



Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Natural Resources Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: January 28, 2014

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Fanno Creek Service Center

In Attendance

Committee Members: Rod Coles, Mitch Cruzan, Laura Porter, Jack Shorr, Cory Samia, Matthew Shepherd
Staff: Bruce Barbarasch, René Brucker, Kristin Atman

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mitch Cruzan at 6:31 p.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

There was a brief discussion about last month's minutes. No changes were requested. Motion to approve proposed by Laura Porter; seconded by Rod Coles. Approved unanimously.

III. Financial Report

Mitch asked for an update on the posts to mark unmown areas. Bruce said they had not yet been purchased.

IV. Old Business

a. Check in activity

Jack: As a continuing part of the Leopold land ethics training he had enjoyed trips to Fern Creek Wetlands and Gales Creek.

Cory: Noted the inconsistent access to the Garden Home trail and informed the committee that she would be attending the UERC conference on February 10.

Laura: Had attended a workshop put on by the Bureau of Reclamation at which she learned about the impacts to the Tualatin Valley should the Scroggins Dam collapse during an earthquake. In short, run for high ground. It would take 4-5 hours for the leading edge to reach the CWS offices at Jackson Bottom and maximum flows of 180,000 cfs would be achieved. Laura had also bicycled the trail through Barrows Park, where the sad-looking condition of the creek broke her heart.

Rod: Had enjoyed blackberry pulling in wet, soggy conditions. The friends of Tualatin Hills Nature Park have been successful in leading walks through the Nature Park on Saturdays and Sundays.

Matthew: Had participated in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and by chance had been in the same group as Mitch and his wife (who were first-time participants). Had been looking forward to visiting THPRD properties, but was assigned to a territory that was mainly in Portland. Hideaway was the only district park visited.

Mitch: Described the lovely curves on the new trails in Lowami Hart Woods, and noted the abrupt termination of the trail at the northern edge of the park. Bruce commented that the unsurfaced trail that continues from that point is a social (i.e., illegal) trail to the neighborhood, though it is possible that a soft-surface trail may be established in the future. Kristin chimed in with the news that this summer will be the first program season at Lowami Hart Woods.

b. Update on NRFP

Not much to say since not much has changed in the previous month.

V. New Business

- a. View from Bruce's office. A new item for the agenda in which Bruce will present musings and observations about Big Profound Things that influence natural resource management in the district. For this inaugural View, the committee took a stroll down the corridor to inspect a map showing wildlife connectivity within the district. The map highlighted significant habitat patches and wildlife corridors within the district. The map offers a new perspective on the district's natural resource holdings and provides information that can be used to guide planning and acquisition.

- b. Somerset West Park Development. The committee was pleased to welcome René Brucker from the district's planning department, who gave a brief presentation of two concept schemes for redevelopment of Somerset West Park. René had previously presented a district proposal to place an ADA-compliant Champions 2 ball field on the park. An alternative location has been found for that. René outlined for the committee two new options. These are concepts, not alternatives to be voted on. Both schemes involve a new ball field overlaid with soccer pitches, new playgrounds, picnic areas, extensive new hard-surface trails (some wide enough for maintenance vehicles), regrading of the slope at the southern edge of the park, and a large expansion of the parking lot. The tennis courts and swimming pool will be retained. Scheme 1 adds a skate pad in the southeast corner of the park and places the ball field on top of the currently culverted creek. Scheme 2 places a basketball area in the southeast corner of the park and opens up the creek.

There was general agreement within the committee that opening up the creek would be good.

Bruce: What's the vision for the park?

René: Open up the creek and enhance natural features.

Matthew: The soccer fields and ball field both encroach significantly into the delineated wetland area.

René: The fields will reduce the wetland area; drainage and soil improvement will be required.

Laura: Commented on how creeks are important for everyone and too often they are hidden or overlooked.

Mitch: Thought meanders would be good.

Laura: Speaking as a mom she would like the trails to be bikeable, likes the outdoor swimming, and approves of the skate pad.

René: There will be a neighborhood meeting at which the future of the basketball courts will be considered. Tennis courts will remain, but the basketball courts have attracted the wrong sort of people.

- c. Education Program Update. The committee welcomed Kristin Atman, who manages the Nature Park Interpretive Center (NPIC) and the district's environmental education programming. Kristin made a short, information-rich presentation on successes and progress in the programming. Many programs are based at the NPIC, although there is considerable effort to take programs to the community with activities in parks across the district and the Nature Mobile. Revenue goals have been exceeded. Programming adapts to demand; when classes fill up, more are offered. For example, the preschool will be offering a longer time and adding an afternoon session. Summer camps are a major part of the programming, with 11 weeks of camps at NPIC and Cooper Mountain Nature Park. Camp Green is for 10-13 year olds, five days per week. It is held at the two regular sites and seven rotating sites to ensure it is close to patrons.

Laura: How are camps marketed?

Kristin: It could be better. Marketing is wrapped up as part of the whole district activities guides (86% of participants via guide). Have considered flyers, social media, and word of mouth—but camps always fill up, with a wait list.

Cory: Where does revenue come from?

Kristin: 60% from camps (summer, day-off, spring break, winter break); 18% from preschool; 7% from facility rentals; 6% from group/school programs; 5% from individual registration programs and annual events; and 4% from fitness classes (e.g., yoga, meditation, tai chi, etc.). Funding for school is an annual challenge. Underserved schools, particularly outreach to low-income and Spanish-speaking schools. Pleased to say that a new staff member is dedicated to working with this group.

Cory: What provision can be made for seniors with an interest in nature?

Laura: How about grandparent–grandchild activities or “Mad Science”-type events?

Mitch: What’s the gender balance of participants?

VI. Other
None.

VII. Next Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25, at 6:30 p.m. at the Fanno Creek Service Center.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Shepherd
Recording Secretary