

# **Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway Advisory Committee (BPGAC)**

**Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – 6:00PM**

**Grand Forks City Hall, 255 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, room A102**

## **AGENDA**

### **I. Bikeway & Pedestrian Items**

- a. N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Construction Project – Christian Danielson GF Engineering

### **II. Greenway Items**

- a. Cross-Country Ski Request – Kim Greendahl Greenway Specialist
- b. Riverbank Stabilization Project Update – Kim Greendahl Greenway Specialist
- c. Upcoming Pet Waste Campaign – Kim Greendahl Greenway Specialist

### **III. Other**

**Next Meeting Date:** Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 6PM at GF City Hall, 255 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street, room A102

**Supporting Documents:**

## RE: Grooming a ski trail on the levees

Walker, Mark <MWalker@grandforksgov.com>

Wed 4/21/2021 12:29 PM

To: Greendahl, Kim <KGreendahl@grandforksgov.com>

Kim:

I am assuming the proposed groomed ski trail would be placed on the levee top and the groomed trail would extend up and down the levee side slope. I also assume that this configuration would be proposed at numerous locations as the levee is not continuous due to the numerous sections of floodwall and numerous Greenway and roadway access opening in the levee. Furthermore, because there are numerous trail connections that pass "up and over" the levee and through the levee to access the Greenway trail system, the proposed ski trial would need to cross some of these trail connections and the Greenway trail itself.

Unless I have misunderstood the intent of the proposed groomed ski trail, Engineering would not support a ski trail as proposed. The main reason is that during the development of the flood protection system in Grand Forks, we met with a number of concerned residents who lived adjacent to or near the proposed levee. Many residents expressed concern that they objected to people who might access the levee tops and be able to look into their back yards and their windows. I recall this concern being expressed frequently by a large number of property owners living adjacent to the levee. At the time, we as staff felt this was a legitimate concern and assured the residents that no activity was being proposed by the City or the Corps that would encourage traffic on the levee tops and that if frequent traffic on the levee tops would occur, the City would take actions to discourage it such as creating local ordinances that prohibit traffic on levee tops. If we were to allow a ski trail to be placed on the levee tops adjacent to residents, we would be going against our word and I believe that we would receive numerous complaints from adjacent residents.

The other issue that is concerning to me is the potential damage that a groomer could cause especially as it traveled up and down the side slopes. As you well know, the Corps periodically inspects our flood protection system identifying unacceptable defects that affect the overall rating of our flood protection system. FEMA uses the Corps' overall rating to certify that we are protected from the 100 year flood threat which keeps the City out of the 100 year flood plain. As you know, the Corps has given us poor ratings for areas of turf that are damaged, rutted, eroding, cracking, etc. and we work hard to minimize the areas of turf damage as an unacceptable overall rating of our flood protection system would place the majority of the City into the 100 year flood plain. Also, we have periodically seen shrinkage cracking in the levee at the sledding hill and suspect the cracking is caused by hard snow pack and heavy foot traffic on the levee. I suspect a groomed trail may cause similar cracking. Cracking of the soil is of a concern during times of high water as the cracks can create a way for water to penetrate the earthen levee. Cracking of the soil on the river side of the levee and at the top is especially concerning.

If the groomed ski trail is to cross the Greenway trail or the access trails, this would be of concern as well. Since snow is removed from the Greenway trails in the winter, they would need to be kept free of snow at the ski trail crossing locations to preserve the Greenway trails for the Corps' intended purpose.

For these reasons, Engineering would not support using the levee tops and side slopes for a groomed ski trail. Although I have not asked the Corps for their position on this question, I suspect that they would likely object to it as well. Often the Corps will not provide an opinion without first reviewing a detailed plan of what exactly is being proposed and exactly where it is being proposed. Ultimately this may require a fair amount of work only to be not approved in the end. Also, the Corps would likely not approve of it if there is public objection and would not approve without Engineering Department support which we could not provide for reasons identified above.

*Mark S Walker*

Assistant City Engineer

City of Grand Forks

701-746-2648 (office)

701-740-6757 (cell)

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**From:** Greendahl, Kim <KGreendahl@grandforksgov.com>

**Sent:** Monday, April 12, 2021 2:49 PM

**To:** Walker, Mark <MWalker@grandforksgov.com>

**Subject:** Grooming a ski trail on the levees

Mark,

I received an inquiry from a local ski group asking about the possibility of using the levee for grooming a cross-country ski trail. I know there is a local ordinance prohibiting motor vehicles on the levee, but I am not aware of anything else in ordinance that would prohibit the activity. The grooming equipment wouldn't be on the levee any more frequently than a mower and sledding is allowed so we haven't blocked all activity on the levee. Designing a course using the levee would present the challenge of not interfering with adjacent activities and property owners, but that could be considered after determining if the levee could be used for the trail.

My first question is does the Corps prohibit this type of activity on the levee?

Kim Greendahl - Greenway Specialist - City of Grand Forks - P.O. Box 5200 - Grand Forks, ND 58206--5200 - Phone: (701) 738-8746 - e-mail:

[kgreendahl@grandforksgov.com](mailto:kgreendahl@grandforksgov.com)