



# PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

## December 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes

- PRESENT:** Brian Bressler, Steve Walker, Ray Dellecker, Jed Holmes, Maggi Kriger, Holly Miller, Scott Pratschner, and Zarah Manju
- ABSENT:** Asa Deane, Jeannie Gilbert, and Jessica Sankey
- STAFF:** Gina Austin, Melissa Bianconi, Peter Gill, Steve Janiszewski, Paul Knippel, Nicole Oliver, Bree Park, Laine Potter, Caryn Regimbal, Taylor Webb, and Lauren Woodmansee
- VISITORS:** Buddy Chapman, Mark Hall, Austin Scheffer, Stan Snapp, and Skip Williams (Council Representative)

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 am by Chair, Brian Bressler

- I. **AGENDA REVIEW:**  
There were no changes to the agenda.
- II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**  
Scott Pratschner announced that there was an article published via the Matador Network, which named Bellingham the best adventure destination in 2024.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
Buddy Chapman shared his vision for becoming an alternative source for plastic recycling and repurposing plastic into benches. Stan Snapp, the Whatcom Environmental Council Representative, shared his support for the Greenways Advisory Committee and the Park Board Advisory Board.
- IV. **NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES:**  
A motion was made to approve the November meeting minutes. Motion passed. Holly Miller abstains.
- V. **NEW BUSINESS:**
  - a. **Storybrook Park Art Update:**  
Taylor Webb, Developmental Specialist for Planning & Community Development, shared an update that the arts jury has selected the finalist and concept for the art display at Storybrook Park. The exact location of where the art will be displayed has yet to be determined. That specific decision will be presented to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for final approval, at a future meeting.
  - b. **2025 Officers:**  
A motion was made to re-nominate Brian Bressler as Chair. Motion passed. A motion was made to re-nominate Steve Walker as Vice-Chair. Motion passed.

- c. PROS Plan Update:  
Staff presented slides on planned updates to the 2026 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The committee was asked provide feedback on the draft chapters, with focus on trail connections and recommendations in the plan. The integration of the PROS plan into the Bellingham Plan will be a two-step process, with the parks chapter updated in April 2025 and the full PROS Plan updated by the end of 2025.
  
- d. Dog Off Leash Signage:  
Steve Janiszewski requested a change in how the dog off leash hours are managed at Bloedel Donovan Park. To protect the turf, stormwater system, and water quality of Lake Whatcom, the proposal is to restrict dogs from access to the park turf areas on the north side of the park from October 1 through May 31 and direct them to the open field south of the parking lot. Access to the beach areas will not be affected. A motion was made to adopt the off-leash signage for turf protection. Motion passed.
  
- e. Civic Athletic Complex Public Engagement:  
Nicole Oliver shared a summary of the public engagement survey on the Civic Complex Master Plan update. The City and Bellingham School District staff are working together to refine Option 1 and will be evaluating and incorporating the feedback we received into a preferred alternative to be released to the public in January.

**VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

The City has entered into a new, four-year lease agreement with Washington Sports and Recreation, focusing on their control over the building's interior and the City's responsibility for the shell and asset. The Chuckanut Center lease will be modified and extended, with a renewed lease addressing their rental of garden plots. Nicole Oliver encouraged the group to read the Mayor's executive order regarding housing, which includes plans by the administration and City Council. The bow hunting event at Galbraith Mountain was successful. The Northern Lights Park is about to be completed, with an official ribbon cutting ceremony to be held January 2025.

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

There was no executive session.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT:** The December 11, 2024, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board meeting was adjourned by consent at 9:17am.