

**Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee
January 21, 2021 Meeting**

Minutes

Members

Allison Calder — PRRVA

Stephen Falk — At-Large (Chair)

Tamra Hansen — CoC

Annelle Norman — PRTA

vacant — At-Large

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Before proceeding with the Agenda, SF commented on the sad and sudden death of PRCAC member Steve Wolff, representative of the PRTA. Mr. Wolff was a valued member of the PRCAC and the community as a whole. New members Annelle Norman (PRTA) and Tamra Hansen (CoC) were welcomed to the PRCAC.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve (AC/SF)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the December 10, 2020 special meeting and the December 17, 2020 regular meeting were approved earlier by e-mail by the only 2 remaining members present at those meetings (AC/SF).

Public Comment

None

Old Business

* Update on the selection of new At-Large members

There has been no feedback from the County Executive's office on the appointment of the new At-Large members. We are waiting to see if Katherine Smith and Grant Heitman are appointed. AC had sent SF a copy of the list of appointees which the County Executive has sent to County Council for approval; the PRCAC appointees are not on that list so far.

* Adoption of Bylaws for the PRCAC

SF noted that the PRCAC could take action now, or wait until February or later for the newly constituted membership to adopt the bylaws. The represented organizations have already The questions put to the County Executive's office have not yet been addressed. AC suggested we adopt the bylaws, and to later make changes if the County Executive's office proposes changes. AN agreed that we need bylaws, but having gone so long without bylaws, the PRCAC could wait until the new members are in place; might be easier to adopt later than adopt and then amend. Also, AN felt it would be a good act of the new group. TH agrees with AC to adopt and amend later if needed. SF reiterated his support for the moving forward as stated by AC and TH.

SF described two new changes from comments from Mark Robbins, president of the PRTA. One was to make the new bylaws effective on February 1, 2021 which aligns with when the new membership is in place. AC agreed. The second was to clarify that the requirement that represented organizations be "incorporated and in good standing", rather than just "in good standing". AN agreed. Katherine Smith asked what would happen if the organization was not in good standing. SF said that it would mean the representative could not serve on the PRCAC.

Motion: To adopt the bylaws as amended tonight, accepting earlier changes, and removing the questions posed to the County Executive's office (AC/AN) (Adopted 4:0).

* Priorities for 2021, such as new Tax Benefit District-fund projects, Visioning, Maple Beach sea wall/flooding, APA Road tree canopy restoration

In view of the changing membership of the PRCAC, with 2 new members and 2 open positions, discussion of priorities for the PRCAC in 2021 was deferred. AC noted that she has information about the TBD funds and how it has been spent in the past which she can share with all the new members.

AN raised the question of the schedule for PRCAC meetings; that 7 pm would be a better time. SF suggested waiting till the new membership is in place to decide on the time (and date) of meetings and the officers for the 2021/2022 year.

In the context of TBD-projects, SF noted that Brian Walter of Whatcom County Public Works has requested PRCAC's reaffirmation of support for the use of TBD funds for the Tyee Landscaping project managed by the Garden Club.

Motion: To approve the continued use of Tax Benefit District funds up to \$40,000 over two years for the Tyee Landscaping project (managed by the Point Roberts Garden Club). (SF/AC) (Adopted 4:0).

New Business

* Covid-19 Vaccination -- Status of vaccination for Point Roberts residents

SF noted that the Point Roberts Public Hospital District with SuperTrack Urgent Care is providing information to the community about the status of the Covid-19 vaccination

program, including that a new class of eligible resident is now approved for those 65 and over. Also, SuperTrack is in the process of getting approved as a vaccination site. It is unknown when vaccine will become available to administered in Point Roberts. The Hospital District will provide weekly updates.

* Dog Park -- Discuss options to create an off-leash dog park in Point Roberts

SF noted that the issue of an off-leash dog park comes up from time to time. If there was interest in seeking an area in a County park, the PRCAC could consider being the liaison for those efforts. An alternative might be to seek public recreation area on Marina property since the Marina agreed to a covenant on its land for public recreation. The Marina is currently on the market and the owners might be resistant to entering into such an arrangement now. AC noted that it could be a benefit for the current owner, since dedicating the land to public use could facilitate certain development opportunities.

Noel Newbolt asked whether it would be better for an independent group to approach the Marina, rather than the PRCAC. SF noted that the PRCAC is set up to interact with the County; not with private businesses. Mr. Robbins offered that the PRTA could work with the “dog community” to approach the Marina on this issue. AC noted that County Parks would be concerned about liability. Mr. Robbins noted the Marina would have the same concern about liability.

* Wildlife (Eagle) Protection -- Discuss recommending to County Council that Whatcom County create an ordinance mirroring federal protection for bald eagles and other protected species so that the Sheriff's Office can enforce rules

SF commented that, walking down Calhoun Drive, he had observed a bald eagle with a branch in its talons fly to a nest in a tree between Calhoun Drive and Simundson Drive, on or near the eastern edge of the Marina property. This is near the fireworks

area. There is a federal law regulating blasting and loud noises near eagle habitat. Getting local enforcement for a federal law can be a problem. That led to the idea of asking County Council to enact an ordinance that could be enforced by the Sheriff's office to protect eagles and other protected wildlife from the disruption of fireworks.

AC asked if Katherine Smith might be aware of issue from her experience with US Fish and Wildlife. Ms Smith noted she was a refuge manager for US Fish and Wildlife and has looked into the 4 major federal laws in this area. She recommended trying to address the issue, and offered to look into it. She was unsure how the different levels of government would interact.

Grant Heitman commented that he has done some work with Jeff Butz on his efforts with eagle pairs in Point Roberts, and his contacts with government officials at all levels. Mr. Heitman offered to put PRCAC members in contact with Mr. Butz.

AN supported working on this issue and doing so soon, so that it is not a last-minute scramble as a fireworks event is approach. She feels that we can protect eagles and still have fireworks in a safe location in Point Roberts.

Mr. Robbins suggested checking with the County Prosecutor's office whether the approach of a local ordinance mirroring the federal laws would be an available approach.

* Point Roberts Ferry -- Discuss whether there is an Issue of non-residents coming over on free ferry
SF noted residents have periodically raised the issue whether non-residents could be coming to Point Roberts, including homeless people in Bellingham who could get here and find there are no support services. SF spoke to Jed Holmes in the County Executive's office about the issue. There are concerns that it may not be administratively feasible for the boat operator to

screen passengers to prevent non-residents from using the free ferry offered by the County and the Port of Bellingham.

Mr. Heitman commented that he would be interested in looking in to the public health and safety aspects of this issue if/when he becomes a member of the PRCAC, in the spirit of compliance with the Governor's pandemic regulations.

* "Visioning" -- plan community work on the "vision" for Point Roberts for new sub-area plan
SF raised the issue of developing a plan for "visioning", but suggested it would make sense to pick this issue up with the newly constituted PRCAC. AC agreed, and suggested it would probably need support from one or more subcommittee.

Ms Smith asked how much has been done to-date on visioning for Point Roberts. AN commented that this was a part of the work done by the Character Plan review committee several years. They held a well-attended townhall meeting and gathered numerous ideas of what resident want. It was captured in the preamble to the Character Plan. The work is dated, but could form a starting point for any new initiative in this area.

In closing, SF commented that he is trying to revise the automatic e-mail forwarding set-up for the Gmail address for the PRCAC. That will need to be tested in the coming days to make sure it is working for all the new members. SF will provide the password for the Gmail account to AC.

Mr. Robbins asked who will chair the February meeting. SF suggested it might make sense for AC to start by chairing the February meeting, at which the members should select Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary as required by the newly adopted bylaws. The new bylaws require that the PRCAC give at least one-week notice for meetings with agenda.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, February 18, 2021. The agenda should be publicized by February 11, 2021.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 pm. (AN/AC)