

Langley POS meeting, minutes 9-8-14

Present were commissioners Nancy Rowan, Gail Fleming, and Marianne Edain recording, with Stan Berryman, staff

The minutes of the August 11, 2014 meeting were approved as read.

The issue of park development at the Highlands was discussed. It appears that now that the Shakespeare Festival has looked elsewhere for a site, the Highlands community would like the Parks and Open Space commission to hold off on plans to develop a park on the city's site there. Stan reported that the park site is being used by developer Erl Bangston for stockpiling soil from housing development at the Highlands. There appear to be very few or no records of what was intended for the site and who has responsibility for maintenance of the two retention/detention ponds on site. The commission agreed that it is necessary to document, to whatever extent possible, the present situation at the site, to create a 'baseline' from which to move forward. The question was put forward as to what use is best for this site, whether a passive use developed park or simply as open space/natural area.

This led to a discussion of what would be required to restore the area to a natural condition. The weeds, predominantly blackberries, Scot's broom, English holly, and English ivy, need to be removed and replaced with native shrubs.

Which led to a discussion of creating a plant salvage program, with capillary holding beds at the sewage treatment facility. Stan agreed to arrange an on-site meeting to determine the best location for the holding beds.

Commissioner Rowan reported on a long discussion with Mayor McCarthy on a number of subjects. The still hanging issue of Noble Creek was brought up and Mayor McCarthy reported that the council liked the idea of purchase but found the price too steep, so did not include it in the budget. It appears no representative of the city has yet approached the landowner or his agent. Ms Rowan, as a professional realtor, would be ideal for this, but needs to have a mandate from the city to move forward. It appears that there is some confusion on the part of the mayor and council as to whether the city is attempting to obtain only a trail easement on the Noble property or the entire parcel. Mayor McCarthy suggested that the Parks and Open Space commission present on a more regular basis to the council, to discuss the various questions that continue to arise.

The municipal code revisions concerning the POS work plan and mandate have not yet been written or presented to council. They should be ready by the next meeting.

The question was raised as to whether the tree protection ordinance, in the works for years, has been passed by council. Stan reported that it is on the agenda for a vote this coming Monday, September 15. The question was then raised, if the ordinance passes, how will residents be made aware of the new requirements? The POS determined that

Stan would ask planner Jeff Arango to write a short statement for inclusion in the water bills which are distributed to all residents and property owners.

There was a discussion of the proposed Langley Lift and how the POS commission should react. It was concluded that the POS commission would create a memo to be presented by Stan to the council. The memo will include the following point:

1. Cascade Walkway is a designated city park. As such it falls under the purview of the POS commission.
2. The city's Shoreline Master Program, at 4.9.1 contains the following language: "development, uses, and activities on or near the shoreline should not impair or detract from the public's visual access to the water."
3. The Langley Lift, as currently proposed, does impair and detract from the public's visual access, and therefore the POS opposes the project as presently proposed.
4. The POS commission proposes that the city study all potential means of access to the wharf/waterfront area which do not impair or detract from the public's visual access to the water.
5. The POS commission asks the city to document the need for such access, including documentation of any measurable gain and research into why this is a priority, including whether it still is a priority.

Aside from the Langley Lift issue, a question was raised about boaters, including how many visit Langley in any given month/year; what activities they participate in; and where they are coming from. That information would prove useful in future planning.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm