

Minutes of the Meeting: May 5, 2022

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Guests: Asa Deane, Dan Senour, Richard Mellon

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:05PM

Welcome to the newest member, Tabb Stringer. Tabb is the non-city resident member of the Board. He has been a local resident since 1995. He shared that he uses the ACFL to hike, run, bike and ride horses. His interest in serving on the board grew after hearing about the ebike discussion and he is happy to learn more about all user groups and the issues facing the ACFL.

Minutes: April minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Public Comments: None

Trail #248: Bob has heard from a number of neighbors about the parking and congestion near the “powerline trail”. The neighbors have brought up the issues of parking, camping, drug use and theft. Bob has encouraged the neighbors to call the police if they see something illegal or concerning. This will allow both the City and County to have a record of the issues and gather data. This area is a challenge with City owned property, a County road and an access gate that is privately owned. Bob wanted the Board to be aware that neighbors have contacted both the City and the County with their concerns. Bob has met with Brian Adams from the County. If the parked cars are on public roads and not over the fog line, the county has no issue with it. If the neighbors pushed and had “no parking” signs posted, then there is the issue of enforcement. The Anacortes Police Department does not have the resources to dedicate to parking enforcement. The City has posted a few new signs with hours that the trails are open, alternate parking on Ray Auld drive and a No Camping sign. With the seasonal staff starting soon, there will be an increased presence in the ACFL. Bob has also been spreading the word with local climbing groups about being a good neighbor. The Board asked that Bob keep them informed to determine if further action is needed.

Remote Control Toys: Bob brought this user group to the attention of the Board. The Parks team has seen an increase in the number of events and participants in these events. The concern is that these vehicles are designed to go “off trail” and that is clearly breaking rules in the ACFL. The two areas they use the most are Cap Sante and Mt Erie. Both of these places have limited parking and Cap Sante is a small area that sees a large number of visitors.

Complaints have been made by community members that the noise of these vehicles disturbs them. The Parks Department has previously reached out to these groups and there was no response. Darby will do some research on Facebook to see if we can find the groups, leaders and contact information. It was suggested that the Board review this at the next revision of the Forest Plan.

Friends of the Forest Update: Asa and Bob suggested that there be a combined hike with the Forest Board and Friends of the Forest in June. The Board was agreeable and asked that Bob and Asa pick the date. This is an event open to the public. The annual hike allows the two groups to reflect on their purpose and enjoy time out in the forest they care for.

Asa shared that they are nearly done with the hiring process and will offer the job by the end of next week. All four of the final candidates are locals and all are excellent options to join the team.

All of the summer camps offered by the Friends are full and there is a lot of excitement in both the staff and the kids attending. The Trail Ambassador program will be starting again soon for the summer season. There are 17 volunteers signed up and they will have two days of training with Parks and the Friends staff. The Trail Steward program is a new venture but is coming together well. Asa also spoke about the National Trails Day on June 4th. There will be a volunteer work party and everyone is welcome!

ACFL Trail Committee Report: The Trail Committee met on trail #311 with the Friends and City Planning staff. It was determined that a biological report would need to be completed prior to any work being done. This is a cost of \$5,000-\$20,000. It was suggested that if Bob sees an area of concern, he will then reach out to the Trail Committee for help.

Staff Reports:

Steve reported that John Meehan had spoken to him about the signage for trails #300 and #302. The placement of the signs has led to confusion as to where motorcycles are allowed. Steve visited the site and determined that the sign was partially covered by brush. He has moved it now to a post and hopes that will help.

Bob reported that Parks team members Steve and Sky participated in training with the Department of Natural Resources and the Anacortes Fire Department, strengthening our partnerships with each. Bob also shared that Skagit county staff and City staff toured the Predators of the Heart facility last week. The property and business are currently undergoing review by the county and the public comment period is open now. Parks staff provided feedback to the City attorney and a letter will be submitted to Skagit County.

Bob also spoke about the June 4th volunteer work party on trail #107. This project will include a turnpike for the muddy area as well as landscaping to

discourage off-trail use. The Fidalgo Trail Riders are also doing a project for National Trails Day on June 4th, focusing on north Heart Lake.

Other Business:

Brian asked if Bob had heard anything about the old dump area or the dam. Bob stated there has been no movement on either project from the DOE.

JoAnn gave an update from the parks Board, sharing that Bob's written report on both the Skate Park and Rotary trail gave all the details.

Kit inquired about the City Community Center that was proposed at the Council meeting. Bob acknowledged that there is excitement and support about the project but there are many questions that need answers before the project moves forward.

Adjourn at 7:31pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan