

MEETING NOTES FROM MEETING BETWEEN CITY OF BELLINGHAM PARKS STAFF, WOODSTOCK FARM CONSERVANCY BOARD MEMBERS, AND MICHAEL SULLIVAN OF “ARTIFACTS” CONSULTING.

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On June 26, 2008, Tim Wahl & Heather Michael of Bellingham Parks & Recreation, Carl Prince & Steve Paus of the Woodstock Farm Conservancy, and historic preservation and historic registry consultant, Michael Sullivan, met at Woodstock Farm to discuss the possibility of a National Historic Landmark nomination for Woodstock Farm.

National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are cultural properties designated by the Secretary of the Interior as being nationally significant. These buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects, are “acknowledged as among the nation’s most significant historic places and possess exceptional value of quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.” To date there are almost 2,300 properties designated as National Historic Landmarks in the United States (NR). In addition to National Park System units that are automatically included in the NR, there are 23 NHL’s listed in the state of Washington (NR).

The most effective way of identifying and nominating NHL’s is through theme studies which provide a comparative analysis of properties associated with a specific area of American history. This history is based on many sources including archeology, oral tradition, and documentary history. Thematic frameworks are established by identifying and defining the context of People, Place, and Time in relation to the site (NR).

Mr. Sullivan said that while Woodstock Farm would not meet the criteria for a national level listing, Woodstock Farm’s buildings, landscapes, sites, structures, and objects, could be merged into a single designation known as a ‘multiple-resource nomination’ that would enhance its thematic framework and provide for a rich nomination on the local level. Woodstock Farm’s character-defining features—architectural, site and landscape, as well as the site’s association with local historic figure and Bellingham civic leader, Cyrus Gates and its use by various indigenous peoples for over 3,000 years, would all be considered in building the site’s thematic identity as a National Register historic site or possibly a Bellingham City Landmark and make a nomination more than likely.

Sullivan indicated that the nature of civic historic preservation projects have changed significantly in recent years to include a much greater emphasis on active uses and more entrepreneurial activities; past projects used to focus on preservation and occasional and passive uses in more of a display or museum mode, whereas retail and meeting spaces for instance, are more common in today's projects. He said that the positive growth trend towards small-scale, low-impact, heritage sites that incorporate long-term stewardship programs and are stitched into the community and made accessible to the public by

means of such features as an active trail corridor, have even greater appeal now than ten or fifteen years ago.

Sullivan said that parks are increasingly limiting the number of vehicles that can enter a site, and the implementation of a strong transportation management plan that emphasizes alternative transportation will serve to increase the site's specialty in a positive way. There also exists the possibility of creating a 'multiple-site nomination' that establishes a historic theme and context between multiple properties of state and local significance. Woodstock Farm could possibly form a historic theme with other non-contiguous properties such as Mt. Baker Lodge, Chuckanut Drive, and Arroyo and Larabee State Parks to compose a Multiple-Property Listing.

An NR designation provides for higher levels of mitigation by ensuring that projects conducted by outside parties which could have a potentially adverse effect on the site, would more likely be restricted. Sullivan also stated that a NR designation provides greater eligibility for federal and state funding for site improvements and programming such as the State Heritage capital fund, whose aim is to "support capital needs and facilities of heritage organizations, tribal governments, public development authorities, and local government agencies that interpret and preserve Washington's history and heritage" (WAC 255-02-010), and the Recreation and Conservation Office of Washington.

Sullivan said that he hoped to review stewardship plans that could be tailored to Woodstock Farm and management assessment plans that could be useful in identifying Woodstock Farm's character defining features. He noted that a balance needs to be established between the need to upgrade site features and structures for practical and safety concerns and the unique position that Woodstock Farm occupies as a heritage site that denies "erosive change" in order to retain its authenticity.