

Anacortes Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

Minutes for the meeting of

May 1, 2025
6pm

1. **Call to Order:**
6:02PM.
Board Members Present: Gerwels, York-Gilmore, Wetcher, Stringer
Staff Present: Lunsford, Vaux, Burroughs (Jordan set up the room and the technology)
2. **April meeting minutes: approved unanimously.**
3. **Public Comments *for any item not on the agenda:***
M. Nihart requested a variety of information/documents be posted on the City website: FAB comments on the Forest Plan, a recent staff PowerPoint presentation and Barrier Busters audit of City facilities from the 1990's.
4. **Forest Plan 2026 Update: work on current draft in progress: if staff can have the next draft of the plan available for the June meeting, the traditional June hike with the Friends of the ACFL Board will be postponed. It is highly likely the June hike will take place. The Board and public in attendance are comfortable with the plan being presented at the August meeting. There typically is no FAB meeting in July.**
5. **Parks & Recreation Budget Update: Director Lunsford did just this, highlighting the approaching June budget retreat to be attended by the Mayor, City Council and Dept. Heads. DL is optimistic there will be funding for the capital projects like the Heart Lake improvement plan, but the operating budget will most likely remain a significant challenge.**

In the fall the usual Council budget work sessions with the public are scheduled. DL reminded the FAB of funding partners like the Parks Foundation, funding support from Parks impact fees and the like. He also discussed the ACFL Endowment Fund and the Conservation Easement Program funds that are available for conditioned ACFL expenditures only. Lunsford also explained that due to explored engineering requirements for the Little Cranberry Lake assisted boat launch that simply end up being more substantial than what we had hoped for, this project is halted for now. Staff may look at a stand along shoreline restoration project on the east side of the lake's north end.

The FAB and the public had some questions for DL...are there plans to repair the wooden observation deck at Little Cranberry? The City will take a look...is the City going to spend money on wildfire observation technology for the top of Mt. Erie? This is in the hands of the Fire Chief...does the City have a budget for expensive cameras to be used for security? Parks do not.

DL also explained that the operational City budget for 2026 will most likely be a "hold the line" budget. The FAB did ask about the recent \$200K donation to the ACFL. DL is hoping to use that for a substantial project, perhaps along the lines of property acquisition or the Heart Lake parking lot improvement project. DL did verify that all Lakeside quarry lease revenue may only be spent in the ACFL.

FAB Chair Gerwels asked DL about the future of a fully commissioned Park Ranger in the woods and parks. He reminded him that the FAB fully supports this. DL emphasized the support for this from Police Chief Floyd. The Ranger would have to technically be a Police Dept. employee due to the law enforcement requirements that exceed the realm of the Parks Dept.

6. **Friends of the ACFL Update:** Executive Director Josie Henderson mentioned the success of recent Earth Day events in Anacortes, i.e., Procession of the Species, etc. She also explained that the Friends Forest Discovery Center will be officially opening Friday, June 13th, and that the Trail Ambassador trainings are quickly approaching. There are wait lists for the summer camps and the annual fundraising event will be Sept. 27 at Wisteria Gardens.
7. **Staff Reports:** ACFL Jamie really enjoyed the April Dallas Kloke Mt. Erie Clean Up with local climbers. He gained some important knowledge of the climbing areas as well as the approaches.
8. **Parks Commission Update:** JoAnn provided her usual report on Parks adventures, highlighting former Mayor Gere's current fundraising work on the Community Recreation Center.
9. **Other Business:** FAB member Wetcher reminded all of his annual 4th of July evening patrol at Little Cranberry. He encouraged other FAB members to pick a favorite spot and do the same.

Adjourn: 7:02PM