



Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

Thursday November 19, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm with the following park board members in attendance:

Board Members present: Tim Manns, Jason Benson, and John Semrau, and Chris Allen

Staff Members and Representatives: Brian Adams

Public: Kathleen Whitman, Barb Ohms, and Jim Taylor

Board Discussion

Tim made a motion to approve the October minutes. Chris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

-Guemes Proposal: Schoolhouse Park

The Guemes Island Community Association attended our meeting to discuss their proposal near Schoolhouse Park on Guemes Island. Their primary interest is completing the stage on their land adjacent to our park. It has been in construction for 12 years and is close to being finished. The structure has lights but still needs gutters and shingles. The landscape plan is to be approved by the County and wetland buffer plantings are required as a condition of the permit. They hope to have the project complete and their first full event on the July 4 weekend.

Their property is within the area perceived to be a single park and they would like to enter into an agreement for their ongoing events and activities. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) would be in lieu of monthly event permits. The vision they have for the entire area includes better/expanded parking, walking trails, and bathrooms. They would like to set up a long-term plan for making other improvements to our/ their park. John weighed in about the parking. The parking would be within road right-of-ways so the County engineer would have to review and comment on any changes. John thought a four-way stop would be needed for approval. A temporary stop sign would not work unless there were people stationed at the lot during the activities/event. Tim thought a solid planting plan would be necessary for creating adequate mitigation for the site. Brian felt it would be preferable if our department reviewed the permit and conditions before it is approved. Jason thought a composting toilet should be considered and thought that interpretive signs should be placed. The old school house, the native population, and pirate Kelly could be explicated. Jason sent photos later of a structure he thinks would be a good fit for Guemes. John mentioned future toilet should be closed for events and porta potties brought in.

-E-Bikes

Jim sent out the federal summary of adoption agreement for e-bikes via e-mail. The Board has discussed e-bike policies at prior meetings but no recommendations have been proposed. John would like to see E-bikes allowed in our park systems much like electric motors on lakes. John would like to make sure all park board members have a chance to weigh in before a decision is made. Tim mentioned the need to think through this issue thoroughly. Jim mentioned that the trails already have a lot of e-bike use throughout the county. Most people do not know they are e-bikes when they see

315 South Third Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

360.336.9414 phone
360.336.9493 facsimile

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them. They are quiet and dually pedal powered. Brian mentioned his desire to see the Cascade Trail opened first since it is a commuter trail. Tim felt the current policies might already allow e-bikes on linear trails such as the Cascade Trail. The board wondered whether it is important to have consistency across other park jurisdictions. Jim mentioned that Bellingham has seen some amount of controversy. Elite riders do not like to see assisted bikes on the lands in which they ride. Purists do not appreciate the technology in their parks and open space lands. Jason wondered about enforcement. Education and information would need to be the key to a successful policy. We have no ability to enforce easily, especially with no roving park ranger. John wondered what the issues of concern were beyond speed. The group agreed that speed was the primary concern. Chris and other board members agreed that e-bikes would help with inclusion. Mobility issues are mitigated through battery power. This subject will be addressed again later. The policy will need to be well vetted so that it can be brought forth as a code change.

-Vamos Project:

A motion was introduced by Tim: As per goals outlined in the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Plan, there should be no fees on the use of NSRA or other Skagit County Parks for their educational activities.

-Park Board Recruitment

We have added Greg Francioch and are about to add another from district one. Jose Riekohl will join us on January 1, 2021.

Staff Report: A report was provided and discussed. Brian will send out a December report soon.

Adjourn.

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