

Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee

Contact: PRCAC.COMMENT@GMAIL.COM

Minutes April 21, 2022 Regular Meeting

Members Attending:

Chairperson Allison Calder (Point Roberts Registered Voters Association)

Annelle Norman (Point Roberts Taxpayers Association)

Bill Zidel (member at large)

Brian Hunter (member at large)...

Absent - Prakash Sundaresan (member at large)

Call to order: 7:01pm

Agenda approved unanimously.

Minutes from March 24, 2022 approved unanimously

Correspondence - none

Public comment - Pat Harper indicates multiple issues with existing and planned culverts to include strategy, location, sizing, and inspection for permitting.

Chairperson Calder (hereafter referred to as Chair) requests e mail from commenter so can add to ongoing discussion with County Public Works.

Old Business:

Flooding and Stormwater

Member Hunter indicated request to County Stormwater for initiation of comprehensive stormwater plan for Point Roberts had been reiterated. Requested State (Ecology, Fish and Game) and Federal (EPA, NOAA, FEMA) contact information. Also queried nature of Birch Bay Stormwater fee.

Member Norman asked what fee amounts contemplated.

Member Hunter posited determined as part of comprehensive stormwater planning, so premature to project.

Chair went and met with President of Maple Beach Homeowner's Association and provided with GIS map of that community. Follow up by President was map marked up via walkabout identifying where ditches located, direction of flow, and other issues as noted..

Chair and Member Zidel spent two hours yesterday with a digital camera documenting running water off of hillside, but not onto beach...something obviously not working. Water is either standing on surface or subsurface with no place to go. Drainage pattern along international border has been modified by previous and ongoing development to detriment of Maple Beach community.

Chair requests assent from Committee to contact our Council member Ben Elenbaas to encourage County Council to dedicate funds for public works for the comprehensive drainage plan for Point Roberts. Unanimous support.

Chair continues now have maps and photos of Maple Beach, suggests other areas of Point require same level of scrutiny.

Jared Oberhausen interjects that federal government has about one hundred water flow sensors located in State of Washington, but none in Point Roberts. He will follow up with them see what resources they may have available.

Member Norman believes County has accomplished little for Point Roberts of late. Queries is it necessary for issues be brought to attention of County via attendance at County Council meetings.

Chair explains County Council public input processes.

Member Norman spoke with County Public Works and was told issues are known, but presently nobody to work here. Concern is will neglect Point Roberts as long as we let them

Chair interjects there is a perceived ArriveCAN issue with some County of Whatcom workers who do not want to enter information into the required Canadian system.

Member Zidel suggests County acquiesce to and expedite license applications for allowing Point Roberts to hire private side contractors given reluctance for County to do work. Or direct him to where the keys are for the ditch witch.

Chair indicates local contractor presently working with Whidbey Tel has expertise to perform necessary work suggested by drainage issues.

Elizabeth Mason requests information re: County Council meetings public access. Suggests putting group of people together and attend meetings consistently to present our case and indicate via attendance that group is not going away and will not be ignored. The squeaky wheel gets the oil...

Chair returns to more full explanation of County Council meeting protocols. While public is invited to a 3 minute comment, the council members do not respond, but solely take comment under advisement. Suggests attendance at council subcommittee meetings, in this case Public Works, getting topic on their agenda potentially more productive as from there can be raised to agenda and discussion level at whole council. Chair notes only two ways to go forward for action are through department or sub committee.

Elizabeth Mason questions which alternative, staff or council, is more productive.

Chair gives a master class in diplomacy. Given County Council prefers not to go forward without positive recommendation from staff, preferred model begins by working with staff, and then on to sub committee to get project moved forward to Council sitting as a whole. Which is why Chair is approaching Council member Elenbaas at this juncture as staff has indicated budget and workload preclude focus. Intent is for Council member to request an agenda item to be taken to committee, and from there on to whole Council.

Broadband

Whidbey telecom requests being placed on agenda for next meeting.

Firewood MOU

Jed Holmes, of Whatcom County is working on this and Chair waiting for update from him.

Spring clean up

Based on discussions by Cando most sought after item is green waste. Proposal to date is over a 3 month period to have six different Saturdays to allow 1 free green waste trip by residents funded by Whatcom County solid waste tax. Chair notes inequities in properties ability to access this clean up based on disparate vehicles. Also notes as part of Maple Beach survey with Member Zidel green waste was a component of drainage ditch issues.

Member Norman brings up how the natural disaster that is Covid has been contributing factor to waste issue for past two summers. This was not an issue for non Point Roberts properties in Whatcom County. This is a health and safety hazard.

Chair will discuss with appropriate parties. If not in budget may be another issue for the County Council subcommittee on Public Works and Health.

Member Zidel agrees that Covid affected Point Roberts differently than rest of County, where others had freedom of access and movement, with exception of vermin who have taken advantage of owner absence. To compare us to rest of Whatcom County is unfair because while here access was precluded, taxes weren't.

Member Norman discusses equity regarding all the money Cando didn't spend to haul garbage for the vacant properties.

Chair suggests requesting from County Executive supplemental money from Covid relief funds, as result is direct effect of Covid lockdown, to augment monies from Whatcom County Solid Waste.

Member Norman volunteers to write up an agenda item speaking to this issue.

Dark Sky initiative

Member Norman noted previously provided Committee with Dark Sky initiative information and asked for any feedback.

Chair indicates County requests minimum of three public meetings to allow for citizen input prior to forwarding for their review and action, which will be next step in process.

Dog Park

Given previous direction from County in above item this request also will necessarily respond to that directive, with caveat proposal has already gone to County Parks where it was summarily dismissed without rational argument for location at Lighthouse Park. Constraints at Baker Field were discussed due to proximity to elementary school and recreation field. The Marina's requirement for public dedication upon development of non waterfront properties is presently untenable per owner's due to offer of property for sale, though given the lack of improvements involved and the potential for a temporary easement seems to be an argument of convenience, rather than substance.