

Minutes of the Meeting: September 7th, 2023

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

Staff present: Bob Vaux, Steve Phillips, Darby Jordan

Meeting held in person and via Zoom and called to order at 6:00PM

Minutes: August minutes were unanimously approved.

Public Comments:

None

ACFL Plan Update

For context, earlier in the year, the board had a discussion on how to best update the Forest Plan. They outlined a plan to allow for lots of public comments while meeting the deadline of a draft by 2026. In the first couple of meetings it became clear that there was a need for dedicated meetings just for the Plan update. Kit proposed to the Board to have additional meetings for the Plan update and allow regular Board meetings for routine ACFL business. The proposal was for 3 meetings on the first Tuesday of October, November and December. There can be additional meetings scheduled if there is a need from the public. Kit made a motion to set the three additional meetings dedicated to the Plan update and public comments. Brian seconded the motion. All Board members voted in favor. It was clarified that all existing public and written comments would be included in the process going forward.

ACFL Trail Committee-Special Use Request:

John Meehan was in attendance to revise his earlier proposal about a study of two-stroke engine motorbikes in the ACFL. He is now suggesting a shorter time frame of one month of documenting his interaction with hikers and other users.

Kit stated that the Board is guided by the Forest Plan which is decided by Council. He has concern about a self-reported trial. It is good to start this discussion as the Forest Plan is being reviewed. Bob suggested bringing this request to the Parks Council committee and discussing with the Parks Director and then returning to the Board with the feedback. There were a few public comments about the focus needing to be on riders and bike style instead of the exact type of bike. Kit made a motion that Bob will speak with the Parks Council committee. Tabb seconded this motion. All Board members voted in agreement.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Asa was in attendance to give the Friends of the Forest update. He shared that summer is quickly coming to a close for their programs. They held summer

day camps for approximately 75 kids. They were able to offer more camps this year and all were very successful. Hannah is working with the summer school program for the Anacortes School District.

Their Trail Ambassador program was also very successful with volunteers out every weekend from Memorial Day through Labor Day. At the end of the season, they will debrief and then share collected data with the City.

Asa announced that he is leaving Friends of the Forest on August 16th. He is taking a position with Bellingham Parks. This is closer to home and is a good step for he and his family. The Board and staff wished him well.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his report.

Bob expressed another thank you to Asa. He will be greatly missed. Bob also reported that blue-green algae is back due to the heat and shallow depths. Signs have been posted. Samples have been tested and the health department has deemed the levels ok to allow for recreation, advising to just exercise caution.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting, stating that it was a record 17 minutes long and the notes are available online.

Other Business:

None

Adjourn at 7:39pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan