



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

September 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

- PRESENT:** Maggi Kriger, John Blethen, Brian Bressler, Ray Dellecker, Jeannie Gilbert, Jed Holmes, Zarah Manju, Jessica Sankey and Steve Walker
- ABSENT:** Asa Deane
- STAFF:** Gina Austin, Melissa Bianconi, Peter Gill, Richard Griffin, Steve Janiszewski, Nicole Oliver, Bree Park, Laine Potter, Caryn Regimbal, Jonathan Schilk, and Lauren Woodmansee
- VISITORS:** Annette Bagley, Teresa Bowers, Maryann Heath, Jack Herring, Sky Leuba, Barbara Matchey, David Martucci, John Roney, Rachel Ustorf, and Skip Williams (City Council Representative)

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 am by Chair, Maggi Kriger.

I. **AGENDA REVIEW:**

There were no changes made to the agenda.

II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

John Blethen noted that native plants were removed along Padden Creek and believes it to be a potential fire hazard. Holly Miller is gathering E-Bike research throughout the country and will be back with a presentation in January.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Maggi Kriger voiced her concern for the lack of facilities available for the Bellingham Pickleball club. Teresa Bowers, Maryann Heath, Jack Herring, Sky Leuba, Barbara Matchey, David Martucci, and John Roney are members of various community dance groups who voiced their concerns regarding the potential fee increase at the Fairhaven Auditorium. Rachel Ustorf proposed the idea of renaming Boulevard Park to Henry King Memorial Park.

IV. **AUGUST MEETING MINUTES:**

Under the Director's Report, regarding Woodstock Weddings, the word project needs to read as "plan". A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes with proposed changes. Motion passed. John Blethen and Maggi Kriger abstain.

V. **NEW BUSINESS:**

a. **Facilities Use Fees:**

Melissa Bianconi and Caryn Regimbal presented the updated fee proposal for all park facilities. This included the research of facility rates and structures of cities similar to the size of Bellingham. Other major considerations included the impact of park users, local demand, and increasing costs in staff salary plus processing fees. A motion was made to recommend to Council the facility use fees, with provision for seasonal and single use rates at special use facilities. Motion passed.

- b. Bayview Cemetery Fees:
Richard Griffin presented an overview of the Bayview Cemetery rates. The current annual cost of maintenance and operations continues to grow at a rapid pace. The future goal is to eliminate the need to subsidize the cemetery and to cover all cemetery operations and maintenance costs by using the general fund. A motion was made to recommend the proposed cemetery rates to the City Council. Motion passed.
- c. Mid-Biennium Budget Requests Overview:
This agenda item was tabled to a later date.
- d. Pier at Squalicum Park:
Gina Austin provided a quick update regarding the Pier project at Squalicum Park. The shoreline permit has been received to complete safety improvements and will then be open to the public.

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- a. Trestle Removal Video:
A video of the Whatcom Falls Trestle demolition was shown and a quick update regarding the City's next steps was provided.
- b. Civic Athletic Complex Design Charrette Recap:
This item was tabled to a later date.
- c. Lorraine Ellis Park Update:
There was a minor setback with the installation of the playground equipment at Lorraine Ellis Park. The re-opening of the newly renovated park should be around the end of October 2023.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The board adjourned to Executive Session at 9:23am. The meeting was called back to order at 9:33am. A motion was made to approve the purchase of property #1. Motion passed. A motion was made to approve the purchase of property #2. Motion passed. A motion was made to pursue due diligence on property #3. Motion passed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: The September 13, 2023, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board meeting was adjourned by consent at 9:39 am.