

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 not in attendance but had called to express his thanks to the Board for their time and effort in reviewing his proposal. Bob has spoken with the Parks Council sub-committee and they were hesitant to offer guidance without hearing from the Forest Board. At this time, staff recommends that the request is denied until the Forest Plan is reviewed and possibly changed. The Board took a vote on approving the request for allowing a trial period to test out the two stroke motorcycles. All Board members voted to deny this request. Kit did add that the intent and direction of the request is appreciated and that the discussion should continue.

Friends of the Forest Update:

Ellie will attend Forest Board meetings until a new Executive Director is hired. She reported that they had Trail Ambassadors every weekend through Labor Day. They are starting their fall field trips for kids and various community hikes mid-month. The number of participants for 2023 is passing 2022.

Staff Reports:

Steve had nothing to add to his report. Kit expressed his gratitude for Steve and shared that Steve's care of the trails was very noticed and he will be missed. Bob added that Steve's legacy in the ACFL will be long lasting and thankfully the department will not be losing him or his knowledge. He will still be a part of the Parks staff and his skills are much appreciated. Bob shared that he did get a request for a wedding to be held at Heart Lake on trail #23. They anticipate having 16 people in the group and will not be bringing in anything to the site. They will not block access to any other trail users. Bob noted that their group is going about this the correct way and is a smaller group than many that use the area. Bob added that the team is glad to be beyond Labor Day and ready for a slower season.

Parks Commission Report:

JoAnn reported on the Parks Board meeting. The Rotary Club was in attendance to share their design proposals for the top of Cap Sante. They are wanting to make the space more accessible for ADA. Part of the project will be to post signs at the bottom, encouraging people to use the trail and not drive to the top. The estimated cost for the project is \$550,000 and they have raised \$395,000 currently.

JoAnn also shared that the Anacortes Senior Activity Center is celebrating 50 years on September 30th.

She reported that the WA park restroom will have a gravity system instead of a pump station, cutting down on the cost. The City is still in talks with Habitat for Humanity on the W 5th lot. Parks staff is looking at the W 6th lot for a park with the assistance of a RCO grant. While out on site, neighbors approached and expressed support and excitement for the park.

Other Business:

The e-bike study has been completed and the data given to staff for organizing into a report. Darby and Bob are working on this and will have it to the Board prior to the Forest Plan meetings.

Adjourn at 6:29pm

Respectfully Submitted by Darby Jordan