



# OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 18, 2018

## **Call To Order:**

Chair Westberg called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

## **Roll Call:**

Chair Rory Westberg, Vice Chair Robin Christy, Secretary Thomas Hildebrandt, Trustee Marie Bender, Trustee Craig Olson, and Council Liaison David Wisenteiner were present. Trustee Geraldine Poor was absent.

Staff present were Paul West, Park Operations Superintendent and Alaine Sommargren, Natural Resources Manager.

## **Minutes:**

Trustee Bender moved and Trustee Hildebrandt seconded to:

**Adopt the minutes of the November 16, 2017 meeting with noted corrections.** Motion passed 6-0.

## **Public Appearances:**

Peter Struck residing at 9310 SE 54<sup>th</sup> Street  
Robin Russell residing at 7549 SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street

Peter Struck and Robin Russell spoke jointly as representatives of the Concerned Citizens for Mercer Island Parks to propose placing Mercerdale Park and other parkland and open spaces under the jurisdiction of the Trust. The written version of their full statement is included with these minutes.

## **Regular Business:**

### **(I) Annual Report and Work Plan**

Natural Resources Manager Sommargren presented the annual report and work plan to the Trust Board and requested feedback. Sommargren noted that the next round of data collection for the Forest Health Survey will be conducted in summer of 2018.

The 2018 Work Plan guides the work of the Trust throughout the year and will be given to the City Council on March 6, 2018. Trustees suggested adding the evaluation of trust properties as a line item in the work plan so the City Council is aware of the project. Trustees asked when we would include the results of this year's forest health survey data collection. Natural Resources Manager Sommargren confirmed that this year's data would be collected between June and August 2018 and presented in early 2019. Trustees requested a preliminary report on the summer data collection at the September meeting. Chair Westberg requested to have staff provide an overview of the methodology used at the March meeting so the Trust understands the kind of data the Forest Health Survey will provide.

Chair Westberg suggested adding the discussion of adding park properties to the Trust to the work plan. Trustees requested some guidance from the city about how to proceed with this discussion. Superintendent West suggested that staff could do a presentation with background on the role of trust properties in May to allow the City ample planning to prepare for this presentation. Superintendent West

suggested an executive session may be advised.

Sommargren called out the addition of "Bylaw Review" to the March calendar, which has not been done in a number of years. Trustees noted that it would be important to review the by-laws in preparation for the City's presentation on the role of trust properties.

Trustee Olson moved, Trustee Hildebrandt seconded to: **Adopt the Annual Report and Work Plan as amended.** Motion passed 6-0.

(II) Evaluation of Trust Properties

Natural Resources Manager Sommargren presented this report to follow up on recent Trust Board discussions about the evaluation of Trust properties. The by-laws do not specify the information to be included in annual reports to council. The Trust asked staff to provide additional recommendations on the merits of different methods. Staff identified two main issues to be addressed: 1) Identify goals and items that should be included in the report to council and 2) The methods for gaining meaningful information. This includes consideration of time scale, and providing objective and replicable data. Staff recommend to continue with what we are already doing which includes: 1) The annual report on restoration activities as a metric of what is happening in the park and 2) An objective replicable study every 10 years on ecological health status. She noted that staff have concerns about only using photo points which had been discussed at an earlier Trust board meeting. Natural Resources Manager Sommargren showed Trustees examples of photo points that were taken as part of the Forest Health Survey in 2008. Photo points alone do not provide the objective, replicable, and quantitative data that would provide meaningful information in forested areas.

Discussion

Chair Westberg agreed that we do not need to change the methods used for the Forest Health Survey, but perhaps repackage how the data is presented so that the restoration activities we report can be put in ecological context. Trustees suggested that staff include a cumulative report on the status of the Forest Health Plan benchmarks. Trustees asked questions about the permanent plots and having data presented in updated maps. Superintendent West expressed that the Forest Health Survey is the best use of staff resources to provide meaningful ecological data to the City. Trustees and staff discussed the importance of identifying priorities in the 2018 report that accounts for the current budget climate.

Trustees raised the question of doing the new data collection for the Forest Health Survey every 5 years instead of every 10 years since during that 10-year period, the trust members and staff could turn over. Natural Resources Manager Sommargren explained that 5 years is not usually enough time to see meaningful ecological change at a landscape scale. Natural Resources Manager Sommargren added that the data collected in 2013 to create the 10-Year Update to the Open Space Plan also provided meaningful information on Trust properties.

In between these 10-year periods, trustees suggested doing qualitative assessments of restoration success and techniques and reporting on this in the annual reports. This is something that staff has already been integrating into the reports. Adaptive management and evaluating restoration progress annually is integrated into the program's restoration practices.

Trustees requested that the information provided to the Trust annually be more rigorous and detailed, even if it is qualitative reports on restoration activities. This would include a cumulative summary each year on the Forest Health Plan progress similar to the report created by Natural Resources Specialist Frappier for the 2015-16 biennium report. Trustees suggested that we continue to discuss this topic moving forward as needed.

**At 6:46 PM Trustee Bender and Council Liaison Wisenteiner left the meeting, ending the quorum. The remaining members discussed several topics noted below, but no actions were taken.**

(III) Hatheway Bench

Superintendent West updated trustees on the status of the Hatheway Bench. Staff succeeded in contacting Rose Anne Cattolico who is a friend of the family. Ms. Cattolico said she would be willing to fund the materials to repair the bench and would like to engage the Boy Scouts to maintain the bench moving forward. Staff will work with the Scouts to ensure that the quality of work meets the Parks Department standards for safety.

(IV) PSE Line Clearance

Natural Resources Manager Sommargren reported that line clearance will begin next week along the main transmission lines on the north side of the SE quadrant. Superintendent West provided additional history of these powerlines and the vegetation management approach to protect these lines. The Natural Resources crew will follow up with invasive plant management to improve the vegetation along this corridor.

(V) Leap for Green Participation

Chair Westberg asked whether the Trust would like to participate in Leap for Green again this year. Trustees agreed that this continues to be an important event and would like to participate in April.

(VI) Quadrant Reports

NW Quadrant – Trustees reported on trail conditions and noted the numerous unofficial trails leading to private residences from the main trails. The perimeter trail is in very good condition.  
NE Quadrant – Trustees reported that some fallen trees had been cleared and that there has been some erosion of the Ravine Trail under the cribbing as it goes up to the bluff. The cribbing needs to be inspected.  
SE Quadrant – No report

(VII) Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2018.

**Adjournment:** 7:05 pm

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Rory Westberg, Chair

Attest:

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Kim Frappier, Scribe