

MINUTES — Regular Meeting
CHUCKANUT COMMUNITY FOREST PARK DISTRICT
Wednesday August 23rd, 2023, at 06:00 PM
Online Meeting Through Zoom and
In-Person at 1108 11th St, Ste 303, Bellingham
Mailing Address: PO Box 4283, Bellingham, WA 98227

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

John Hymas jhymas1331@gmail.com
Hue Beattie hue.ccfpd@gmail.com
Frank James fjames.ccfpd@gmail.com
John McLaughlin johnm.ccfpd@gmail.com
Ed Grumbine egrumbine.ccfpd@gmail.com

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.

This meeting will be recorded. A visual and audio recording of this meeting will be posted on the CCFPD website. If your camera is on during the meeting, your voice, likeness, and surroundings will be publicly available and viewable on the CCFPD website. If you choose to speak with your camera off, or by calling on a telephone, only your voice will be recorded.

Call to order: Welcome Commissioners and Citizens. Per Chapter 42.30 RCW (Open Public Meetings Act), CCFPD Board meetings are open to the public. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak and the Governor's "Stay At Home" Order, this meeting of the Chuckanut Community Forest Park District will be conducted online on Zoom.

Roll Call: Frank James (President), Hue Beattie, John Hymas, and Ed Grumbine. John McLaughlin arrived at 6:08 due to computer problems.

Motion by Ed Grumbine to amend the agenda and add Fire Plan to New Business with second by John Hymas. Approved 4/0. Motion by Hue Beattie and second by John Hymas to approve amended agenda. Approved 4/0.

Motion by Ed Grumbine to approve minutes as amended of regular meeting on July 26th, 2023. Second by Hue Beattie. Approved 4/0.

Introductions Legal counsel Bob Carmichael, Secretary Robyn Albro. Nicole Oliver, City Parks Director, entered the meeting around 6:30 pm.

General Public Comments: No public comments.

Park Advisory Board Meeting Report: No report.

Old Business

Stewardship of 100 Acre Wood

Frank James talked about the Commissioners desire to assure water quality and wetlands are monitored, the status of amphibians is monitored. He talked about the desire to work with the Northwest Indian College on some of this. Nicole Oliver suggested that the Commissioners write a letter about what they would like the funding that is being passed to the City for the 100 Acre Wood to be used for. She can't promise anything, but she is currently working with Northwest Indian College on programming at Woodstock Farm. She suggested that the Commissioners be pretty specific about what they would like, what's important to keep front and center as the Parks Dept moves forward to steward these woods. John McLaughlin suggest that Western Red Cedar as a cultural resource would be of interest to the Northwest Indian College. It was mentioned that there are two trees in the Forest that have been entirely stripped of their bark, and not in a way consistent with native practice.

The need for receptacles for dog waste was also brought up. Nicole said they are coming imminently.

Frank James asked about the timeline for the project that was supposed to happen this summer, but does it look like the trail construction may happen next year?

Nicole Oliver: The preliminary steps are underway, but the design is not yet complete. A couple of things will be done this year and then the major construction will be going on once the design is complete. They were doing a little more delineation to make sure they understood the hydrology. We've put up some

informational signs at the entrances and have received quite a few comments about that. We are going to try and bid the full trail construction early in the year and get it going in the spring.

Press Release re Conservation Easement

Bob Carmichael confirmed that the First Amended Conservation Easement is in place and is binding on the City and binding on the Land Trust. The Park District has assigned away its interest in the Conservation Easement. The agreement for a Second restated Amended Conservation Easement was principally at the request of Rand Jack so that the Land Trust would be the record grantee. There's no other substantive change to the document.

Frank James will work on a press release about assignment of the Conservation Easement and send it around for input prior to the next meeting. When it is finished, Robyn Albro will send it around to media outlets.

Dissolution of CCFPD

- Robyn Albro updated the Board on the Status of the Audit. She has sent all the files to the State Auditors through the end of July (July approved minutes will be sent after this meeting). Documents for August and September will be sent as they are approved. They are going to work to get as much done as possible in August so that the majority of the costs are billed at the beginning of September.
- Discussion of Robyn's payroll through the dissolution process. It was clarified that Robyn can only be paid as long as the Park District exists and once it dissolves, she can no longer be paid.
- Motion by John Hymas and seconded by Ed Grumbine to authorize the closing of the Petty Cash fund and authorize a check to Whatcom County to transfer all the petty cash funds out of the Park District's WECU account and back into the Park District's general fund. Approved by 5/0.
- Motion by Hue Beattie and second by John McLaughlin to authorize: the closing of the CCFPD post office box 4283 as of 9/21/2023, the forwarding of the mail as of the date of dissolution to the City of Bellingham Parks Department at 210 Lottie St, Bellingham, WA 98225, and for Robyn Albro to take a copy of the motion, that is signed by the President, along with a mail forwarding form to the Post Office on Magnolia Street where the Post Office Box is located. Approved 5/0.
- Motion by Hue Beattie and Second by Ed Grumbine to authorize the closing of the Safety Deposit Box at WECU.
- Nicole Oliver stated that it is their intention to have the website be a resource that would live under the 100 Acre Wood as a history and the Park District's history is worth retaining on the City's Public Website and she is committed to doing that.

Motion by John Hymas and second by Hue Beattie to transfer the Chuckanut Community Forest website to the City of Bellingham upon dissolution. Approved 5/0.

- Discussion re the records of the CCFPD (digital, paper, website, and emails). It was discussed whether to turn the records over to the City or the State Archives or to both. The Commissioners would like to know what we are obligated to archive and what we are not obligated to archive and then those items we are not obligated to archive, we could give to the University archives, who have the local social movement archive. The library was discussed, and Robyn noted that neither the Fairhaven nor Downtown Library wanted any of our papers. They suggested Whatcom Museum. Bob Carmichael said that we are not supposed to donate these things to just any other entity unless you meet certain criteria. He said that wouldn't necessarily preclude us from doing so, but it's a bit uncertain and he'd rather take the safe course and simply donate to the entities we know we can, such as the State Archives or City of Bellingham. Robyn will work with Luke Phifer of Carmichael Clark to make it clear what items need to be archived with the State Archives and which don't.

Emails were discussed and Hue Beattie said that he's never sent out an email as a Commissioner. John McLaughlin made the point that almost all of our messages, with a few exceptions, mostly involving Frank, were copied to everyone, including Robyn and Bob.

Review updated Budget (as of 7/31/2023)

At this point it looks like around \$189,000 will be left at the end of the Park District, but this could change in the next month.

New Business

Fire Plan

Frank James: What is the position of the City with respect to fires in the Chuckanut Community Forest? Frank described Michael Chiavario's discovery of a campfire in the Forest that no one wanted to put out because it was a homeless camp.

Nicole Oliver: I think that Michael's interaction with the fire department happened quite a few months ago and he has been very concerned since then and I've responded to him. Ed had a great e-mail that I haven't gotten back to. I'm so behind, but I will try and get back to you on that. I know the Fire Chief has responded and the Police Chief and what we tried to articulate is that the Fire Department is not responsible for enforcing park rules. No campfires is a park rule. However, right now we have a no campfire rule and I have ordered two dozen no campfire signs to be posted all around the 100 Acre Wood because I know how concerning it is for everyone and I want to reinforce no campfires. Should an individual find a fire happening, we will extinguish the fire absolutely because it is in Title 8. Our staff has already extinguished fires, and it has happened at least once in the Arboretum. But the Fire Department at this point, when it's dry like this, they will extinguish anything that even remotely is on fire. You should have seen how quickly they extinguished a little one that happened down at Maritime Park last week. Very frightening. Also, a campfire. It was out before I could get down there and there was a column of smoke, so our community is vigilant. Our Fire Department works very closely with DNR. We also had a fire in Lake Padden that was also likely a campfire that went amok and they took care of it, and DNR took over because it's wild lands. It was just outside the City limits. But I have absolute confidence in both the attention that we all have to this very critical and scary issue right now and the responsiveness of both the Fire Department and the City. That very particular instance that Michael had regarding one campfire of an individual I don't have personal knowledge of what exactly happened. But I can only say that I have been assured, and I have seen the responsiveness. We also had a fire in a grassland up in the north and it was put out so quickly and then DNR monitored it overnight. So, they go in with heat monitors and make sure that everything is extinguished. They wait a full 24 hours before they leave it alone. I really do feel confident, but I do think that signage and reminders and the vigilance of everyone in this very critical dry time frame and the dry summers are just going to keep going is super important. I don't want to belittle that concern because it's a very serious concern from all of our perspectives. I ran straight down to Maritime, when I heard that there was a fire and I walked right over to it and talked to a couple of transients and asked them if they knew anything about what happened or who might have been there or anything. We are very, very vigilant, especially right now. Hope that helps.

Ed Grumbine: I'd start by thanking Nicole for what you just said. Michael came to me and Frank and described the incident which occurred in June, which was early on in the fire season but still dry given the weather of April and May. I think the best thing to do is thank the City for responding to my queries more or less within 48 hours. That would be Nicole, the Police Chief, the Fire Chief and based on their responses, I crafted and sent to everybody another e-mail a week ago today, which nobody responded to. I'm not complaining, I'm just stating the facts and there isn't any need for a rapid response but given the details in the e-mail I sent before. I believe there is still some tightening up in the fire policy that may need to occur and maybe I can have a further conversation with Nicole on that and report back to the Commission. But I really appreciate what you're doing, Nicole. Thanks a lot.

Frank James: I think the thing that I heard Michael say and I think everybody would want is just a clear process for what you do when you see one. How do you respond?

Nicole Oliver: If you see a fire, you call 911 absolutely. The Fire Chief and the Police Chief and I had a deep conversation about this topic and about how essential it is. That we put out any fires in parks and that we need to be notified, so we have that understanding.

Frank James: That's really good to have that level of coordination and that's simplicity. I think that's elegant and it's what I think I wanted to hear.

Nicole Oliver: There's a push right now to better train our own City staff and equip them for more wildland fires. It's just becoming more and more of an issue than it ever has.

Hue Beattie: They have these airplanes that can park at our airport and dip down into Lake Whatcom and fill up with a bunch of water and come back dump water and come back and do 10 loads in less than an hour and they can take care of Skagit and Whatcom and Eastern Washington. It's not so much that we know it's dry, but the wind can be the real killer.

Party Celebrating 100 Acre Wood

No progress has been made on the party at this point.

Other New Business?**Monthly expenses and cash flow sheets.**

Petty Cash: WECU Bank account balance as of 07/31/2023 was \$2,967.11.

Treasurer's Report: As of July 31, 2023, Whatcom Co. Treasurer's Monthly Report, beginning unencumbered cash balance (07/01) \$275,644, ending unencumbered cash balance (07/31) \$191,093. We received tax revenues of \$442 and paid out \$84,994 in operating expenses, which includes the \$75,000 to Whatcom Land Trust.

- **Motion** by John Hymas and second by Hue Beattie to approve District Payroll Input Form, wages for Robyn Albro, 32.25 hours in July 2023, total gross of \$806.25. Approved 5/0.

Consent Agenda Motion by Ed Grumbine and second by John Hymas to approve following payments. Approved by 5/0.

- Payment for July 15, 2023, Invoice #04400 from Carmichael Clark for professional services for \$6,982.50.
- Payment for July 26, 2023, Invoice #311 from Hartnell Ent. for Technical Services for June and July for \$225.00
- Payment for August 10, 2023, Invoice #L156400 from Washington State Auditor's Office for 2019-2023 Audit for \$2882.25.
- Payment for August 20, 2023, Mileage Invoice from Robyn Albro for June, July, and August for \$29.34.
- Payment for July 27, 2023, receipt from Robyn Albro for Secretary of State annual report filing for \$20.00.
- Payment for August 24, 2022, receipt from Robyn Albro for copies and office supplies for \$20.39.

Reminder: Robyn Albro will send an email to three board members right after the meeting, John Hymas, Hue Beattie, and Ed Grumbine. Please respond confirming that you approve the paying of bills as listed in the consent agenda and payroll.

Next regular meeting (last scheduled meeting): Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 6 PM. This meeting will be held on Zoom as well as in-person at 1108 11th St. Suite 303 above Fairhaven Bicycle. If the door is locked downstairs, a phone number will be posted on the door for you to call and be let in.

Anyone attending the in-person portion of the meeting is required to wear a well-fitting mask per the Commissioners of the Chuckanut Community Forest Park District as voted at their October 26, 2022, meeting.

At this time the final scheduled meeting is set for September 13th, 2023, at 6 PM.

Letter Susan Kaun, former commissioner, sent an email to the Commissioners: I am so proud that the Board completed the mission of the District! Please let them know how proud I am of their work!!
Regards, Susan Kaun

Neither Bob Carmichael or John McLaughlin will be at the final meeting.

Frank James: John, this is your last meeting and Bob, it's your last meeting. I did want to just extend an incredible heart felt thank you to both of you. You both have had very, very long and very distinguished careers with us and have contributed mightily. John, with your intellect and with your academic rigor that you always have, has guided us wisely and your effort to work long hours and create documents that are very useful to us is unparalleled. So, thank you so much. I'm sorry you're not going to be here and I'm looking forward to seeing you at the party. Bob, you've been sort of a board member in addition to being our attorney, we appreciate not just your legal advice, but your wise counsel and we so much appreciate everything you've done for us and with us and we look forward to seeing you on the streets as well as at the party, I hope.

John Hymas: I'd like to add that I think I'm the only one left when we hired Bob and his dedication really showed through and he was in it for the long haul. Thanks Bob.

Bob Carmichael Yeah. Thank you for that John and Frank. If I start talking too much, I might get a little emotional because this has really been an important endeavor and not only have I thoroughly enjoyed it, to be able to work on something as important as this is a privilege. But also, a privilege to work with all of you and the former board members. Everyone is first rate and everyone brings a lot to the table. Everyone of you and I really have enjoyed getting to know you all and the prior board members as well. But before I go too far down, I do have as the lawyer, I've got to make one more minor point for you guys to think about, because I won't be here for the next week. Nicole had the suggestion about writing down what the District might want the City to spend its money on. I think we should walk through that open door and my suggestion is that somebody write that out for the next board meeting so that the board can vote on it and we'll have an official record then that this is a request from the board and its last meeting that the city do these things with the money. I think that will have some punch I hope it will. We should at least take that opportunity. So, I'm hopeful that somebody will have the time to work on it before the next meeting and be able to propose something.

John McLaughlin: Bob, that's a great suggestion. I think we have a head start. Several years ago, we passed a list of restoration priorities. Some of those are on the park master plan and others are not. And so those could form the foundation of our list as well as the monitoring that that would go along evaluating progress towards those goals. Bob Carmichael: Good idea.

Meeting was Adjourned.