

**MINUTES—Regular Meeting
CHUCKANUT COMMUNITY FOREST PARK DISTRICT**

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

Fairhaven Branch, Bellingham Public Library

1117 12th St, Bellingham, WA

Fireplace Room 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Mailing Address: PO Box 4283, Bellingham, WA 98227

Official email addresses for Commissioners, where the public may send comments (which are subject to public disclosure):

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Our Mission: The mission of the Chuckanut Community Forest Park District is to ensure the entirety of the property is protected in perpetuity in public ownership, with respect for its ecological, recreational, and educational functions and to serve as a fiscal mechanism through which the district, via a tax levy, will repay the City of Bellingham for the Greenways Endowment Fund loan.

Call to order: Frank James. Welcome Commissioners and Citizens. Per Chapter 42.30 RCW (Open Public Meetings Act), CCFPD board meetings are open to the public. This meeting is being voice recorded.

Roll Call: Frank James (President), Vince Biciunas, Hue Beattie, John Hymas – Clerk, John McLaughlin.

Motion: It was moved by V. Biciunas to add the following to the agenda for today: New Business: Coordination on getting information to mayoral candidates re CCFPD interests; google groups, and savings account and signatures on checking account. J. Hymas seconded. Voted 5-0 to approve.

June Minutes: Moved by V. Biciunas to approve the June 26, 2019 meeting minutes June 26 board minutes. Seconded by H. Beattie. Approved 4/0 by attendees to June meeting: J. Hymas, V. Biciunas, J. McLaughlin, and H. Beattie.

Later in the meeting, J. McLaughlin made a correction to the June 26th minutes on page two, to replace the previous sentence about bike mitigation with “Some of the illegally built bicycle jumps have not been mitigated.” Moved to approve this change by V. Biciunas and seconded by F. James. Approved 4/0.

Vince Biciunas requested that a notice be sent to the Friends of the Chuckanut Forest when the updated June minutes are posted.

July Minutes: Moved by V. Biciunas to approve the July 24, 2019 meeting minutes, seconded by H. Beattie. Approved 3/0 by attendees to July meeting: F. James, V. Biciunas and H. Beattie.

Introductions: Those who wish to be acknowledged: legal counsel Bob Carmichael, Robyn Albro, Secretary, John Blethen, Ted Wolf, and John Brown.

Public Comments: Ted Wolf, a south hill resident, taxpayer, and frequent visitor to the forest with an ecological background, is interested in carbon capture and storage by the forest. The mosaic of forested wetlands is likely to be unusual in its capacity to capture and store carbon. Chuckanut Community Forest could come to be seen as unique to the city's green space. It is a topic that relates to the City of Bellingham Action Plan which is of concern to many of us citizens. Hope that it comes to research attention, hopefully in time to influence city in planning stages.

J. McLaughlin: Commissioners have been discussing reintroducing beavers. This spring students developed plans for reintroducing beavers and where you might do it. Only suitable place for reintroducing beavers is the large wetland that Hoag Creek drains out of, owned by city with conservation easement. Wetlands have been shrinking, more and more vegetation growing that could become trees and that is a mechanism for capturing and storing carbon. Wetlands soils capture and store carbon as well. These are two competing effects and it takes careful calculation to figure what the net effect of reintroducing beavers might be. The upper wetlands are storing carbon and can continue to store more carbons. Any trail plan or use ought to consider if we want to put carbon sequestration on table for the master plan; this would be one way to consider those functions. Forest continues to grow and accumulate carbon. Our recreation has an impact on the carbon capture. Has a friend that is an expert on figuring carbon storage and will be talking to him about that.

Used to be cutthroat there. Beaver introduction would be most effective if had public input like trail plan, might not be as contentious as trail plans. Carbon sequestration is mostly informational, what we have and what are potential futures if we go in different ways.

Hue Beattie brought up water sequestration and how it relates to beavers. John McLaughlin said most of the Hoag Creek drainage just runs off.

Park Advisory Board Report: There was not much that pertained to us. Had a walk in Chuckanut forest per John Blethen – 5 people, 1 greenways person and 4 parkway members, supposed to think of signage, but most people just walked. There was little

organic material on the trails. Frank asked John Hymas to ask the park board if they blow leaves off the trails.

Commissioners want to join in a walk, if there is another one.

Vince Biciunas said at today's city club they asked mayoral candidates: how are you going to choose new directors for parks and public works (the process)?

Frank James questioned if it is possible to join in a partnership with the city and parks in thinking about restoration at the planning level. John Blethen said staff is new and most of their workload is on the north side of town. Parks department is short staffed and would like to move more people to full-time.

John McLaughlin said he talked to Nicole Oliver at Parks, she said she is very busy now and not allowed to put any time into CCF Park master plan at this time.

Trail Designs Meeting: John McLaughlin: There was a divide between people who wanted to allow bicycle use and those who didn't. If we had this issue of violation of the easement and the impact of bike use, little bit difficult to consider more bike use if the jumps have still not been mitigated, when MBBC said they were going to exert peer pressure to not extend use beyond the jump park, hard to accept that if haven't restored or mitigated the damage done by the jumps in the Community Forest.

Frank James brought up that a Bellingham Bicycle Map at Fairhaven Runners has a section of bike trails that calls out jumps in the 100-acre woods. Frank James is going to get a copy of the map. Suggestion about a local bicycle park at the quarry, or perhaps even better at Fairhaven Park. Vince Biciunas suggested that at next month's meeting craft a letter to please edit the map as there are no legal bike jumps in Chuckanut Community Forest. John Hymas will make a public comment at the Park and Recreation Board Meeting.

John McLaughlin said considerable feedback that people didn't like the criteria for the trail design, so is working on redesigning the criteria for future trail design proposals. One of the critical things is support and involvement from the public.

Hue Beattie questioned if the quarry holds water or could it? Vince Biciunas said not right now. Possibility to use the quarry as a wetland bank to mitigate impacts somewhere else. To get wetlands right, must get topography and hydrology right. John McLaughlin said the topography is right. If add water, will it drain? Must address that before putting in a wetland. Vince Biciunas noted there is gravel at the bottom and water sitting up above it during heavy rains, but not inside. There were many 10 ft. square holes that the bank had dug, but we do not know what for. John McLaughlin has a

topographic map of where the holes are. What did they find out and why did they do it? Frank James can talk to the head of First Federal Bank about if they have the records. Could also ask Public Works or Planning Department and make a public records request of the city.

Monthly expenses and cash flow sheets. Submitted for July by Robyn Albro. Hue Beattie asked that the total left to be repaid on the loan be added to the Treasurer's report in the future.

Petty Cash: WECU Bank account balance as of 7/31/2019 was \$2,770.95.

Treasurer's Report: As of July 31, 2019, Whatcom Co. Treasurer's Monthly Report, beginning unencumbered cash balance (7/1) \$187,266.82, ending unencumbered cash balance (7/31) \$186,949.65.

Motion: It was moved by V. Biciunas to approve District Payroll Input Form, wages for Robyn Albro, 13 hours in July 2019, total gross of \$325.00. Seconded by J. Hymas. Voted to approve 5/0.

Consent Agenda: Motion was made by V. Biciunas and seconded by J. Hymas to approve the following payment. Voted 5/0 to approve. Payment on the July 15, 2019, Invoice #88472 from Carmichael Clark PS for \$1,395.50, for regular professional services.

Old Business:

- Signage and garbage cans for Chuckanut Community Forest.

F. James asked J. Hymas if there was any discussion at the Park Advisory Board Meeting of any signage or garbage cans at the park advisory board at CCF. Signage did come up as people can get lost. John Hymas said we need to bring it up with Leslie Bryson and John Modine of Parks. Frank said we could expend our funds, if they didn't have a budget for it. John Hymas asked if we need to have okay from our taxpayers? Frank James said he doesn't think that we need that. Greenways have maintenance funds for this kind of things per Vince Biciunas. Vince Biciunas wants to ask city if they would pay for signage, garbage cans and dog waste cans. John Hymas could ask. Suggested at trail design meeting that waste cans be put in a ¼ mile in. Frank James and Vince Biciunas said dog waste cans are at entrance in other parks. There is not much in the way of gum and cigarettes seen in the Forest. People do pick more up because it is a community forest. Vince thinks it is city staff who pick stuff up. Be nice to know who the individuals are who do that. Amy Brown is the new volunteer coordinator.

- Actions to be taken to support Chuckanut Community Forest, such as safety issues, wildlife habitat surveys, and moss and lichen survey.

Moss and lichen surveys – Dr. Fred Rhoades called Vince Biciunas and asked who was doing it. Fred is the guy to ask to do that. Vince Biciunas will ask him what is involved and what budget does he need.

Have a baseline study report of wildlife. Ann Eissinger did a good habitat survey, but we need to do a wildlife survey. John McLaughlin: If you were going to be doing woodpecker survey, surveying snags, and for salamanders doing a search for logs and stuff, all very different surveys. Getting someone like Ann Eissinger would be the way to do it right. John McLaughlin could do it cheaply with his classes or do it himself. If do it with rarer things, foxes, cougars, bobcats, green crabs, freshwater surveys, that is more detailed. What do we want surveyed? Who can do that? What will be sensitive to impacts? John McLaughlin will do a wish list of potential surveys, plus a recommendation of prioritization, including what is there and what is sensitive to recreation impacts?

There are invasive plants on the periphery, not so much in the interior. There have been some volunteer efforts to pull ivy and stinky bob.

John Hymas: When people were talking about more trails and the loops, why not connect the southern trail along Chuckanut between the road and the tree line to the upper trail and that would create a loop. Could take out a bunch of that scotch broom, would satisfy the people's loop mania. Vince Biciunas: When we do the master plan, will there be a parking area along there? Can be dangerous walking along there right now. City no longer mows there.

- Discussion of Beaver Reintroduction.

Postpone discussion of beavers. Beavers are on Whatcom Creek near downtown. City as landowner would have to take the lead. We could do preparatory work to see what would be involved. Where would get them, what would be partners, how to do communication, and what mitigation is. Class has already done that and could also present information in another public meeting. Can delve into them any time we want. John McLaughlin will pull out the best reports. Site is entirely suitable, except wetlands jj has dried out and is no longer suitable. Can build small dams that would impound water and then beavers can finish them or add to them. Other steps for mitigation and neighborly communication? Would do preparatory work at old dam site? Have a public meeting in November?

John McLaughlin will send info to commissioners. Suggests commissioners look at all that information first before setting up a public meeting.

John Hymas is going to talk to Leslie Bryson about signage and will also contact Steve Nordine about whether Parks Dept. blows leaves off the trails.

John McLaughlin will make a wish list on what we should consider regarding wildlife habitat.

Vince Biciunas will ask Fred Rhodes about doing moss and lichen survey.

New Business:

- Savings and Checking Accounts: Treasurer Steve Oliver said we can't have a savings account, so John Hymas moved all money into checking. Steve Oliver also needs to be a signatory on the account. Frank James and Vince Biciunas are going to go to WECU and add Frank to the signature card and take Vince off. Vince will also give the savings box key to Frank. John Hymas will arrange for Steve Oliver to sign the signature card for the checking account.
- Coordination on getting information to mayoral candidates re CCFPD interests. Vince proposed a sub-committee of two commissioners to meet with Seth Fleetwood and April Barker to discuss park concerns. John Hymas and Frank James will do it. Part of the value of a meeting is to educate them about what the Chuckanut Community Forest is about. Meet with the candidates either together or separately before the end of September and educate them about our issues and how they intend to direct their park people and tell them our expectations about the park master plan. Suggested we give them copies of our interlocal and conservation easements. Also brought up was that there are ongoing conflicts that can't be resolved until the master plan is done. Discuss what their legal responsibility is if elected. John Hymas seconded. Approved 5/0.
Can send out letters of support for a mayoral candidate, can only do it as an individual, not as a Commissioner, per Bob Carmichael.
- Google Groups: Robyn Albro set up a google group to send out emails to Friends of CCFPD as we now have enough people on our list that it won't go out through regular Gmail, Gmail just keeps blocking the emails. The Commissioners can all access the list online. There are a couple people that must be sent emails separately. It is just an email list, not a web page or anything that you can click on. Commissioners want to be able to add people to the list. I will make Commissioners managers in the Google Groups so they can add people.

Next meeting: September 25, 2019, Fairhaven Library, **Fireplace Rm.**, 6:00 PM.

Adjourn. Time: 7:25 pm.