

Minutes
Parks and Open Space Commission
January 14, 2016

Present were: Gail Fleming, Marianne Edain recording

City clerk Debbie Mahler presented both Gail and Marianne with copies of a Public Records Request. This generated much discussion.

Gail reported that several people had proposed that Parks & Open Space subsume itself under the Planning Advisory Board. She expressed surprise with the abrupt resignation of Nancy Rowan and had concerns about the continued viability of POS without a quorum. She said that both Jeff Arango and PAB chair Sue Walsh had put forward the idea of a merger. Gail said she had resisted the notion for some years, but thought now was perhaps a time to investigate the possibilities. Marianne suggested meeting with Sue Walsh to consider the idea. One proposal was that since the PAB is now meeting twice a month, it could continue with that schedule, with one meeting addressing planning issues and the second addressing POS issues. This would involve asking the PAB for the formal rules concerning membership and participation.

The upcoming report to the city council was discussed, and it was agreed that Marianne would prepare a report on what the POS has done in the last year and what it proposes to do in the coming year. Under what is done: comp plan element review and update, including a review of the goals and policies, with quotes of specific comp plan goals.

Under 2016 proposed work plan, there are 4 items:

1. Noble Creek – we hope to return to the Conservation Futures board with a revised application, and to seek funding from other sources, primarily the Recreation and Conservation Office of the state, which offers grants for exactly this sort of acquisition. Gail asked specifically about the status of Noble Creek from Edgecliff to the shore.
2. Bluff management – we hope to work with Mayor Tim to determine the scope of the proposed bluff stability study. Aspects of such a study must include physical infrastructure, regulations, and vegetation management.
3. Trails – identify existing trails. Identify holes in the trail system. Give priority to completing the Middle Earth trail. Coordinate with the South Whidbey School District to connect trails in and out of the city. Identify those portions of trails which are on public and on private lands. Years ago POS, with help of Kathleen Landel, created a list of properties which host trails, and the owners of those properties. The challenge now is to find that list, as well as to create an information sheet on the benefits to landowners of granting a trail easement.
4. Plant salvage – a site has been identified as an appropriate location for capillary holding beds to store salvaged plants. There is much work to create an actual program of plant salvage, as well as building the capillary beds.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00