

**MINUTES
CITY OF LANGLEY
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION
August 24, 2009**

Chair Leah Green opened the meeting at 2:34 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Cary Peterson, Leah Green, David Schmidt, Nancy Rowan,
Gail Fleming

Staff Present: Fred Evander, Kathleen Landel

MINUTES

The Commission reviewed and approved the August 4, 2009 minutes.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

The discussion points recorded in the August 4, 2009 minutes were reviewed. Fred Evander handed out "Assumptions for the Open Space Level of Service" with four assumptions to discuss:

1. Critical areas are the foundation of the open space system.
2. Critical areas form a pre-existing corridor and core area system in and around the City of Langley.
3. Including critical areas and their buffers within the total of open space puts the City of Langley very close to (or over) its Level of Service for open space.
4. The Parks and Open Space Commission should change the 25 percent open space Level of Service to either a.) decrease the amount and not include critical areas or b.) increase the amount to accommodate the critical areas, buffers and additional open space.

The issue was raised that the assumption that critical areas should be part of the open space definition needs to be questioned.

Evander gave out two other handouts, "Getting a Location Specific Open Space Level of Service" and "Understanding the Open Space Level of Service" and stated several implications:

- The critical areas ordinance will require setting aside a lot of land for open space.
- Under the current open space definition certain areas will require certain landowners to provide a level of open space not equitable if the 25% requirement is applied to all properties.

- If critical areas are taken out of the open space definition then it would require property owners with critical areas to set aside not only the critical areas but also an additional 25%.

Evander asked the questions, "Do we need more than 25% LOS for open space?" and, "Is it a good thing that we are close to 25% currently?" He explained that we need to come up with a set of LOS rules that can be used to apply to setting aside open space.

The commissioners discussed the idea of using a location specific approach and made the following comments:

- We could identify the places to keep as open space and set-up defensible zones or areas of open space.
- Maybe it doesn't matter where the lines are drawn. We've learned from our inventory process where and what places matter; what is already protected and what is not protected that we want protected.
- Maybe we should establish a LOS for forest habitat and one for open agriculture and vistas.
- We should take an eco-system based approach. Where do critical areas intersect with areas of high open space value? The LOS should allow us to connect critical areas.
- What is the public access issue with open space and critical areas? Some areas should be for human use and others should not have public access.
- Should we use a LOS percentage approach versus a mapped approach? Maybe we could work backwards from the corridors and core areas map to determine where to use the percentage approach, and then ask landowners not impacted to contribute to a land protection fund.
- We should define where we want open space protected and the tools to get there and a long-term implementation plan that can be applied when a development plan is proposed.

There was general agreement that the commission liked the corridors and core areas approach, mapping where open space should be protected, with a long-term approach that can be applied one development proposal and land protection project at a time.

There was a discussion on the critical areas definition and whether the state code might get "better" or "worse." Marianne Edain shared that a recent Washington State court case allowed for "cumulative actions" to be taken into consideration, which will potentially strengthen the legal approach to protecting critical areas.

Concern was voiced that not all critical areas are known and mapped. It was suggested that there be a property buyer's critical areas disclaimer to protect unknown critical areas.

There was suggestion that there be a percentage set for public access that could be applied on a case-by-case basis.

There was discussion about Fosseck Farm and its unique situation as the “gem” of open space in Langley. It was suggested that this property is an exception that should not dictate how other open space is addressed.

There was no conclusion reached on LOS for open space. Evander was directed to bring a revised proposal back to the next meeting.

GOALS & POLICIES

Evander noted that the commissioners have drafts of the Inventory, Level of Service and Goals & Policies sections of the Parks & Open Space Element, and noted that the timeline is right on schedule to submit to the state by September 30th. The commission can continue to revise after submission.

Evander asks that the commissioners review and give him comments prior to the next meeting.

There were several comments on the draft Goals & Policies:

- Some specifics from the old element would be preferred to be included in the new element.
- Would like to have the shared-use concept included since roads will sometimes be used as connectors between trails or open space areas.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 pm. The next regular meeting of the Parks and Open Space Commission will occur Monday, September 14, 2009 at 2:30 pm.

Kathleen Landel recorded the minutes for the meeting.