

MEETING NOTES FROM MEETING BETWEEN CITY OF BELLINGHAM PARKS STAFF AND AL JOHNNY, LUMMI NATION CULTURAL DEPARTMENT

DRAFT 6/20/08 Prepared for review by the Lummi Cultural Department with a copy to 2008 “Adapting Woodstock” participants. (HM/TW)

On June 16, 2008 Tim Wahl, Jonathan Schilk, and Heather Michael, met with Al Scott Johnny of the Lummi Nation Cultural Department at Woodstock Farm to discuss the development of a cultural resource management component of a site plan. The Department uses both archeological data (empirical information recorded about a site by a culturally-biased observer, a trained professional in recent years) and traditional knowledge maintained among current-day tradition holders and in tribal archives usually closed to the general public.

Mr. Johnny indicated a Cultural Department preference for approaching a National Historic Registry nomination through formal redesignation of traditional Coast Salish placenames for sites like Woodstock and their environs, as has been done at Lily Point, Semiahma, Madrona Pt. and other native heritage sites. Formally-given place names, with orthographies (spelling and punctuation) approved by Lummi Nation’s Cultural Department, are a way of asserting and protecting traditional cultural properties. Traditional cultural properties are sites and regions within traditional use areas and used for reference to the overall landscape, information recalled in recent (say 150 year-old) and more ancient family and community accounts.

Placenames and information associated with places are traditionally inseparable from the physical place itself. This integration of story and recollection with place is a key attribute of traditional knowledge which the Cultural Department seeks to preserve and protect. Unrecognized by many outside native communities, units like the Department also respect the intellectual property rights of specific families and individuals, rights to determine how and when to disclose and share and present traditional information about places and people. The Department consults regularly with elders about these matters.

(TW: A useful way to think of traditional cultural property is the inherent right of a person, family or group to speak for itself and on behalf of itself. Intellectual property, the right to control other’s use of an idea, artifact or image by its originator, is a similar concept, albeit one driven by very different values in recent Western economies. Other forms of traditional cultural properties are specific hunting, fishing and gathering rights, many, but not all, exchanged and limited in treaties with the US government. Traditional cultural property, whether asserted as a use right or intellectual property, is critical to a tradition’s identity and indigenous government authorities seek to preserve the linkage of their people’s languages and histories to the landscape, in a majority cultural environment which encourages appropriation of virtually all information in a process of economic gain and exchange.

While the formal “reattachment” of native place names through the government-to-government NHR process does involve transmittal of some basic cultural knowledge, such as abridged placename stories, the publication and dissemination of cultural information outside of Indian country and native communities is not an important objective for native scholars and programs at present. The use of such information is largely incorporated into critical efforts to preserve native languages and cultural geographies, to preserve a local knowledge base for future generations, and to avoid patterns of cultural appropriation and misrepresentation common in recent centuries.)

For more information regarding traditional cultural properties visit the National Historic Landmarks website at:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb38/nrb38%20introduction.htm>

Under provisions of federal and state law and employing traditional and contemporary geographic analyses planners and policy makers at Lummi have inventoried and characterized a wide range of resource and reference sites known to Lummi families and tribal members. Records typically consist of GIS and GPS-based maps linked to related photographs and accounts by native elders, scholars and early Euro-American observers. Data is often presented in poster form. Mr. Johnny presented examples of several internally maintained cultural resource inventory posters showing known sites and designating management and assessment buffers. Buffers are for the purpose of alerting regulators during development review and working with developers whose nearby activities might potentially disturb, or otherwise impact, a cultural site.

Johnny indicated that the Lummi Cultural Department could proceed with preparation of a cultural resources “overlay” for use in the Woodstock site planning and Wahl agreed to furnish the Larry Steele & Associates base map and other information.

By utilizing traditional, pre-contact and post-contact knowledge, the archeological surveys conducted by WWU personnel and criteria developed within the Department’s cultural resource management system, significant features of Woodstock Farm and the surrounding area will be assessed and summarized in a visual format including maps. The overlay will identify archeological and traditional cultural features, resources and activities. It, or a subsequent document not necessarily for widespread use, will identify measures and means for protecting and managing the integrity of the traditional cultural landscape and its physical components. Ultimately the City hopes Lummi will assist in presenting various aspects of this knowledge to the public. As at other sites within the City, future agreements and memoranda of understanding may be developed to formalize programming and activities at Woodstock involving presentation of native history and culture.

Mr. Johnny indicated that Juanita Jefferson might be able to attend the July 25 charrette as a designee of the Cultural Department.