



Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

Thursday December 17, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm with the following park board members in attendance:

Board Members present: Tim Manns, Jason Benson, John Semrau, and Chris Allen

Staff Members and Representatives: Brian Adams

Public: Louie Requa presented his proposal for expended recreational opportunities at NSRA

Louie presented the conceptual plan and masterplan elements for NSRA. The Commissioners pledged \$3,000,000 at the time which was to be allocated over the course of several years. The funds were to be used for building the ballfields but due to the limits of water and septic, the plan was put on hold. Louie proposed a scaled back plan for mowing the field near the Helmick parking lot and opening it up for practice fields. Louie believes they have the 'horsepower' to make this an easy transition with help from Rotary Club and a core of volunteers. They would like to see the fields at NSRA mowed so that the nesting Bitterns relocate to the areas 'inside the berms' and within the designated alluvial fan. This would allow the area that was planned for active recreation to remain available for ballfields.

Discussion: Tim mentioned we need to make sure we stay within the requirements of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If the fields were cut early enough and often enough it would keep the birds from nesting in the areas they have been nesting in. Jason asked about the 'territorial behavior' of the Bitterns and about the number of nesting pairs currently utilizing the area. Tim inventoried the area the best he could considering the length of grass in the field and thought there were at least three active pairs in 2020. Jason asked if more research could be done so we have a better understanding of when the nesting begins, buffer requirements, and impacts of nearby activities on the birds. Tim felt there was a way in which we can protect the birds and increase recreational use. Brian had concerns about increasing ballfields with such a limited staff but thought a practice field was much more palatable than a formal complex at this time. An MOU would need to be put together to ensure success. Brian said he would research the resolutions regarding the prior commitment to the facility. Tim will do further research on the behavior of Bitterns and come up with specific recommendations.

Board Discussion

E-Bikes:

The e-bike discussion continues with support from the Skagit Trail Builders. Tim would like to see more research done regarding the policies of other local jurisdictions. He would like a clear policy and felt it may be worth having public meetings and hearing about future policies. There should be an opportunity for public comment and open process. John would like to see the e-bike policies reflect the same policies as mountain bikes. Brian will research how other local agencies are addressing this growing issue.

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Park Naming Policies:

The Board was informed that a naming policy application will be coming their way. The proposal will be for the new soccer fields once known as the "Rogers Fields." The mitigation efforts are complete and a permit will be issued shortly. The final piece to the permit is the commitment for wetland mitigation bank credits. The policies of the resolution will be followed.

Park Board Recruitment:

We are still working on this. We may have a new District #1 recruit. The resolution should be signed later in the month. The new recruit has a military background and lives in Anacortes. He retires from the military this spring. Brian will send on his bio in the next update.

Staff Report:

Brian said he will send an update later in December.

Adjourn: 6:35pm.

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