

**Comstock Neighborhood Council**  
**Meeting Notes for April 19, 2017**  
**6:00 PM –7:30 PM, Sacajawea Cafeteria**

**Disclaimer:** These notes are subject to revision and corrections from all participants. The contents herein represent the notes and recollections of the Comstock Neighborhood Council's scribes and representatives, and may not have captured the true intent of all statements made by the participants. For clarification of any details of these notes please contact the Comstock Neighborhood Chairperson. For clarification of any statements attributed to the participants of this meeting please contact the individual for clarification before passing judgement on the words contained herein.

**MEETING AGENDA:**

- I. Call to order
- II. Updates and Comstock Neighborhood Council business
  - Traffic calming and speed radar proposals
  - Time, date, location changes for upcoming meetings
  - Call for volunteers and open positions
- III. Forum: Bluff Tree Removal

Edit note: Underline indicates Agenda

**MEETING NOTES:**

***Updates and Comstock Neighborhood Council business:***

Meeting call to order at 6:07 PM

Steve Smith welcomed all the attendees.

Points Noted by Steve:

- Please sign in
- If you wish to comment, please sign up on comment roster
- Fill out comment cards. We will deliver to designated parties

**Updates and Comstock Neighborhood Council business:**

**Traffic calming and speed radar proposals**

The Traffic calming issues were stated by priority. It was also noted that no status regarding the request has been received.

- 1) 43<sup>rd</sup> ave proposal to reduce speed and perhaps volume of vehicles that cut through 43<sup>rd</sup> to get between Perry and Hatch/High Drive
- 2) The Grand Ave corridor between 29<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Ave especially with the advent of the new bank building construction.
- 3) A cross walk across Bernard Ave at 37<sup>th</sup>

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Radar Proposals by priority: It was also noted that no status regarding the request has been received.

- 1) 37th between High and Bernard east bound
- 2) 29<sup>th</sup> and Manito Blvd east bound: 17 votes
- 3) High Drive west bound: 12 votes

Time, date, location changes for upcoming meetings

- May 24th (NOT May 17th) Sacajawea Middle School Cafeteria (entrance on Lamonte)
- June 21st No meeting - Summer Parkways event.

Call for volunteers and open positions

- Any volunteers of any capacity are welcomed, wanted and needed.

Clean and Green Report by John Schram:

- The main events to occur in October will be the curb side pick-up and the “Clean and Green” event the last Saturday in October in the Sacajawea parking lot.
- A brief statement about how the funds are allocated for all the neighborhoods and how Comstock has been one of the most engaged entities utilizing the city support to help keep our neighborhood clean. Comstock’s effort has utilized \$11,000 in city funds to keep our neighborhood clean. It was also expressed that we have reached the maximum allowed funds and there was concern about going over the city allocated funding.
- John met with members of the city council to express the situation regarding Comstock’s efforts and the funds required. He noted that the President of the Council Ben Stuckart indicated that he will ensure that Comstock is fully funded in their Green and Clean efforts.

**Forum: Bluff Tree Removal**

Moderator, Steve Smith

Leroy Eadie (Parks and Recreation) and Josh DiLuciano, (Avista)

Pat Keegan, (Friends of the Bluff)

Lori Kinnear & Breean Beggs (City Council)

**Leroy Eadie (Parks and Recreation) and Josh DiLuciano, (Avista)**

**Scribe’s Note:**

Leroy Eadie, Parks and Recreation Director and Josh Diluciano, Avista Director of Electrical Engineering spoke.

**Statements Attributed to Leroy Eadie:**

- They are fully committed to restore the damage.
- Working with First Tee and Avista.
- There are no plans to use the road.

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- The road is about a mile in length and it crosses private and public land and the Avista corridor.
- The First Tee par 3 golf course project has been placed on hold.
- Pronouncement was made that no permits were given for the road. The permit given was for tree removal. (only within a narrow specified 6 acre plot directly adjacent to the golf course and never for a road)
- Slide 3 additional comment included that the road was cut from North to South, beginning on private land to the north.
- Discussed the maps from the power point presentation and showed a copy of the permit which were on slides 5 and 6 of the PowerPoint presentation.
- Spokane City's legal team is reviewing the legal aspects.
- There will be a survey of the area to determine where, if any, there are Avista or City easements across private property.

**Statements Attributed to Josh Diluciano:**

- Avista has begun erosion control immediately after becoming aware of the damage.
- Signage has been put up to keep off the road/trail.
- Working with the Friends of the Bluff (FOB) and Spokane Riverkeeper, Lands of Council, Dept. of Ecology, Neighborhood Councils organizations.
- The goal is to restore the damage to its original status.
- Contact information: [bluffrestore@avistacorp.com](mailto:bluffrestore@avistacorp.com).
- Avista has been working on a two year project in the area for upgrading power lines. This likely will occur using helicopters rather than bulldozing new roads.

**Questions Asked as captured by this scribe:**

- What is to happen the First Tree par 3 project?  
Answer: the project has been stopped and all permits rescinded.
- Will there be a public forum for further discussion of the Par 3 project?  
Answer: yes
- What is to happen to this natural area; what is the master plan and vision?  
Answer: Overall vision is to leave the area in a natural state. They also recognize that the plan needs review because of the impact of the recreation needs of the growing population.
- Can the power lines be buried?  
Answer: The cost is significant and it would cause an environmental impact to dig in that area.
- Couldn't the unauthorized road be used to bury the power lines?  
Answer: The road does not match up to the lines.
- COMMENT: Need to have more public forum for such projects.
- What about the current Avista project access?  
Answer: Avista will follow all proper procedures for access to upgrade their power lines including appropriate notification.
- What about the easements to the private property?  
Answer: The city is currently checking all easements; also discussed the possibility to try to purchase the private property. Some of the property does not have easement access and some of the owners have been kind in allowing hikers to cross the property to hike along the bluff.

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- What about the access to the Par 3 in the original plan?  
Answer: There was a conversation about how the original access was to cross through the current golf course. The general problem with what caused the unauthorized road is the contractor thought he was using the Avista easement.
- What about Avista's use of easements?  
Answer: Avista is currently searching for and investigating all possible easements that will have the least impact for their project.
- Why was the tree work permit issued?  
Answer: It is usually the first permit provided so that the project can be assessed considering costs of the removal of trees as one entity of the project.
- There were trees marked for removal where were they?  
Answer: The Arborist was there to advise on tree removal only. No other purpose could be implied by their work.
- Question about the Contractor's involvement?  
Answer: It is the city's understanding that First Tee had a verbal agreement with the contractor.

**Scribe's Note:** The following are excerpts of the text contained within each slide of the Parks and Recreation and Avista PowerPoint Presentation. The entire PowerPoint presentation can be found on the Comstock Neighborhood Council web site at:

<http://comstock.spokaneneighborhoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Bluff-overview-presentation-Comstock-04.19.pdf>

Slide 1:

Title page introducing the joint presentation of Avista and the City of Spokane parks & recreation.

Slide 2: South Hill Bluff Restoration

We are fully committed to restoring this treasured Parks conservation land.

Avista, in collaboration with the City of Spokane and The First Tee of the Inland Northwest, has taken the lead to carry out site restoration.

Neither The First Tee nor Avista will make use of this newly-constructed road for their planned projects.

**NOTE:** This slide contains a photo of the road.

Slide 3: Overview of Incident

April 10 and 11, a contractor built a road and removed trees along the bluff on the south hill, below Bernard and north along the bank of Hangman Creek.

The road crosses:

- Parks conservation land
- An Avista utility easement corridor
- Private property


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Slide 4: Related Project – 3-Hole Youth Golf Course

- The Park Board was slated to consider approval of a contract with a non-profit group, The First Tee of the Inland Northwest, for a 6-acre 3-hole youth golf course.
- In preparation for the youth course, Urban Forestry issued a permit to The First Tee on January 20 for the removal of trees only on a 6-acre site next to the Qualchan driving range.
- The permit included a map of the site. No road is included.
- A tree removal permit is commonly granted prior to a signed project contract, because it's important to know the project has tree removal permissions before finalizing.

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**Slide 5: Permit**

 Date Submitted: January 20, 2017  
Permit Number: 17-006

**Public Tree Permit Application**

A permit is required for removal, pruning and planting of trees on streets rights-of-way and all public property.  
All work must be performed by an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist or  
Certified Tree Worker (SMC 12.02.910).

**PLEASE PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION & ALLOW 2 WORKING DAYS FOR PERMIT PROCESSING & RESPONSE**

Applicant Information	Project Information
Contact Name: <u>Steve Prugh</u>	Project Name/No.: _____
Organization: <u>The First Tee Inland Northwest</u>	<u>The First Tee at Qualchan</u>
Arborist Cert. No.: <u>Swedberg Contracting</u>	Estimated Start Date: <u>Winter 2016-2017</u>
Phone: <u>509.953.9890 or 509.688.9892</u>	Estimated Completion: <u>Summer 2018</u>
Fax: _____	<b>* Date Changes Require Notification</b>
Email: <u>info@thefirstteeinlandnw.org</u>	
Tree Location	Property Owner Information
Address: *see attached map <u>Qualchan Golf Course/Hangman Park</u>	Name: <u>City of Spokane Parks &amp; Recreation</u>
Site Placement: <u>6 acres adjacent to, and NE of, the</u> <u>Qualchan driving range</u>	Address: _____
	Phone: _____
Type of permit(s) requested (check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Planting <input type="checkbox"/> Pruning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Removal <input type="checkbox"/> Root Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Protection Zone	
Number and type of trees: <u>All reasonable and necessary tree removals for the development and construction of</u> <u>proposed 3-hole project. Preservation and protection of large/significant Ponderosa pine is highly encouraged.</u>	
Describe work to be performed: <u>Contractor and developer are required to consult on-site before work begins with</u> <u>City Arborist and/or Urban Forester. Additional consultation meetings are expected throughout the project.</u>	
<b>* Please attach additional information if necessary. Courtesy/Violation (if applicable):</b> Yes _____ No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM USE ONLY BELOW THIS LINE	
Pre-Inspection Date: <u>1/20/2017</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied
Signature: _____	
Recommendations: _____	
Post-Inspection Date: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied
Signature: _____	

**Submit Public Tree Permit Application to the Spokane Urban Forestry Program**  
808 W Spokane Falls Blvd • Spokane, WA 99201 • Phone: 509.363.5495 • Fax: 509.625.6205  
[www.SpokaneUrbanForestry.org](http://www.SpokaneUrbanForestry.org)

**NOTE:** This slide contains a map illustration of the Avista power lines, Qualchan golf course and the proposed area of the par three golf course.

**Slide 6: Site View**

**NOTE:** This slide contains an aerial photo of the road that cut across the bluff.

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Slide 7: South Hill Bluff Restoration

Interim measures to prevent erosion, further damage and trespass.

- Dept. of Ecology, City Parks and Avista have been on site to assess damage and initiate plan.
- Interim erosion control measures will be in place this week.
- Barricades prevent vehicle traffic.
- Site signage being developed.

**NOTE:** This slide contains two photos of the interim erosion control measures taken.

Slide 8: South Hill Bluff Restoration

Workgroup of experts and stakeholders to participate in restoration efforts.

- Friends of the Bluff
- Spokane Riverkeeper
- Lands Council
- Dept. of Ecology
- Neighborhood councils

Slide 9: South Hill Bluff Restoration

- Continued outreach to impacted land owners, stakeholders and the broader community.
- First stakeholder meeting will be held next week. For meeting notification email your interest to: [BluffRestore@avistacorp.com](mailto:BluffRestore@avistacorp.com)
- Reach out to us through email: [BluffRestore@avistacorp.com](mailto:BluffRestore@avistacorp.com)
- All parties are committed to improving processes to ensure this doesn't happen again.

**NOTE:** This slide contains a photo of the road.

Slide 10: Avista's Transmission Project

- Avista plans to complete the transmission upgrade work this fall. This is the final phase of a two-year upgrade project that began in 2016.
- In the next month Avista will announce stake holder meetings allowing public involvement in the planning of the access for this project.

Slide 11: Questions & Comments

Leroy Eadie, Parks and Recreation Director

Josh DiLuciano, Avista Director of Electrical Engineering

**Scribe's Note:** The following are excerpts of the text from each slide contained within the Friends of the Bluff PowerPoint Presentation. The entire PowerPoint presentation can be found on the Comstock Neighborhood Council web site at:

<http://comstock.spokaneneighborhoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Comstock-FOB-041617.pdf>

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Slide 1:

Bluff Destruction and Bluff Restoration

Presentation by Friends of the Bluff April 19, 2017

Slide 2: Outline

- ▶ Who is Friends of the Bluff?
- ▶ Road Damage: Severe and Less Severe
- ▶ Friends of the Bluff's Position
- ▶ How Can You Help?

Slide 3: FOB Background

- ▶ Formed in 2010. Incorporated 2014. 501(c)3 in Jan 2017
- ▶ All volunteer:
  - ▶ Organized hikes with naturalists
  - ▶ Tree thinning for fire suppression
  - ▶ Removed litter, supported "Doo Crew"
  - ▶ Negotiated MOU with City Parks
- ▶ Priorities Today
  - ▶ Remediate the road
  - ▶ Attract volunteers and resources
  - ▶ 44<sup>th</sup> Ave Access

Slide 4: Friends of the Bluff Mission

*To steward the High Drive Bluff and conserve the area in a natural, sustainable state for multiple users who respect the resource, each other, and wildlife.*

*Friends of the Bluff pursues this mission through volunteer efforts, community partnerships, and education.*

Slide 5:

This slide contains an aerial view of the area with an illustration that shows the path of the road.

Slide 6:

This slide shows two photos of the bulldozer and backhoe used to build the road.

Slide 7:

This slide shows a photo of the road illustrating the deep cut.

Slide 8:

This slide shows another view of the depth of the cut into the hillside.

Slide 9:

This slide contains a photo of the road where the cut in the earth is less severe.



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Slide 10:

This slide shows another view of the road where it ended and the damage is less than other parts of the road.

Slide 11: FOB Position

- ▶ Full, complete remediation of the damage
  - ▶ Restoring natural contours and vegetation
- ▶ Revoke tree removal permit
- ▶ No consideration of the proposed golf course until remediation is complete and a public process implemented
- ▶ Begin remediation immediately

Slide 12: How Can You Help?

Volunteer!! Help us with:

- ▶ Media
- ▶ Join Working Group to Track Remediation Efforts and Push for Full Remediation
- ▶ Organizing Volunteer Activities
- ▶ Fundraising

Donate!!

Slide 12: Friends of the Bluff

[www.friendsofthebluff.org](http://www.friendsofthebluff.org)

Pat Keegan

[pkeegan610@gmail.com](mailto:pkeegan610@gmail.com)

**Additional questions asked following the FOB presentation by Pat Keegan as captured by this scribe:**

- What is the estimated cost of the repair and how will it be paid?  
Answer (Leroy): The city is still assessing the cost and is currently in the process of identifying the responsible parties for the damage.  
Answer (Josh): Avista started the restoration process immediately and will assess the costs as the process unfolds and worry about costs later.
- Comment: This neighbor expressed a concern about the approval of the project and the appropriate use for the city conservation property. It felt like the appearance of a kids only country club. Leroy's response: He indicated that First Tee does great work and makes positive contributions.
- What will First Tee's involvement be in the restoration efforts?  
Answer (Leroy): First Tee is a partner in the restoration, but they are a small nonprofit group without the resources to handle this extensive reclamation project.
- What is the impact to the wild life animals?  
Answer (Leroy): Not sure of this answer. They will need to get fish and wildlife involved to assess this impact.

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**Final Comments by LeRoy Eadie:**

- Contact them if there are any further questions and concerns. Contact information: bluffrestore@avistacorp.com. and <https://my.spokanecity.org/urbanforestry/bluff-restoration/>. Please sign up for email notification at both sites.
- Check the Facebook page for current information.
- Check the websites for information.
- There is a plan to create a database of all concerned bluff neighbors concerned about this issue.
- Expressed a concern about the need for better communication between the Parks & Recreation department and the city council. Perhaps the current independent relationships need to be revised.

**Comments by Lori Kinnear:**

- Thanked the Friends of the Bluff for “getting on it” quickly.
- Expressed concern that the golf course project was at the stage of the project without the council really knowing how far along they were.
- Urged the neighbors to stay in touch with them for this or any issue.

Details of Lori Kinnear’s understanding and overview of the bluff situation can be found at the following URL which links to the email sent to Comstock Neighborhood Council on 4/16/2017: <http://comstock.spokaneneighborhoods.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Gmail-South-Hill-Bluff-Unauthorized-Road-Update.pdf>

**Comments by Breean Beggs:**

- Talked about the Washington state laws that support the restoration and full payment of the costs.
- Talked about the process questions: How did it happen? What was the Parks Department processes and communications with the city’s elected officials that allowed this to happen?
- The silver lining is that with proper use of the laws and proper compensation from the responsible parties, the taxpayers will not bear the costs of remediation. Furthermore, it is possible the city can recover additional funds from the responsible parties that can be used to further enhance the bluff and/or to purchase some of the remaining private land in the area."

**Questions asked of Lori Kinnear and Breean Beggs:**

- How alarmed should we have been?  
Answer (Lori): At first you should have been very alarmed and had some outrage.  
Answer (Breean): Alarmed and outrage at first, but now we should be focused on getting the restoration right.
- Comment: it was suggested that if there additional funds procured from the damage the monies to create a parks plan.  
Answer (Lori): At first you should have been very alarmed and had some outrage.

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**Concluding Remarks:**

- Steve Smith thanked everyone for attending the meeting and in particular thanked the people who spoke during the forum and fielded questions and comments from the neighbors.