

Langley Parks & Open Space Commission 11-8-17 Meeting Minutes

Present were: chair, Gail Fleming; Joann Quintana (recording minutes due to Marianne Edain's absence); Shanti Loustaunou

Staff: Kelsey Loch, assistant planner; Stan Berryman, public works director

Public: Guy Burneko, Trilby Coolidge. Also, Kent Hanson with Whidbey Island Trails.

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 PM.

Meeting minutes: The minutes of the 10-11-17 POS meeting were reviewed, amended, as per a request from Joann, and approved.

Seawall Park subcommittee update: Sharon Emerson, chair of the Seawall Park subcommittee, was unable to attend to provide a subcommittee update. Joann provided an update in Sharon's absence. Joann said that the RFQ for Seawall Park design improvements has been published. Stan pointed out that the language of the document was adjusted to reflect that state rules are different when soliciting submissions from architectural and design firms, versus construction contracting firms. The document also needed to be changed into a Request for Qualifications versus a Request for Proposals. It was agreed that efforts will be made to ensure that individuals and firms that qualify will be informed of the RFQ and encouraged to make submittals. This will be done via emails to firms that have successfully worked in Langley before, and with an ad that Joann offered to post on drewslist. The RFQ is on the city's website as well. Deadline for submittals is November 28, 2017 before 9 AM. It was also reported that there were no responses submitted to the city's request for proposals for park furniture at Whale Bell Park.

Budget: Gail reported that Sharon Emerson had asked that POS request that the city council carry over the \$5,000 left in the 2017 POS budget to 2018. (The \$5,000 is intended for the Seawall Park improvements design. This would be separate from the request for \$7500 for 2018.) Stan said that the council is aware of the \$5,000 and that the 2018 budget request for POS has gone to the council. Stan said there will be a budget meeting in December and all budget issues will be resolved before the end of the year.

City ethics complaint: Gail reported on the complaint regarding POS that was made to the city Ethics Board. Gail was interviewed about the complaint by Ethics Board member Fred Herzon. She prepared a letter in response to the complaint. A vote was taken and there was unanimous approval to send the letter to the Ethics Board, council and mayor on behalf of POS. Kelsey clarified that Frosty Hollow had provided quality wetlands evaluation services to the city and that the invoice was approved by the Council to pay the firm. However, the invoice was not paid because Frosty Hollow, never having been informed that a contract was required, did not have a contract with the city. It was pointed out that the story in the local newspaper mentioning the Ethics Board complaint implied that POS had done something wrong. Depending upon how the Ethics Board complaint is resolved, and whether the newspaper runs a follow up story, a letter to the newspaper may be required to effectively communicate that POS member Marianne Edain recused herself from the discussion and the vote regarding the commission's decision to seek Frosty Hollow's services.

Critical Areas Ordinance: Kelsey reported that Steve Erickson of Frosty Hollow had provided very valuable input for the much needed update of the CAO. Before the meeting, Kelsey had provided POS members with the draft language for a Potential Wetlands Ordinance and this was discussed. Gail had made edits to the draft and will give them to Kelsey. Kelsey pointed out that it remains to be seen if there will be objections from city council members because not everyone seeking to build in the city has to go through the critical areas process, only those with property or projects in proximity to inventoried wetlands. With time, it is hoped that the city's critical areas map will become more accurate.

Sidewalks, informal trails: Kelsey also shared a Langley Sidewalk Inventory map, part of the Comprehensive Plan 2017 update. A pedestrian sidewalk on Fairgrounds Road is a priority but there is no

funding for it. There was a discussion concerning the need to map “informal” trails in Langley, especially easements the city may own. Kelsey is focused on recording where it is known that the city owns the right-of-ways. Gail reported that, with input from Shanti, she had met with Ross Chapin regarding informal trails. Gail and Ross marked the informal trails on a map. They also included a “wish list.” Gail will meet with Kelsey to share this information. Kelsey wants to catalog city trails that might not be known. In some cases, there are parts of these informal trails that are owned by the city. The question was asked whether or not the city has an ordinance that requires new developments to have connecting trails, so that if a piece of property has informal trails on it now and there’s a proposal for a development, there is a likelihood a trail could be preserved through the property. Kelsey said that the city does have such an ordinance as a condition for development approval. They can place or keep trails on newly developed property, but they cannot require that a trail connect to other people’s property if those owners don’t want it.

Whidbey Island Trails: Kent Hanson reported that the informal trails he has mapped were brought to Island County staff and they ran it by the commissioners and that they are including these trails in their non-motorized trail system map. The idea is to ensure that if/when land is developed, such trails are considered by the developer. Kent has found that developers are often willing to include trails when planning their developments, but no one informs them of this opportunity. Kent has sketched a way for trails to link Metcalf, Saratoga and Putney Woods properties, and such a network is very close to Langley city limits. As a bigger vision, Kent has been discussing a Langley to Possession Trail. In terms of Langley, if we have a comprehensive vision for a trail system in and around Langley, then we need to advocate for the connections. Kent called trails that are wanted “Desire Lines.” Kent suggested a book that’s been on the New York Times bestseller list called “On Trails,” by Robert Moor. When you walk on trails, you meet people and this builds community. In terms of a meeting in Langley, the meeting would be like using the community to crowd source, because we would be asking the community to define “desire lines,” as well as explaining to the community the value of trails and the indemnification program. Kent’s role would be to talk about the indemnification issue. Kent identified a potential issue with insurance companies. State Farm Insurance said a homeowner is covered by their policy if someone is injured, but if you tell State Farm that people are routinely walking across property they insure, they’d cancel the policy. It has to do with their desire to avoid lawsuits by offering to pay for medical upfront if someone falls and hurts themselves. Kent is not sure if all policies in Washington State have this, and if so, would need to talk to the State Insurance Commissioner. Kent said that we need to develop a vision and a program. The desire is to have a public meeting in Langley to discuss the issue of a trail network that would tie into the Whidbey Island Trails network. Might be possible to include it as part of the Whidbey Institute’s winter gathering. It would make sense to make a list of all groups that could potentially have an interest in this trails program: e.g., South Whidbey Parks & Recreation, Port of South Whidbey, Whidbey Institute, “greening congregations.” Gail and Joann will work together on writing some verbiage describing such a public gathering, what we would be inviting people to participate in, and how such a gathering might be organized. The target audience would be landowners. This will be brought back to POS for consideration.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

The next POS meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2017 at 3:00 PM.