



OPEN SPACE CONSERVANCY TRUST BOARD REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MAY 22, 2014

Call To Order:

Chair Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Roll Call:

Chair Thorpe, Vice Chair Wachs, Secretary Poor, Trustee Lanzinger, Trustee Newman and Trustee Weiker were present. Council Liaison Senn was excused.

Staff Present:

Jason Kintner, Parks Superintendent
Paul West, Parks Natural Resource Manager
Alaine Sommargren, Natural Resource Specialist

Minutes:

It was moved by Secretary Poor, seconded by Trustee Wachs, to:

Approve the minutes of March 20, 2014.

Motion passed 6-0

Appearances:

There were no public appearances.

Regular Business:

(I) 2013 Annual Report Update – Paul West

Paul West reported that the 2013 Annual Report went to Council and was accepted on the consent calendar.

(II) Leap for Green Update – Tina Lanzinger

Trustee Lanzinger reported that she and Vice Chair Wachs staffed the booth at the Leap for Green event. The attendance was a little lower than anticipated due to a Preschool Association event at the High School. She suggested that if the Trust Board decided to do a booth again next year that they use a gimmick/activity to attract children (such as including a letterboxing component). The trivia cards were well received. Overall she felt it was worthwhile having presence at the event. Thanks were given to Trustee Lanzinger and Wachs for their volunteer hours and to Alaine Sommargren for the work she contributed.

(III) Letterboxing Update – Joel Wachs

Vice Chair Wachs reported that the clues are being updated and a walk-through will take place. The booklets will be printed by the Parks & Recreation Department. June 7th is National Trails Day and Vice Chair Wachs will be at the event to promote Letterboxing. He is hopeful that he can work with Trustee Weiker and the Boy Scouts in the coming months to work on a better solution

for the boxes. Trustee Newman thanked Vice Chair Wachs for his work with the program. Vice Chair Wachs also mentioned two new additions to the Letterboxing Committee.

(IV) Dog Off-Leash Update – Jason Kintner

Jason Kintner reported that the issue was discussed at a recent Parks & Recreation Subcommittee Meeting and staff was encouraged to work with Ross Freeman, Sustainability and Communications Manager to do a public outreach/education campaign. Staff is also working with the Mercer Island Police Department about enforcement issues. Staff is keeping track of complaints regarding this issue now, and have had eight since the beginning of the year, five of which relate to Pioneer Park. Additional signs have been added to specific areas of the park to help support patrolling and educational efforts. Jason Kintner invited the Trustees to discuss their thoughts and concerns.

Trustee Newman suggested the Trustees consider requiring dogs to be leashed on the North Perimeter Trail (starting at SE 63rd St) in the Northwest Quadrant. He feels it is important to make some kind of recommendation to the Council about this issue. Secretary Poor asked how many hours Officer Ornsby has committed to off-leash patrol work. Jason Kintner reported that he didn't know how many hours, but that she has made over 70 contacts this year.

Trustee Wachs expressed some concerns about engaging in such a large and controversial issue. He suggested the Trust Board either keep the rules as they are or make the entire quadrant on leash. He feels that requiring just a small portion of a trail be on leash may cause more confusion.

Trustee Lanzinger clarified that the current rules in Pioneer Park are dogs are permitted off-leash and under voice command in the Northwest Quadrant, dogs must be leashed in the Northeast Quadrant, and they are permitted off-leash in the Southeast Quadrant. She explained that she believes the dog issue is cyclical and seems to be much more problematic during the warmer months when the park is much more populated.

Secretary Poor said that she thought Trustee Newman's suggestion is good, but that it would probably make more sense for the entire Northwest Quadrant to require leashes. Trustee Lanzinger noted that if that happened it would force all the off-leash activity to the Southeast Quadrant which is the only Quadrant where horses are permitted (and may, therefore, cause more incidents between dogs and horses).

Jason Kintner informed the Trustees that there are Facebook pages for both sides of the argument for off-leash dogs in Pioneer Park.

Secretary Poor asked staff if it is possible to post signs if it was decided to only require leashes on the north portion of the Perimeter Trail in the Northwest Quadrant. Jason Kintner stated that he would prefer to talk to the Police Department about the issue before responding.

It was moved by Trustee Newman, seconded by Vice Chair Wachs, to:

Have a recommendation submitted to the City Council from the Trust Board indicating that we would like to see the northern portion of the Perimeter Trail in the Northwest Quadrant be a leash only for people using the park with dogs.

It was moved by Trustee Weiker, to:

Amend the motion to include all of the trails in the Northwest Quadrant.

The amendment failed to receive a second and was lost.

Motion passed 5-0 with one abstention.

(V) Trails Summer Work Plan – Paul West

Paul West reviewed the staff report in the agenda packet and reported on some work already done and a few projects coming up. The Trustees had a couple questions about the work plan, and Paul addressed them.

It was moved by Trustee Lanzinger, seconded by Trustee Poor, to:

Approve the Trails Summer Work Plan.

Motion passed 6-0.

(VI) Trail Signs – User Survey By Trustees – Paul West

Paul West reminded the Trustees about their discussion and interest in conducting a user survey and invited them to continue the discussion as peak season approaches. Trustee Wachs suggested maybe trying to do something at Leap for Green next year. Trustee Wachs suggested that perhaps a Trustee serve as a point person for driving this initiative, and potentially making it an Eagle Scout project. Trustee Lanzinger suggested that Trustee Weiker and Chair Thorpe run it by the scouts to see if there is some interest, and they agreed to do so.

(VII) 2013 Herbicide Application Report – Alaine Sommargren

Alaine Sommargren reviewed the staff report in the agenda packet.

(VIII) Evaluation of Canopy Sustainability – Paul West

Paul West reviewed the staff report in the agenda packet to give the Trustees some background on the subject of canopy sustainability. He asked the Trustees if there were any questions they would like answered that were not covered in the staff report. The Trustees had a few comments including evaluating species being planted for resistance to known diseases in the park and potential impacts of climate change.

(IX) Quadrant Reports – Trustees

Trustee Weiker reported seeing work in progress that Paul West reported on. Trustee Poor also reported seeing work done in the ravine area. Trustees Wachs and Newman did not have a recent report. Chair Thorpe asked the Trustees if they would be open to doing some small plantings around some signage and Alaine agreed to work with him on plant selection and location.

(X) Next Meeting – Chair

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 17th. Trustee Lanzinger reported that she may not be able to attend.

Adjournment: 7:27 pm

Robert Thorpe, Chair

Attest:

Deborah Alexander, Scribe