

**MINUTES—Regular Meeting**  
**CHUCKANUT COMMUNITY FOREST PARK DISTRICT**  
**Wednesday, October 23, 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, John Hymas (Clerk), and Hue Beattie. John McLaughlin – excused.

**Motion:** It was moved by Hue Beattie and seconded by Vince Biciunas to approve today's agenda. Discussion. Motion approved 4/0.

**Introductions:** Those who wish to be acknowledged: legal counsel Bob Carmichael. Nicole Oliver from Parks Department, Kirk Gulden, Todd Elsworth from Recreation Northwest and Doug Klunder.

**Visit from Nicole Oliver, Parks Department:**

This park is unique due to the Chuckanut Community Forest Park District and the conservation easement. We are bound through that conservation easement not to change anything until we have a master plan, meanwhile people are going in there and getting lost because there is no signage.

Would like to do a "You Are Here" map but need more information on our current maps. Been a little bit thwarted by how many trails there are. Be nice to have a main route in here, that is the Parks conundrum. Can't tell where a main route is from the map I have. We need to refine the map we have with the work CCFPD has done with the public and the students and try and come up with a core main trail we can mark on the map and decide where in the main core to put a "You Are Here" map. Where to put signs? at the main entrances and somewhere else? Need the board's help to determine this. This can be done before the master plan, so people can know where they are.

V. Biciunas: Look at map 19 on page 92 of the Ann Eissinger baseline study. That map does have the wider trails as the darker lines. This map came from the city. Shows the main trails from Interurban, Viewcrest and Fairhaven Park and there is almost a complete circuit without going through the wetlands.

Nicole Oliver: Can use that and take some of the little spin-off trails off the map, get rid of some redundancies and direct people onto the main routes. Suggestion to take fallen wood and line the main route. Can do that without building anything.

John Hymas: Lot of comments submitted on the trail designs were that people wanted a loop.

Possible loop area was discussed.

Nicole Oliver: That is step one, designating the main route, with a potential loop, and putting in signage. Only other things we can do are to monitor and get rid of mountain bike ramp structures.

V. Biciunas: Where the three main trails junction and a lot of undergrowth has been trampled, that would be a good place to put a sign.

N. Oliver: There is one place where there are three parallel trails and Parks could have a work party and obliterate the most redundant of those trails.

F. James: John McLaughlin is going to do another trail design project, and this is something we could ask students to include.

N. Oliver: Have some funding to do some simple things right now. Can put some signs up now and can change them later. These things are within the constraints of the conservation easement. Could do a couple of dog waste receptacles at the key entrances. There are usually stewards for the ones that are harder to get to. Locals adopt them, then the Park provides the bags and the stewards keep the receptacles filled with bags. Must be easily accessible for trash pickup. Only trash pickup is up at the top of the Park, but none within the Park District. Put dog waste station at entrance to the Forest in Fairhaven Park, could do that now. Put them near a trash can that they can access.

V. Biciunas: What about at Viewcrest, where a lot of dog walkers go?

N. Oliver: Will talk to Operations about that. Have asked about it and he said he would be into it if someone would agree to fill the bags. Need to make sure there is also a trash receptacle there.

F. James: We could send out a request for someone on our Friends of Chuckanut Community Forest Mailing List. The other place to have one is off the Interurban.

F. James: Most people park closer to Fairhaven Parkway and walk down from there.

N. Oliver: Might be able to do one there. We have veterinarians that sponsor dog waste and trash receptacles.

F. James: We could approach the Veterinarians office by there to see if they will sponsor a dog waste station.

N. Oliver: Re question of blowing leaves off the trails, the Parks Dept. is not blowing any leaves off the trails in the Chuckanut Forest.

N Oliver: Master plan is budgeted at \$100,000 in 2022. It would be in the next biennium; the funding is there over a two-year process. If new park planner is good as I think she will be, might be able to start the process in 2021. A big part of it is going to be figuring what the scope of that plan is going to include. Right now, it is in the system as Chuckanut Community Forest as part of Fairhaven Park. Probably need to make it part of the existing

master plan and update both at the same time, because a lot of the potential amenities, accesses and things that need to be considered relate to the main functioning Park. There is a master plan for Fairhaven Park that Nicole has and could get to the board.

V. Biciunas: Also, it would be good to look at the Cordata Master Plan.

N. Oliver: Each master plan is unique and there are no particular rules. Sometimes the masterplan goes right into design. Can tailor the process to fit the park area.

The draft PRO Plan is out: URL is [www.cob.org/proplan](http://www.cob.org/proplan) . The master plan is in there as a recommendation. All of park inventory/assets are now in GIS. They are now finalizing new park guide and trail guide.

B. Carmichael: One thing we are interested in with the conservation easement is the protection of the ecological functions, not the only purpose, but a little different focus than the average city park. Baseline study by Ann Eissinger (that the city signed off on) makes it clear that there is a lot of information that is not known about the ecology of the park, particularly wildlife habitat, things that would be important to know to protect those things properly. One of the things the board has been talking about is how do we help get some of this information. Last meeting, John McLaughlin was talking about a number of different things we could learn more about, an example is snags. Where are they, what kind of wildlife is supported by that . . . Before we get to that point, what could we do to fill some of those information gaps, what types of things that could be done along those lines. Is this something the park board could partner with the city on for leading up to the master plan, maybe work toward gathering information like this. This is another thing we could work on besides just the signage and dog bags.

F. James: Have been talking about using citizen scientist approach, iNaturalist is an available platform with a geo platform, where people could note what they see such as trilliums, snags, mushrooms. This information becomes part of the public domain. The groups that are interested in this, like the mushroom group, would make this a much more powerful document over time.

N. Oliver: Similar park is Northridge Park where people didn't want facilities.

Oftentimes there can be a big gap in time between the masterplan and the design.

Masterplan is very much driven by the participants: what they want to accomplish, what amenities, what is important, what isn't important and then you go into the design.

Oftentimes the design and masterplan are farther apart. What are the gaps and what is the information that would be useful to know?

Make our master plan be specific and real and can use that to make key improvements, or to say where we are not touching anything. In the bigger scheme of things, we are working on where to have trails and some places trails are not appropriate. Where should they be? We need some places that are more accessible. Where do we want to improve the trails, such as a moderate version of the standard main trails? Identify with signage, where bikes can go. Have off-leash areas or not? Many things to consider.

B. Carmichael: Park master plan cannot violate the conservation easement. When the new park planner comes in, to help her start thinking about the masterplan, a good idea is to hand her the baseline report we have.

V. Biciunas: How much does Public Works department interact with Parks?

Nicole Oliver: We have done some work with public works, such as at Squaticum Park.

We have separate funding and mitigation sites. Working together on urban forest master

plan. Do projects together and separately. Sometimes have to battle over very different goals.

V. Biciunas: They could be involved in Chuckanut Community Forest master plan.

N. Oliver: Improving, restoring habitat and removing invasive species can now be funded through the PRO Plan.

Laine Potter is the new parks planner.

We will keep the map that Nicole brought [it is at R. Albro's house].

F. James: Thank you for coming!

**Minutes:** Moved by V. Biciunas to approve the September 25, 2019 meeting minutes. Seconded by J. Hymas. Approved 4/0.

**Public Comments:** Todd Elsworth: Invite park board to Fairhaven to wetlands board walk where we have a recognition bench installed. Tomorrow at 5:30/5:45 have a cut the ribbon event. It is just before the wetlands board walk, by 18<sup>th</sup> street (has all of donors and project partners engraved into the bench).

John Hymas: Invite people to Arbor day and make a difference day at Fairhaven park. Will be booths and information and mayor does her annual speech at 11:45 am about Tree City USA. From 9 to noon is a work party for planting trees. Lots of free pizza.

Kirk Gulden walks almost daily in the park. Be happy to help parks dept figure out where to put signage.

F. James: Come to the meeting for next trail public meeting.

K. Gulden: In terms of the master plan for the park, not looking at pump track, mainly has to do with what trails to have and what are friendly to wetlands.

F. James: The purpose of the trail planning is as much laying out the core principles by which we want to make decisions.

The difficulty is where to put the signs on the inside. The main nexus where the trails come together is a bit of a mess, talk to Nicole about combining some initial effort about directing traffic there.

V. Biciunas: That area is right outside our property line.

K. Gulden: It is a logical place to put a sign, 16<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, Interurban, and Viewcrest.

Issue was brought up of dogs off leash there, which can be an issue with dogs chasing wildlife, which is why getting signage up is important.

**Park Advisory Board Report:** J. Hymas reported: PRO Plan was the focus of the last park board meeting and the WMBC Galbraith Mountain update. Parking lot is contentious. Acres of park land at Padden Park were given to the mountain bikers so they can have access to the mountain. The state is going to put in lights and make speed limit changes so it is safer. I have a hard time with giving away park land.

F. James: Something we may want to think carefully about regarding conservation aspects of the property, let's prepare for it.

F. James: What is the status of a Bike area within the Chuckanut Community Forest?

The quarry site is not going to happen, dropped by WMBC.

Bob Carmichael: I think it is dormant.

J. Hymas: A lot of those kids have been diverted to Galbraith.

B. Carmichael: The kids came and lobbied the board and I was surprised by the momentum. Then we started looking at the impacts and what are the impacts from bikes in the forest right now. We wanted to make sure reparations are made now to bike ramps. Never really done to our satisfaction. My office put together a document at the direction of the board that said, if we are going to move forward with a consideration of a bike quarry, we need to have an extra agreement with the bike people to make all repairs first, and second, if there are impacts from the bikes, there is a commitment from the city to restore habitat. They said we are not going to agree to all of that. Stalled, but never officially dropped. Last time talked to Alan Marriner in city attorney's office, it is not dead, but they are not looking at it right now, they are focused on Galbraith. When master planning gets started for this park, we are going to see a push for the bikes and the quarry.

F. James: Asked Bob Carmichael to give him a copy of the draft document about the bike quarry.

### **Old Business**

- Bicycle maps: Owner is still gone. Frank James will follow up again.
- Holes dug in Chuckanut Forest by First Federal Bank contractor: F. James called and has not heard back yet.
- Mushroom Surveys: Nice email received from the gentlemen Vince Biciunas contacted. She is going to work with him. Fred Rhoades and Vince Biciunas can create lists with dates of what was found where and when. Might want to finish the lists before deciding where to put the information. Cannot put historical information in iNaturalist. There have been mushroom club forays in Chuckanut Forest and Fairhaven Park. When people brought their collections in, those lists were made of what was collected on what date. Those are discrete lists. The lists are not geocoded to the locations. Is there a downside to promoting iNaturalist? Can widen the GPS parameters in iNaturalist to include all of Chuckanut Forest. Vince Biciunas will talk to Fred Rhodes about his recommendations on how to list mushrooms and their locations. Could do a private GPS document that is highly specific that could be used for planning, that wouldn't have to be in the iNaturalist domain. Will talk more about this.
- Wildlife habitat surveys and prioritization & Beaver reintroduction: Postpone till when John McLaughlin will be in attendance.
- Checking account signers: Frank James, John Hymas, and Steve Oliver are now signers on the account and Vince Biciunas is now off the account. Vince turned over the safety deposit box key to Frank.
- Auditor Roadshow: Robyn Albro attended the BARS portion of this. Not much of it applies directly to us, but it was valuable for R. Albro to attend because it increased her understanding of the BARS system. She also had a chance to talk to the auditors about our upcoming audit, which helped in the preparation for the audit.
- Box Audit: Information went to the State Auditor on Friday October 11<sup>th</sup> and the audit started on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Frank James did an interview with them. There is a letter that needs to be signed by Frank and Robyn and submitted to the Wash. State Auditor's office. R. Albro sent it to Bob Carmichael, but he said the lawyers didn't need to review it.

**New Business:**

**2020 Budget and Tax Levy Public Hearing:** V. Biciunas asked R. Albro to send out an email the week before about the public hearing. Discussed the budget questions. R. Albro will resend the letter from the City about the tax levy so that C. Moore can work on the tax levy resolution. Didn't go over anything in 2019. There were no unexpected expenses. No need to add anything to the budget at this time.

Discussion about whether we want to take a smaller percentage for tax revenue. Even if pay the loan off early, won't dissolve the Park District until the master plan is finished. B. Carmichael hasn't really thought much about that so far. Might be good to have Steve Oliver run some numbers. Can do that with the spreadsheet that we are already given. B. Carmichael suggested that we take time in the next year to discuss this more, as we have time to do that, as it won't be paid off next year.

Election is a significant cost. Hue Beattie will contact the auditor's office to see what the cost for the election this year will be. We have \$8,000 budgeted. It was \$53,337 for the park district original ballot measure and the election of the commissioners.

**Monthly expenses and cash flow sheets.** Submitted for September by Robyn Albro.

**Petty Cash:** WECU Bank account balance as of 9/30/2019 was \$2,699.43. R. Albro will gather the information to submit to the county to get petty cash reimbursed before the end of the year.

**Treasurer's Report:** As of September 30, 2019, Whatcom Co. Treasurer's Monthly Report, beginning unencumbered cash balance (9/1) \$186,727.15 ending unencumbered cash balance (9/30) \$189,086.56.

**Motion:** To approve District Payroll Input Form & Consent Agenda by V. Biciunas, seconded by H. Beattie, Approved 4/0.

Wages for Robyn Albro, 20.75 hours in September 2019, total gross of \$518.75.

Consent Agenda:

- Payment on the September 15, 2019, Invoice #89129 from Carmichael Clark PS for \$1,024.00, for regular professional services.
- Payment on the September 30, 2019 Invoice #2269 from Highwaters Media, LLC for web hosting and updates for \$240.
- Payment on the October 1, 2019 Invoice from Elizabeth Diane Birsner for Training of Robyn Albro for \$90.50.
- Payment on the 9/30/2019 Invoice 30005 from Whatcom County Administrative Services for third quarter payroll preparation for \$30.00.

**For Future Meetings:**

Updates from John McLaughlin on Carbon Storage.  
Invite winner of Mayor's race to November meeting.

**Next meeting:** Wed. **November 13, 2019**, Fairhaven Library, **Fireplace Rm.**, 6:00 PM.

**Adjourn.** Time: 7:27 pm