

Parks, Recreation and Fair Board Minutes

Thursday, January 26, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm with the following Park Board members in attendance:

Board Members Present: Tim Manns, Elizabeth Detillion, Jose Riefkohl, John Semrau, and Kevin Loy

Staff Members and Representatives: Brian Adams

Members from the Public: None

A motion was made to approve the January Agenda. The minutes from November are forthcoming. The motion to approve the agenda as written was approved and passed unanimously.

Board Discussion:

DNR Proposal –Squires Lake:

There was a meeting to discuss the Moon Property entrance to DNR Lands. Snohomish and Whatcom Counties have access to DNR lands for recreation but in Skagit County an agreement has never been achieved. With the purchase of the Moon Property in 2021, we now have the opportunity to create a trailhead and a loop trail. The parking is proposed for the Moon Property, which is a part of the abandoned railroad corridor and a future section of the Centennial Trail. Brian met with the DNR to discuss this proposal and samples of agreements between the DNR and Evergreen Bicycle Alliance were shared. If the County would like to introduce a formal proposal, there would need to be a commitment to maintenance and enforcement.

During the discussion, the DNR brought up another parcel that may have interest to Skagit County. Parcels 48924 and 48870 are potentially available but the process generally includes a trade of Skagit County Land. There was a discussion of whether the Frailey Mountain Land could be accepted as a trade. The parcels the DNR has identified provides access to expansive recreation lands, in Skagit County and into Whatcom County.

The Advisory Board is generally supportive but doesn't want to see the vision of the gun range lost. John brought up the process in which Frailey Mountain was acquired. Trust Lands must be provided if Trust Lands are lost. Tim stated his desire to see a positive outcome for recreationalists accessing the expansive recreational lands around Squire Lake and in the Samish Watershed. He hopes that some of the Frailey Mountain issues can remain separate. John, Kevin, Jose, and Elizabeth were proponents of the acquisition but also wanted to see lands made available for recreational shooting. Elizabeth and John mentioned their desire for replacement properties if the Frailey Mountain site goes back to DNR ownership.

The conversation was equated to the fairgrounds. John mentioned that relinquishing Frailey Mountain parcels prematurely would be as big of a mistake as relinquishing the fairgrounds. With his long history (35 years) as a PRAB member he has been a part of these discussions and studies. He's definitive in the thought that a replacement site should be acquired and developed before the current fairgrounds are relinquished. John has the 1986 EIS completed for relocating the fairgrounds to NSRA.

Studley Acquisition:

We have been at a standstill. The Studleys simply want an agreement showing that we will create a trailhead, trail, and parking. The Skagit County attorneys want to make sure the language is clear so that there isn't an opportunity for an heir to claim the work was never completed as intended. Brian was asked to try to resolve the differences and get this finalized.

Filippini Waterfall:

The wetlands have been delineated and a trailhead design is in the works. A preapplication meeting is scheduled for March. There is a question of whether we need to rezone to OSPI. The planning department said that it may be necessary for public access. The falls are associated with Holt Creek.

Update on Rec/Current Projects:

Recreation: Recreation is into the new year with several winter programs getting underway for both adults and youth. Our Boys SWISH Basketball League has 118 teams, which plays every Saturday now through March 9th. Teams come from Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom, Island and San Juan Counties in the 3rd-8th Grades. We also have Men's Basketball and Adult COED Volleyball Leagues getting underway. We've also turned an eye towards spring, with our spring-summer weekend tournament dates filling up at the Skagit Valley Playfields and youth softball and baseball teams signing up for weeknight practices. Our recent cold weather and snow definitely remind us why we focus on indoor sports this time of year, but we can already feel the pull towards spring with a lot of activity planning and scheduling for spring-summer activities.

Swinomish Boat Launch: Our permit with the Corp of Engineers will purportedly be ready in the coming months so that the vital upgrades can be completed during the fish window. Eel grass was discovered, prolonging the permit process. Launch fees will increase from \$8 to \$10. In the interim, we continue to make repairs to keep the facility functional.

NSRA: Our fall work parties with The Skagit Trail Builders were well attended and all trail work will be completed by spring of 2025. We will have an approved HPA for the footbridge before the end of the year so the loop trail connector can be completed during the 2024 construction window. We are hosting the *Searching for Sasquatch* Fun Run, scheduled for February 10. Two new display panels will be placed in the plaza in the coming month. One of the panels commemorates two Medal of Honor recipients from Skagit County: Gerald Young and James K. Okubo.

Acquisitions:

Filippini Falls: March 7 Pre-App

Studley Community Park: *The family would like to see conditions added to the transfer agreement. These matters are being resolved and the attorneys are sorting out the details.*

Adjourn: 7:15 pm