



ANACORTES PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

P.O. BOX 547, ANACORTES, WA 98221
(360) 293-1918

Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

December 7, 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 November '23 Minutes
3. Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda*
4. 2026 Forest Plan Update Discussion
5. Friends of the Forest Update
6. Staff Report
7. Parks Commission Update
8. Other Business

Adjourn

Minutes of the Meeting: November 2nd, 2023

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Darby Jordan

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

Minutes: October minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

Tim Schmidt, Anacortes resident, was in attendance and spoke about his enjoyment of riding his motorcycle in the ACFL in the 7 months per year that it is allowed. He rides daily and believes this allows for improved balance and muscle tone. Tim did suggest another entrance or exit to the Whistle Lake area as there are limited ways to access it at this time. Bob spoke about the restrictions near trail #21 in the Heart Lake area, which would give other options for entry and exit to Whistle Lake. This was part of the State Park originally and still holds the same restrictions and regulations. Motors are not allowed on this trail.

Jeff Rentaria was in attendance and spoke about a project he is working on for school. This project includes researching urban growth and climate change impacting Anacortes. The Board expressed support in this project and directed him to speak with Transition Fidalgo as well as look at the reports on the ACFL website. Nate also mentioned that Shannon Point has data back to the 70's.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Ellie was at the meeting and introduced the new Executive Director of Friends, Katie Earley. Katie started about two weeks ago and has been getting to know the City staff, Board members, Friends staff and their programs.

Ellie shared that it has been business as usual with the 3rd grade program wrapping up their plant diversity unit. Kindergarten programs will run through the month. Their after-school program continues as well as their community hikes. Their Halloween hike was quite popular!

Staff Reports:

Bob shared that the process to hire a replacement ACFL staff member was continuing. There were 21 applicants and the Parks staff was assisting in reviewing and scoring the submissions. Six applicants will have in person interviews on November 7th and the finalists will attend a meet and greet with staff shortly after that. We hope to have someone hired in 2-3 weeks from that

last meeting. Steve has continued to help with work parties. The public is letting us know about downed trees.

Bob also shared that Staff has met with Fish & Wildlife regarding removing the culvert near 31st but this will take a biologist report and substantial funding. The goal would be to return this area to a wetland with natural outflow of the storm drainage.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting. There was an advocate in attendance regarding the Ace of Hearts dog park. She spoke about the increased use as there is more condensed housing and small or no yards. There is a group doing volunteer work out there to improve the space.

Other Business:

Brian expressed concern about the number of cars at times at the A avenue access and parking. Ellie shared that it was the Skagit Audubon society and there were several groups that were dispersed for their event.

Kit reminded everyone that there is another Forest Plan public comment meeting on November 7th at 6pm.

Adjourn at 6:36pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan

November 2023
Assistant Director's Report
Bob Vaux

Submitted: November 29, 2023

Ben Root Skate Park Improvement Project

We are down to the final days of concrete, reflecting on the amazing efforts and creativity of the Grindline construction team. Can't wait for the ribbon cutting.

On Oct 31 we bade farewell to the Grindline fellas, many thanks and hearty handshakes all the way around. Now working with Janicki on the lighting, drainage and top dressing.

Started planning the ribbon cutting with Rachel and Sheri from the skateboard non-profit. A larger scale celebration will happen in the spring.

Some of the current work involves coordination with "R" Ave project contractor SVR on sidewalk work and access. Thanks to SVR for their cooperation.

The ribbon cutting will be happening Thursday, Dec. 7th, 3PM.

Washington Park Restroom Project

Working with Steve in Engineering and Tiffany in Legal on the bid acceptance. Also reviewing Building Permit with Rob in Planning.

Council approved the civil contract with Blackfish Civil Infrastructure on 11/6.

Shout out to Cheri and Aaron in Planning for their assistance on getting the appropriate permitting documents assembled and submitted.

Building Permit approved: 11/20.

ACFL Maintenance Tech Hiring

We had 21 applications for the position made vacant by ACFL Steve. The City now mandates the application review process be anonymous. Six finalists were selected by a Parks & Rec review team without knowing the name of the applicant as well as no reference information.

A team of four conducted our first interview on the 6th, and then five more the following day. Each interview proved to be worthwhile, every candidate bringing different strengths to the process. We decided on two finalists.

Parks Manager Johnston and I, along with our Parks Maintenance Team, interviewed our two finalists, both making a final decision tough.

The job has been offered and accepted. Our new staff member will be starting with us on Monday, December 11th.

Friends of the Forest

Good meeting with Ashleigh. FoF staff very focused on the annual fundraising event. Looking forward to the celebration.

11/4 great annual FoF event. Lots of generous and smiling faces supporting the incredibly important education work the Friends keep expanding each year.

New Exec Dir Katie Earley and I getting a regular meeting schedule together. Had a good Forest Plan discussion with she and Ellie K.

Trees

10/30: took a look at a tree in the Orchards neighborhood for Planning. It's dead and a good candidate for a habitat tree.

11/17: another Orchards site visit. Small ACFL tree down on a fence. No damage. Neighbor willing to clean up.

11/27: catching up on hazard tree removal permitting in the ACFL, all neighbor related and supported.

Meetings

11/2 attended Tailgate Safety with Parks Crew.

11/2 new FoF Executive Director Katie Earley introduces herself to the Forest Advisory Board.

11/6 Recreation Travis and I traveled to Bellingham for a solid Washington Recreation and Park Association regional gathering. Association leadership working on an updated strategic plan, travelling the state to gather input.

11/7 another relatively quiet and brief Forest Plan public input meeting with the FAB.

11/13 2024 budget review at Council. Director Lunsford did a very nice job presenting our mostly hold the line numbers. No questions were asked.

- 11/14 Good Parks Commission discussion of sand court volleyball possibility at Storvik, along with other project updates.
- 11/16 senior staff met with our Parks Council Committee, updating them on various projects and some 2024 budget goals.

ACFL Recon

- new parking on 29th Street works great. Shout out to Brandon Lowry and our Streets Division, along with the adjacent homeowner.
- 32nd Street Swamp Beaver Deceiver rounds. Water level still not up to intake. Parks Tottenham also keeping a close eye on it.
- did some 123/108/107 on and off trail patrol. Mountain biker with off leash dog refused my request to stop. Off trail activity seems to have slowed. Great to see the swan on Big Beaver.
- Director Lunsford was able to update our 32nd Street Swamp HPA with WDFW. This allows us to continue to notch area beaver dams by hand, keeping the adjacent human neighborhood from flooding.

Leave

- 11/10 Veteran's Day Holiday
- 11/23, 24 Thanksgiving Holiday