



Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

Thursday, October 15, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm with the following park board members in attendance:

Elizabeth Detillion, John Semrau, Kerri Cook, and Tim Manns,

Staff Member: Brian Adams

There were no additional matters raised by the public, beyond issues already on the agenda. The agenda was passed by those present without any changes. The minutes were passed with edits to a typo, as well as changes to language under the discussion item concerning the Veterans' Park concept for NSRA. It's important to note that the war relics in the plan were not prioritized in the 2002 master plan for the park.

Board Discussion

Northern State Gateway Center EIS Letter:

The letter was signed by those present. The 'e' will be "whited out" at the end of Kerri Cook's name. Concerns about the road were reiterated. It should be noted that the bridge has a very low load restriction. It can't be used in its present form for vehicles other than very light weight equipment such as lawn mowers and half ton trucks. Brian will meet with the project proponents to discuss this issue further.

Cavanaugh Park Discussion

There are 16 acres with a lowland bog on Bamboo Lane that has been offered for public-use by the current landowners. Another acre connecting the parcel to the Creek and Lake is now being offered as well. Shoreline connectivity is one of the more important surveyed needs in the comprehensive plan. Although the property is quite a distance from other parks, presenting challenges to ongoing maintenance, it holds value for future public use. The question is centered on whether we should acquire it but let it stay in the current format, at least in the interim. The neighbors currently use the trails much like they are an extension of the neighborhood. The State Parks Department acquires and holds land for future use as a part of their long-term planning, often purchasing lands as they become available in areas that fit into their 25 year plan. It would seem prudent for Skagit County to consider this property for future need. Populations increase at an annual rate of 2% in Skagit County and waterfront lands are becoming less available with each year.

Skagit County has an example of lands being held for future use, as the needs arise. The park property near Rexville hasn't been used for general public use, although the neighbors reportedly use it for viewing colorful fields during tulip

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season. When these prime recreational land acquisition opportunities arise we need to consider the potential uses, especially when the properties come at no cost. All lakes should have a site for public access to ensure they are made available to all. If there are no public access points in coveted areas, the desirable places become only affordable to those that can afford it. John mentioned the issues with neighbors not wanting the public accessing their neighborhood. He asked staff to check on the zoning.

NSRA Mitigation:

If dry land is encumbered for mitigation, the loss of recreational land would need to be mitigated. A conservation easement on uplands is a bad deal. Upland property only computes to 1 acres of wetland mitigation value for every per 20 acres of protected upland. John mentioned the need for mitigation for parks projects, noting that fewer acres remain for development since the plan was completed in 2002. Maybe only 100 acres remain for park projects? The footprint has been reduced with new critical area policies. Tim stated he was not a proponent of upland being used for wetland impacts. Creating new wetlands and improving current wetlands should be the objective for wetlands that are destroyed or compromised. Tim advocated saying "no" based on principle. The board members agreed that the 20 to 1 mitigation didn't make sense. They agreed that the 4.4 acres the parks dept. manages north of the park could be made available to PW for either a mitigation project (or simply encumbered with a deed restriction that protects the land). Goals and objectives should be established for parklands being used for mitigation projects. RCO will be weighing in with their opinions. A letter will be created, vetted, and signed stipulating the Board's position.

Staff Report:

No Skagit money will be utilized for the acquisition of the 6.3 acres needed to make the Tursi Trail more conducive to a greater number of users. The acquisition will also provide value as a wildlife corridor. There was no appeal to the current configuration so the trail is now officially under construction.

Youth Athletic Field Grant was approved. We will have \$150k in grant funds made available to us for 2016 for the Otto Wallberg Field. Skagit County will be matching funds.

Acquisitions: a report was given about the cathedral tree on Fidalgo Island. It was discovered that the tree is on Park property. It was thought to be on private property until recently when a GPS was used to show its actual location.

NSRA Veterans Park has a water challenge. Water is perhaps \$300k from the site. A project phase without the bathroom is considered but the without a fire hydrant, we may not be able to secure a building permit.

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Adjourn

Next Meeting: December 17, 2015