

BREMERTON PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of June 22, 2021

Virtual Meeting

Commissioner's Present: Tim Baker, Ben Burnette, Pat Watson and Dave Hedger

Staff Present: Jeff Elevado, Director of Parks and Recreation
Colette Berna, Park Preservation and Development Manager
Steve Mutek, Parks Operation Manager

- I. **Meeting Called to Order** at 5:31 p.m. by Chair Burnette
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the minutes from the May 25th meeting. Watson/Hedger (M/S/U)
- III. **Public Comment:** N/A
- IV. **Business Items:**
 1. **Parks & Recreation COVID-19 Status Update**

Director Elevado shared that the City was able to open both the Sheridan Park Community Center and Senior Center last week at 50% capacity following current CDC protocols including camera temperature sensors at check-in and contact tracing. Softball adult leagues will get started again with 73 teams registered which is about 40% of what is normal, and the park shelter rentals continue to be in high demand. **Chair Burnette** asked about Senior Center trips and senior games. **Director Elevado** said they have not started the trips yet and that the West Sound Games were canceled this year.
 2. **Madrona Trail Stewardship Group Report (Josh Farley)**

Josh Farley thanked the Commission and Department and gave a brief presentation on Madrona Trails which he happens to live nearby. Recent stewardship efforts include clearing and widening trails, picking up trash, cleaning up the "smoke break area" used by hospital workers and cleaning up lots of encampments. Since the stewardship efforts have begun, he is finding more use of the park by neighboring residents and there are fewer undesirable elements coming in. They have also installed wayfinding signs to help people find their way through the trail system and he really wants people to feel safe and enjoy this area to recreate. **Mr. Farley** mentioned that an Eagle Scout is interested in helping identify a main entrance (currently there are multiple) from the parking lot to the trail system. His three priorities: 1) Visibility so more people walking it will discourage bad things; 2) Fertility by beating back the invasive species; and 3) Mobility by making trails less steep with switchbacks. He concluded presentation by offering to give anyone that was interested a tour. **Director Elevado** shared appreciation of volunteer groups like this to walk the trails and alert us of issues and mentioned that the parking lot needs to be reduced in size per state/federal agencies as the site was deeded to the city for recreational use only. **Chair Burnette** asked if a gate could be used at the parking lot to discourage illicit use afterhours and **Director Elevado** shared the challenges locking gates creates for staff at night.
 3. **Arvon Park Renovation Proposal (Jessie Smith)**

Jessie Smith thanked everyone for the opportunity to present her proposal to renovate Arvon Park with skateboard features that would serve teenagers and complement nearby Matan Park which has modern play equipment for younger kids. She noted that the skate park at East Park in East Bremerton is not easy to get to for kids on the west side of town and felt that reopening the

park will foster a sense of community among neighbors which should deter most criminal activity. Her proposal also included a covered seating area that could double as a distance learning hotspot, a BMX bike track around the perimeter, landscaping, an art wall, water features, lighting, and security cameras. She recognized that noise might be an issue and suggested that the skateboard feature could be sunken like a bowl to help contain the noise and that other features (water, landscaping) could also double as sound barriers. **Chair Burnette** thanked Ms. Smith for her proposal as did **Commissioner Hedger** who added that Arvon Park has been discussed many times regarding its limitations in size and parking. **Director Elevado** shared that Arvon Park is a small parcel on a very narrow alley road which only fits one car going one way and has a very small parking area. In 1995 it was donated to the city by the National Spiritualist Association of Churches for recreation and open space and in 1996 it was developed into a pocket park with a playground, retaining wall, and small parking area. It has been closed since roughly 2009 due to illicit activity and inability to maintain vandalism when our staff was cut during the recession. Around this time the city also renovated Matan Park and developed Lillian & James Walker Park which are both a few blocks away. He explained that the long-term viability of Arvon Park has been discussed in multiple adopted Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plans since 2004 and was recommended for surplus as a potential option due to management issues, lack of recreational value, and its visually secluded small, sloped site. City staff have been in contact with the Church and Church's lawyer to discuss this possibility. He shared the current 6-year Renovation and Capital Facilities Plan which includes 17 high and medium-priority capital projects and status of projects currently underway. **Ms. Smith** asked if old playground equipment at Arvon Park could be donated and **Director Elevado** explained it was a liability. **Fritz Rice** has ridden skateboards for 25 years and does not think that Arvon Park is a good location for a skate spot due to small, sloped site and noise impact on neighborhood. **Amberlee** supports the proposal, likes hotspot idea and believes community needs more resources for teens. **Gary** supports proposal and believes we need more recreational options for youth. **Erin Harris** has strong concerns regarding noise because Arvon Park is on steep hill and noise barriers don't generally work on steep hills because of the way sound travels up. She liked features in proposal like hotspot idea and wondered if they could be incorporated in other parks. She would love to see a robust public process to decide what to do with Arvon Park as many neighbors have different opinions. **Rebecca Lee** supports proposal, asked what the next steps would be and asked for clarification on whether park would go back to Church if it's not used for recreation. **Director Elevado** said we will continue to evaluate the site based on feedback and that the Church's lawyer indicated they are willing to quitclaim deed the property to the city. **Mary Harris** is a parent of three skateboarders, grandmother of another skateboarder, is not opposed to the sport but is opposed to the location. She does not feel it's a safe location due to its seclusion, lack of access and feels the noise would be appalling. **Chair Burnette** thanked everyone for their comments and participation.

V. Staff Reports:

1) Warren Ave. Park Renovation Update

Director Elevado shared that besides needing some additional fencing and getting final signage in that we are pretty much done. **Mr. Mutek** shared maintenance issues they've had with people vandalizing the restroom and playground which has been frustrating.

2) Kitsap Lake Park Renovation Project Update

Ms. Berna shared progress with design and permitting and recent approval by the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation to proceed after review of the cultural resource survey. This approval will allow Geotech work to proceed which will happen this Friday. We are also working on the DNR lease and paperwork for Department of Commerce 250k grant. **Director Elevado** noted there is park waterfront cleanup this Saturday to help clear the dead vegetation

that ends up in front of the park due to predominant winds. Removing the rotting vegetation helps the health of the water quality by reducing excess nutrients which leads to algae blooms.

3) Ivy Green Cemetery Improvement Project Update

Mr. Mutek shared that the contractor redid the concrete pillars at the entry because the lettering wasn't quite right. It's the same contractor that did the renovations around the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and he's been doing a great job.

4) CDBG Accessibility Improvement Project Update

Director Elevado summarized status of project to improve accessibility at four sites including getting bids to perform work at Kitsap Lake Park.

5.) Added item: Juneteenth Celebration at Evergreen Rotary Park

Director Elevado added that the June 19th celebration on Saturday was our first special event since the pandemic began, was happy to see people enjoying the park and thanked staff for putting on a great event.

VI. Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioner Watson thanked everyone for their comments tonight and said he would love to see Arvon Park become a viable park again with a use that's appropriate for its size and location.

Commissioner Baker agreed it would be nice to find a use for Arvon Park and asked if we would meet in person again. **Director Elevado** said yes, we should have some changes in the public meeting restrictions soon but that there has also been value in doing these meetings over zoom to allow more people to participate so maybe we will do a hybrid version.

Chair Burnette thanked everyone for being at meeting, thanked Jessie for her proposal and invited everyone to send any additional comments to Director Elevado.

VII. Adjournment: Chair Burnette adjourned the meeting at 7:31 pm.