

City of Bainbridge Island
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Kathy Cook, Planning Director
DATE: November 20, 2009
RE: Strawberry Plant Park Shoreline Restoration Project

Purpose

This memo provides a synopsis of the November 7 community meeting on the Strawberry Plant Park project, in order to help facilitate a Council decision on how to proceed with the project.

Background

At a joint meeting on February 24, 2009, the Park Board and City Council reviewed the preferred design for the Strawberry Plant Park Shoreline Restoration project, and both the Park Board and City Council approved the conceptual design. In March, the Park Board approved the 30% design and the City Council agreed to waive the need to review and approve the 30% design. This allowed the project to move forward to permitting and final design. On July 22, as a result of public comments concerning multiple aspects of the project, City Council requested and the City Manager directed staff to stop active planning (other than working on the permits in process) on the Strawberry Park project until a community meeting was held.

The City conducted a community meeting on Saturday, November 7, 2009. Approximately 55 people signed the attendance sheet for the day-long meeting, which was facilitated by an outside facilitator, Dee Endelman.

Purpose of November 7 Community Meeting

The purpose was to include all members of the community who want to engage in an honest and respectful conversation regarding their interests in the Strawberry Plan Park project and to provide useful input to the Bainbridge Island City Council on ideas to meet these interests.

Meeting Design and Development

Prior to the community meeting, Ms. Endelman conducted interviews with focus groups, funding agency representatives, City and Park District staff, and the members of the City Council. Through the input from these meetings, Ms. Endelman designed the meeting and materials for the November workshop, including bringing in 6 additional group facilitators for the meeting.

Communication on the Meeting

The meeting was broadly advertised through display advertisements in the local newspaper, press releases, meeting notices to active community groups and through emailing to approximately 600 email addresses.

Meeting Framework

The meeting was designed to allow opportunity for community members to express their concerns and desires for the park, and the agenda was planned as such. Ground rules were set and an informal site visit was provided at the beginning of the day. The City survey crew painted the existing shoreline setback requirements (including the 50-foot Native Vegetation Zone) on the ground and staked the location of the proposed design shoreline and two of the proposed design elements (the overwater pier and boat launch) to allow the site visitors a visual understanding of the property.

Meeting Desired Outcomes

- Questions answered about the Strawberry Plant Park project
- Understanding of constraints under which we are operating
- A better understanding of one another's key interests regarding Strawberry Park
- Thoughts about possible ways to meet these interests and possible options for proceeding
- Input for Bainbridge Island City Council
- Understanding of next steps after this meeting

At the beginning of the meeting the City staff provided a presentation on the chronology of the park property and an opportunity for questions and answers. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is attached (Attachment D) and the chronology is available for viewing on the City website at http://www.ci.bainbridge-isl.wa.us/strawberry_plant_chronology.aspx

Participants then broke up into six smaller groups, each of which was facilitated. The groups discussed "key interests," which were recorded by facilitators on flip charts. City staff did not attend the small group discussions. After a break, the large group shared the outcomes of the small group discussions. Participants then moved into facilitated small groups again and discussed ways to honor the community desires, needs and concerns about the park. The full group then sat together and discussed the shared interests:

- We see this park as a special place.
- We want non-motorized boating there.
- We want visual water access (views).
- We want actual water access.
- We want to balance the needs of all Islanders with the needs of the neighbors.
- We see this as a waterfront park with woodlands.
- We want functional ecosystems for people and wildlife.
- We want educational opportunities for children.
- We want to honor the history of the site

For your information, the meeting agenda and the flip chart outcomes of these group discussions are attached, (Attachment C). The flip charts were transcribed verbatim and have been reviewed by the facilitator.

Council Decision

Now that the community meeting has been conducted and the public has provided additional input regarding the park and the proposed shoreline restoration project, the City Council needs to make a decision on how to proceed. Since this project is primarily funded through state and federal funding programs related to habitat and salmon restoration, funding requirements must also be considered. Staff has determined that there are three paths that the City Council can take regarding this project:

- 1) Stop all shoreline restoration planning at this site, with the understanding of what City and grant funds have been spent on the project, and what unexpended funding would be turned back;
- 2) Alter the current plans to accommodate additional community desires or interests, with an understanding that a) additional staff time and funds would be necessary for a design revision, b) further approval would be required from the funding agencies, and c) these changes would need to be accomplished within the approved funding agencies' required timeframes; or
- 3) Retain the current design and move forward with the 90% design, bidding, and construction in fall 2010 or spring 2011.

Project Funders

A summary of the funding for the shoreline restoration project is outlined in the attached PowerPoint presentation, and includes sources from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), and the City. [See page 6 (slide 11) of Attachment D.] The state SRFB money granted for this restoration project (under two grants, one for design and another for construction) have deadlines which the City must meet or requests extensions. The NRDA funds are being used as the City's required match for the SRFB grants.

Currently, the City is under contract obligation, which began in 2006, with SRFB to complete the *design* work funded by this project (including final bid design) by January 29, 2010. Approval from the funding agency is necessary to extend the grant beyond the January, 2010 deadline, and cannot be extended beyond April, 2011.

The SRFB *construction* grant contract requires that the City complete construction of the project and all billing by December 31, 2010. As with the *design* grant, any extension of the *construction* grant must be approved by the SRF Board, and the latest that construction could occur (with approved extensions) is during the 2012 construction season.

The Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds are approved by the Elliott Bay Trustee Council. A letter to the Council regarding the NRDA funds for this project was recently received, and is attached, (Attachment A).

Decision Matrix

The funding, design, permitting and construction constraints and consequences of each of these actions are provided in the attached decision matrix. (Attachment B).

Attachments

- A. Letter to City Council from Elliot Bay Trustee Council regarding NRDA funding
- B. Decision Matrix
- C. November 7 Community Meeting Flip Chart
- D. November 7 Community Meeting PowerPoint Presentation
- E. Public Comments Received since July 22, 2009