



## Meeting Summary for January 30th Harper Community Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, January 30, 2019, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

**Location:** Colby United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall, 2881 Harvey St SE, Port Orchard, WA

**Meeting Purpose:** Discuss the future of Harper Park and Harper Estuary planning made possible by a new Washington State Department of Ecology grant. This meeting kicks off 2019 grant activities including the removal of invasive plants in the restoration area, implementation of estuary monitoring, community engagement, development of a park plan, and design and build of key park and public use improvements. This work supports long-term work to fully restore Harper Estuary and potentially construct a new bridge on Olympiad Drive.

**Community Attendees:** In total, 36 community members people signed in for the meeting. Among this total, 18 were interested in volunteering or possibly becoming a steward for Harper Park and Estuary. Including staff, approximately 50 total persons were in attendance for the community meeting.

**Project Staff Attendees:** Commissioner Charlotte Garrido, Kitsap County Commissioners Office, Jim Bolger, Kitsap County Department of Community Development (DCD), Travis Buell, Kitsap County Parks, Christina Kereki, Kitsap County DCD, Jennifer Cannon, Kitsap County Commissioners Office, Steven Starlund, Kitsap County Parks, Kathleen Peters, Kitsap County DCD, Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech, Kitsap County DCD, Gunnar Fridriksson, Kitsap County Public Works, Jackson Lee, Kitsap County Parks, Doris Small, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Jeff Adams, WA Sea Grant, Jenise Bauman, Western Washington University, Dana Coggon, Kitsap County Noxious Weed Program

### **Meeting Agenda:**

1. Meeting welcome from Commissioner Charlotte Garrido, Kitsap County started off the event.
2. Background and introduction on how we are building off previous good work and participation was presented by Jim Bolger.
3. Upcoming work plan and introduction of the team was provided by Christina Kereki and then Jennifer Cannon provided a brief overview of how the community can get involved and announced the upcoming walking meeting being held on 2/9/19 (weather permitting).
4. Parks planning presentation was provided by Steven Starlund and this was followed by questions and answers, and public comments. *A summary of the questions and public comments is provided in the below Community Discussion section.*
5. Then the open house portion of the meeting occurred whereby by participants viewed posters, provided public comments, and engaged in conversations with project staff.
6. Posters can be viewed at: <http://westsoundwatersheds.org/default.aspx?ID=42>

## **Meeting Outcomes:**

- ✓ This meeting kicked off the 2019 grant activities for Harper Estuary restoration planning and Harper Park plan development.
- ✓ Participants provided comments on the 2019 grant activities and work plan. In addition to previous input and project/site constraints, these discussions help to shape future work.

## **Community Discussion Summary**

### **Discussion on Harper Park Improvements**

- *Community member expressed concern about the need to protect the birds that nest in the Harper estuary area.*
- *Another participant asked about whether it was feasible and recommended to have a boardwalk on the estuary? Another person said that during the planning stages, there was a boardwalk planning to go around the periphery on the bank in the east and the south side but now the area is heavily overgrown.*
- *Concern was expressed about realistically what could feasibly be accomplished in five months.*
- *A participant asked about whether we could fix the sign on Harper hill.*
- *An attendee asked about the Department of Natural Resources land requirements and whether a land swap would be possible?*
- *A community member voiced concern about taking out the fences around the ballfield since this could lead to cars parking where the fence was located and could lead to issues with kids in the park running into the busy roadway. They advocate keeping parks for children.*
- *A community member indicated that if the baseball structures were removed, that they would welcome just an open play field, and an improved picnic shelter.*
- *A neighbor asked about the possibility of adding interpretive exhibits that could be constructed with brick material to recognize the brick factory past. Another attendee pointed out that they worked with a small group of people a few years ago to come up with a half dozen ideas on adding a brick feature to the park. This committee work was spurred at a past community meeting. They requested Kitsap County follow-up from where they left off. They would like to reinvigorate this work.*



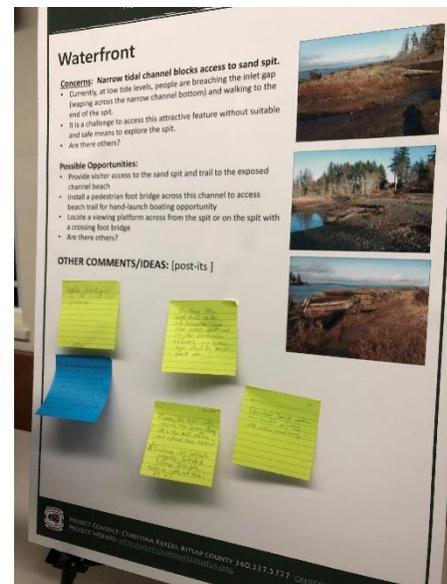
- Another meeting attendee asked at a minimum for crosswalks since they would like safe beach access. In addition, they suggested that the parking lot be upgraded with gravel and other improvements. They pointed out that not many people would object to these improvements.
- An attendee emphasized how this could be an opportunity to make Harper an attractive location for the kayaking community. Harper Park could be a great spot for them to explore the waters on a kayak. The area could change with the construction of a bridge but there could be possible improvements that might be worth the effort.
- A meeting participant asked how quickly we can put up signage to not drive on the beach and near water. This might not fully deter driving, but it would be helpful to inform people who did not know this wasn't allowed. What about installing an attractive temporary barrier?
- Another person asked about the possibility of adding a bicycle rack to make the park more inviting to bicyclists.
- A few attendees asked staff to explore the possibility of adding a bathroom or a porta-potty.

### Community Comments on the Olympiad Drive/Shoreline Access Poster:

- Make an observation view point on the north side of Olympiad Drive at a bump out across from the 25 mph signs.
- Dredge creek channel of bricks and other debris north of Olympiad Drive. This condition is hard on small crafts and natural environment.
- Keep people from driving on the beach.
- Remove the road, return the estuary to original. Boat ramps and parking on west side.

### Community Comments on the Waterfront Poster:

- Only allow access to the spit if natural areas, nesting sites, vegetation can be protected. I would hate to see a natural area we are trying to restore get trampled and people will trample it. Keep this area inaccessible, view from platform only. Our national parks are an example of what people will do: i.e. cut Joshua Trees, trampled vegetation, trash, etc.
- Restore the wetlands on the NE boundary line that were destroyed in the restoration efforts 1 to 2 years ago. Used by ducks, geese, etc.
- Elevated boardwalk on north estuary, old relic roadway. Please no boardwalk around the lower estuary – it is the most pristine and natural area around. Purchase Joe Lockhart's property east side of estuary, it is for sale. Make a look out there!
- For the kayakers who may visit the new launch area, a few signs on the post with park maps? For example: Welcome to



*the Harper Estuary! With where they can safely access to view, hike, picnic, etc. There are/will be signs coming from land but might not be obvious coming from the water.*

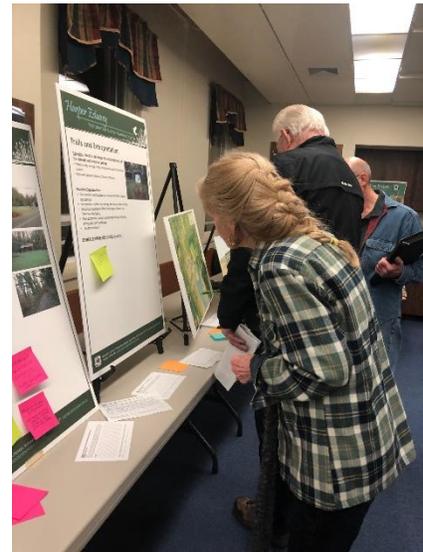
- *Trails developed in the south end of the property.*
- *Rebuild a boat ramp. There is no longer access for small watercraft and less parking on the road shoulders. Replace failing culvert with a box culvert, which would be cheaper than a bridge.*

#### **Community Comments on the Trails and Interpretation Poster:**

- *Place a history marker with information on the estuary side of the park.*
- *Trail signage, trail maps*
- *Add more interpretation about the historic brick factor trail and former operations*
- *Include local history gathered from neighbors and any relatives related to the historic Harper Brick and Tile Company operation.*

#### **Community Comments on the Harper Park Planning Poster:**

- *Boat launch for small boats. Place a history marker with information on the estuary side of the park.*
- *Keep the park accessible to the local families – the fenced area is wonderful for local children.*
- *A large rain garden on the east side of the ballfield. Remove fence. Construct a new bridge over ravine on main trail.*
- *On Harper Hill Road Park access, the sign is overgrown and dilapidated and there is zero parking at that trailhead. Any chance for a 1 -2 car pull-off by the sign?*
- *Fix the parking lot. Sign on Harper Hill. Fix entrance from Harper Hill. Love the rain garden idea. Bench on north side of Olympiad. Bike rack (must be near the road so it can be seen from the road).*



#### **Submitted Community Comments (actual comments are shown in *italics*):**

- *Paper: Suggest evaluating the road shoulders from Southworth ferry landing to Harper Park to improve safe pedestrian and bike access. A possible loop using Southworth Drive, Cherry Street, and Olympiad Drive would be a large improvement that may be possible with county crews and remaining grant funds.*
- *Paper: I took my first walk in the park (trail) yesterday. I didn't know about the park trail until I was asked by Kitsap Audubon to attend the meeting. I noticed there are wooden markers on the trail but no way to access the information associated with these markers. Since most of us have smart phones, would there be a way to put the information associated with those markers on a park website so that we could access that information on our phones?*

- Paper: *At the top of the park on Harper Hill, people pull to the side and park on the road/shoulder. There is very little parking. Maybe clear a spot for parking or add a sign explaining there is more parking at the Southworth Drive (ballfield) entrance or a no parking sign???*
- Paper: *I've never seen anyone playing in the ballfield. If it isn't used as a ballfield all or part of it could be used/converted into a playground that might be more useful also a picnic area would be nice.*
- Email: *If I thought that it would do any good, I would attend. I know that they ignored the communities wishes when they removed the gravel boat ramp. At the initial meeting we twice emphasized in writing that it was important to keep it, and it's gone.*
- Email: *Thank you and your colleagues for the community meeting regarding the Harper estuary. I attended it last evening, and it was very comforting to know that our little park is still being considered for improvement. Unfortunately, I had to leave early and could not participate in the "leave a message on a post-it" portion of the evening. Most of the comments I heard during the first part of the evening seemed to be about the "grand ideas" for the long- term future. And many of these were dependent on the bridge finally being financed and built. In the meantime, however, there are lots of things that could be done to improve the park itself without costing a bundle. From my standpoint, here are just a few:*
  - *1. A new sign at the upper part of the park off Harper Hill Road, beside the trail that goes down the hill. The old one is literally falling down.*
  - *2. Clearing and improvements to the trail that leads down the hill. There are lots of muddy, narrow parts of the trail that make it slippery and dangerous at times.*
  - *3. A new bridge or walkway over the creek to allow access to the south end of the park. Make it out of concrete or wood. Not the metal that drug addicts tear apart for scrap.*
  - *4. Redo the ball field and perhaps turn it into a play area with playground equipment for younger kids. Include good seating and tables for families watching their children play.*
  - *5. Repair/improve the covered picnic area.*
  - *6. Call on the local police to patrol the parking area more frequently to move the drug addicts along.*
  - *And finally, a personal wish. I hike a lot around the area. I would love to see a better walking/hiking area between the park and the Harper dock. I know this is not under your area, but anything you could do to make it happen would be appreciated. Again, thanks for the interest. Hopefully, something good will come out of it.*

### **Action Items:**

1. Another meeting is scheduled to take place at Harper Park to allow for further discussions on Harper Park improvements. This event benefits from giving neighbors the opportunity to view different park features (ballfield, trails, waterfront views, picnic shelter, drainage) firsthand, share information, while engaging in a moving conversation about possible improvements.
2. Kitsap County will follow-up on the brick feature work compiled by a public committee. The goal will be to help to integrate or reinvigorate this work into the current 2019 grant work.

3. Kitsap County staff will follow-up on community comments, provide supportive information, and make additional estuary clean-up progress and conceptual plan options for Harper Park.
4. The monitoring plan will be further developed to explore possible ways volunteers could contribute. The parks department will follow up on additional volunteer and stewardship opportunities, including invasive plant species removal (English ivy), trail improvements and interpretive displays.
5. Additional community outreach activities will be planned.