

Parks, Recreation and Fair Board Minutes

Thursday, November 21, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm with the following Park Board members in attendance:

Board Members Present: Barry Brower, Greg Francioch, Jose Riefkohl, John Semrau, Tim Manns, Elizabeth, and Kevin Loy

Staff Members and Representatives: Brian Adams

A motion was made to approve the November Agenda. The motion to approve the minutes and agenda was approved and passed unanimously.

Board Discussion:

Renaming Filippini and New NSRA Bridge

Big Rock: The Board endorses combining the native name “Yudwasta” with the traditional name “Big Rock” in a hybrid naming approach.

Hilt Creek Park: our donators aren’t supportive of the park being named after themselves. Elizabeth thought that we should investigate whether there is an indigenous name affiliated with the waterfall or creek. Brian will reach out to Scott Schuyler.

NSRA Bridge name: several names were discussed. The name won’t be affiliated with a person so a resolution won’t be necessary. Staff will research and name the bridge before the end of the year.

Pressentin Restroom Options:

After conducting a structural and cosmetic review of the Good Foods building, our architect provided an estimate of \$500K for renovations. However, constructing a new building with an identical design would cost \$100K to \$150K less. While the current building has space for an interpretive display, there is uncertainty about whether a partner would be willing to utilize the space. Tim expressed concerns that an empty interpretive space, especially if it remains closed most of the time, might send the wrong message to the public. He suggested that wayside exhibits along the trail might offer more value to visitors. Elizabeth raised the question of whether relocating the structure could provide additional benefits.

John inquired about the timeline for the Balise House. The house is expected to be put on the market in the spring. All easement work has been completed, and the waterlines are in place. There were also questions regarding potential vandalism and how best to protect the buildings from damage or ill intent. One possible solution discussed was positioning the restroom doors at the front of the building to help mitigate these concerns.

There is also uncertainty about whether Good Foods is perceived as a true community icon. Brian will follow up with Will Honea and the owner of the taproom to gather their opinions. Tim suggested reaching out to the Cooke Family (neighbors across the street) as a potential resource.

Honor Bench Program and Expectations:

Honor Bench Program: Guidelines and Expectations

The Parks Advisory Board emphasizes the importance of setting clear expectations for the Honor Bench Program, ensuring participants understand that the bench dedication is not in perpetuity. The program's duration will align with the anticipated lifespan of the bench.

A formal resolution, signed by the Board, will outline the program's terms so customers fully understand their purchase. The Parks Department aims to honor individuals with a meaningful gesture—a bench—without equating it to permanent memorialization akin to a plot of land.

This approach reflects the department's role in providing community amenities rather than acting as a caretaker for permanent memorials.

New Members:

Brian is meeting with Gery Cardenas from the MV area. Gery has worked in several capacities throughout the country. He came to Skagit County to be closer to his daughters and really loves the area. Brian will introduce Gery with Peter Browning if the initial meeting goes well.

Reports:

HMSP: We are prepping the site for the modular restroom. The prep work will be completed before February 15 and the unit will arrive March of 2025. We hope to have our online reservation system up and running by January 1, 2025. The interpretive center deck will be completed before mid-December in preparation of the eagle watching season.

NSRA: We are working on the newest footbridge and will be ready to open the bridge and loop trail by January 1. Our discussions with The Port, Hospital District, and SW continue to be productive. We invited a consultant to discuss ways of creatively and sensitively recognizing the history of NSRA, i.e. the indigenous population, the patients, staff, etc.

Recreation: With fall programs all in mid-season, we're actively registering and planning for our winter season that will include our single largest program of the year, the Boys SWISH Basketball League. We expect to once again have 120+ teams participating in our Boys SWISH Basketball League from all over NW Washington, plus a few teams from British Columbia. This past weekend we hosted the annual Gobblers Classic, which is an Adult COED Volleyball Tournament. It's a rare adult event, which attracts competitive teams from all over western Washington. It really is a grass-roots event supported and promoted by the players themselves.

Acquisitions:

Filippini Falls: We appreciate the Planning Department for allowing the permit to progress prior to the agreement being completed. The purchase agreement will be finalized by early

December. This will allow us to pay the permit fees and help with other design costs. The Filippini Family has been very generous in paying for consultants, design, and environmental reports. We are still waiting for the WSDOT access permit.

Studley Community Park: The PSA has been signed and we will be recording the deed as soon as an additional form is signed by the Studley Family. We are scheduling a celebration in the hearing room in December.

Big Rock: The funds will be allocated during the 2025 legislative cycle and will become available in July of 2025. This project includes 20 acres of land that is being donated by Ellen Rak and William Dunlap. We are prepping the PSA and trailhead plan.

Adjourn