



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES September 20, 2018

Call To Order:

Vice Chair Bender called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

Roll Call:

Vice Chair Marie Bender, Secretary Thomas Hildebrandt, Trustee Geraldine Poor, Trustee Craig Olson, Trustee Carol Lynn Berseth, Council Liaison Bruce Bassett (left meeting at 7:03 PM). Chair Rory Westberg was absent.

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

Minutes:

Trustee Olson motioned to approve the July minutes with proposed changes. Trustee Poor seconded. Motion passed: 6-0.

Public Appearances:

Barbara Crawford, 8445 SE 63rd Street

Ms. Crawford spoke in support of retaining the social trail that leads from her home into the NW quadrant of Pioneer Park. Her full statement is included with the minutes.

Regular Business:

(I) Social trail follow-up

Superintendent West reported that he read through the Pioneer Park Master Plan and found no mention of social trail management. The Pioneer Park Forest Management Plan mentions closing social trails if they are causing damage to the park, but there is no specific policy. Natural Resources Manager Sommargren reported back on her outreach to private homeowners adjacent to the NW and SE quadrants. She spoke with 7 of 9 home owners with social trails. She noted that perspectives varied by homeowner with some expressing a desire to close all social trails and others requesting to keep them. Two neighbors have agreed to having their trails decommissioned, which will be done next spring, and one other has agreed to narrow the point of entry to minimize impact.

Board members discussed varied approaches to addressing the issue of social trails from private property into the park. Suggestions ranged from dealing with the issue on a case-by-case basis to an official policy banning social trails altogether. Some Trustees requested a middle ground approach working closely with the neighbors, but not creating an official policy at this time.

Board Direction: Trustees agreed to the middle ground approach which will involve working with the two neighbors who have agreed to close their social trails and minimize the size and appearance of the widest one leading to 8445 SE 63rd St. The board agreed to revisit this issue again next year and requested that staff report back on the success and status of the trail decommission work.

(II) By-laws revision adoption

Natural Resources Sommargren reported back on her review of the OSCT by-laws and ordinance with the City Clerk to ensure that the two documents were in agreement. There was a conflict regarding the term length for the Council Liaison, which will be updated in the job description section of the by-laws. There was a minor modification to the language in section 2G regarding meeting absences. Notification of the by-laws revision was posted in the Mercer Island Reporter as required.

Vice Chair Bender moved to adopt the by-laws revisions as amended. Seconded by Trustee Berseth. Approved 6-0.

(III) Forest Health Survey (FHS) data collection progress

Natural Resources Manager Sommargren reported on the status of data collection for the FHS. Data collection has concluded. She provided a brief synopsis of the tree composition data including the occurrence of holly versus native trees between 2008 and 2018. A more comprehensive report on the findings will be presented to the Trust board in early 2019.

(IV) Rotary Peace Pole project and picnic table replacement

Superintendent West requested feedback from the Trust board regarding the placement of a new picnic table in the NW quadrant, within the existing picnic area. He also requested feedback on the preferred type of base for the table. Trustees requested that staff place the new table on a gravel base and anchor it so that the table cannot be moved. He also provided background on the Peace Pole donated through the Rotary Club Peace Pole program. Trustees were presented with three options, but suggested a fourth option located next to the Mythical Bird sculpture.

Board direction: Superintendent West will explore the possibility of placing the pole near the other sculpture. Trustees will revisit this decision at the November meeting.

(V) Hatheway Bench

Superintendent West reported that staff have not been successful in recruiting a volunteer scout to refurbish the Hatheway Bench. A community member has offered to pay for materials, but a volunteer is still needed to complete the work. Trustee Hildebrandt volunteered to refurbish the bench and will coordinate with Superintendent West on the project.

(VI) Quadrant Reports

NW Quadrant: Trustee Berseth and Trustee Bender

Trustee Bender inquired about getting a Mutt Mitt dispenser on 84th Avenue SE. Staff reported that this on the work plan for the Parks maintenance team.

NE Quadrant: Chair Westberg, Council Liaison Bassett, and Trustee Poor

Trustees relayed information on observations between dog owners and their dogs. Trustee Berseth attended a walking tour with Natural Resources Manager Sommargren and Natural Resources Specialist Frappier.

SE Quadrant: Trustee Hildebrandt and Trustee Olson

No report

(VII) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2018.

Adjournment: 7:13 pm

Marie Bender, Vice Chair

Attest:

Kim Frappier, Scribe



I am Barbara Crawford and I have lived at 8445 SE 63rd Street since 1972. My husband died in 2014, and there is a bench dedicated to him in the park along the Island Crest Way portion of the Northwest quadrant. We spent many a happy hour walking all portions of the park walking a succession of golden retrievers and on our own. We accessed from our back yard on a small trail created by our use.

We worked hard to save various portions of the park from becoming a 9-hole golf course. The last attempt to do so was in perhaps the late 80's or early 90's. At that time, we met a young, dynamic, articulate young man, who probably had not been on the Island very long. He was to become our leader and hero --- DON COHEN!

It was through these efforts that Conservancy was born. No one can appreciate more than I, your efforts to make this beautiful park accessible to all. From its earliest days, (when there were often summertime pot parties in the park) to what the park is now, from the South 40, to the Nature Trail with ravine walk and the Northwest Quadrant which is truly accessible, it a joy to behold.

Accessibility is very close to my heart. In his last months of life, due to congestive heart failure, my dear husband could no longer make it from our home to the corner. I purchased a scooter for him. At first, we went down 63rd to 84th to enter the park. That proved to be somewhat dangerous, when crossing 63rd at 84th, due to considerable traffic and poor visibility. With Paul West's approval, we widened our path. Since his death in June of 2014, I have attempted to allow it to fill in for privacy.

Coincidentally, our eldest of four daughters, uses a scooter wheelchair and in the early days, there was no way she could enjoy this treasure. Presently, whenever she visits from Mukilteo WA, the first item is "let's walk in the park". We use Dick's scooter to keep hers clean for in the house.

An occasional dog may use my trail, but frankly, they do so even where there is no trail. I have never had a problem with any dog in my 46 years in my home.

I honestly see no need to de-access these small trails, unless the homeowner wishes to do so. Most of us are your best stewards Pioneer Park, reporting downed trees or lost bicycles. and would never cause harm to the park in any way.

Thank you.