

Minutes  
Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee  
Regular Meeting, April 18, 2019

Attendees: Linda Hughes (LH) – At Large, Chair  
David Gellatly (DG) – CoC  
Tessa Pinckston (TP) – PRRVA  
Steve Wolff (SW) – PRTA

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to Order at 6:01 pm

The meeting was videotaped and Live Streamed, courtesy of Bennett Blaustein.

Judson Meraw also captured a video recording of the meeting.

2. Review and approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 21, 2019

**MOTION:** David Gellatly moved that the Minutes of the Regular meeting of March 21, 2019 be approved. Tessa Pinckston seconded. **MOTION PASSED 4-0**

3. Review and approval of Minutes of two Special Meetings held April 1 and April 16, 2019 regarding proposed changes to WCC 20.72

**MOTION:** David Gellatly moved that the Minutes of the Special meeting of April 1, 2019 be approved. Tessa Pinckston seconded. **MOTION PASSED 3-0** Linda Hughes abstained as was absent from the April 1 meeting.

**MOTION:** David Gellatly moved that the Minutes of the Special meeting of April 16, 2019 be approved. Steve Wolff seconded. **MOTION PASSED 4-0**

4. Public Comment

Louise Cassidy commented on the roadway chip sealing project that was reported in the local newspaper, asking Why are we losing nice paved roads to chip seal?

Brian Walker responded that this notion might be a bit of a misnomer, in that the chip sealed roads are worn and in need of maintenance. Worn chip sealed roads have a smoother appearance than new ones.

Louise responded, No, some asphalt roads are being replaced by chip seal.

Brian Walker offered that although he could not speak directly to that on behalf of Public Works, that he does know that chip sealing is much more cost effective and has better longevity than asphalt.

Pat Grubb interjected that he had asked Joe Ruttan of Public Works the same question and had been advised that “this is how county roads are maintained.”

Discussion ensued about certain asphalt roads in Point Roberts, the benefits of asphalt roads, their proximity to density, etc.

Louise asked Why isn't PRCAC petitioning the County to save the asphalt roads?

Linda Hughes responded to Louise, yours is the first request to PRCAC for a Petition to save asphalt roads.

More discussion ensued about the importance of good roads, not only for the safety of local cyclists, joggers, children, but also for tourism, as a good number of visitors every year come here to enjoy recreational activities such as cycling, roller-blading, skateboarding, etc. One speaker felt the roads don't even really need resurfacing and the money would be better spent on a new seawall at Maple Beach.

Brian Walker reminded the gentleman that roadways should be maintained before they deteriorate.

Judson Meraw commented that the current asphalt roads should stay asphalt. He added that the Taxpayers Association has been working on an Economic Development Plan, and roads are part of the experience for visitors. Other speakers agreed with Judson, commenting that in their neighborhood (Fir Street, Maple Beach area) the neighbors had come together in fundraising to ensure an asphalt road on behalf of a neighbor confined to a wheelchair, who had great difficulty using the chip sealed roads.

More discussion ensued from cyclists who come to Point Roberts for the cycling experience and noted that the chip sealed roads are not ideal, in fact uncomfortable to ride upon.

Steve Wolff pointed out that the road maintenance process has begun as evidenced by the painted arrows and lines that some may be starting to notice on roadways around Point Roberts. He also mentioned that some roads are really in a state of disrepair and really need to be resurfaced.

Alison Calder asked Why are we only be notified about this now? We need to press the County to give us a timeline of major projects, so local input can be gathered and shared ahead of commencement.

Olav Grabi of the Maple Beach Property Owners Association area offered Brian Walker a copy of the same Flooding Mitigation Assistance Request report that he has provided to Joe Ruttan. Mr. Grabi and a significant number of his neighbors are here again to talk about the water flooding and devastation they face in their neighborhood each year because the seawall is so poorly designed and is failing. His group has been spending approximately \$5,000 per year in temporary flood mitigation, including inflatable baffles and sandbags. He noted that some of the Maple trees in the area are dying from exposure to floodwaters. The flooding is also causing road damage, and the wave surges are destroying the seawall, its footings, and as a result, the under bed of Bayview Road. The footings and bottom of the seawall are exposed in some areas and waves are literally sucking the gravel and dirt away from under the roadway, which is resulting in cracks in the road, drops in elevation of the road, and could lead to potentially dangerous sinkholes.

He continued that the last assessment of the beach was in 2005 and his group feels that it is imperative that the beach be nourished and that permanent mitigation efforts be undertaken, such as the placement of large boulders, baffles, and re-design of the poorly designed seawall. One simple suggestion to reduce flooding is to follow the example of the Canadian neighbors, just a few feet to the north, who added a cap to their portion of the seawall which is highly effective at keeping the water in the sea, instead of splashing over onto the roadway, which simply seeps back down under the roadway causing further erosion of the road bed.

Many of the concerned parties shared stories of earlier seawalls made from wood with much deeper pilings, the developing road cracks, sinkholes and damage to their properties from the repeated flooding. The discussion went on at some length with many suggestions offered to mitigate the beach erosion, flooding and roadway damage. They reiterated that the seriousness of this issue must be emphasized, that a possibly dangerous situation is in the making with the under roadway erosion. One speaker asked what could be done to grasp the County's attention on the urgency of this matter? He queried whether a class action lawsuit should be forthcoming, and suggested he was prepared to initiate one.

Brian Walker said that he had asked the County Engineer about the situation before this meeting, who advised that the County will maintain the right of way if the roadway is failing, but that Maintenance and Operations has been following recommendations for the area and feel that it is being maintained. He also mentioned that the County has no purview with respect to flooding of private property. He advised that the County wants to use tax dollars in the most efficient way possible, and offered that maybe the path of least resistance is to close the roadways during storms. He responded to the inquiry about how to go about grasping the County's attention, saying tonight's meeting is how it is properly done. The concerned citizens bring their issues to PRCAC, PRCAC then makes a recommendation to Public Works, Public Works makes a recommendation to the Executive and the Executive makes a recommendation to County Council who then decides, based on the recommendations provided to them to consider, how and where to spend public funds.

Pat Grubb reminded Brian Walker that Birch Bay is getting \$12 million in berm building and roadway changes, to which Brian Walker responded that there was a concerted grass roots initiative in Birch Bay that took years (more than a decade) and added that one option is to remove the seawall entirely.

Brian Walker added that it is very important for the community to come together to support this initiative to garner support from the County.

Ken Calder offered a solution involving large angular faced rocks, not the round boulders, which works much better at wave diversion.

Brian Walker acknowledged that there were a lot of interesting solutions being presented, but there are considerations of permitting, cultural and natural concerns, repercussions of changing the flow of water from one area to another – and noting that the expertise of a geomorphologist will be necessary to determine which solutions are feasible. He added that County Council will ultimately make their decision based on scientifically calculated solutions.

A question was posed from the Live Stream audience asking when PRCAC will be concentrating on an Economic Development Plan for Point Roberts, and the guest was advised that the Agendas for the next several PRCAC meetings have been drafted to appropriately schedule the many pressing topics before the Committee, and the answer could better be provided if they could please send their question to the PRCAC board for attention at [Comments@pointrobertsac.org](mailto:Comments@pointrobertsac.org).

Annelle Norman added that it sounds like our Maple Beach neighbors are warning us of an impending emergency. She asked Brian Walker if the emergency presented, would we still have to go through the lengthy assessments and recommendations phases? Brian Walker offered that there is always an emergency contingency plan and funds, should an emergency arise. He also said that the County has an emergency contact number to call in the event of one. Stephen Fowler acknowledged the County's swift response to emergencies in the past, but is worried that the County is not responding quickly enough to this impending emergency.

Quite a bit more discussion ensued, veering toward the difference between the Point Roberts seawall and the Canadian seawall. David Gellatly has been in discussions with several County departments on the issue of Maple Beach flooding, and was advised that there is a big difference; on the Canadian side the roadway is behind the properties on the waterfront, whereas in Point Roberts the roadway is on the waterfront, in front of the properties, which is a big factor in considering potential solutions.

Specific questions directed to David Gellatly as the PRCAC liaison to the County were:

- Could you bring a Maple Beach Property Owners Association with him to meetings with the County on this issue?
- Could you ensure that flooding is a major part of the discussions?
- Could beach nourishment and mitigation efforts be addressed?

Brian Walker added that these many issues will bring several departments into the discussion, including the River and Flood department, Public Works and several others for the beach nourishment issues.

Steve Wolf offered that the Canadians in the Tsawwassen southlands, where a housing development is being constructed, just the other side of the border and north of Roosevelt Way, have indicated they are very interested in receiving water runoff from Point Roberts to nourish the planned community gardens there. He described a pumping system currently in place and hopes it is their intention to keep that pump in place permanently.

## 5. Correspondence

There is no correspondence to report at this time, but a reminder was mentioned to everyone that comments and questions can be forwarded to [Comments@pointrobortscac.org](mailto:Comments@pointrobortscac.org).

## 6. Old Business

### Lighthouse Marine Park roadway/trail expansion

The proposed loop trail extension, essentially the “shared shoulder” project that was last talked about late in 2018 was reviewed for the benefit of the public in attendance and Brian Walker said that the next step is for PRCAC to submit a formal request for the project to go forward. His vague recollection was that the project was estimated to cost approximately \$100,000 but no one could recall the proposed ratio of cost sharing between the County and the TBD fund. David Gellatly will liaise with Public Works to obtain the necessary information in order to work with another member of the board to draft a formal request to the County for approval and submission. All members in attendance are in favor of moving forward with this project that had been spearheaded by former PRCAC Chair, Jeff Christopher.

Pat Grubb noted that the County might want to consider striping changes now that the road works project is underway, in anticipation of completion of that shared shoulder project, which shared shoulder will essentially end on the southwest side of the road, right where the sidewalk begins on the northeast side of the road. Brian Walker agreed that striping now would be prudent and it is a simple addition to the roadway maintenance project. He said that he would consult with the traffic and safety experts on it.

Brian Walker reiterated the timing of the Lighthouse Park loop trail project will go from formal request to agenda, bill, resolution, approval of funds on behalf of the TBD District, and approval of funds on behalf of County Public Works, all of which could take three to six months, after which the design could begin, the survey crew will be deployed and contracts will be prepared.

David Gellatly mentioned to Brian Walker that while the striping crew is up here in Point Roberts, there is a potentially serious safety issue that could easily be rectified with proper striping. This matter was also discussed at a recent Border Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Cyclists (walkers, runners) on Roosevelt road have been narrowly missed by vehicles crossing into the U.S. from Canada where vehicles routinely ignore the stop sign and faded road striping, whereas on the U.S. side of the border the problem does not seem to exist; vehicles routinely come to a full stop at the stop sign at Roosevelt. Because Roosevelt is in the U.S., Whatcom County maintains the roadway and stop signs on both sides of the roadway. David asked Brian if consideration could be given to re-striping, the stop lines, and maybe a cross-hatched safety zone could be added. Brian agreed the suggestion of striping is a benefit to safety, costs would be reasonable, could be another simple addition to the roadway maintenance project, and he would look into it.

### Traffic Mitigation

It has been a very long time since this matter has been raised, as so many other time-sensitive matters were being focused on by PRCAC last year. Brian Walker had his copy of the traffic mitigation assessment report that had been prepared by Public Works and was reminded that PRCAC had voted to move forward with Option D, enhanced stop signs and rumble strips at a few key intersections. When Linda Hughes asked whether the costs estimated in that earlier assessment might still be relevant, Brian Walker indicated he felt the cost would not have increased very much in the time frame since they were given, and seemed to indicate that it might be in the \$10,000 to \$12,000 range, all in. There was discussion of the costs of these safety improvements being borne entirely by the TBD funds, as none of the intersections considered for these safety upgrades have yet experienced a serious accident and therefore are not statistically dangerous enough for the County to initiate safety enhancements. PRCAC members would like to avoid a potential collision and are all in favor of utilizing TBD funds for enhanced safety at these intersections.

Another suggestion was to move the stop sign at Mill and Johnson, as it is currently placed so far back that a driver must pull out past the stop line to see, and it appears to traffic on Johnson that the vehicle might be running the stop sign at Mill.

Ken Calder felt that there had been no public session and was reminded that it was at the beginning of the meeting. Nevertheless, he was provided the opportunity to share further comments. Ken asked how David Gellatly had become the PRCAC liaison to the County as he could not recall the discussions at PRCAC meetings. Linda Hughes said that it was discussed late last year when Jeff Christopher knew that he would be retiring from the Committee for health reasons, and began transitioning the liaison role to David several months ago. She reminded Ken that for well over a year now, with PRCAC authorization, David has exclusively been doing all of the legwork toward getting an updated Economic Development Plan for Point Roberts, having been in discussions with the Port of Bellingham and the County trying to garner support and funding for a new Plan. Linda continued that the formal recognition of David as PRCAC liaison was at the Election of Officers meeting, where it was discussed that David should continue

in the role of liaison and bring Tessa Pinckston to observe as many meetings as possible over the next year, to begin the transition of the liaison role to the Voters Association representative. Ken continued to reiterate his concerns about David Gellatly serving on the PRCAC, and further feels that three of the Chamber of Commerce members represent a conflict of interest on the PRCAC board as they have financial ties to Cando Recycling. He said that he had provided these concerns to County Executive Jack Louws in a letter, and Linda responded that she had read Ken's letter to Executive Louws, along with the response, and reminded Ken that the Executive have provided him with five reasons why his claims were unfounded, confirming that there is no conflict of interest with David serving as the Chamber of Commerce representative to PRCAC. Linda further noted that as an At-Large member she was entitled to share her opinion and support of the Chamber of Commerce appointment of David Gellatly to the PRCAC board, and further state her personal opposition to Ken Calder's demand for David Gellatly to be removed from PRCAC, or from his role as the PRCAC liaison to the County. She asked the Taxpayers Association representative Steve Wolff if his organization was prepared to submit their view/vote on this issue, and he said that the Taxpayers would prefer that the Chairperson of PRCAC be the County liaison with the freedom to appoint delegates to liaise with the County. Linda Hughes responded that the County had repeatedly asked PRCAC to delegate one liaison for simplicity and the Taxpayers suggestion was in contravention of that wish. Linda Hughes asked the Voters Association representative, Tessa Pinckston, if her organization was in a position to share their view/vote on the matter and she said that she will need to confer with the Voters before commenting. Linda said this question will be presented to the appropriate organizations and the absent At-Large member for consideration at a future meeting.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned.