

September 5, 2008

To: *Adapting Woodstock* Charrette Participants and Followers

From: Tim Wahl, City of Bellingham Parks & Recreation

Jonathan Schilk, Heather Michael and I are emerging from a post charrette deluge (of unrelated matters) to update you and express many and belated thanks.

We start with thanks to the Woodstock Farm Conservancy for taking a major role in the event—it would not have happened without the Conservancy. We thank David Christensen and Steve Price of Charrette Studio, who completed much of the work out of dedication to our community and enthusiasm for Woodstock. We thank all of you who took the time to attend and share your ideas. You and your charrette colleagues, and the event supporters and contributors are listed on the website (<http://www.cob.org/government/departments/parks/projects/woodstock-charrette.aspx> which you can also reach by going to the City of Bellingham homepage and typing “adapting woodstock” in the Search box.)

A number of you have provided observations after the charrette. City Parks, or the Conservancy, will be getting back to you. (Thanks to Loni Rahm, Joe Yaver and Tom Thornton for contributing when they could not attend).

Here are 4 observations, followed by notes on what we’ve published since the charrette and reminders of why we did this and where it might go.

1. You will note that some of the principles and opportunities listed in the Principles summary (see below) could, if pursued or implemented separately and vigorously from one another, actually contradict one another. This is the way it’s supposed to be at this stage, with balance being attained by bouncing back and forth a bit at first.
2. We had issues with how people travel now and how they might travel in the future. Envisioning these modes and accounting for some of the unstated assumptions we each make about how the world might change or should change is challenging. Some people went away wondering if only kayakers, aggressive highway cyclists and fit walkers would end up being able to use the “low impact, limited parking” site we kept coming around to. Others simply saw hordes of smiling senior citizens and families being dropped off from shuttles at the Farm and others walking the .4 mile from the trailhead. It was, of course, more complicated than this.
3. We had very different and often unstated perceptions of the role and nature of business on the site. By business I mean the art, science and need for one or more site operators to generate income from activities that honor and fit, as much as possible, the

General Principles presented on the website. I was surprised to find coffee-shops and vending booths coming up in the last hours of the event, in contrast to Don Hunger's seemingly acclaimed, and I thought, eloquent distinctions of transient automobile services from other site services. I also sense that classic dilemma of public/private realty partnerships: the tension between giving an entity terms of use and control that are long and strong enough for them to generate income and make substantive investments benefitting the public, versus the desire and mission of most public agencies to keep public sites unencumbered for significant periods of time.

4. A successful Woodstock operator/programming agency will have transportation services and transportation management practices built into its structure and business plan. If the special qualities of the place are to be retained we are looking at 20 to 30 auto stalls maximum. If we are looking at keeping the driveway unclogged and maximizing vehicle occupancy those 20-30 stalls will be carefully managed and complemented with a range of other transportation services and opportunities.

#### **New on The Website & New With Staff.**

(<http://www.cob.org/government/departments/parks/projects/woodstock-charrette.aspx>)

We've posted the minutes from Friday and Saturday, the concluding "General Principles", a set of more specific "Site Design Principles & Possibilities" and some of Dave's sketches.

**Trails.** To be web posted by September 10<sup>th</sup>: Reference Item 2B.1, a Conceptual Trails and Plazas Plan. We drew this during the charrette to describe the main pedestrian access routes to and through the site and the secondary foot circulation and gathering areas within the site and supporting whatever its internal components end up being.

**"Moving the Interurban"**. Gwyn Howat and others spoke strongly about "putting Woodstock" right ON a bike-able Interurban Trail rather than off to the side and downhill. This concept is noted in the new Conceptual Trails Plan and the "Principles" documents. We talked about the foot-oriented "California Street Trail" below Chuckanut and we talked about the need for spot improvements on Chuckanut for roadway cyclists. Now we will take another look at overcoming what is essentially a gap in the Interurban between Lake Samish Rd. and Jody Bergsma's property line north of Spokane St. (Try being a family or an average off-road bicyclist and biking this.) This is a significant challenge and would require purchase of property and significant funds, IF we find there are operational advantages to be secured. (For those who are interested, we have a topographic survey showing the physical challenge seaward of Chuckanut Drive and northeast of the Woodstock Driveway.)

**Driveway Plan.** You may recall our spirited discussions about adapting the old driveway to today's vehicles and driving patterns and the potential "collision" between historic preservation values (keeping the old look) and contemporary standards for providing large fire truck access to the core of the site. Jonathan will be working with Fire, Building and Codes, Planning and his consulting engineers on a new conceptual driveway plan which incorporates many charrette

comments, a replacement for current web Item 2A.1. Things like sprinklers and hydrants are part of this. Jonathan hopes to have the new plan posted in 2 to 4 weeks.

**The “Inholding”.** To be web posted by September 10<sup>th</sup>: Item 0.10, a map showing the portion of the site the City has envisioned leasing or renting to a partnering organization. We were fortunate to receive a Department of Natural Resources grant in support of our original Woodstock purchase. (These funds are helping pay for the Charrette, the Inspiration Point project, and the new, shore-side trail to California Street.) Securing grant funds means placing the site under restrictions enforced by the State. We kept these restrictions off of the core of the site to allow for income generation, construction and cultural activities that would not normally be permitted on a State-funded park site.

**Why & What Next?** Parks continues to recognize a need for an operating partner at Woodstock. The “Challenge Statement”, web Reference Item 1.1 still stands. The *Adapting Woodstock* charrette was a step toward City solicitation of an operating partner; its findings, plus a whole lot of other site background materials, have been web posted. There are many ways a partnership could work. Please talk to Parks Director Paul Leuthold if you represent a party interested in making a proposal and please support the City in its efforts to secure one or more partners.

I sense that City Parks or the Woodstock Farm Conservancy or both will be inviting interested Charrette participants to an armchair follow-up session later in the Fall or this Winter. We at Parks welcome comments and reviews of the charrette process and its findings. Please feel free to contact us.

Lastly, we have a new roof on the Gates-Lee House and, almost, a new electrical service there. Thank you, Georgie Lee Bailey and Denis Bailey!

And really last, please consider visiting the second Woodstock Farm Art Show next weekend, Saturday and Sunday. Van service will be provided from the North Chuckanut Mt. Trailhead and Fairhaven Middle School on Saturday and Sunday between 11:30 AM – 7 PM, approximately every 20-30 minutes. A list of artists is posted under <http://www.cob.org/services/recreation/parks-trails/woodstock-farm.aspx>