

**MINUTES—Regular Meeting  
CHUCKANUT COMMUNITY FOREST PARK DISTRICT  
Wednesday, December 11, 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.**

Frank James read letter from Susan Kaun:

I want to offer my appreciation for Commissioner Vince Biciunas' service to the public as an elected board member.

She is the personification of one of Alexis de Tocqueville's conclusions about American democracy: *The health of a democracy may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.*

Kind regards to you, the Board, the Staff, and citizens of the CCFPD, Susan Kaun

Frank James: I want to thank you, Vince, for your many years of being, not just a member, but being a strong leader that has gotten us as far as we are. Thank you so much.

Vince Biciunas: My pleasure. I do it for the love of the forest.

John Hymas: I consider you the backbone of the board and I don't know what we are going to do without you. F. James: I concur.

Thank you's offered from all attending.

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

**Motion:** V. Biciunas moved to approve the agenda, seconded by J. Hymas. Approved 4/0 (John McLaughlin not yet present).

Minutes: A correction/addition to the minutes of the last meeting by Vince Biciunas, on page 4, the surveys were done by the Northwest Mushroom Association members during forays. Hue Beattie asked that the minutes be amended to say that he needed to leave to attend another meeting. V. Biciunas moved to accept the minutes as corrected. J. Hymas seconded. Minutes approved by 4/0. (John McLaughlin not yet present).

**Introductions:** Catherine Moore, legal counsel, John Blethen, John Brown and Diane Birsner.

**Public Comments:** John Hymas: Happy Valley Neighborhood Association has been planting trees like nobody's business. Planted 8 trees at Larrabee Grade School as part of neighborhood street tree project and will be planting at least another 14.

Planted 200 native trees at Connelly Creek Nature Area with 100 people. For 20 consecutive years we have planted street trees in Happy Valley. If look at parking strips with trees, we have planted 90 % of them, probably over 350 trees. Got another small and simple grant to plant more trees, \$5,000 with no strings attached. Used to be cost share with volunteer labor. We still use volunteer labor to plant them. F. James: Commend you for that. That is the true meaning of Chuckanut Community Forest, having a forest on the streets.

J. Hymas: Planted a lot of Garry Oak this year because it is native, hardy and drought tolerant. More planting this weekend.

John Blethen: Thank you John for 20 years of doing this. John Hymas: Thank you as you have probably done 30 years of planting trees.

John Blethen: Another volunteer coordinator has been added by the park. You can adopt a trail or a piece of property through the city. Talked about the urban forestry canopy project that is coming along. I think under Seth Fleetwood there will be money to put trees all over town.

John McLaughlin arrived.

**Park Advisory Board Meeting Report:** J. Hymas: This was Leslie Bryson's last meeting. Have always worked well with her. She has been a positive bureaucrat for Parks and Rec and I hate to see her go. Her last day is January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Nicole Oliver is interim director until they come up with a new director.

Off-leash dogs big subject this morning. Off-leash dogs pulled salmon out of Arroyo Park Creek. Parks is going through the Bellingham Municipal Code to see why Arroyo Park was made an off-leash dog area. How do you enforce on-leash dog areas? Fines for dogs being off-leash are \$250.00. Need enforcement, if had cops every couple of weeks, giving tickets, word would get out and people would start leashing their dogs. When they run off-trail, they mess with beavers, ducks, and then dog waste is where no one will pick it up. Now that we have electric bikes, speed limits on greenways and in the parks are no more than 10 mph.

City is thinking about licensing electric scooters, going through the Bellingham Municipal Code – which is why this came up. Scooters don't fit under ebikes. This will be addressed in the revision. Everybody can send in their comments.

J. Blethen: Proplan went through the planning commission, climate change needs to be more a part of the Proplan.

### **Old Business:**

- Mushroom Surveys. V. Biciunas talked to Fred Rhoades and also wants to acknowledge Buck McAdoo, another mushroomist. Fred has agreed officially to do a survey of

mushrooms, mosses and lichens. They will be going out next week to look at them.

They are going to use iNaturalist, but are also using an excel spreadsheet. Vince will work with Fred on this.

- Wildlife and Habitat Surveys. J. McLaughlin: We, CCFPD Board, Need to review the criteria for selection. iNaturalist could be helpful with this.
- Beaver Reintroduction. Had a class that looked at beaver reintroduction this last year. Picked seven of the best designs. Format quality is not quite as high as the trail design, but the concepts are fine. Considered all the steps for beaver reintroduction from is it even appropriate, all the way down through monitoring and mitigating. Shows first the wetland JJ, which is on city property, which we do not have the easement for, though the city will be monitoring-managing it as one unit. That is the only place there is evidence of once having beaver wetlands. Other sites are not suitable. Wetland JJ is not suitable currently, largely because there is not enough standing water or escape habitat, short of that it looks promising. Can mitigate with some pre-introduction treatment in two forms, putting in a faux beaver dam, they will then put in their own dam. We can even build a faux lodge. Both of those structures have long design use. Where do you get beavers? Who do you get them from? Need some sort of a well developed communication plan, need to be absolutely transparent from the beginning. There are some examples in the student reports. Make it a community project and modify things accordingly. Then address any problems that could occur.

John Hymas: Deepness of the pond is an issue, would it require augmentation?

John McLaughlin: There may have been some filling in, some accumulation of urban soils and leaf litter. Worked when the beavers were there. Need to do a hydrologic assessment.

Vince Biciunas: Would this have to wait until Master plan?

John McLaughlin: Probably not, have to look at the easement that the land trust has. Would be up to the city.

Vince Biciunas: Do we know history of why beavers left?

Frank James: A couple of theories are that ~~One is~~ dogs chased them to extinction-off, or they may even have been poisoned, or evenpossibly trapped.

John McLaughlin: It is far from other sites, so it ~~C~~could have been natural mortality.

Possible humans or associates could have done them in. Also, beaver introductions don't always take. Can set things up, try to mitigate things so that they can succeed. Have to be prepared for if they don't.

Frank James: Lake Samish used to trap excess beavers.

John McLaughlin: Beavers were at the JJ wetlands site in the early 1999's/2000's.

Hue Beattie: They are bringing the beavers back to England. Trapped them out in the 1600's. Bringing them back to get more ponds and water retention.

John Hymas: Can't have good coho runs without beavers.

John McLaughlin: If the city wants to get serious with its climate mitigation plans, more than our missions, beaver reintroduction would be a really good way of mitigating some of the hydrologic impacts of reasons for climate change.

Frank James: There is an 8" culvert that drains that area, under Chuckanut drive, 60 feet long, 8" in diameter, from Chuckanut Creek to Hoag Creek. There was a salmon box there for years. Salmon don't get above it, but cutthroat did. Washed out. There is a tunnel under it now, just above the tunnel is where the culvert is. Salmon used to get above there

before the culvert was there. Might play into this tribes/culvert piece. Is it prioritized or not? If we could raise the money to replace the culvert, might help with that potential project.

### **New Business**

**New trail designs project:** John McLaughlin: still reviewing. Have gone through half of them. Some of them are excellent. Will bring them up in January again. Maybe have another meeting in March or June? Those are the best times for John McLaughlin.

F. James: Should we put them on the website?

J. McLaughlin: Let's look at them first. I took public comments from first trail design process to recreate criteria to create this new design project. Elevated some of the comments to requirements: has to have loop trail, has to access all the major trail heads, and has to have mitigation for going over wetlands. Make it so there are trails that are farther away from other trails. Diverse set of comments.

V. Biciunas: Invite new people in Parks Department, Lane Potter, and Nicole Oliver to attend the public hearings.

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

**Petty Cash:** WECU Bank account balance as of 11/31/2019 was \$2,699.43. Petty Cash Report to be submitted by Robyn Albro.

**Treasurer's Report:** As of November 31, 2019, Whatcom Co. Treasurer's Monthly Report, beginning unencumbered cash balance (11/01) \$394,731.97, ending unencumbered cash balance (11/31) \$241,580.96.

**Motion:** To approve District Payroll Input Form. Moved by V. Biciunas and seconded by H. Beattie. Approved 5/0. Wages for Robyn Albro, 20.75 hours in November 2019, total gross of \$518.75. Motion, Second, Discussion, Vote.

**Consent Agenda: Motion to approve following payments by V. Biciunas and seconded by J. Hymas. Discussion. Approved 5/0.**

- Payment on the November 15, 2019, Invoice #89685 from Carmichael Clark PS for \$3,059.00, for regular professional services.
- Payment on the November 13, 2019, Invoice L133796 from Washington State Auditor's Office for Accountability Audit for \$2,832.83. Thanks to Robyn and Diane for their work on this.
- Payment on November 30, 2019, Invoice from Robyn R. Albro for mileage of 19.2 miles for November for \$11.14.
- Reimbursement of Petty Cash of \$245.42. \$57 was for office supplies, \$37 was for copies, \$10 Secretary of State annual filing, \$106 for PO Box and \$35 was safety deposit box.

Elections will cost around \$5,000.

Add Vince to friends list with her personal email.

Vince Biciunas, I am leaving with a big smile on my face.

**Next meeting: Wednesday** January 22, 2020, Fairhaven Library, **Fireplace Rm.**, 6PM

**Adjourn.** Time: 6:50 pm.

F U N A L