

Lowami Hart Woods (LHW) Key Planning Issues:

The following summary stems from a meeting on January 19, 2011, involving Hal Bergsma and Matt Kilmartin of the THPRD staff and Priscilla Christenson and Mark Hereim representing Friends of Beaverton's Johnson Creek (FBJC). The purpose of the meeting was to acquaint Staff with the prior public input, Board actions, and the context in which the input was generated. At Staff's request, Priscilla provided a packet of documents from the public record related to the Lowami Hart Woods Master Plan. During the meeting, the participants reviewed and discussed these documents and their implications. Included in the document set were:

- Letters to the THPRD Board from Friends of Beaverton's Johnson Creek, West Beaverton Neighborhood Association, and the general public.
- A copy of a petition supporting low-impact development of Lowami Hart Woods. THPRD has the original petition signed by almost 200 Park District residents.
- A partially revised Lowami Master Plan printed in October, 2001.
- Minutes from August and September, 2001 THPRD Board meetings.
- An Oregonian newspaper article on Lowami Hart Woods written following the September, 2001 Board meeting.

Mrs. Christenson and Mr. Hereim reiterated that Friends of Beaverton's Johnson Creek has been a strong supporter of THPRD in the past. FBJC would like to work *with* the Park District to continue that tradition. FBJC's goal in calling attention to the Lowami Hart Woods Master Plan is simple: Develop Lowami Hart Woods in keeping with public expectations following extensive participation in the planning process.

In addition to looking at historical context, the participants also discussed current planning activities related to the site, including trails planning and the recent design/development work that has been done by THPRD staff and consultants. The focus of the discussion had to do with the direction provided by the Board of Directors on the Lowami Master Plan at their September 12, 2001 meeting as recorded in the approved minutes of that meeting and the absence of an accurate "final" draft of the Master Plan.

1. Programming park activities

This issue is listed first because its resolution will affect resolution of the next issue listed. Minutes of the September 12, 2001 Board of Directors' meeting where they deliberated on the draft master plan before them indicate that some Board members did not want educational programs to be conducted at LHW, but rather at the Nature Park. (It was noted by the FBJC representatives that Cooper Mountain Nature Park is now also available for educational programs.) At the Sept. 12 meeting Board member Mark Knudsen stated that was his position at page 6 of the meeting minutes. Board member Deanna Mueller-Crispin indicated on the same page she agreed. Board president Terry Moore stated at page 7 she wanted more discussion of the issue. It does not appear, however, based on the minutes that further discussion occurred.

Based on recent input from staff of the THPRD Natural Resources Department, project staff has anticipated that the park may be programmed for educational activities including summer day camps for children. The FBJC representatives are concerned that prolonged and sizable group activities in the park would have an adverse impact on wildlife, habitat, and the quiet sanctuary of the park. Such programming would also increase the need for on-site parking. The FBJC representatives are not opposed to small group tours through the park or placement of educational signage.

Direction requested: Project staff needs direction from the Board of Directors regarding educational programming in the park.

2. Number of on-site parking spaces

At page 9 of the minutes it is noted that a motion was made, which passed 3-1, to the effect that the parking lot would be constructed in two phases with the eastern portion as shown on the master plan design constructed first and the western (phase two) portion constructed "as needed". After the motion was approved Terry Moore said, as recorded on page 11 of the minutes, that phase 2 elements of the master plan should be "addendums" and considered after additional public hearing(s).

The parking lot as shown in the master plan exhibit presented to the Board is labeled "parking for 10-18 cars." Phase one of the parking lot in the exhibit shows six regular parking spaces and one handicapped space. It also shows space for parking two school buses. Phase 2 appears to show an additional ten spaces.

The number of parking spaces “needed” will largely be determined by how the use of LHW is programmed and the level of non-programmed use of the site, which can only be estimated at this point. The FBJC representatives have suggested that off-site parking, such as at Sexton Mountain Elementary School or on-street within the adjacent neighborhood, could be used, or that people could be encouraged to access the site by other modes of transportation (walking, bicycling, transit).

If phase two parking is not constructed at this time but is determined to be needed later, the cost of the construction could be higher than if both phases of the parking lot are constructed now.

THPRD’s methods of implementing site programming activities have evolved over the past 10 years, including the need for bus access and parking. Based on consideration of current bus practices and site constraints, and depending on direction provided on issue #1 above, project staff recommends that if bus parking is warranted for park programming activities it be provided for only one bus.

Direction requested: Should both phases of the parking lot be constructed at this time, or should only phase one be constructed consistent with Board direction in 2001? Additionally, should a different number of auto and bus parking spaces be provided than planned in 2001? (Direction provided on the first issue should influence this decision.)

3. Parking lot paving

The minutes of the September 12, 2001 Board meeting are clear (page 9) that the Board directed that the parking lot surface be made pervious by using pavers. However, pervious paving technology and awareness of its limits have evolved over the last ten years. Project staff is presently proposing a non-pervious parking lot surface because of concerns that site conditions (including soils, drainage, shade, impacts to tree roots, and prevalent forest debris) will limit the ability of a pervious surface to function adequately and will cause excessive maintenance demand. The Board decision in 2001 did not address what should happen if use of pervious paving was determined to be infeasible.

Direction requested: If pervious paving is deemed feasible, should project staff be allowed to consider use of other types of pervious paving? (Presently, pervious concrete is favored by District maintenance staff, and pervious asphalt is more cost effective than pervious concrete or pavers.) If pervious paving is deemed infeasible by staff, based on consultant studies, due to site conditions, could non-pervious

paving be allowed with the understanding that on-site treatment and detention of storm-water runoff should be done by other appropriate low impact means?

4. Surface of the main trail

The FBJC representatives have suggested that the surface of main trail should be pervious. However, there is no discussion or motion regarding pervious trail paving in the 9/12 minutes; only direction that the primary trail be ADA accessible and provide access for maintenance and emergency vehicles into the park, as identified in motion #1 on page 8. The cost estimate included in the Board packet on 9/12 itemized the primary trail as “asphalt” at a unit cost consistent with that identified for standard asphalt on the 9/6 pervious & non-pervious trail surfacing options memo provided to the Board.

The 9/12 meeting packet contained a staff memo dated 9/6/01 regarding pervious & non-pervious trail surfacing options in which staff recommended not using pervious paving surfaces for the trail pending further study. Project staff is presently proposing a non-pervious trail surface because of concerns that site conditions (including soils, drainage, topography, shade, and prevalent forest debris) will limit the ability of pervious pavement to function adequately and will cause excessive maintenance demand.

Direction requested: Should consideration be given to applying pervious paving to the main trail?

5. Surface of the loop trail

In 2001 the Board directed that the loop trail through the park, called the Madrone Trail, should be a 3-foot wide bark chip trail. (See pages 8 and 9 of the Sept. 12 minutes.) However, it was noted by the consultant during the discussion that wood chips would wash away on steeper sections of the trail. It had been the District’s practice in recent years to stabilize bark chip trails by underlying them with a pervious cloth material topped by gravel. Recently the Natural Resources Department has recommended just using gravel on pervious cloth with no bark chips to reduce maintenance costs. The FBJC representatives accepted that pervious cloth and gravel could be underlain but want bark chips on top, as the Board directed, for aesthetic reasons.

Direction requested: Should the top surface of the loop trail be bark chips?

6. Vehicle rating of the main trail

Minutes of the Sept. 12 meeting indicate that the main north-south trail, called the Wahoo Trail, was to be constructed to allow for maintenance and emergency access by light vehicles. (See page 8 of the Sept. 12 minutes.) The new bridge recently installed near the south end of the trail is vehicle rated allowing it to be crossed by light pickups. However, constructing the trail to allow for use by light pickups would require deeper base material and wider turning radii, increasing cost and environmental impact of construction. If the trail was built to allow for only light utility vehicle access (e.g., motorized carts, Gators, or ATVs) its construction cost and environmental impacts would be reduced.

Direction requested: Should the main trail be constructed to only allow for maintenance and security access by light utility vehicles?

7. Connectivity of the main trail

The main north-south trail through the park is classified in the 2006 Trails Plan as a community trail. Staff has determined that it was also classified as a community trail in the 1998 Trails Plan. According to the Trails Plan, the trail is to be continued in the future south of Hart Road into Vale Park and north of LHW into Brookhaven Park. Per the Trails Plan and as allowed by the City of Beaverton's engineering design standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a multi-use community trail is to be a paved trail between 8 and 10 feet in width with at least one foot shoulders.

The Sept. 12, 2001 meeting minutes indicate the Board thought the trail might be continued south of Hart Road by going under the road where the road crosses Johnson Creek. The FBJC representatives are concerned that this route would have adverse environmental impacts. Since 2001 the City of Beaverton has improved Hart Road. One of the improvements is a median in front of LHW with a pedestrian refuge 'cutout' for pedestrians to cross. If the trail is continued to the south, a mid-block surface crossing of Hart Road would be the more likely treatment.

The FBJC representatives question whether the main trail through LHW should retain its community trail classification. They are of the opinion that the environmental impacts of building a community trail through Vale and Brookhaven Parks would be excessive and would pose difficult permitting issues. They further maintain that development of this segment as a community trail:

- would create an *isolated trail segment*, which would remain unconnected for an undetermined period of time (not a Bond item);

- is not consistent with current District goals to connect *existing* trail segments, not create new ones; would probably never connect to potential segments north and south from Lowami, due to not meeting need, feasibility standards of CWS, or constraints from Hart Road's creek crossing;
- is not needed, since neighborhoods in this area are already connected via nearby walkways;
- would cause degradation to the natural area, reducing its overall value as natural space for the public.

Without a community trail designation, ADA accessibility could still be accomplished with a narrower trail leading from Hart Road to the site center and along the flat basin on a stand-alone basis, if funding permits.

Direction requested: Should the main trail retain its community trail classification?

END