

11-10-14

Langley Parks and Open Space Commission

meeting minutes

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

absent was: Stan Berryman, Public Works director

The meeting packet included: agenda, a Priorities List reflecting the needs of all parks entities on south Whidbey, an inventory of properties owned and/or maintained by each entity, a draft Memorandum of Understanding outlining a possible partnership agreement relating to maintenance of various parks.

There were no minutes from the meeting of 10-13-14 because the recording secretary was absent and no minutes were taken.

In the absence of Public Works director Berryman it was not possible to have an in-depth discussion of the meetings with Island County Parks, South Whidbey Parks & Rec, and the Port district.

The city's budget and allocations for POS were discussed at length. The request for funding is before the city council but no action has been taken yet. Because Mr Berryman was absent it was not possible to ask him what he had presented to council. Gail reports that Mr Doug Coutts, of South Whidbey Parks & Rec was very supportive and advocated that POS ask for sufficient funds to carry out its mission. The mayor's response to an informal funding talk was that the city's focus this year is Economic Development, and he does not see Parks and Open Space as relevant to that endeavor. **The mayor's entire focus this year is on increasing retail sales and local business.**

The POS commissioner therefore concludes that all requests need to be couched in terms of the potential to contribute to economic development. POS asserts that Langley's shops are not what draw people into town. Rather, it is the rural quality of the area, the slower lifestyle, the views, and the general ambience. Once people come to Langley for those reasons, they visit the shops and other businesses. Nancy cited a conversation with clients who said "tell them Georgie Anne and Dave asked for a map of where all the parks are." POS will attempt to quantify some of the favorable economic impacts of parks and open space. It was agreed that it would be necessary to demonstrate an economic benefit from each POS budget request. It was proposed that POS members should appear at the 11-17-14 council meeting and bring up the budget issue if appropriate. The budget will be finalized in December.

The Langley Lift proposal was discussed. There has been a shift in attitude since the meeting of 10-6-14 when it seemed all but inevitable. The project is on long-term hold.

The matter of Langley's shrinking UGA was brought up in relation to loss of tree protection. Once the land is outside the UGA, Langley's tree protection ordinance will no longer apply. It was proposed to ask Island County if it would be willing to adopt Langley's tree protection ordinance for lands newly outside the UGA as part of an interlocal agreement.

There was discussion of the various documents, including in particular the park property inventory. The City of Langley list includes parcels which have not thus far been on the list of park properties. It was proposed that POS map the various parcels and examine them for consistency with the current comp plan element.

There was also discussion of the implications of a proposal made to enter into a memorandum of agreement concerning parks maintenance and management. While cooperative management is a good thing, there had evidently been talk of creating a single island-wide agency which would oversee all the existing parks agencies. This will require a good deal of discussion and consideration. POS was somewhat dismayed to have been left out of this discussion.

The meeting adjourned about 5:00 pm.