



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

November 2, 2023
6pm

In person and virtual meeting options.
In Person: City Hall, Council Chambers
Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88308344363>

Preliminary Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approve October '23 Minutes
3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda*
4. Friends of the Forest Update
5. Staff Report
6. Parks Commission Update
7. Other Business

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: October 5th, 2023

Board members present: Brian Wetcher, JoAnn York-Gilmore, Tabb Stringer, Kit Gerwels

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Darby Jordan

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:01PM

Minutes: September minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

None

Friends of the Forest Update:

Ellie will attend Forest Board meetings until a new Executive Director is hired. She reported that they are prepping for the benefit event on November 4th. They are in the middle of school partnerships for 3rd grade students and starting the kindergarten classes soon. The Friends will partner with the City for the fall volunteer work party on October 14th. Ellie presented a request for the December stewardship hike. She is hoping to make the hike an invasive holly pull. This may require hikers to take a step or two off trail to pull the holly and ensure the entire root is removed. The hikers will then haul it out. The Board was in full support of this project.

Staff Reports:

Bob shared that the parks crew removed a large homeless encampment as reported. City staff does have cameras in the ACFL to help ID people breaking the rules and to watch for any issues. There are several people making unauthorized alterations to trails. The Parks crew is also fixing bridges on trail #220, Tabb mentioned he had seen one and it looks great.

Kit asked about a replacement for Steve and where that is in process. Bob shared that there should be an announcement next week.

Brian asked about an update to the toilet that was blown up at the base of Mt Erie. There has been no update from the police.

Tabb asked about the camping along Heart Lake road and if that is classified as the ACFL or a road. Bob noted that it is a road, and that is a good thing as far as enforcement by the police with the new parking ordinances passed by Council.

Kit asked about climbers on Mt Erie and Bob shared that Lake Erie store and camping has changed hands. There have been no major complaints or issues this past summer near the power lines trail.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting. The majority of the meeting was spent discussing what park projects are a priority while also able to qualify for grants. There was a \$25,000 donation to the parks department from the estate of a local resident. Also, the Samish and DOT are working on the Trestle replacement study. This has a timeline of 12-16 months for the drawings and study.

Other Business:

Bob reminded everyone that submitted written comments on the Forest Plan will be posted routinely on the City website.

Adjourn at 6:20pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

October 2023
Assistant Director's Report
Bob Vaux

Submitted: October 26, 2023

Ben Root Skate Park Improvement Project

Like previous dispatches from the skater/pump track front, the Janicki/Grindline teamwork continues to impress and move forward in a smooth and efficient manner. The shotcrete team (former Grindline staff) have been exceptional. There is a great amount of pride being taken in this work, and the final product will reflect this. Thanks again to Engineering Justin Symonds for making the daily inspection trips with me and keeping an eye on the technicalities of the plans and the execution of same.

The first week of October brings shotcrete to the pump track. The pros from Dover are rocking it! Shout out to the shotcrete team for the impromptu site tour for our Parks Maintenance staff.

Justin and I review some creative ideas with Grindline site supervisor Mike. He and his team will do some streetscape upgrades at little or no cost to the COA. Really appreciate the thoughtfulness, along with the full support of BRSP Improvement Project Inspiration Rachel.

Shout out to Fidalgo Trail Riders Kevin Foss and Seth Kiser. We had a great site visit and preliminary test of the pump track. Their on-going support of the project has been important...not to mention the design work and construction consultations directly from Kevin.

Skagit Valley College's construction school visited the site, enjoying the insights into this unique project.

As of 10/24 the pump track is in place, and all involved are very happy. Should be quite an attraction.

Joined a meeting with the Landscape sub and Parks Tottenham. They should be on site early November, putting the finishing touches on the project.

ACFL Forest Plan Update

Written comments are coming in. I am forwarding to the Forest Advisory Board, and Darby will be posting them on the Parks & Recreation website. She is typically doing this on Thursday's.

The Oct 3rd Forest Plan update meeting was brief. Always good to hear from the community. There will be at least two more of these: Nov. 7 and Dec. 5.

Regular Oct. Forest Board meeting took 20 minutes. Appreciate FoF Ellie's plan for a holiday holly eradication forest walk.

Washington Park Restroom Project

Engineering Lead Steve Lange has finalized the civil plans from HLN Engineering, and he and Contract Specialist Tiffany Matson have the project out to bid. Bid opening is scheduled for Oct 24.

Eleven bides received, which Tiffany tells me is a big number for a COA project. She is vetting the low bidder.

Heart Lake Master Plan

Director Lunsford, Parks Manager Johnston and I met on site with Beth from WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). We reviewed the '09 Master Plan, DFW likes the options. The project is currently unfunded, but we are looking at grant options.

We also visited the 32nd Street swamp beaver deceiver and surrounding wetlands. We are exploring the possibility of removing a culvert and creating a healthier wetland. Next steps will be working with DFW on a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA).

COA / Samish Nation Hike

Denise Crowe and I had a beautiful old growth stroll and discussion along 210 & 212.

Friends of the Forest

Continuing to meet regularly with FoF staff. Their focus now being on the fast-approaching annual auction: Saturday, November 4th. We've also got our fall volunteer work party to put the final planning touches on.

Conversations with FoF staff Ashleigh and Ellie finish this up. Special thanks to (Former ACFL) Steve for leading this work party, along with Nichola from our staff.

Director Lunsford and I met with new Executive Director Katie Early. Very positive initial discussion of the FoF / COA relationship in the woods.

ACFL Maintenance Position

Director Lunsford has been working hard with our Police and Human Resources leadership to add a law enforcement qualification to our vacant forest lands position. While all involved have done their best, the timeline for making this change has proven unmanageable, and we need to get the position filled. A required in-house only posting went out in late September.

No in-house applicants, so job now posted externally until 10/23.

We are currently reviewing the 21 applications for the job and hope to schedule interviews soon.

COUNCIL PARKS COMMITTEE

Good meeting with our three council members, along with Finance Director Steve Hoglund. Discussed a variety of capital projects and potential funding sources.

Dams

Working on Department of Ecology dam safety requirements at Little Cranberry. This is mostly updating inspection documentation and safety planning.

Farewell Tim Hohmann

As we prepare for the 10/13 departure of City Engineer Tim, Director Lunsford and I meeting with he and remaining Public Works leadership on a variety of project topics. While we are sad to see such a valuable member of the team leave, we are excited for him and his new challenges at the City of Bellingham.

Oct Parks Commission

Long time dog park volunteer gave an update on fundraising and request for support for future projects. Most of the meeting spent reviewing staff reports via Q & A.

ACFL Reconnaissance

10/3: 32nd Street Swamp + 107 off trail activity with Parks Tottenham. Putting our annual beaver deceiver plan together and checking on areas that have been neighborhood “playgrounds” over the years. We’ve got some clean-up to do.

10/4: #100 off of 24th motorcycle activity. Collecting photos for APD.

#241: double checking property line issue. Looks ok but will dig into some paperwork.

10/5: took Planning Sara out to the #220 bridge repair sites. She approved our emergency measures, and we will get all the paperwork in soon. Steve, Braydn and Myles doing a great job.

10/10: Arborist Steve and I met at Marine Heights residence I have been working with on some tree evaluations. Steve now doing an official hazard assessment on three struggling cedar in the adjacent ACFL.

10/13: working on some parking potential with a 29th Street neighbor.

A new residential tree concern on the east side of the Cranberry unit. Small stand of dead alder that we need to drop in the woods.

10/16: shout out to Streets Division Supervisor Brandon Lowry. We met on site at the end of 29th Street, and his team will put the finishing touches on some newly available trailhead parking up there. Special thanks to the neighbor for cleaning the space in preparation for this work.

ABPAC

Attended this monthly meeting of good folks focused on non-motorized transportation and recreation and blending the two for the health and enjoyment of the community and many of its visitors.

More Off Trail Clean Up on Mt. Erie

Sadly, Parks Tottenham found more shelter construction and the associated garbage near the previous site, cleaned up last month. Thanks to the Parks Crew for making another solid clean-up effort on Oct 19.

City Council

Attended 10/16 meeting. Director Lunsford did a great job of presenting our Capital Facilities Plan and answered several questions. Council members are very supportive of and wanting to see action on the Guemes Channel Trail.

32nd Street Improvement Project

Attended the pre-con meeting lead by Project Manager Steve Lange. The timing is working out great so that this project and the BRSP improvement project do not get in each other's way.

Leave

Took the 6th and 9th & the 20th and 23rd off.