

Rotary Point History as of 7-20-2011

Rotary Point is a part of the West Bay Park which is owned by the City of Olympia. As its name implies, it is located on the west side of Olympia and is on the waterfront directly across from the Port of Olympia cranes. Rotary Point is comprised of about 1 acre on the eastern point of the property and is surrounded by water on three sides. The currently developed portion of West Bay Park is about 5 acres. There are still 12 acres remaining to be developed but that development is not likely to occur for many years. This is a brief history of how Rotary Point came to be.

It began in July of 2003 when the Pat Rants, incoming president of the Olympia Rotary, decided that he would like to find a significant "hands on" project for his club.

To accomplish this, he asked Olympia Rotarian Steve Bean to head up a committee to research the needs of the community and feel out the club for its enthusiasm for taking on one of those needs.

Steve and his committee (including Denny Peterson, Chuck Fowler and Nick Handy) met and discussed various kinds of projects.

They determined that a waterfront park project would be ideal for the community and would be a project that many Rotarians could and would support. They proceeded to explore various sites.

The current site was one of the many that were considered and rapidly became the preferred location.

At that time the location was owned by the Port of Olympia but was later sold to the City of Olympia as the site for a future city park. Rotary continued planning and after some preliminary discussions with the City, determined that the City was amenable to overtures from Rotary to build a park on the site.

Negotiations were held with the City and an agreement was reached to allow Rotary to develop about one acre on the point that juts into Budd Inlet as a park.

The agreement calls for Rotary to develop the one acre site into a park. Rotary would be allowed to name it Rotary Point. The naming of the overall park was up to the city and they ultimately decided on naming it West Bay Park.

The city would develop the infrastructure (access and parking) for the site and maintain Rotary Point on an ongoing basis but Rotary would have the right to do maintenance as well.

This process took several years and the Olympia Rotary club was assisted by several other Rotary clubs. Showing particular interest were the two clubs that meet on the west side

waterfront of Olympia – West Olympia Rotary and South Puget Sound Rotary. However Rotarians from all over the county pitched in and provided support as needed to get the political hurdles crossed.

Approximately mid-2006, a multi-club committee was formed. It was initially called the Rotary Point Park Committee and was eventually called the Rotary Point Project Committee.

The overall Chairman of the project was Bob Wubbena a fairly new member of the Olympia club at that time.

After plans for the design of the park were under way, a fund raising committee was established. It was chaired by Stan Arnold of the Olympia club. In 2007, as the fund raising workload expanded, Bob Lovely became a co-chair the fund raising committee. The name the committee adopted for the fund raising effort is Rotary Point Paver Project since the primary vehicle for raising funds was via recognizing donors with engraved bricks and larger pavers. We also “sold” wall seats, benches and picnic tables.

By mid-2007, we had an estimate of what the cash outlay would be and we established a fund raising goal of \$175,000. The Olympia Rotary club provided seed money to allow us to get the printed marketing materials and to get the web site set up (www.RotaryPoint.org).

Meanwhile, near monthly meetings of the overall project committee were being held, planning, permitting and negotiations with the City were taking place. The timeline stretched resulting in a much later start time that originally anticipated (by nearly two years). We originally thought construction would start in 2007, then 2008 and were relieved and excited when it actually started in 2009. The project was completed and opened in mid-summer 2010.

Total cost of the Rotary Point portion of the project exceeded \$400,000 including both cash expenditures and in-kind donations. The City of Olympia invested more than \$2,000,000 in building out the infrastructure and doing the environmental cleanup. This was truly a successful joint public/private partnership and the City of Olympia and it’s Park Department are to be commended.

Around one half of the support for the project came from in-kind donations made by Rotarian owned businesses and many other community minded businesses. In particular, those to be commended are: Berschauer-Phillips (Jace Munson-Olympia Rotary) who provided us on site professional staff for much of the project. Other significant in-kind donors were: Glander and Associated (Jeff Glander-West Olympia Rotary), HDR/EES Engineering (Bob Wubbena-Olympia Rotary), Kaufman Brothers (Marv Kaufman-Lacey and Mike Swarthout-South Puget Sound Rotary), Miles Sand and Gravel, Controlled Rain, Gale Construction, Reflections Custom Etching and many others.

Through April 2011, we had raised in excess of \$187,000. Our original goal was \$175,000. That’s the good news, the rest of the story is that we still owed \$25,000. We had a plan to have

this paid off by the end of the Rotary year – that's June 30, 2011. The plan was to ask the three Rotary Clubs with the most involvement to raise or loan the Project the balance required to pay off all the bills. That translated to the following: Olympia (\$14,000), West Olympia(\$6000) and South Puget Sound (\$5000). By June 30, 2011, the commitments had been made. Olympia and West Olympia made loans to the project while the South Puget Sound Club made an outright donation to the project. The loans will be repaid as the project receives additional donations. The outstanding project bills were paid by mid-July 2011.

We took the project development committee to end of life on June 30, 2011. In its place was a new ongoing committee to be called Rotary Point Operations Committee. The Rotary Point Operations Committee will see to ongoing fund raising and maintenance for Rotary Point via the City's Adopt a Park program.

The Rotary Point Operations Committee invited each of the 8 Rotary clubs in Thurston County to have one or more of their members serve on this committee. The boards of Olympia, West Olympia and South Puget Sound Rotary clubs have already committed to providing one or more members each to this committee and to rotate the chairmanship on an annual basis (The chairmanship of the committee can also be held by another club if they would like.) The plan is for the new committee to operate in perpetuity.

The initial committee is comprised of Marisa Wulff, Jenney Keesey and , Whitney Golob from Olympia Rotary, Bill Clem and Rick Longnecker from South Puget Sound Rotary and Gordon Kirkemo of West Olympia Rotary. Marisa Wulff was selected as the initial chair of this committee.

Prepared 7-25-2011 by Bob Lovely (South Puget Sound Rotary)