

**MINUTES
CITY OF LANGLEY
PARKS & OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
October 27, 2008**

Leah Green, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Leah Green (Chair), Dave Schmidt, Cary Peterson,
Michael Cramer, Nancy Rowan

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Fred Evander, Kathleen Landel

Council Present: Rene Neff

MINUTES

Leah Green asked for approval of the October 13, 2008 minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously with the following corrections: add description of the Edgecliff tour route and the name of the neighborhood tour guide; add to Cedars tour the discussion on a private trail the used to connect the back of the Cedars to Welcome Road over private property that is now closed and would not be considered for being opened again.

Nancy Rowan mentioned that she will not be at the November 10, 2008 meeting.

AGENDA REVIEW

Leah Green reviewed the meeting agenda and asked if there were any items that needed to be added. There were no items to add.

TOUR DEBRIEF

Fred Evander facilitated a review of the three tours the commission had completed, using a PowerPoint of maps with tour spots. Members shared additional observations, issues and opportunities on each key tour spot. A list of general principles and themes were documented during the discussion. The additional comments and general principles will be incorporated into the *Compiled Tour Comments* document. As part of the PowerPoint Evander reviewed current Comp Plan policies related to parks and open space.

PLANNING IN WASHINGTON 101

Larry Cort, Director of Community Planning, provided an overview of planning. The Growth Management Act was passed in 1990 and has been amended almost annually. One of the foundational tenets is for governments to protect what is of value to the community in the way of natural areas. The focus is on growth being directed to existing urban areas and a new designation of the "Urban Growth Area" (UGA) for expanding growth.

The Langley UGA boundary was established in the late 1990s. The planning department has calculated that with the Langley UGA under current zoning, the city could handle a population up to 4000, which would take more than 300 years to reach under the current city growth rate. A moratorium is currently in place for subdivisions outside the downtown core.

Cort reviewed the county policy on parks and open space planning. Several years ago, the state mandated the addition of a parks and open space element as part of the Comp Plan. There is a lot of leeway on how to meet the general standards of the county and state and tailor it for Langley.

Cort said that the parks and open space element must be internally consistent with the existing Comp Plan. The planning department can be a guide for insuring consistency. The city needs to have a state-approved parks and open space element in order to be "certified" for state grant funds.

The question was asked if there are parameters for the UGA. Cort answered that the UGA is there to "capture" population growth needed beyond the city limits and that the city must plan for a greenbelt in the UGA.

Cort commented that cities must have a plan for critical areas, which is already in place for Langley.

The question was asked if the city can identify areas for protection of wildlife corridors, forests and wetlands. Cort answered that the city can be creative with regulations to protect these resources while allowing development. Some tools available are the clustering of housing and exercising transfer of development rights. Both tools can be used to protect natural resources while allowing higher housing density in areas without natural resources that need protecting. Cort explained that the city implements the Comp Plan through development regulations. The city must allow development but can use these types of development tools to maintain corridors for open space or needs to purchase development rights.

The question was asked if the city could require landowner education about wetlands. Cort replied that education is important and that the city has a relationship with the Whidbey Island Conservation District who has experts who are available to go out and talk to property owners. With the Highlands development, Low Impact Development (LID) guidelines are attached to title for each lot sale and each property owner is required to follow the guidelines. There was discussion on neighborhood associations also being a vehicle for education.

There was discussion about the current scenic right-of-way in the entrances to Langley, which are specified in the Comp Plan. There is a 50' buffer required from the road.

Larry Cort was thanked for participating in the meeting.

MEETING ASSESSMENT

The following comments were made:

- The general principles identified should be discussed further at on a future agenda.
- The PowerPoint questions at the end of the presentation will be emailed to the commission members by staff.
- A suggestion was made that when we have citizens attending to have the commission members introduce themselves, ask the citizens to introduce themselves and for the chair to review the opportunities for citizen comment.
- A comment was made that on tours it is important to keep the cohesion of the commission members so the group can do its work.
- Evander gave a homework assignment out of the commission binder. From the "Planning for Parks" document read pages 64 – 70.
- Landel passed around a copy of two resources mentioned by Rhonda Salerno on the last tour, Dan Burden's walkability report and a green infrastructure report. There is one set that can be borrowed and PDF files of the documents will be emailed to members.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 PM. The meeting was held at Langley City Hall. The next regular Parks & Open Space Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 10, 2008 at 2:30 PM. Minutes were taken by Kathleen Landel.