



# OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES March 21, 2019

## Call To Order:

Chair Westberg called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

## Roll Call:

Chair Rory Westberg, Vice Chair Marie Bender, Secretary Thomas Hildebrandt, Trustee Geraldine Poor, and Trustee Craig Olson. Council Liaison David Wisenteiner and Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth was absent.

Staff present were Jessi Bon, Parks and Recreation Director, Paul West, Parks Planning Manager, Alaine Sommargren, Interim Parks Operations Manager, and Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist.

## Minutes:

Trustee Poor motioned and Trustee Hildebrandt seconded to: Approve the September minutes. **Motion passed: 5-0.**

## Public Appearances:

There were no public appearances.

## Regular Business:

### (I) 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Work Plan

Natural Resources staff presented the 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Work Plan at the January meeting, but no vote was taken on their approval at that meeting. Staff requested that the Trust vote to approve these reports so that they can be presented to City Council on April 2nd.

#### Action Taken:

Trustee Olson moved and Trustee Poor seconded to approve the 2018 Annual Report and 2019 Work Plan. **Motion passed 5-0**

### (II) Deed restriction research update

Parks Planning Manager West presented an overview of the process to conduct deed research on City-owned open space properties and the work that has been done to date by Parks staff. He explained that it is a time-consuming process that takes a great deal of research. Parks Operations Manager Sommargren noted that the initial request to conduct this work was made to the Trust by Concerned Citizens of Mercer Island Parks (CCMIP) to better understand the protections in place for City-owned open space properties. Parks Director Bon added that this work is high priority, however, the Parks and Recreation Department does not have the capacity to complete the research in-house, nor the resources to pay for a title company. She also noted that the Parks and Recreation Department is embarking on the new Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Strategic Plan (PROS) that could include a request to seek resources for a consultant. Staff noted that there is no development scenario in any of the City's open spaces, so the need for the information is not urgent. Trustees and staff discussed that this information continues to be valuable and different options for completing the work, such as requesting funding to hire a highly skilled intern.

**Board direction:** The Trust board recognizes that this is an important project with limited resources. As a first step, Trustees directed Parks and Recreation department staff to create a prioritized list of open space properties so that we have an idea of where to spend resources (when they are available) to understand existing restrictions and covenants that protect those open space properties.

(III) Letterboxing program support

Parks Operations Manager Sommargren spoke with Grant Polhemus, who currently coordinates the letterboxing program, about how the Trust could participate in the letterboxing program, given that Leap for Green has been cancelled this year. Grant reported that he could use 2 - 3 people from the Trust to assist at the National Trails Day Event on Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>. Trustees Westberg, Poor, and Hildebrandt volunteered to set up and run a booth at the event from 10 am to noon. Grant also noted that Kim Borden and Elizabeth Cross-Nickel, the letterboxing coordinators, would appreciate assistance in letterboxing set-up for the season in Pioneer Park. Parks Operations Manager Sommargren will provide Trustees with additional information.

(IV) Staff changes in the Parks and Recreation Department

Parks Director Bon presented an update of staff changes to the Parks and Recreation Department. She explained that as a result of the levy failure, the majority of cuts fell on Parks and Recreation. Three full time positions were eliminated between Recreation and Community Center staff, which the department was able to do through attrition. She also outlined special events that were eliminated such as Summer Celebration, which the department hopes to restore through creative partnerships.

She outlined that there have been staff and departmental reorganizations. Paul West will now be the Parks Planning Manager, continuing to oversee planning work and major capital projects such as the Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan. The Natural Resources team has been joined with Parks Maintenance. Alaine Sommargren is overseeing the newly combined team as the Interim Parks Operations Manager. Parks Operations is working with fewer staff than the same time last year.

Trustees and staff discussed the changes to the L&I prevailing wage rate and the effect on restoration costs.

(V) Parks and Recreation Commission

Parks Director Bon provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the new Parks and Recreation Commission. She noted that the Commission would not replace the Open Space Conservancy Trust or the Arts Council. There will be a kick-off joint board meeting in September. The PROS plan will be the first primary project of the Commission.

Trustees expressed a desire to have members on the Commission who are concerned about conservation issues. Parks Operations Manager Sommargren will keep the Trust Board apprised of what is happening with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

(VI) Quadrant Reports

**NW Quadrant:** Trustee Berseth and Trustee Bender

Trustee Bender commended the Parks and Recreation staff on their great clean-up work after the storm.

**NE Quadrant:** Chair Westberg and Trustee Poor

Trustee Westberg noted that a large tree took out the trail tread along the Ravine Trail. He also noted an orange wheelbarrow that was tossed downslope below the Overlook Trail.

**SE Quadrant:** Trustee Hildebrandt and Trustee Olson

Trustee Hildebrandt noted that there was some Indian plum damage from the snowstorm across from the outer trail on the east side between 68<sup>th</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup>. He also noted that there were four large Douglas firs and a large cottonwood that came down.

(VII) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2019.

**Adjournment:** 7:20 pm

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Rory Westberg, Chair

Attest:

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Kim Frappier, Scribe