

# Gresham Butte Neighborhood Association

*December 13, 2017*

Officers present: Jim Buck, president; Sandy Davidson, vice-president; Theresa Tschirky, treasurer; Tracy Slack, land use; Lynn Saint, secretary.

## 7:02 p.m. Introduction

President Jim Buck called the meeting to order; 22 attendees present. Attendees introduced themselves.

## 7:09 p.m. Metro and City Planners and Representatives Discuss Gabbert Butte

Olena Turula, from Metro staff, reviewed Metro's four areas of concern: recycling, venues such as the Schnitz, wildlife habitat, public transportation. She introduced her speech by explaining that the Gabbert Butte Master Plan began about nine months ago. She outlined her presentation with several categories:

- Project overview
  - Context
  - Project goals/purpose
  - Nature Park examples
  - Why Gabbert Butte?
- Draft Alternatives
  - Trails
  - Parking area

Gabbert comprises 113 acres. The city of Gresham and Metro protect 1,000 acres of wildlife areas for migrating birds and the larger animals who live here: deer, coyotes, raccoons, opossums and an occasional cougar. Furthering meaningful nature experiences is a goal for Metro and the city while celebrating the unique qualities of Gabbert Butte. Maintaining water quality relates to both the Kelly Creek and Johnson Creek areas.

Within the Gabbert Butte Master Plan Area lies the objective of trying to connect the buttes through conjoining trails, especially Gresham Butte and Hogan Butte. The Master Plan welcomes all cultures, communities, and abilities while endeavoring to enhance each neighborhood identity.

Examples of other nature parks in the region include Cooper Mountain in Beaverton, Scouters Mountain in Happy Valley, Orenco Woods in Hillsboro and Mount Talbert Nature Park in Clackamas.

In welcoming visitors to Gabbert Butte, access should direct the public to areas while still offering protection to the natural scenery and pristine beauty of the location. A parking and entry area will welcome visitors. Possible activities, amenities and program opportunities will be displayed. Realigned trails will allow access to the novice, as well as the seasoned hiker. Connections to the Saddle Trail will be in place and possibly connect to Hogan Butte.

## Short History

The region's first open-space bond measure passed in 1990. The City of Gresham has planned for parks, trails and natural areas with bonds and mandates in the intervening years, The Gabbert Access Plan was approved 2010. Both the City of Gresham and Metro have worked

jointly in the Gabbert Butte project as they have tried to build onto the pre-existing trail network and to meet the goals of the trail master plan.

In 2013, an operating levy mandated that the community welcome people of all ethnic backgrounds and underserved communities. To facilitate this, people come to the table within ethnic and immigrant communities. Connect with Nature has a goal of creating a region-wide toolkit for welcoming various people groups. For signage relating to meeting the needs of different people groups, after English, the most common languages are Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese.

Because of bond measures which have passed, funding is available for the needs of making the anticipated changes. Obviously, no funding will meet every requirement, so some readjustments will occur as the plans are realized.

The current timeline includes the topics: Schedule Summer 2017 Start-Up – Existing Conditions – Plan Alternatives – Recommended Plan – Final Plan – Fall 2018

### **Trail Design Goals**

To maintain the animal habitat and water quality protection, engineers will avoid trails going along streams. Visitors will experience varying trail grades along with shorter and longer trails. One of the trails has a 30% grade. Realigning steep trails is a challenge, along with looking at drainage issues and neighborhood connectivity.

Included in all proposals: decommissioning steep trails; keeping pre-existing trails with minor improvements; pulling trails away from the proximity of neighborhood homes; cross a drainage way and make connection lower down or higher up.

Metro is considering three parking lot designs. Two of the possible areas are close to 29<sup>th</sup> and Regner Road. A shelter and a restroom will be constructed at any of the potential parking sites which will hold 20 parking spaces, similar to other nature parks. This first option will offer a very small loop around to connect out. A pond (actually a wetland) would not be fenced but would act as a buffer zone. Design 2 has an entry across from 29<sup>th</sup> but away from the first design and would bring vehicles farther up. There is a possible connection further south with an overlook and wetlands. Water cannot be seen from any of the parking lots. Connection down from the water tower cannot be avoided.

Overall, the three design-area options are available with pre-existing, steeper grades and gentler grades of trails in the areas displayed. Each proposed entry will connect to a trail or work on a loop configuration. A loop trail could feasibly connect the east with the west. One other aspect to consider is that the slender salamander is endangered. As a result, old trails should not be decommissioned to preserve the amphibian.

A question was posited through identification as part of the Gresham Trails Master Plan. “Is there a way to have a walking/biking trail along Butler Road, not a sidewalk, continuing along the roadway?” Regner Road presents a similar design as Butler, also with few to no sidewalks.

Finally, a three-mile loop will comprise the hiking trail. Protecting downstream water quality creates an issue to ensure no source of sediment erosion. A question about mountain bikes was presented to consider multi-use trails. Although the Mountain Bike Association likes to ride to their destination on trails, the group has not expressed an interest in this smaller park as there are larger parks to the west, such as Forest Park, which offer biking trails. Metro is not as interested in biking trails within the East Butte areas because its priorities hold a greater focus on maintaining wildlife habitat.

## **Parks serve a purpose**

Parks are purposed to celebrate the qualities that are unique to each one. Celebrating an area's uniqueness includes providing meaningful experiences with nature. Another aspect reflects inclusivity – reaching out to the whole community of individuals and embracing the backgrounds they all represent.

## **Entry/parking area design goals**

Building a parking lot would require large retaining walls. There is a place that already exists; it will have a restroom that needs a visual site. A landslide years ago, before Regner Road was constructed, needs to come under consideration.

## **Next Steps**

An alternatives review should take place in winter of 2018, within the next few months. An open house is scheduled. An online survey will poll residents about the planned actions. Stakeholder meetings will be held to continue to include all in the process. The preferred alternatives will be chosen in late spring 2018. Site finalization is scheduled for fall 2018.

## **Questions, comments and concerns from listeners and participants**

“Would the speed limit close to the park change to a lower velocity on Regner Road?”  
No answer was forthcoming.

This would be a day use park. Metro does not allow dogs on trails they manage. New trails will not allow dogs. Areas that are termed right of way cannot prevent the addition of dogs.

Some sellers may be willing to relinquish and sell parcels to public ownership. First purchases for public use were in the 1990's – so, it takes a good amount of time.

Is there access at the different trail points? There is not much room between private properties. If a trail exists, the public path establishes public use. Venues along this trail area are reminiscent of the Cascades – a pristine area which needs protection. A loop trail can be better managed.

The Saddle Trail has introduced more invasive plants with increased foot traffic. Trying to keep unwanted seeds is a new challenge with greater accessibility. Posting foot brushes on the trails to remove invasive seeds could prevent the spread of undesired plants. Also, marking native species on the trails is a possibility so that people learn to identify plant types. Weren't there signs on Scouter's Mountain?

Scouter's Mountain has art; not much money has been allotted for artists and artwork. There could be good opportunities for creative endeavors. Has there been evidence of any damage to artwork?

The conversation concluded, but an open house will return to the topic in February.

## **8:17 p.m. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes were approved for the October 11, 2017 minutes with unanimous consent.

## **8:20 p.m. Reports**

According to Tracy Slack, land use chair, Ambleside area will be annexed – part of the parcel intersects Johnson Creek, south of what Metro owns. There could be problems with this new development.

Theresa Tschirky gave updates as of the 15<sup>th</sup> of November on the treasury balance of \$631.35; after a check to Tracy for \$54.45, \$576.90 will remain. Earmarked amounts continue: Dawncrest, \$128.86, Sign: \$174.45, Bench, \$53.55, Uncommitted, \$220.04.

The parks department has installed the sign and the bench.

To offset the amount the city gave, GBNA needs to account for more man-hours. In allaying our debt to the city, ongoing work for other projects can be included. Pulling weeds and ridding invasive species around the newly installed bench could offset some of the debt.

### 8:30 p.m. Old Business

The city helped tremendously with the bench design. Tracy performed many manhours in troubleshooting and augmenting this project. Jim Saint helped, also, by transferring and spreading gravel around the bench area.

### 8:30 p.m. New Business

Sandy Davidson has recruited speakers for the January meeting regarding emergency preparedness. Kirk French, Michael Gonzales and Kelle Landavazo will participate in disseminating information for local residents. Bike routes will be presented at the February meeting. In March, we will welcome Michael Gonzales with ONCE, Office of Neighborhoods and Community Engagement.

What new topics are needed for April and May? Two possible topics include a Metro update and recycling.

At this time of year, blackberries have died back. Jim still wants to return to the trail intersection at Regner to trim back the ivy. We can encourage members to remove ivy from trees on their property to clean up personal homes. Sending out a memo to Next Door should help draw out more people to trim back the ivy on the trees. Volunteer labor may offset the debt to the city.

### 8:37 p.m. Meeting adjourned