

MINUTES OF GIG HARBOR SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING – September 30, 2013

PRESENT: Councilmembers Ekberg, Young, Guernsey, Perrow, Malich, Payne, Kadzik, and Mayor Hunter.

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Hunter advised the Council, staff, and audience that the City Attorney, Angela Belbeck, was in attendance via conference call.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Gig Harbor Kayak Club – Kayak Storage Racks at Skansie Brothers Park. Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm introduced this request to use Skansie Brother Park as the new location for kayak storage. He explained that the club has been asked to vacate their existing storage location by November 15th. He said that the Parks Commission has been working on a parks use policy for this purpose at Ancich Park, but that site won't be available for several years. He said that this proposed action would authorize the Mayor to sign a land use application for the storage racks.

Mr. Langhelm described the two locations that are being considered for the racks and the possible impacts at either location: on Jerisich Dock itself or behind the Skansie House against the south wall. He added that either site would require land use permits that would include a habitat assessment, a shoreline exemption, a minor site plan, and design review. He said that staff recommends all associated costs be paid for by the Kayak Club.

Planning Director Jennifer Kester discussed the permitting process and appeal period, saying they are confident that staff will be able to obtain the appropriate documentation to meet the necessary deadlines. She explained that they are working with the fair market value of the racks in order to stay under the shoreline substantial development permit threshold of \$6,416.00 to avoid extending the permit processing length from weeks to months.

Mayor Hunter commented on the unique and historical nature of this park, explaining that the city has gone through a visioning process that places this type of use at Ancich Park. He also said that the Parks Commission is working on a policy for private use of public parks, and that we may be getting ahead of the process. He cited the 24 events held at Skansie Park and talked about how busy it is. He recommended a six-month time limit on any use agreement to prevent getting locked in. He then asked how many members are in the club and the number of participants that would be using the park on a daily or weekly basis.

Alan Anderson, Kayak Club President, responded that the racing team has 35 paddlers and along with the development program, the number is closer to 47. He added that this is about the maximum number he can work with at a time.

Mayor Hunter commended Mr. Anderson for the program and for working with the kids, but said we may be getting the cart before the horse. He said that he wants to make sure we look at the value of the property and the fact that public parks are for all the people, not just some. He asked how many sanctioned events are held there.

Mr. Anderson said that there are two sanctioned races held in the harbor. He then responded to a Council question by describing the racks as three, nicely built and lockable racks that will hold 75 vessels and has the ability to be transferred to the Ancich Property when the time comes.

Mr. Anderson was asked about wear and tear on the lawn. He said that there has been a suggestion for a rinsing area in the far corner nearest the water to remediate this concern. There has also been a suggestion for gravel pathways or decking under the racks as well. He voiced concern with rinsing the kayaks near the dock for fear of accidental spraying of pedestrians.

Mayor Hunter said that he thinks the dock is the better location for the racks to avoid traffic across the lawn.

When asked for his recommendation, Mr. Langhelm said he would rather the Mayor and Council decide the location, and said that the racks would take up 1/3 of the pier if located there. He then said that adding a gravel base or pathways, permeable pavers, or cloth would need to be finalized before permit application; the concern being the increase in cost exceeding the Substantial Shoreline Development Permit threshold.

Councilmember Payne stressed that Council is only being asked to decide whether to give the Mayor authorization to proceed with permitting; not design the project. He said that the location isn't as critical to him at this time.

MOTION: Move to authorize the Mayor to sign land use applications for canoe and kayak storage racks at Skansie Brothers Park.
Kadzik / Perrow –

Councilmember Malich asked the city attorney if there has to be an agreement to allow a private entity to use the park. Ms. Belbeck responded that the main concern is that there is no gift to a private entity, and the city is getting a return on fair market value; and it doesn't necessarily need to be financial but can be in-kind consideration.

Councilmember Young pointed out that we already have this type of use in place with the Gig Harbor BoatShop.

Councilmember Malich then asked Mr. Anderson if they looked at Eddon Boat Park as an alternative for the racks. He also asked about floating racks.

Mr. Langhelm explained that a number of locations were considered and the Eddon Boat Park site was ruled out due to the lack of parking and lack of level ground.

Ms. Kester responded to the question about floating racks by saying any over the water construction would have significant shoreline implications and would take one to one and one-half years to permit. She suggested that could be a consideration for the future.

Councilmember Ekberg voiced concern with the timing considering the Parks Commission is working to develop a policy. He addressed the comment regarding Eddon Boat, saying that it was already a public building now being leased out for a public benefit, whereas this is a request to put a private structure in a public park. He added that tonight Council is being asked to authorize the Mayor to sign a permit application only; not to agree to a contract. He warned that if we don't have a policy in place and this use is allowed, there may be others asking for the same consideration.

Councilmember Guernsey said that she doesn't have a problem with the club working with staff to determine the best location; they are already there and she isn't aware of any complaints. She emphasized that the club is a phenomenal organization for our youth, adding that we don't do enough for the kids in our community. She agreed with the comments that the lack of a policy may be putting the cart before the horse, but said that this is a situation which needs to be addressed. Alan Anderson has a good working relationship with the city, she said, and that she expects it to continue. She also said there can be determination for public convenience in a contract, and so we can do this.

Councilmember Young mentioned that the Planning/Building Committee reviewed this plan a while ago and considered it a common sense solution. He agreed that we don't do a lot for our teenagers and said he thinks this is a great plan and although the timing isn't perfect, it's worth taking a risk.

Councilmember Malich also spoke in favor of serving the kids, but said he wants to make sure this is temporary until a permanent solution can be worked out.

RESTATED MOTION: Move to authorize the Mayor to sign land use applications for canoe and kayak storage racks at Skansie Brothers Park.
Kadzik / Perrow – unanimously approved.


MAYOR'S REPORT / COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Payne encouraged everyone to go to the City Park at Crescent Creek to observe the work on the wood sculpture.


ADJOURN:

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 6:06 p.m.
Kadzik / Guernsey – unanimously approved.

CD recorder utilized: Tracks 1002 – 1005



Charles L. Hunter, Mayor



Molly Towslee, City Clerk