

Parks, Recreation, Downtown Revitalization, Economic Development Project

MARCH STATUS REPORT

Introduction: This is the first quarterly report for the Project for 2007. This report is intended to bring the City Council up to date on all activities. All of these activities are designed to enhance the overall economic viability of Ferndale.

1. Ferndale Downtown Development Association (FDDA)

The FDDA has just received its approval as a State of Washington non-profit organization and will be opening up a bank account and begin soon to recruit members and raise funds to support the work of the Association. The FDDA meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month at 11:30 at Babe's. Mike Chaplin is the FDDA Chair.

The FDDA is currently working to develop a written "compact" with the developer of Pioneer Plaza to help ensure close coordination between the two business districts and to establish this approach as a way of doing business in Ferndale. The FDDA has indicated support for Pioneer Plaza and is working to make that reality in a way that will help strengthen downtown. The FDDA is currently working with the Community Forestry Commission to develop a street tree plan for downtown.

The FDDA has a full slate of officers and a board and will be working on fund raising, a downtown plan and other strategies that will strengthen the downtown district. Members of the FDDA will be attending the National Mainstreet Program Conference held in Seattle in late March.

2. Parks Recreation and Trails

The Parks Recreation and Trails Advisory Board have elected Connie Faria as their new Chairperson and several new potential members have stepped forward. Since the first of the year, the Advisory Board has organized, finished their work on the proposed Parks Master Plan and is

now reviewing a list of potential parks related volunteer projects to complete this year.

Staff is completing work on the proposed Parks Master Plan in accordance with direction provided by the City Council in January and February. The proposed Master Plan will come to City Council for action on April 2 following a review with the Recreation and Finance Sub-Committee of City Council. The PRTAB has reviewed the proposed Six Year CIP and has worked with staff to set new priorities in alignment with City Council direction (limit cost to about \$550,000 per year). Once approved by the City Council, the updated Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan will be filed with the State of Washington to ensure Ferndale's ability to qualify for state grants.

Additionally, staff is in the final stages of the report on operational alternatives, which will be reviewed with the PRTAB in April and reviewed with City Council on May 7 in a work session. This report will document six different operating alternatives and the cost for each alternative for Council consideration.

The Advisory Board meets the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 at the City Hall Annex.

3. Bergsma House

At the direction of City Council staff has begun meetings with the Heritage Society to determine their interest in taking over the operations of the house. One meeting has been held at Bergsma House and a number of issues and questions have been raised and are currently being researched. The Heritage Society has raised questions about the condition of the floor in the kitchen and bathroom as well as other issues.

There is no deadline for the completion of this dialogue, but there is hope of wrapping up discussions by mid summer so that City Council can make a determination.

4. Economic Development Commission

The new EDC held its organizational meeting in January of 2007 and has already conducted a training session regarding economic development. Representatives from the Port of Bellingham and the Whatcom Economic Development Council were present to assist the EDC learn about

economic development. In early March, the EDC also participated with the CCA in developing strategies to assist the City Council with the retail moratorium.

Art Rojsza and Brent Goodrich serve as co-chairs of this commission. The EDC meets the first Thursday of each month at 5:00 PM at the City Hall Annex. The April meeting will include time for the EDC to begin selecting projects to work on that are in alignment with the job description approved by the City Council.

5. Community Coordinating Association

This community organization was chartered by the City Council and given a specific job description approved by the Council. The CCA has held its organizational meeting and is working with others in the community to carry out its charge. Steve Malpezzi is President of the CCA.

The CCA has formed a Turn Out Task Force (TOTF) to plan the second annual community meeting, which will be held on May 10 at 7:00 PM at Eagleridge School. The agenda includes a review of the vision statement developed last year and approved by the City Council as well as progress reports on other issues identified in the community meetings of 2006.

Additionally, the CCA has created a Transportation Task Force to assist the City with transportation issues and a Special Task Group to work on retail issues related to the moratorium in support of the City. CCA leadership is reaching out to others in the community and working to fully coordinate other groups with the focus of the CCA.

The CCA Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the City Hall Annex. The CCA is a one of a kind organization in the state.

6. City Hall Annex

The painter has completed his work inside the City Hall Annex and will be finishing up this coming week. The Human Resource Task Force has had volunteers assist in this project and they have moved furniture, filled holes and cleaned up to help complete the Annex improvement. The outside of the Annex will be painted very soon. We anticipate a re-dedication event once all the painting is done and the social service agencies are in and operating. Right now there are four agencies planning to occupy space in the Annex and deliver social services primarily to Ferndale citizens.

The Community Forestry Commission, in partnership with the FDDA is developing a plan to improve the front yard of the Annex as a part of the downtown tree planting effort. Reuse of the Annex came out of the community meetings and is seen as one tool to help bring more people into downtown Ferndale while at the same time providing needed services to Ferndale citizens. A draft contract for space has been developed and the social service agencies anticipate the need to pay for electricity, heating and other services over and above what it would cost the City for the operation of the Annex.

The Task Force is laying the groundwork for the creation of a coordinating body to assist with improving services as well as assisting the City meet the needs of citizens at the Annex.

7. Community Forestry Commission

The Community Forestry Commission held its organizational meeting in March and has developed a four point plan of work for the year. The CFC will plan and sponsor an Arbor Day celebration, assist the FDDA with the development of the downtown tree plan, inventory and preserve suitable plant material from the Wright property (Riverview Plaza) and look to creating a youth tree club.

8. Project Transition

I am working with City Administration on the development of a plan of transition during 2007. The approved work plan for this project calls for all of the City Council created organizations to be self supporting and independent, although they will need some ongoing level of support from the City to be effective.

Each organization is working toward independence and there are three or four different approaches that we are looking at in the transition. It is my feeling at this time that we could very well see this project phase out and into the transition mode by mid summer.

The work that the City Council did in creating job descriptions has been very helpful. Every organization is working within the parameters set by City Council in the approved job description and the citizens are making good progress. The City and community will be well served and stronger as a result of this effort and the fine citizen engagement that is underway.

I continue to be in town generally the first and third weeks of the month and maintain telephone and email contact with all of the organizations.

Important Dates to Remember

- **Second annual community meeting May 10 at 7:00 PM Eagleridge School**
- **FDDA meets the third Thursday of each month at 11:30 AM at Babe's**
- **PRTAB meets the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 PM at the City Hall Annex.**
- **EDC meets the first Thursday of each month at 5:00 PM at the City Hall Annex.**
- **CCA Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Annex.**
- **Forestry Commission meets the third Thursday of the month at 5:30 PM at Bergsma House.**
- **All meetings are publicized and open to all.**

Should you have any questions about any of the items reported here, please feel free to contact me.