

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY
CONSERVATION FUTURES PROGRAM ADVISORY BOARD**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 20, 2013

3:00 – 7:00 P.M.

**Willis D. Tucker Community Park, Vista Conference Room
6705 Puget Park Dr., Snohomish WA 98296**

Members Present: City Councilmember Randy Lord (Large City Representative), Mayor Carla Nichols (Small City Representative), County Councilmember Dave Somers, County Councilmember Stephanie Wright, Ann Boyce (Community Representative), Peter Camp (County Executive Representative), Dan Bartelheimer (Community Representative)

Staff: Tom Teigen (Director, Snohomish County Parks and Recreation), Dianne Bailey (Park Property Administrator, Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation); David McConnell (Planning Assistant, Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation); Geoffrey Thomas (Legislative Analyst – Operations, Snohomish County Council)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Stephanie Wright

Dave Somers notified staff that he would be late for the August 20th meeting, in his absence the Board elected Stephanie Wright, as temporary Chair, who served until Chairman Somers arrival. Temporary Chair Wright called the August 20th, 2013 meeting of the Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board (CGPAB) to order at approximately 3:05 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Board

3. CONSERVATION FUTURES ACQUISITION OVERVIEW MAP

Dianne Bailey

4. APPLICATION REVIEW

Board

The Board heard presentations and then asked questions on the following presentations.

3: 10 pm City of Snohomish – Stocker Farm Acquisition, \$500,000

Presenters:

- Ann Stanton, Park Development Planner, City of Snohomish
- Mayor Karen Guzak, City of Snohomish
- Mark Spada, Board President, Snohomish Sportsmen’s Club

Presentation:

The City of Snohomish seeks to purchase a portion of the property owned by the Stocker family. Park Planner Ann Stanton presented the history of the proposed Stocker Farm property purchase with Mayor Karen Guzak and support by Mark Spada, President of the Snohomish Sportsmen's Club. The property provides 1,700 lineal feet of riparian border, a trail nexus and location for a boat launch, much needed by the City of Snohomish. The negotiated price is over the appraisal report.

Board Questions:

- Is there more property available for sale? Answer – yes, there is a willing seller, but the negotiated price of \$25,000 per acre made further purchase prohibitive. The property owner sold nearby land to a soccer club within the last few years at \$28,000.00 per acre.
- Is there funding available for the construction of a boat launch? Answer - There is funding currently available for a boat launch through the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

3:25 pm Town of Darrington – Dashiell Land Purchase, \$175,000

Presenters:

- Mayor Dan Rankin, Town of Darrington

Presentation:

The Town of Darrington seeks to purchase a property owned by the Dashiell family. Mayor Rankin presented the potential land purchase of a small site located in the center of the Town, adjacent to the existing town park and Whitehorse Trail. The subject property contains an 80 year old tree stand, is a great resting spot for bat specie and a migration route corridor. The property currently attracts transients, if purchased the site would be maintained by volunteers.

Board Questions:

- What kind of maintenance will the site receive if acquired? Answer – the site would require mowing and would also provide for passive recreation with several picnic tables and green space. The site also connects to the 7 mile portion of the County's Whitehorse Trail that is open between Darrington and Swede-Haven Road.
- Is the site located within the town limits or UGA and what is its current zoning? Answer – the site is currently within the town limits.

3:40 pm City of Lynnwood - Seabrook Heights, \$7,026,600

Presenters:

- Laurie Cowan, Parks Planner, City of Lynnwood
- Jared Bond, Environmental and Surface Water Supervisor, City of Lynnwood

Presentation:

The City of Lynnwood seeks to purchase the Seabrook Heights property owned by West View Properties, Inc. Parks Planner Laurie Cowan and Environmental and Surface Water Manager Jared Bond described the Seabrook Heights property, which is 13 acres of

environmentally sensitive property with critical areas designation, steep slopes and the threat of landslides that is part of a sensitive watershed. The property is a unique opportunity to preserve habitat and open space in a dense urban area.

Board Questions:

- How often do landslides occur? Answer – frequently. Slides of significant size have occurred in 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2011 and are a serious concern, especially if this site is allowed to develop.
- How is development in this area allowed given the critical areas and steep slopes? Answer – This project is permitted by the County, not the City of Lynnwood. The property was not within the City's annexation area.
- Does the City have the budget to prevent landslides in the future? Answer – The best way to prevent landslides in this area is to acquire and protect this site to prevent development on the site.

3:55 pm City of Lynnwood – Heritage Park, \$838,220

Presenters:

- Laurie Cowan, Parks Planner, City of Lynnwood
- Jared Bond, Environmental and Surface Water Supervisor, City of Lynnwood

Presentation:

The City of Lynnwood seeks to purchase the Landsverk Quality Homes Inc. property, adjacent to the City's Heritage Park. The park was developed in 2004 and is a regional favorite among residents in the City and the surrounding area. The target acquisition is a 1.01 acre property south of and adjacent to the park. There are few other public parks in this local area and there are potentially 60 new residences currently under permit review by the City. The property if acquired will be used to enhance the existing park. There is an existing 33 acre educational demonstration farm nearby and a potential link to the Interurban Trail could be established as well.

Board Questions:

- Is a connection to the Interurban Trail possible from Heritage Park via this acquisition? Answer – yes, this property will help in establishing a connection, but it will not make the connection itself.
- How many heritage trees are on the site? Answer – approximately 33.
- Has the City considered using REET funds instead of Conservation Futures funds for this site? Answer – the City has not considered this.
- Where is this acquisition on the City's parks priority list? Answer – The City did not have this property on its priority list at all but the property recently became available and the City took the opportunity to request Conservation Futures funding to acquire it. It has also been a priority of the City's Parks Board for some time.

4:10 pm BREAK

4:20 pm Snohomish County – Rinker Materials, \$368,950

Presenters:

- Kevin Teague, Parks Planner, Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Department
- Tom Teigen, Director, Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Department

Presentation:

The County seeks to purchase the former Rinker Materials site owned by CEMEX World-Wide. The site is a 58 acre former gravel extraction mine that has been filled and reclaimed under supervision of the Department of Natural Resources and which would be largely donated to the County. The County seeks to land bank this piece for future development as a regional park with passive recreation, scenic view trails and habitat restoration. The site has spectacular territorial views and also is in close proximity to the East Side Rail Corridor where the County seeks to purchase a trail easement.

Board Questions:

- Are there environmental concerns at this site? Answer – the environmental concerns have been identified and addressed to the satisfaction of the Department of Natural Resources.
- Are operations at the site ongoing? Answer – no, commercial operations have ceased and reclamation work is also complete.
- What is the value of the donation the property owner would like to make? Answer – 80% of the property value.
- Where does this property fit on the list of parks priorities? Answer – this property is not as high as some of the other County projects yet to be presented but it is still a great opportunity given the views, the 80% donation and its close proximity the East Side Rail Corridor.
- What is the threat of development for this site? Answer – the site has already been determined by a property assessment as a suitable site for a regional park so it would be equally suitable for use as a plat or Planned Residential Development (PRD). There are no imminent plans for the owner to develop the site and the owner gains more benefit from donating the site to the County than in selling it for land development.

4:35 pm City of Marysville – Mother Nature’s Window, amended \$372,898

Presenters:

- Jim Ballew, Parks and Recreation Director, City of Marysville

Presentation:

The City of Marysville seeks to purchase the Brager property, which is immediately adjacent to the City’s Mother Nature’s Window Park. This property if acquired would perfect the City’s access to the park and would allow for the development of better public access via 100th Street. The City would demolish the buildings and use the area to create parking and ADA access for the park. This is a long term goal in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Board Questions:

- Where does the current public access connect? Answer – the current access crosses the Turk property and connects to 55th Avenue. The public is no longer allowed to use this access to the park.
- Why didn't the City purchase the entire property years ago? Answer – The County worked with four different sellers to assemble the park with a condition that the Turk family would sell the Mother Nature's Window site if the other three private property parcels were purchased first. Funding was limited and the Brager residential property was not part of the transaction deal with the Turk family at the time.
- Could the City live without funds for fencing the property? Answer – yes.

4:50 pm City of Brier – Brier Creek Nature Park, \$723,820

Presenters:

- Mayor Bob Colinas, City of Brier
- Nicole Gaudette, Park Planner, City of Brier

Presentation:

The City of Brier seeks to purchase the Alberg property. This site is a 5 acre site near City Hall that consists of wooded wetlands and uplands and is part of the headwaters for Locust Creek. There are many listed species in the headwaters and upper portions of Locust Creek and the site has also been identified as high value habitat for the Western Bumblebee which has recently been identified on and in the vicinity of the watershed. The property represents a rare opportunity to not only preserve open space but also do habitat enhancement and environmental education for pollinators of the northwest. The property is currently zoned for single family residential (SFR) and could be short platted and developed also if not acquired and preserved. Finally, this property represents a rare opportunity to establish a trail connection between the City's center and several other parks via a network of trails and paths.

Board Questions:

- How would public access be provided? Answer – either along the public roadway or from the existing Brier City Park.
- Where exactly is the Locust Creek headwater? Answer – it originates in Locust Creek Park (See application maps).
- Will there be pesticides used in this park? Answer – no, the City plans to manage the park and this property without pesticides in an effort to protect the Western Bumblebee and other sensitive species of plants and animals.

5:05 pm City of Brier – Lyon Creek Park, \$275,572

Presenters:

- Mayor Bob Colinas, City of Brier
- Nicole Gaudette, Park Planner, City of Brier

Presentation:

The City of Brier seeks to purchase the Schudlich property which is a property that just became available for purchase. It is a 2.37 acre property adjacent to City owned property to

the south and a local public school. Access would be available through the school. The site has wetlands and has significant communities of native vegetation which is rare in the southwest portion of Snohomish County. The owner has at least one current purchase offer pending so the property is under threat of development.

Board Questions:

- Can the City clarify the access through the school campus? Answer – yes. (See application map).
- How many houses can be built on the site? Answer – 1 single family residence as the site cannot be subdivided under current city code.

PCC Farmland Trust – Bailey Farm, \$585,750

Presenters:

- Hilary Aten, Conservation Project Manager, PCC Farmland Trust

Presentation:

The PCC Farmland Trust seeks to work with the Bailey family, owners of the Bailey Farm, to facilitate the purchase of a conservation easement for the farm. PCC Farmland Trust works to conserve active farmland in Washington State. Snohomish County has lost 58% of its farmland since 1950 and conservation easements allow farmland owners to conserve farmland in a working state. PCC Farmland Trust will work with the Bailey family to remove invasive species on the farm property, conduct public education programs on site, and help the family reduce farming impacts on Puget Sound threatened and endangered species. The property is currently zoned as a density fringe area and there is the potential for some development on the site in the future if a conservation easement is not established.

Board Questions:

- How does PCC establish the value of the conservation easement for grant purposes? Answer – PCC uses a broker estimate to establish a conservative rough estimate and, if successful in its grant application, will then commission a formal appraisal.
- How does a conservation easement for agricultural land work? Answer – the conservation easement will prevent land uses other than those allowed for agricultural use. The land must continue to be used for agricultural purposes as defined by the terms of the specific easement. The accessory uses such as the composting business are allowable uses that will be written into the easement. The PCC Farmland Trust will monitor compliance with the easement terms.
- Are there other match fund sources for this conservation easement acquisition? Answer – yes, the PCC Farmland Trust is also perusing grant funding for an agricultural conservation easement through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Funding should become available for match in 2014.

5:20 pm BREAK

5:45 pm City of Sultan – Sultan River Nature Park Trail Acquisition, \$365,850

Presenters:

- Ken Walker, City Administrator, City of Sultan
- Carolyn Eslick, Mayor, City of Sultan

Presentation:

The City of Sultan seeks to purchase a combination of property and trail easements that will allow the City to establish a trail connection between The City's Osprey Park and River Park along the Sultan River. Three property owners, the Boucher family, the Knowlton family, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are willing sellers for this project. The City is collaborating with Snohomish PUD on work to restore and enhance habitat along the Sultan River and this collaboration along with two private willing sellers represents a unique opportunity for the City to develop a much larger recreation area than it otherwise could as well as participate in habitat enhancement for salmon recovery. The property also will provide many opportunities for environmental education for schools and other groups in the Sky Valley.

Board Questions:

- How imminent is the threat of development? Answer – the southern property is on the market now, the northern site is owned by an elderly owner who is retired and ready to sell. The northern site also has frontage both on a major street and riverfront. There is also strong interest from the community and partners to pursue this project because the site is already used informally for students and the public to view the annual salmon run and the City is working on developing an educational/community program and festival to celebrate the return of the salmon.
- Does the Snohomish PUD plan to do mitigation work on this site? Answer – yes the PUD does plan to do mitigation work at the site and in the area surrounding the site which will include invasive species control for blackberries and knotweed as well as additional fish habitat enhancement work.

6:00 pm Forterra – Anderson Farm, \$1,100,000

Presenters:

- Michelle Connor, Executive Vice President, Forterra
- Sabrina Bolieu, North Sound Conservation Program Manager, Forterra

Presentation:

Forterra and the Anderson family seek to facilitate the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement on the Gutschmidt farm. The Anderson family has already made a purchase and sale offer to purchase the farm, and Forterra would like to purchase the development rights on the property to conserve the farm as working agricultural land. The family would like to operate the farm for grass fed organic cattle and hay production and also operate an agriculture tourism business on the farm. The farm is 210 acres of riverfront property on the Stillaguamish River with approximately 1 mile of riverfront. If the farm is not purchased and conserved as agriculture land it will be subdivided into 10 acre parcels based on current zoning and potentially used for hobby farms. Forterra will work with the Andersons to include the critical areas buffers into the business plan for the farm.

Board Questions:

- How was the value of the easement determined? Answer – the easement value was estimated by examining the price of prime farmland in the surrounding area and based on the recent purchase of other conservation easements in the region.
- Is the price of \$3,500 per acre a reasonable price for prime farm land? Answer – Forterra and the Anderson family are asking the County to purchase and hold the development rights for the property. The Anderson family will pay for the remainder land value (the agricultural land value) and all subsequent farm improvement costs after the development right value have been established for the easement.
- Are there invasive species such as knotweed on the site? Answer – yes, the owner will work with Forterra and the County on invasive species control.

6:15 pm Forterra – Whitehorse Stilly II, \$125,000

Presenters:

- Michelle Connor, Executive Vice President, Forterra
- Sabrina Bolieu, North Sound Conservation Program Manager, Forterra
- Adam Draper, Staff Attorney, Forterra

Presentation:

Forterra seeks to purchase and conserve the Curtis property. This project was partially funded by the Conservation Futures program in the last round and Forterra sought match funding through other grant sources. The other sources fell through and now Forterra is seeking the remaining balance of the cost to purchase the site. The Curtis property crosses the 27 mile long Whitehorse Trail and is situated to enhance the trail by providing a beautiful setting for bird watching, public river access from the trail, as well as other recreational uses such as camping. The site has not been logged since 1950 and the forest stand serves as a buffer against future development for other adjoining public land. There are three generations of the Curtis family who own the property and the family would like to sell the property soon. If developed, the property could yield approximately 6 lots for single family residential use. There is no public easement access to the property but Forterra will attempt to acquire an easement “by necessity”.

Board Questions:

- What is the priority for protecting open space in this area when compared to other areas within Snohomish County? Answer – from the perspective of environmental conservation, protecting open space and habitat in this portion of a watershed basin (think Puget Sound) is critical because the upper reaches and the headwaters of rivers are critical for water quality, storm water management, fish habitat, and regulation of water flow. Conserving open space in these regions is one of the best things that can be done to preserve the health of Puget Sound.

5. PRELIMINARY APPLICATION DELIBERATIONS

Board

Preliminary Deliberations:

- Discussion revolved about the deliberation and selection process.
- If funds are returned to fund balance from unsuccessful projects, there may be another grant round in January.
- The Board noted that many great projects had been submitted and because there were many more projects that were worthy of funding than there were funds available, the Board should consider funding only land acquisition and related costs and not additional items such as signage and fencing.
- The Board also felt that the present bond funded grant round would be a great opportunity to land bank.
- The Board's initial impression of the projects was that there were many projects that scored well but that were really not unique in nature, and some others that were very unique opportunities that may not score as high but that should be given additional consideration.
- The Board discussed how to approach some joint projects that overlapped and how they would fit into the Board's priorities.
- The Board discussed but did not reach consensus on how to approach agricultural easements and decided to have Staff bring information to the Board on this topic on the last day prior to beginning the ranking and scoring of projects.
- It was decided that the projects would be considered on the last day, after all of the presentations
- Chair Somers reminded the Board that deliberations would not continue past 9:00 pm on the August 21st CFPAB meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m. by Chair Dave Somers.