



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

7:30 PM November 12, 2020
Microsoft Teams Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Diane Veltkamp, Gerald Veltkamp, Tim Faber, Karen Timmer, Nikki Turner.

Commissioners Absent with Notice: Blair Scott

Staff: Dave Timmer, Heidi Gudde, Nancy Norris, Vern Meenderinck

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

Faber approved as presented.

Turner seconded.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

Deferred to the next meeting as the hearing item was continued.

4. PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER:

Zoning Text Amendment Application 20-02 re Mobile Home Parks

Motion made to continue to the December 10, 2020 Planning Commission meeting to allow staff to collect more information on this item.

Motion made:

Motion seconded: by Korthuis

5. PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER:

2020 Park and Trail Master Plan Update

A. Summary Introduction by Dave Timmer, Planner

Dave Timmer summarized the purpose of review. The 2020 Park and Trail Master Plan is a periodic update required by the State. Timmer also emphasized the usefulness of having a functional plan that can be an active resource for City planning. The update also gives the community, staff, and other stakeholders an opportunity to focus on priorities and goals.

Changes from the 2014 plan to this update were highlighted. These include:

- Adding other green spaces. Spaces beyond the traditional City parks are included in the updated park inventory. Examples include, the city-

owned property near the water treatment plan and also the property associated with the Fairgrounds which is zoned as PU – Public Use. This land touches the Fishtrap Creek and includes some ecologically interesting wetlands and riparian areas.

- A public online survey was conducted successfully that gave good insights into the priorities of the community. These results were incorporated into the Plan.
- Map 2.2 Conceptual Trail Network Plan gives the community a vision for what the trail network could include. The map and associated trailways planning also assists the City in obtaining trail segments / easements in association with development as it occurs. Timmer noted this trail concept was an ambitious one and that trail locations shown were not solidified but shown as trail concepts. Many details would need to be worked through during trail implementation.
- Chapter 3.3 is a new component that discusses walkability to the City's parks. This includes map 3.3 that illustrates which neighborhoods are less served in this regard. It can be used to focus on connections to parks or additional recreational opportunities in these areas.
- Chapter 4.4 is capital improvement plan that is a specific list of improvements and potential locations for these improvements / additions. Timmer mentioned that a revised format / clarification will be recommended to the Planning Commission tonight's meeting.
- At the close of the document a page is included for each park. This section gives the opportunity to shine a light on the features or needs of each park.

Dave concluded his introduction by highlighting what the Planning Commission is being asked to do with the Park and Trail Master Plan. These tasks include becoming familiar with the Plan as it becomes part of the City's larger Comprehensive Plan. The Park plan is relevant as the Commission reviews development applications in the future.

The Commission is also asked to hear feedback from the community on the plan. And, to recommend to the City Council any items that might warrant additional consideration.

Timmer noted that the plan was a big picture plan and that details of the plan such as implementation would likely come back to the Planning Commission in other forms.

Questions or Comments from the Commissioners

Vern Meenderinck, Parks Director, was asked if he had any additional comments he would like to make about the plan. Vern expressed his thanks to Dave Timmer for the work he has put into gathering input and writing the plan.

Public Comment

Marlin Hendricks, Lynden resident, spoke. Stated that he has read the document in full. He appreciates the positive tone of the document. Additional comments from Hendricks included:

- Section 2.1 mentions a foundation with supporting parts which was a reference that he was not familiar with hearing in the past.
- Page 5 under perceptions Hendricks thought this was very good.
- Page 6 is a “pet project” of Hendricks and he noted this was the 3rd priority that folks in the survey were willing to fund.
- Noted the Burlington Northern railway as part of the loop trail. Hendricks has not heard of a contact with BN and suggests that this be done right away. He also suggested that the Rec District may want to take the lead on this issue as it is outside the City limits. The Loop trail, Hendricks noted, is not just proposed concept but segments of this trail exist. He’d love to see this trail continue to develop.
- Page 14 map represents a great disappointment from when he was on the Planning Commission. East Lynden did not develop according to the plan that MH remembers working on. There are segments that have been developed but these are relatively disconnected. He is ok with using sidewalks to bridge gaps but that developments should not be permitted to call a sidewalk a trail to fulfill their trail obligations. Patching East Lynden back together, he believes, is possible but we need to be intentional about it.
- Long range trail planning has his support.
- Volunteer participation, Hendricks believes, has gotten “trickier” to implement but he believes it is important to the community.
- Hendricks asked that the Commission, when whatever version of the Plan is adopted, that the City “hang onto it”. Use the plan early and it must be a “given” when development occurs.

- Also, he understands that affordability is an issue for the City and for developers but cheap housing with no parks would not make a good City. Find a way to make the Plan happen. Don't give up parks for the sake of affordability. Developers are trying to keep their costs down but parks should be a "given".

Dave Ellingson, Lynden resident representing Fairside Condo Association. This is located at the north end of Fairside Drive. North property edge is Fishtrap Creek adjacent to the Dickenson property.

Dave Ellingson would like to address some of the issues that they are currently negotiating with the City. Stated that they had met with Public Works director to try to identify the northern property line. Described a problem with the restoration work that Nooksack Salmon did on the northern edge of the stream. He stated this was done without permission or notification of the property owners at the condo. Stated that they have yet to have a meeting with the City. Discussed the easement for the trail and the bridge from Dickenson Park to that trail easement. Additionally, the 108 Fairside Condo Association adjacent to them also has concerns. Noted that a field crew was on site recently and they hoped that topographical map would be produced from the work and a resolution could be found that would be beneficial for all parties.

Dave Ellingson noted that his correspondence has been sent to City staff and the City's legal counsel. The group, Dave noted, is making "a plea" that he could meet with the appropriate folks regarding the boundaries.

In response, Dave Timmer expressed appreciation for the residents speaking on the plan. However, noted that this is not the best forum for discussing the specifics of a property boundary as it is something the Planning Commission would be unable to resolve. He noted that many specifics of trail locations here and throughout the City will need to be worked out as trails are implemented.

Jerry Heller, officer on the HOA Board spoke and noted his appreciation for Dave Timmer and the plan. He noted that he and his group was looking to express their concerns to "as many people at the City" as possible.

Diane noted that this was now part of "the record" and asked City staff if this issue will be routed to the appropriate people.

Dave Timmer said that the City is aware of the issues mentioned. He himself was not involved in detail as it was in need of a legal interpretation and survey work which had already begun.

The Chair requested any other comments from the public on the item. When none were volunteered, she initiated a discussion of the Capital Improvement

Dave Timmer presented to the group a revised table of the Six Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – Park Development (Table 4.4.2). He revised the table to avoid the reference to a specific location for some features such as the concept of a spray park being located at the City Hall space or Glenning Park. This may have been misleading as these locations were suggestions that have not been specifically discussed or approved. Staff did not want to give the impression that these locations were decided. Table was revised to remove references to these potential locations. Timmer also noted that a sub-text was added to the table to note that the building remodel a Dickinson Park may occur after the 6 year planning period as the residents of that home currently live there and, by contract, may continue to do so as long as they want to.

Faber asked if the order of park development concepts had been reorganized to show priorities from most to least likely. Timmer noted that the table was not organized in any specific priority.

Diane Veltkamp asked a series of questions for the staff and the Commissions consideration.

- An indoor aquatic center was one of the most frequently requested items in the public survey. Why doesn't this appear as one of the improvements / developments in the six-year plan? Dave Timmer responded by noting the costs associated with such an ambitious development. Also, the City owned building that the YMCA recently vacated has had pool improvements and a new operator brought in to continue swimming opportunities there. While this is a desire for the community, realistically, a new building is an extremely high dollar item. It will require a new bond, and/or significant private funding. It would be great but don't anticipate this occurring any time in the near future.
- What is the City planning to do to improve trail signage? Could there be room for public participation in this effort? Dave responded that coordinated park signage and trail wayfinding signage will bump up on the priority list as the trail network is built out. It is needed – city wide. High quality, coordinated and recognizable signs at each park and for the trail system indicate professionalism and help people further appreciate the system and this public resource.
- Grant writing. Is there city staff or volunteer possibilities to pursue grants?

- Patterson Park has a play center and there are wetlands around there. Changes here may include moving the disk golf course. Where would this go? How do you utilize this space when it is wet for a good portion of the year? Vern noted that the disc golf is slated to go to Benson Park when that develops. Land south of the road is wet about 75% of the year so this area would likely just be maintained as open space. Dave Timmer noted that this area has the potential for habitat restoration, and we are seeing more waterfowl in the area. Improvements here could include some boardwalk type of access that could withstand occasional flooding and connect people to the views and charismatic wildlife that use this area.
- DVK asked about Benson Park. In the plan it is noted as 20-40 acres of park land. What assurances the Planning Commission could be given that this area would remain 40 acres in size and not reduced? VM stated that plans were being done for the first 20 acres of the property but agreed with Diane that the area should be maintained as 40 acres in total.

Karen Timmer noted her thanks to Dave and the committee for putting the plan together. She agreed that we should continue to move down this path of park creation. Karen stated that she was very involved in the Rotary and the recent changes to Bender. Her recommendation would be that the Commission move to encourage the Council to accept the Plan. Timmer also wanted the record to show that with her work on the Rotary project at Bender Park they found that the City was very easy to work.

Tim Faber commented that he agreed with Karen Timmer's comments and thanked Dave for a concise document.

Bryan agreed the document was a good one. Asked that the Plan include description of efforts to continue to reach out intentionally to the Community to get participation in park development.

Gerald stated that he felt Benson Park should encompass all 40 acres that the City owns there. He stated that he lives near the popular Rotary improvements in Bender Park near Fishtrap Creek. He wanted to call attention to existing trail sections that may be threatened by erosion / Fishtrap Creek. He believes that the City should have a plan for the maintenance and safety of existing trails. In areas where the Creek threatens sections of the trail these need to be carefully managed.

Turner expressed appreciation for the readability of the plan. She said it makes her excited to live here. She sees a lot of activity at Bender and how important the space is for families.

DVK said that when residential lots are constructed at smaller sizes parks become even more important and smaller lot sizes have been the nature of recent development.

B. Decision and Planning Commission recommendation(s)

No additional comments were brought forward from the Commissioners so the Chair summarized recommendations / statements in the following way:

The Planning Commission recommended to the Council that:

1. The Park and Trail Plan include potential ways to garner community involvement in the development of parks and trails. Recent examples include public / private partnership and community donations that made the Rotary's additions to Bender Park a possibility. This section could also include suggestions on involvement by local students and churches as these groups have assisted with restoration work and planting in the past. Commission noted that the City has proven to be a willing partner in private / public cooperation.
2. The City develop Benson Park to utilize all 40-acres of that city-owned property.
3. The Plan prioritize or make a plan for protecting and maintaining the existing trails that we have within the City.
4. The Plan prioritize the management of shoreline areas of Fishtrap Creek where the waterway threatens the condition or safety of existing parks or trails.

Additionally, the Planning Commission wanted the record to reflect that they believe

5. Parks and trails are an even higher priority than they have been in the past as residential lots are now smaller and provide less outdoor play space.

Tim Faber made a motion to approve the 2020 Park and Trail Plan with the present revised Table 4.4.2 Six Year Capital Improvement Plan – Park Development with the five recommendations listed above for Council consideration.

Moved seconded by Karen Timmer. Motion passed unanimously.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Gerald Veltkamp at 8:40 pm.

Seconded by Karen Timmer.