

Langley Parks & Open Space commission minutes of 8-9-17 regular meeting

present were: Shanti Loustaunou, Gail Fleming (chair), Marianne Edain (recording), Stan Berryman (Public Works director), Kelsey (Planning staff), Burt Beusch (city council), Dominique Emerson (city council), Sharon Emerson (Seawall subcommittee), Joann Quintana (Seawall subcommittee), Guy Burneko, Trilby Coolidge

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm
2. The minutes of the July 12, 2017 meeting were approved as presented.
3. Sharon Emerson reported on the work of the Seawall Park committee. She pointed out that there had been no meeting since the last POS meeting. She did speak with chair Gail Fleming, who asked that the Seawall Park subcommittee assign a member to act as liaison to the new Wayfinding committee. There was discussion of what constitutes the Seawall Park subcommittee's agenda. There is a lack of clarity as to the territorial limits of the Complete Streets grant and Main Street. All agree there is a serious need for coordination among the various groups: Seawall Park subcommittee, Main Street, the Wayfinding committee, and POS. Main Street evidently reports directly to the city council. The Whidbey Record has reported on Complete Streets funding. Sharon expressed a concern for the lack of public process in all of this. All present want greater cooperation and coordination among the various entities. Sharon also discussed the need to settle on a design process for Seawall Park and a timeline. We are all still waiting for the maps to be produced from the survey which Stan says is now completed. There was discussion of plantings at Seawall Park and how to maintain them until they are able to survive on their own. Sharon has asked Lorinda Kay to bring this up with her board. Stan pointed out that there is a city spigot at Whale Bell park.
4. Kelsey reported on her work re: Wayfinding. She provided a map and staff recommendations. There is a 30 page report available for review. She wants to create a Wayfinding committee. She could not provide a timeline as that is yet to be determined. There has been one meeting on this subject thus far.

Kelsey reported on the "potential wetland" maps." She has been working on various versions of this map, along with the supportive ordinance language. Gail specifically requested that Kelsey include a list of acceptable consultants.

Kelsey reported on the Fish and Wildlife map. The heron rookery near 6th Street has been added. She needs to file an observation report with Dept of Fish and Wildlife. She is also verifying an eagle's nest. Gail reported that there appears to be a new heron's nest near Decker Ave, and asked what protection it would receive.

Ms Coolidge expressed concern that the development density increases proposed by planner Brigid would be within the buffer of the heron rookery.

5. There was discussion of the Community Trails project spearheaded by Kent Hansen, including the difference between a conservation easement and a revocable license, and who carries liability. Mayor Tim stated that the city would accept liability for easements and revocable licenses, but he has not responded to Mr. Hansen to confirm this.

It was proposed that the city should undertake to partner with South Whidbey Parks & Rec and/or the South Whidbey Port District to develop connecting trails both inside and outside the city.

Guy Burneko reported on walkable trails in the Sartoga/Owl Haven/Brooks Hill area.

Shanti reported that Vance and Tiny Tillman object to any map which shows any trails on their property. They don't necessarily object to people walking on their land, but they want people to ask permission. Evidently the map to which the Tillmans object is in the long-adopted comp plan.

Sharon reported on her experience in donating an easement of 50 ft x 1300 ft, that she and her husband had been very hesitant but that it had been very positive. The question became how to make such positive experiences known to the public. It was proposed to create an event, by invitation only, for owners of property across which a trail runs. Sharon suggested presenting this idea as a recommendation to city council.

Shanti raised the issue of water trails, and her wish to see a kayak storage rack at the marina. She reports that the Port District is not being helpful. She reports that Mayor Tim wants to see Langley included in the Washington Water Trails system, which would involve a kayak-friendly pull-out. This led to major discussion of what facilities would be necessary to make Langley attractive as a kayak destination.

6. Gail had proposed a review and update of the city's tree protection ordinance. Planner Brigid emailed a response asking if POS had the time and whether this was in fact a priority. Dominique explained that the process was for POS to write a list of action items, which it then presents to city council. Brigid says that Langley has no Urban Forest strategy, and that POS would need to identify the shortcomings it perceives in the existing ordinance. Brigid's email expressed concern about the time and energy involved in enforcing the tree ordinance. Gail proposed that POS institute a Tree Protection subcommittee, to include (if he is willing) Mr Jesse Brighten, who is a certified arborist, and others. Brigid raises some good points, but tree protection is within the mandate of POS. Sharon pointed out the issues of private property – solar access, garden space, views. She felt a forest plan should include a vision of what is wanted in the city, including views.

The discussion continued for some time. There was no specific resolution.

7. Stan presented the Transportation Improvement Plan, which includes the option of trails funding, but that line item is not currently funded. He asked POS to develop a Trails plan for inclusion in the TIP. Sharon pointed out that there is work proposed for 3rd Street in 2021, and asked that the project include a bike and walking trail. Stan said that the funding for the road work does not allow for any non-motorized work, and that we would have to find an alternate source of funding for that component.

Kelsey reported the existence of a trails inventory, but Stan pointed out that that included trails on private property. He said the Complete Streets grant is for \$250k, out of which will come \$12k for the 3 telescopes, mainly for pedestrian amenities. Complete Streets is only for main streets. We argue that 3rd Street certainly is a main street.

Dominique pointed out that city council really wants to see coordination between road plans and multi-modal transportation infrastructure, which should be included in the TIP. City council has recommended that it review the plan at every stage to see how walkways and bicycle trails can be incorporated. She wants to see coordination between road and trail grants. Stan pointed out that WSDOT has provided federal grant funds for 1st Street, but any sidewalk work would have to come out of state funds.

Shanti raised the issue of objections by 1st Street homeowners to the proposed sidewalks there. Dominique reported that as a result of those objections the entire project was redesigned, so that each property will have its own stormwater infiltration bump-out, and the designers are working with each homeowner to address their specific issues. Dominique explained that the proposal for sidewalks came out of requests by residents of 3rd Street for a safer walk to downtown. She said there is a need for many more safe walkways and expressed a wish to work with POS to establish priorities for these projects. In the case of 1st Street, there was a focus on retaining rural character.

8. Given the very full agenda and the intensity of discussions, the matter of reviewing the draft POS comp plan element was put off until the next meeting. Dominique pointed out that city council is preparing to move ahead with the comp plan. She said that the transportation element was not intended to address trails, which should be included in POS. Gail is concerned that trails are falling between the cracks, since it had been decided by council to move trails to the Transportation element and it seems that Transportation is just dealing with sidewalks. The capital improvement program in the POS element has been eliminated. POS needs to document for purposes of RCO that trails have moved to Transportation and can be found in the TIP.

9. Marianne reported that she had asked Pat Powell of Whidbey Camano Land Trust for advice and consultation on the RCO grant process. Pat responded with a very supportive letter. It was decided to ask for a meeting with Pat to lay out a grant application process and program. Marianne will contact Pat.

10. The hour being late, and there being no other items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.