

## Minutes of 7-14-14 meeting of Langley Parks & Open Space Commission

Present were: commissioners Gail Fleming, Nancy Rowan, and Marianne Edain, recording

Stan Berryman, Public Works

Doug Coutts, South Whidbey Parks & Recreation

Rene Neff, in her personal capacity

Sue Walsh, Ann ?, and Diane ?, all residents of the Highlands

Because commissioner Rowan was late, informal discussion began with the residents of the Highlands. There was word that a park was being proposed in the development and they were seeking information. Mr Berryman said there were no plans at present, just discussion, and that some form of joint effort was likely to result. The residents asked that the planning process for such a park begin. They point out that the Highlands is building out quickly, and they are weighing their options. The park site is public property, but is in the middle of their neighborhood. It consists of 2.5 acres, with no provision for parking. It is a watershed protection area, and its topography is literally a pit. The city has access from Fairgrounds Road. The residents offer some resources, are hoping for a partnership, and would like to have some public meetings.

Gail asked what their vision for the site was, and they responded: no skateboard park or baseball diamond. They were hesitant about a playground, asking that it be limited.

Rene Neff spoke on behalf of the Shakespeare Festival. They are looking for an alternative to the Middle School site and believe this might be a good option. It has the option for landscaping, a small amphitheater, which could serve for the theatre, concerts in the park, etc. The Shakespeare Festival would want use of the site for 7 – 10 weekends/year. As for parking, they would have people park at the middle school and walk up the trail, with a drop-off and shuttle option as needed. The Shakespeare Festival could pair with the city for foundation grants. The only available renderings show the middle school site. The city would tend the surrounding gardens. The developer, Erl Bangston, claims that such maintenance is the city's responsibility. At present Mr Bangston maintains the park site and pathways around it. Those are not dedicated to the city, but their maintenance was required in the development permit. There is also a requirement to retain and maintain the trees in "tract A."

Ms Neff explained that the Shakespeare Festival is not moving but expanding. The site at the middle school is considered not very inviting, and the school district does not want to see changes in the landscaping at that site. She sees this expansion as a tourist draw, and so a benefit to economic development. She says they have reviewed a number of sites, and this one seems the best possibility. It must be public property. The Highland park is city land. Attendance would be in the range of +/- 120 people /performance. Mr Kent Philpps, a landscape architect, has volunteered his services for this project.

Sue Walsh responded that the locals want covered picnic tables, fire pits, and landscaping. The park is public and she is concerned about the intensity of the

public/private interface. She says that some people are NIMBYs and asks for a public meeting in September to present her group's research and to ask the public's opinions. This entire discussion is prompted by the fact that Mr Bangston is finishing his obligations to the project and residents of the Highlands want to make use of the "closing" resources.

Gail asked how residents would feel about having the public in their midst. The response was that they would be surprised and would need some education.

Ms Diane reports that they met with Jeff Arango, who sent them to the POS to initiate a public process.

On the map Tract C is the park site. The pit under discussion is actually a retention/detention pond which was never planted.

Gail asked Mr Berryman to research the planning file for the Highlands, to find any relevant maintenance agreements, to find any information about the site, any hydrological studies, and information about the trail on the circumference, such as who maintains it, since it is privately owned, and the homeowners' association agreement. All of this information will be discussed at the next meeting, August 11, 2014.

Returning to the regular agenda, the minutes were approved as written.

Commissioner Cathy Waymire-Rooks has neither appeared at a meeting nor resigned. This is causing a problem. It was agreed to communicate with Ms Rooks to ask her to make a formal resignation.

The council meeting at which commissioner Rowan presented the POS work plan and asked for certain code revisions, was discussed.

~ at an upcoming city council meeting, POS needs to ask council to approve the amended duties, which will be an amendment to Langley Municipal Code. There is no need for a council member to sit on the POS, although their presence is welcome. It was pointed out that councilman Thomas Gill attends PAB meetings.

~ we discussed how to get POS projects included in the city's budget. Budget planning begins in September.

~ we discussed how to push action on Noble Creek. It was agreed that commissioner Rowan would meet with mayor Fred to ask how to proceed. Ms Rowan wants a conscious decision from city council. The entire POS feels the need for a commitment from city council. Ms Rowan will ask mayor Fred for authority to approach the landowner and/or his representative on behalf of the city.

The annual work plan was reviewed and approved, with the addition of one item: build capillary holding beds at the sewage treatment site. The work plan items need to be re-numbered to reflect this addition.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm

