

Japanese Gulch Subcommittee Meeting – July 1, 2015

City Hall, Council Chambers

7:00pm – Opening:

Present at Meeting: Tom Little, Dustin Weller, Demaree Clay, Chris Cook, Kristen Kohorst, Tyler Thompson, Richard Emery, Nic Morin, Karl Almgren, Jennifer Berner.

Jennifer Berner opened the work session with proposing to the subcommittee about discussing the 76th Street Trailhead property and discussing the Overall Trail Layout at a later date. The subcommittee stated that they felt the 76th Street Trailhead was going to take more than one night, and that starting the discussion tonight was wise.

One subcommittee member stated that before the meeting went too far, that they wanted to reflect on some comments made at the Open House regarding the Traffic Calming. The table they were at seemed very pro-‘Safe Pedestrian & Bike’ whereas such as speed bumps were disliked. The discussion then returned to the Dog Park.

The subcommittee discussed the Dog Park right now is the most visible entrance to Japanese Gulch. This area is used by both hikers, bikers, and dog park users, as some of the users will prefer to hike/bike up the hill and travel back down versus travelling down to go back up. This led the discussion to recommend adding as many parking spaces as possible to the area. The Dog Park Discussion concluded the following:

- The design of the Dog Park entrance must synthesize the area as an entrance to not only the Dog Park, but also an entrance to Japanese Gulch. The challenge faced is ensuring that the amenities of the planning areas are able to work together and integrate into the landscape to prevent a disconnection between the sub-areas within the park. This included potentially utilizing a Japanese themed shelter. There was a discussion of whether the Japanese theme should carry over to the Dog Park.
- Additional conversation of Japanese characteristics identified that Japanese Gardens tend to be very practical with the usage of materials. The correct usage of materials may also lend itself to incorporate the lumber industry story into the park areas. Such structures may range from sheds, kiosks, and potentially a structure within the dog play area to provide shade and cover for users. Look at adding characteristics to the current kiosk and sheds to go with the theme of the dog park – Japanese themed structures or lumbering themed structures.
- Specific structures, such as picnic tables, should not be located near trash and dog waste receptacles.
- While water & sewer may be extremely challenging and costly to implement in the short term, the long-term desire would be to have public water and sewer on site. The availability of water and sewer would provide the requirements for a restroom. In the short-term a compostable toilet/port-a-potty should be utilized. The challenge noted with having a plumbed restroom is to ensure that the scale of the restroom is appropriate and is not to dominate the entrance to the

Dog Park and Japanese Gulch. The subcommittee also discussed the option of locating the restroom at Centennial Park, but was determined that a restroom there would be too dominate for the park there.

- Utilizing a cistern for holding rain water was a concern some park users would not understand that the water is non-potable, even with signage. The original consideration was to utilize a cistern to collect rain water for a dog wash station. While the cistern may not be utilized for a dog wash station, rain water could still be collected in a shed for other purposes including on-site irrigation if needed. The cistern could be housed in a shed/cabinet located near another structure.
- A linear dog run could also be shared space with a maintenance path. The subcommittee concluded that the linear dog run should be a fenced area, as the maintenance path could be gated at both ends. The conversation revolved around the concept that dogs wont respect boundaries of the linear dog run, and that having a gate at either end of the maintenance trail does not reduce the functionality of the path.
- Additional drainage work is needed at the Dog Park to provide adequate drainage as organic matters (bark) break down when the water is unable to drain. The maintenance path, and heavily used trails will require some subgrade drainage abilities such as course rock.

The subcommittee then focused a significant amount of time discussing the concepts of off leash trails within Japanese Gulch. The discussion included potentially identifying a single trail, potentially the mainline trail, to be used as an off-leash trail, while others voiced that on-leash was the best practice. This discussion was tabled to a later date to provide more time for reflection as the debate continued between ‘What the Community Wants’ (survey results) and ‘Continued Use’. Below is a summarized pro/con/fact list from the discussion.

Facts:	Pro	Con
All other Mukilteo Parks are On-Leash	Provides continued historical use of the area prior to the City’s purchase	Dogs may not stay within eyesight of owners and may not obey owners
City’s Insurance would allow for off-leash trails with proper signage	38% Like Off-Leash Dog Trails	42% Don’t Like Off-Leash Dog Trails
38% Like Off-Leash Dog Trails, 20% Neutral, 42% Don’t Like It	Accommodates more users	Dogs may damage habitat or chase after wildlife
Paradise Valley is On-Leash	Finds the balance between historical uses and solutions	On-leash conforms to guiding principles of protecting environment
	All other city parks are on-leash	Restrict for on-leash leads to greater enjoyment of all
		Dogs wont respect boundaries of the trail

The discussion then returned to an overall focus of Japanese Gulch including the understanding that:

- The primary entrances of Japanese Gulch are the Dog Park and the 76th Street Trailhead.
- The more multi-use areas, the more sustainable the park will be as more users will volunteer.
- There must be a balance of signage between users and definitions of who have the right-of-way.
- People volunteer in the Gulch, because they care.
- While the area used-to-be the 'Wild West', Japanese Gulch East may serve that role.

The discussion then turned to the 76th Street Trailhead including identifying that the portion of the 76th Street Trailhead is only a small portion of Japanese Gulch and how this was not conveyed well in the master plan survey. The primary outcome of the conversation was that the historical use of community will never be obsolete addressing that the property has long since been a service to the community with the Grange Hall, then the Memorial Park, then the Police Station, and now the Community Garden. As the subcommittee further discussed the concept of a structure at the 76th Street Trailhead, the subcommittee considered comments of 'Hobbit House' to incorporate with the community garden. Nic commented that the public spaces could be activated with correct marriage of uses. This led the conversation to the Dirt Jump Bike Course.

The subcommittee continued to support the use of a portion of the site for a Dirt Jump Bike Course. It was stated that a bike dirt jump area provide an opportunity for a community recreation activity for individuals that are not interested in team sports. As well as it provides a physical activity for teens and young adults.

The final discussion was regarding the role of the future Active Transportation Plan related to commute trip reduction and partnership opportunities with Boeing regarding Japanese Gulch East. Staff stated a meeting has been held with Boeing to start a partnership of identifying how our needs for mobility and recreation can be equally met. The subcommittee, some of which are Boeing Employees, discussed the focus of safety, security and how involvement of Boeing is personality dependent.