

November 14th, 2024

Parks Commission in Attendance: Brad, JoAnn, Alex, Chris and Sarah

Staff in Attendance: Jonn, Bob, Nicole, Dustin and Darby

6pm Call to order

October minutes passed unanimously with no changes.

Public Comments:

Linda Martin spoke regarding the lot at W 6th and Minnesota. She stated that she attended the City Council meeting on Tuesday and presented a petition with over 140 signatures from neighbors asking for a park to be built on that lot. She presented the same petition to the Parks Commission and asked that the west end park be reprioritized over any Storvik Park changes. The neighborhood has expressed willingness to work with volunteers and organizations to get the park built.

Kelly List also spoke on the W 6th street lot. She is in favor of the park as she has witnessed a number of children in the neighborhood who would benefit from the park. She feels that there are many young families in the neighborhood, and it would be a uniting factor.

Another community member spoke in support of the long-awaited park.

Correspondence and Communication:

Forest Board Notes- JoAnn shared that the most current information is in the report.

She mentioned that survey work has started at the Whistle Lake dam. The ACFL team has been working on cleaning up storm damage from recent windstorms.

Pickleball Discussion:

Jonn presented the PowerPoint, sharing information about the history of Pickleball in Anacortes, the issues that have come to staff attention and possible solutions. Dustin spoke in detail about the indoor opportunities to play, Nicole shared about the possibility of noise dampening curtains on two sides of the fence. Jonn spoke about the possible change to parking, moving it to the back of the area and off the neighborhood street. Another potential option is working with the school district to retrofit a few of the tennis courts above the middle school. The floor was then opened for comments from the public.

Ed shared that he is new to town and the most welcoming thing has been pickleball. He suggested moving the courts to the back area and use the front for parking.

Colleen stated her concerns of no restroom as well as the vandalism to the nets and wind screens. Kelly spoke about her empathy for the neighbors, sharing that it is a loud activity for the neighborhood.

Steve shared that he lives near the courts and can hear the play. He is in favor of the sound barrier and adding another location that is not near any homes.

Delores is a neighbor that stated she can see and hear everything at the court. She can appreciate the exercise, but the noise is too much. She would like to see the courts closed at 5pm, suggested

10am-5pm and closed on Sundays. The neighbors have been advised to call the police but that has not resolved anything.

Mary shared that she is a new player and feels there are too few courts in town and would like to see some covered courts.

PK loves the idea of working with the school district as most of the time the courts are full. She suggested adding pickleball courts on the handball side of the school property.

Nancy feels that it would be a better return on investment to relocate the courts instead of retrofitting the current courts.

Mike has been playing for about a year, mostly at Mt Erie school and likes the diverse age and ability of the players. He feels the sport provides opportunities for all citizens and would like to see the opportunities expanded.

Wendy spoke at the request of Delores who is frustrated with the noise level and states that it falls into the nuisance decibel category. She is glad to see the sympathy and empathy from the players for the neighbors but wondered why the neighbors were not consulted.

A citizen says they have made lots of friends and has fun playing. They do not want to be part of the problem and would like to see more courts in town. They use courts in Burlington and Mt Vernon.

Dave is a resident and sees the enormous demand for the courts in the non-stop play, but feels the courts are too close to the homes. He would like to see the courts relocated and the hours restricted until then.

Kelly expressed surprise and concern about people breaking rules on the hours of play and would like to see the recreation department be the voice of the rules.

Debbie gave her opinion that there are not enough courts and sympathizes with neighbors. She feels that Fidalgo school would be an option. Her concern with moving the parking to the back is the possibility of vandalism.

Delores spoke again and asked if there was a feasibility study regarding the noise prior to changing the courts from tennis to pickleball.

Jean inquired about the different type of ball that is supposed to be quieter. She also asked about the timeline for the fence to be replaced. Staff is looking into getting this taken care of.

Jonn expressed his thanks for the comments and questions. Staff is looking at other options and creative ways to add courts away from homes and neighborhoods.

Department Reports:

Nicole shared that staff is just working on maintaining projects and tasks with the hiring freeze and being down one team member. The major projects happening are the Altaire Americus pavers and path and the Cemetery office building.

Dustin shared that soccer season is complete and basketball is starting. There will be a puzzle competition next week and the Wonderland Walk on December 13th and 14th. The Commission asked about gym space with pickleball and now basketball, but staff has been able to work all requests out with all user groups.

Bob reported that he and Jamie went and did the annual inspections on the dams and all is looking good. The beavers have slowed down at the spillway. The projects on the list include the restroom move and parking lot near the skatepark.

Jonn announced that staff is working on the budget process with council and that will be discussed for the next couple of weeks at their regular meetings. He stated that he expected to have discussion at those meetings on the West end park and pickleball.

Other Business:

Chris asked about the Guemes Channel Trail and funding in 2025. Jonn responded that there is no funding for that but there are funds allocated for the design to rebuild the SHIP boardwalk. Sarah stated that the West end park has been on the plan for quite awhile but is a large budget item. Discussion was had about having a community meeting, designing the space and making sure it is ADA accessible. The original plan was to sell the W 5th property and use those funds to create the W 6th park.

Adjourned at 7:12pm

Respectfully submitted by Darby Jordan