



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

Call To Order:

Chair Poor called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Roll Call:

Chair Poor, Secretary Christy, Trustee Olson, and Trustee Hildebrandt were present. Vice Chair Westberg and Council Liaison Sanderson were absent. Trustee Newman resigned his position on the Board. The Board did not have a quorum for the meeting, so all motions and actions will be postponed until November.

Staff Present:

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

Minutes:

Due to lack of a quorum, the minutes will be approved at the November meeting.

Public Appearances:

Nancy Yost, 6112 W. Mercer Way

Mrs. Yost requested that the Board reconsider allowing off leash dogs in the NW Quadrant of Pioneer Park. As reported in the email she submitted, her dog was attacked while walking on leash in the NW Quadrant of Pioneer Park. The owner of the other dog thought their dog was friendly and was under voice control. She stated that additional signage would not have kept this incident from occurring, but a leash would have. She explained that other dogs have jumped on her dog Ruby many times before. She said that voice control is open to interpretation and difficult to enforce. Mrs. Yost researched off-leash site specifications and found some developed by an off-leash advocacy group. According to this research, the NW Quadrant would not meet the recommended specifications. She stated that the NW Quadrant should be for all park users and asked the Trust Board to reconsider the leash policy.

Chair Poor asked Mrs. Yost to share the off-leash park specifications she spoke about as well as any written testimony she had to share. Mrs. Yost agreed to send the Trust Board the information.

Sue King Eastman, 8433 SE 62nd Street

Ms. Eastman described her rescue dog and their experience walking through Pioneer Park. She explained that he needs to be on a leash and can be skittish around other dogs. She has had numerous experiences where other dogs have jumped on her dog and the owner was far behind them. She noted that many owners allow their dogs to run far ahead of them and are not in sight or under voice control. Because it was too stressful to walk in the NW Quadrant, she started walking in the NE Quadrant which is on-leash only. However, even in the NE Quadrant, dog owners are allowing their dogs to go off-leash. Ms. Eastman reported that at times when she has asked people to put their dog on-leash, the request is ignored. One time, the dog owner swore at her. Ms. Eastman would like to see additional signage in the NE Quadrant along the Ravine Trail. She stated that it is unfair and stressful that the park isn't truly available to everyone.

Mike Yost, 6112 W. Mercer Way

Mr. Yost requests that the Trust Board reinstate its recommendation to the Mercer Island City Council to establish the NW Quadrant of Pioneer Park be designated an on-leash park area for all dogs. He noted that this decision was originally passed unanimously 7-0 at the January 21, 2016 board meeting. He told the story of his dog Ruby who was attacked by an off-leash black lab on July 24, 2016. Mr. Yost submitted this story in his written testimony. The attack on Ruby required emergency surgery, a long recovery, and expensive hospital bill. Mr. Yost would like to see a change to the dog-leash ordinance that would require leashes in Pioneer Park in the NW Quadrant. This event was avoidable and preventable, if a leash law was in place and obeyed. He stated that the current policy fails to protect the public from off-leash dogs. Mr. Yost referenced the biennial citizen survey of April 2016 which showed a majority of Mercer Island residents in support of making the NW Quadrant an on-leash dog area.

Regular Business:

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

Paul reviewed the works in progress by staff to improve education regarding the leash dog code. First, he presented the city-wide brochure. Because this is a city-wide brochure and not a Trust publication, it does not require a vote of the Board, but welcomed their feedback before it goes to press. Second, staff have scheduled two meetings at Pioneer Park Tues, Sept 27th at 6:00 PM and Saturday Oct 1st at 9 am. We are welcoming dog owners to come and discuss how to improve the culture of dog behavior at Pioneer Park. Third, Paul presented the draft temporary sign that has been posted at Pioneer Park regarding dog rules and etiquette, which we've been getting feedback on. Staff would like to discuss the content of the sign before we finalize it. This will require action on the part of the Trustees, which we will have to do in November. Paul invited Trust Board members to attend the meetings and outlined the overall agenda and format for the two meetings.

Trust discussion

Trustee Christy noted the challenge of interpreting and enforcing voice control. She asked how many voice and signal control parks there are in the City. Paul explained that every park in the City except for the NE Quadrant of Pioneer Park, Dean's Children's Park, and Luther Burbank except for the fenced off-leash areas. He noted that there are spaces within other parks such as sport courts or ball fields where dogs cannot be off leash when a game is underway. Otherwise, the ordinance is widespread in its allowance of voice control.

Regarding the signs, Paul requested Board feedback on the temporary signs in the NW Quadrant. Chair Poor asked about the signs drafted for the NE Quadrant that were already discussed. Alaine noted that the signs were approved pending additional language referencing restoration and erosion control. The second draft of the NE sign will be reviewed in November.

(II) Herbicide Protocol Amendment – Kim Frappier

Kim explained that staff propose to amend the herbicide protocol to shift from frilling to EZ-Ject lance to treat invasive trees. Because this issue requires board action, the Trustees decided to hold off the presentation and discussion until the November meeting.

(III) Juanita Woodlands Field Trip Follow-up – Alaine Sommargren

Alaine asked Trustees if they had any follow-up questions.

(IV) Quadrant Reports – Trustees

SE Quadrant: Trustee Hildebrandt noted that there is a snag that fell across the Warbler Trail which needs to be removed. He observed that staff regraded the Fox Trail which looks good.

(V) Additional Updates

Halloween family event

Alaine noted there is a family community event scheduled for October 26th from 6-8 PM in the NW Quadrant. There will be carved pumpkins and luminaria on the West section of the Perimeter

Trail. The email and contact for the event are included in the meeting agenda packet.

Empty Board Seat

Chair Poor asked about the process for filling the empty seat on the Trust Board. Paul said the next step is that the City Clerk will open recruitment and the Mayor will select the applicant.

(VI) Next Meeting – Chair

The next meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2016

Adjournment: 6:31 pm

Geraldine Poor, Chair

Attest:

Kim Frappier, Scribe