

**Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee
November 19, 2020 Meeting**

Minutes

Members

Allison Calder — PRRVA
Stephen Falk — At-Large
Judson Meraw — CoC
Pamala Sheppard — At-Large (absent)
Steve Wolff — PRTA

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the October 17, 2020 meeting were discussed as needing further work before finalization. JM was willing to work further on the minutes.

Public Comment

Grant Heitman — Mr. Heitman made reference to the newspaper stories about John Lesow's comments advocating Canada's annexation of Point Roberts. Mr. Heitman also made reference to the issue of Point Roberts incorporating as a town. He mentioned the possibility of a formal vote being held in Point Roberts to determine support for particular initiatives. He suggested the PRCAC could contact the County Executive to follow up on these issues.

Tom O'Brien — Mr. O'Brien made reference to Mr. Heitman's suggestion of a plebescite in Point Roberts. (Note: A plebescite is not an organization; it is a vote by a local population generally as a final step to approve or reject a governmental plan affecting that population.) Mr. O'Brien made reference to the Point Roberts Independent Business Council's efforts in 2019 and 2020, and its opposition to the PRCAC as a voice for Point Roberts and its approach to amending WCC 20.72. However, he noted that the PRIBC recognizes that the PRCAC is the only local group looked

to by County government as representing Point Roberts. Mr. O'Brien made reference to the County Executive's letter which identified shortcomings of the PRCAC. He stated that the PRCAC may be the only organization to advocate for the needs of Point Roberts to the authorities in Bellingham.

Olaf Grabi — Mr. Grabi reiterated the concerns of Maple Beach resident for any support to mitigate sea flooding in that neighborhood. He noted that the sea wall is in worse shape and the flooding has worsened year over year. It was noted that Whatcom County Parks and Whatcom County Public Works need to be involved in the solution.

Old Business

* Update on changes to WCC 20.72

County Council adopted the changes to WCC 20.72 proposed by the PRCAC (and Planning and Development Services) by a vote of 7:0. Earlier, the Planning Committee of County Council heard comments from SF and AC, and also from Tom O'Brien of the PRIBC. It was reiterated that the PRCAC and the community should still start a much more comprehensive review starting with a "visioning" process to identify what the community wants Point Roberts to be like, have an economic development study made, and then re-do the sub-area plan for Point Roberts, and make further necessary changes to WCC 20.72.

* Update on County Council's discussions on Point Roberts' mandatory curbside trash and recycling

At the October meeting, the PRCAC voted to request that County Council reduce the minimum curbside trash service level from 26 to 12 32-gallon cans per year. County Council's Finance Committee reviewed the PRCAC request at its October 27, 2020 meeting. There was brief discussion about this issue (and questioning why the PRCAC was advocating a different position than it did just 2 years ago), though most of the discussion centered on the payment arrangement under which Cando's fee is collected through the property tax bills managed by the Treasurer's Office.

AC noted that the issue was held over to the Health Committee for further consideration. She also noted the County Treasurer Steve Oliver's comment that the rate can be changed mid-year (not just as of January 1).

AC will follow-up with the Health Committee to see if they want the PRCAC to get more community input or even do a formal survey to assess public sentiment on this issue,

There was interest in getting UTC figures on the cost difference between the current 26 pick-ups and the proposed 12 pick-ups per year. The point was raised that it could be useful to get survey results first before asking for the cost of a new alternative, if the majority turned out to support the current arrangement. On the other hand, the point was made that the survey could be more meaningful if residents had cost information on the alternatives.

JM commented that CoC had no advance notice that this issue was going to be discussed and voted on at the October meeting. He questioned the urgency that caused the matter to be dealt with so quickly without input from the CoC and at a PRCAC meeting he was not able to attend. JM requested a change in procedure to avoid votes on matters that the represented organizations and the public are not aware of. It was noted that the issue was on the agenda, but not in great detail.

The suggestion was made to have the agenda published at least a week before the meeting.

* Report on the recent recycling and waste reduction seminars
AC commented on the 4 sessions run by Beth Chisholm of WSU Extension. The Zoom sessions were well attended. The topics covered were recycling, waste reduction, and composting.

SW mentioned an idea from George Wright that the community should have a chipper/shredder to process yard waste from residents and prevent it from going into the trash and into landfills.

* Dates for steps in the PRCAC At-Large member selection process
SF noted that he had already posted notes to the community about using the same process to fill his At-Large seat as was used in December 2018 and December 2019. SF stated that he did not plan to seek a second 2-year term. SF had asked the County Executive if he would approve the use of this process again. The County Executive was supportive, provided all recognize that ultimately, it his responsibility and decision to select the

new members to the PRCAC. That was the same situation in 2018 and 2019.

SF had encourage people to express their interest in the position before the end of November, but that is not absolutely necessary. Those interested need to file an application with Whatcom County; a link to the application was in the recent posting.

The PRCAC selected December 10, 2020 for a special meeting to function as a “Candidates’ Forum” for PRCAC members and the public to ask questions of the applicants. The e-mail voting period will run from then to 5 pm on December 17, 2020, just before the PRCAC’s next regular meeting. SF will post additional notices on PAWS and Nextdoor to remind the public of the process, deadlines and meeting dates.

* E-mail address for the PRCAC: prcac.comment@gmail.com
SF noted that he has set up the new PRCAC e-mail address of prcac.comment@gmail.com. The e-mails will be automatically forwarded to each member of the PRCAC. SF will post notes on PAWS and Nextdoor to notify the public about the new address.

* PRCAC Bylaws

SF commented that, with AC’s help and prodding, a draft of the bylaws was completed and sent to the PRCAC members a few hours before this meeting. SF suggested that the PRCAC members review the draft and be prepared to discuss the bylaws at the December meeting for modification and possible adoption at that time (or the January meeting).

AC had suggested that the draft bylaws be sent to the County Executive’s office for review. SF sent the draft to Jed Holmes and Suzanne Mildner for review.

New Business

* 2021/2022 County Budget for Tax Benefit District (TBD) funds and TBD funds utilization process

AC and others had noticed that the County Budget included \$40,000 over 2 years from Point Roberts’ Tax Benefit District funds. SF commented that he had confirmed that this was just the continuation of the Tye Drive landscaping work that has been going on for the last couple years. The

work is contracted to cost about \$5000/year and WCPW estimates overhead costs of about \$5000/year. To avoid budget overages, WCPW “rounds the amount” up to \$20,000/year and that is the amount in the 2-year budget.

* Information about County projects involving Point Roberts

There was discussion about methods to improve communication from Whatcom County government to the PRCAC regarding any initiatives related to Point Roberts, such as the road paving work done in the summer of 2019 and which residents only became aware of a few months in advance.

AC noted that she just happened to notice an amendment to WCC 2.98 proposed by County Council member Rud Browne which would change the foundational ordinance for the PRCAC. County Council had not informed the PRCAC of this proposed action.

A motion was made and seconded:

that the PRCAC send a letter to the County Executive to request that he provide direction to administrative agencies to give notice to the PRCAC when the agency is starting to discuss an action that will take place in Point Roberts.

The motion was approved 4:0. SF will send the letter to the County Executive.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.