



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MARCH 16, 2017

Call To Order:

Chair Poor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Roll Call:

Chair Poor, Vice Chair Westberg, Secretary Christy, Trustee Bender, Trustee Hildebrandt, Council Liaison Wisenteiner, and Trustee Olson were present.

Staff Present:

Paul West, Park Operations Superintendent
Alaine Sommargren, Natural Resources Manager
Kim Frappier, Natural Resources Specialist

Minutes:

Chair Poor called for a motion to approve the January minutes. Trustee Olson made the motion, seconded by Trustee Hildebrandt.

Approve the minutes of the January 19, 2017 meeting.

Motion passed 7-0.

Public Appearances: There were no public appearances.

Regular Business:

(I) Off-leash dog education updates – Paul West

There were no significant events to update at this time. The dog owner signage project is complete and installed. A spring "Walk with Paul" has been planned and Parks and Recreation will offer a voice control class this summer. Diane Mortenson, Recreation Superintendent, is researching teachers for this class.

Discussion

Trustees noted that May will mark the first anniversary of the off leash dog public forum held last year during the OSCT May meeting. Trustees would like staff to develop a summary of accomplishments to date along with a report from Officer Ormsby regarding her contacts with dog-owners during the past year.

(II) Bike Trail Resurfacing – Paul West

Paul met with a pavement company to get an estimate for the bike trail resurfacing project. The estimator said that foam only works under concrete, not asphalt, so we will be unable to use foam for this project. We are left with 1) ramping or 2) cutting tree roots. The estimator recommended looking at things on a case by case basis: cutting tree roots in some cases where the trail is 20 to 30 feet from the trees and ramping where the trail is close to the trees. Ramping is double the cost of cut and patch. Most of the trees are big leaf maple and Douglas-fir which are not usually sensitive to root pruning. Staff plan to move forward with the estimator's recommendation.

(III) Budget Overview – Alaine Sommargren

Alaine provided a high level overview of the Open Space budget. She explained that the Trust does not technically have a budget. The Trust provides oversight regarding policy and then Parks Staff decide how that money is allocated. In 2008, Mercer Island voters passed a 15 year levy that ensured funding for open space. Open Space is funded in part by the levy and in part by REET (Real Estate Excise Tax). Alaine presented a breakdown of Trust property expenses.

Discussion

Trustee Bender asked if managing Pioneer Park is more expensive than a developed park. Paul explained that developed parks are about ten times more expensive than natural areas per acre as they require more intense management. Alaine responded to a question from Chair Poor regarding the allocation of levy money versus REET money.

(IV) Public Education Regarding Root Rot – Paul West and Alaine Sommargren

Paul provided a history of root rot in Pioneer Park and how it has affected the forest canopy and management strategies through the years. This is an ongoing challenge in the park. Alaine noted that public education about root rot has been in the Trust's work plan so that we can provide the public with information regarding management strategies we enact or simply be able to respond to public enquiry about such things as canopy gaps and tree failure. The Trust will need to determine the kind and level of public education regarding this issue moving forward.

Discussion

Trustees discussed whether we should be doing education on this issue regardless of how we manage the issue of root disease. For example, residents are concerned about canopy gaps in the park. Paul noted that the city has about 45% canopy cover across the island which is high for a Puget Sound City and that many of these trees are on private property. Education efforts about Pioneer Park could also benefit private property owners manage their own trees. Paul noted that Pioneer Park has a higher occurrence of root rot because the park is more coniferous. Forest stands in other parks are largely dominated by big leaf maple. Paul noted that fungal pathogens are present in all northwest forests, but urbanization affects soil temperatures and moisture, which in turn affects levels of root rot present in the forest.

(V) Leap for Green Fair

Secretary Christy reported that she met with the volunteer coordinators Elizabeth and Kim along with Diane from Parks and Recreation. They would like to bring in more volunteers to help with the program. Leap for Green is scheduled for April 1st from 10 am to 2 pm. Tom, Marie, and Robin will be helping with the event. Robin plans to create a practice box. She asked the Trust about participating in Trails Day on June 5th.

(VI) Quadrant Reports – Trustees

SE Quadrant - Trustee Olson and Trustee Hildebrandt

Trustees noted that the trails look very good and it is evident Parks staff have been busy with clean up from the winter storms.

NW Quadrant - Vice Chair Westberg and Secretary Christy

Secretary Christy inquired about the new off-leash dog sign. Alaine explained that this is a new permanently anchored sign to replace the temporary one that was there previously.

NE Quadrant – Chair Poor and Trustee Bender

Chair Poor asked about a new sign near a bench referencing the "Emerald Forest."

Council Liaison Wisenteiner will need to choose which quadrant he would like to report on for future meetings.

- (VII) Next Meeting – Chair
The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2017

Adjournment: 7:04 pm

Geraldine Poor, Chair

Attest:

Kim Frappier, Scribe