

MINUTES
GIG HARBOR PARKS COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 6, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting (via Zoom webinar)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Parks Commission Members: Present – Chair Ben Coronado, Vice Chair Mary Barber, Roger Henderson, Louise Tieman, Will Appleton. Absent – Anastasia Wright (excused), Doug Terrien (unexcused)

City Council Liaison: Spencer Abersold (excused)

Staff: Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm, Public Works Assistant Terri Garrison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of September 1, 2021 Parks Commission Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to approve the September 1, 2021 Parks Commission Minutes

Barber / Tieman - Motion passed unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Lindhartsen, 3506 107th St Ct, GH, 98332 - I am here to propose the idea that some of the open space at Shaw Park be developed into a community garden. Every day I pass by the park, and I have noticed the small improvements, but much of it remains empty. I keep thinking to myself that it would make a great place for a community garden and here's why:

- It is already cleared and it receives full sun from the south
- It is a central location in Gig Harbor, and easy to walk or bus to
- It is close to a retirement community, Swift Water Elementary, the YMCA and many neighborhoods. A garden could provide intergenerational community building and education
- It would provide additional community gardening area to the growing city, which would increase community interaction and food resiliency
- It could potentially provide ecosystem services in slowing down and cleaning water that runs down into the water catchment pond behind the retirement community, especially if we don't use pesticides or herbicides

Since community gardens need people to get them going and keep them growing, I inquired in my Gig Harbor FB gardening groups about the idea and got some feedback. Some sounded like they would be interested in participating in some way if a community garden was started. Many others commented that they also thought it would be a good community garden site.

I know there are other groups suggesting different use and development ideas for this park, like maybe a playground or a dog park, but I don't think a community garden is incompatible with those things. It is a fairly small park, but if the back half of it was made into a community garden, it would be about the same size as the community garden at the Wilkinson Farm Park (about 11,000 sq ft). This could support both individual plots and community growing areas. If a smaller area of the park is available for a community garden, we can design a communal vegetable garden that can be harvested by those who tend it or a food forest that is open harvest to the community. There are many potential options.

So there are many things to consider when developing a community garden, foremost of which is asking what the community wants. Water access and fencing would need to be figured out and would likely be the most costly initial financial input. However, there is the potential of donations for these costs from individuals, fundraisers or organizations like the Master Gardener program. If the parks commission decides to further explore the community garden idea, I would be happy to be part of a committee or group to determine the best course of action in engaging the community and putting together a design for the site.

PARKS UPDATE REPORT – Public Works Director Langhelm provided general park update information and answered questions, noting a few recent developments not included in the published update.

- Parks Manager position – Interviews for this position are being scheduled.
- Eddon Boat Carriages – The inside rail carriage is nearing completion.
- Eddon Boat Brick House – The roundabout project landscape plan was viewed.
- Ancich Boat Storage Building - Gig Harbor Canoe and Kayak Race Team will have their storage racks in place soon.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Pros Plan Update** – Commission Vice-Chair Barber provided the PROS Plan Subcommittee reports.

Summary of the public input received from the online and mail-in survey:

- People are generally satisfied and support the parks.
- They visit the larger, waterfront parks more than others.
- There continues to be confusion about what is a GH vs PenMet vs KeyPen park.
- Respondents cite things like safety more than any other general improvement.
- More than half those who responded have not visited the parks that cater to a specific activity, except for the sports fields.
- People in north GH visit parks differently than those in south/central, especially as it relates to sports fields.
- Generally, people feel there are enough amenities but when you look at younger residents that is not as true.
- Younger people, including those with families are more likely to want improvements in the parks than older people.
 - They cite overcrowding as a reason they don't visit more
 - They also use the specific use parks more and want more of those types of parks
- Interest in new amenities is standard across the board-

- There has been talk of adding things like an off-leash dog area and community garden. Those are in the middle of the list for interest and support with a dog leash area being higher.
- People don't want us to acquire new parks or open space; they do want us to maintain what we have; preserve and protect the feel and image of the city.
- The other three items in the "investments list" flip between mail/online surveys — develop owned property, install new amenities, expand trails.
- There is higher interest in preserving greenspace;
 - maintaining/expanding Cushman;
 - expanding/maintaining waterfront parks;
 - Connecting waterfront and other parks to other neighborhoods
- Some folks are willing to pay \$10/month more for parks, but the majority want to pay less than that.

The next step in the PROS process is the stakeholder meetings being held in the next few weeks. Also, next week the consultant and the subcommittee will be meeting with the Public Works Committee to update them on the survey and our progress on the plan.

After those meetings happen, we'll move to the drafting of the plan and testing ideas/plans with the general public using virtual open houses. The consultant has been using some interesting techniques with virtual open houses for his clients. We believe these methods will help us get a better result since we can't meet in person. Once we determine when the open houses are, we'll be asking Commissioners to help spread the word to park users in the area.

NEW BUSINESS

2022 Parks Commission Work Plan - The draft work plan for 2022 was discussed. The process is to prioritize items and then have a work session with Council. Items discussed that were not included in the draft Work Plan emailed in the packet include:

- Adopt-A-Park Program – Implement the Adopt-A-Road Program.
- Amend List of Master Plans for Parks – Prioritize the master plan list and determine a way to create a shorter "plan" for all parks so their purpose and use are documented.
- Identify Open Space for the City to acquire.

The Parks Commission suggested having a work study session with Council before the budget is finalized and having a special Parks Commission meeting to prioritize work items.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

ADJOURN

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 7:14 p.m.

Coronado / Barber - Motion passed unanimously