property owners in proximity, and the need to identify the boundaries.

Gail presented a copy of a booklet produced some time ago by Harrison Goodall with color photos and maps of many Langley parks. Stan agreed to make copies of the booklet, as it is a wonderful resource.

Nancy handed out copies of a portion of the Langley Municipal Code which outlines the duties and responsibilities of the POS. This was provided by Gail as a guide to the business of POS.

Nancy led a discussion about the many maps depicting Langley's history, parks, businesses, gardens, and more. One map is posted in front of city hall. That was sponsored by the chamber of commerce, which now has the capacity to edit the map as information changes. There are actually 4 of these maps posted, the one at city hall, one at the marina, and 2 at the ends of Frick Lane.

It was determined that the chamber of commerce maps are accurate, but there is a 6 month lag between change on the ground and that change being reflected on the maps.

Frank Rose said that there is work in progress to document the locations of public art. This would lead either to a brochure or to electronic availability.

There was a discussion about trails, on both public and private land, and what POS can post publicly vs what it can not. The Upper Langley development is bringing some of these issues to a head. Mr Davolio pointed out that one of the conditions of approval of that development was provision of a trail accessible from Al Anderson Road. He (and the developers of Upper Langley) would like to see that trail connect further, but there is no legal access at present.

It was agreed that a list of all property owners whose lands are crossed by trails is necessary. The question is, what can the city offer those landowners in exchange for allowing an easement for the public to walk trails on their property. Landowners are concerned about privacy, liability, and vandalism. It was proposed that Kathleen Landel be invited to address the POS about the benefits of granting public access for trails on private property. Kathleen has researched the subject.

There was also a question about how to deal with portions of trails beyond the city limits. It was concluded that it was within the mandate of POS to negotiate inter-local agreements with other jurisdictions, which would help with continuity. It was suggested that a trail easement might reduce property taxes. The conclusion was that the reduction would be minimal but future sale prices might suffer. This theory was challenged, as the experience with other trails was that landowners resisted originally, but then found their property values increased with the presence of the trail.

There was discussion of the possibility of promoting some existing trails with video, with the intent of developing support for making these official trails. The various legal options were discussed: eminent domain, prescriptive easement, and positive inducements to landowners.

Guy wanted to address the eco-social context of trails. He sees the historic mentality of commodification of land, resources, and people. He would like to make Langley known for its genuine engagement with a 21st century eco-social sensibility.

The city budget, and POS's place in that budget, was discussed. Boards do not receive funding. Rather, the department with which they are associated receives funds for projects promoted by boards. The process is that POS makes a recommendation to Stan, who includes the item in his budget request. The following proposal was made for Stan to include in next Tuesday's budget meeting: \$1000.00 for plant salvage and capillary bed construction. \$2000.00 for signage. \$3000.00 for wetland mapping/delineation in Middle Earth in preparation for trail construction there. The total request is \$6000.00. POS needs to be present at the 8-18-15 city council budget meeting, 1:00 – 3:00.

Gail reported on a discussion with Gary Piper, realtor for Ted Noble, about the Noble Creek property. It has been for sale for a long time and Ted is ready to reduce the price. The \$175,000.00 from Conservation Futures has probably fallen through. Gail expresses concern for the potential 22 houses which could be built on that property. It is too late for the city to raise the funds to buy the land. Gary Piper did not know the new price, but did say he had a potential buyer for one of the two parcels. Many ideas were discussed, with no obvious solution. Stan was requested to investigate the status of the \$175k Conservation Futures grant.

Gail asked that we renew efforts to schedule a public event with Kate Wolfe. The aim is to demonstrate the economic development benefits of retaining open spaces. Marianne agreed to contact Ms Wolfe.

The next meeting of the POS will be 9-10-15, at 3:00 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.