

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 13, 2017

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Patrick Merriam, Manager, Park Resources

Subject: Change in Park Hours for Baker Park

Requested Board Action

Parks completed a nine-month pilot project in Baker Park on Crown Hill, that changed the operating hours from 4:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. This was done to respond to concerns regarding illegal behaviors occurring in the park.

Based on Seattle Municipal Code Section 18.12.245, the Superintendent, in conjunction with the Board of Park Commissioners, holds a public hearing and the Board makes a recommendation on whether to make the change in hours permanent. This decision is based on staff evaluation and public testimony. The Board's vote can occur the same day as the presentation of the evaluation or at a later date should the Commissioners require additional information to make a decision.

Staff Recommendation

Baker Park on Crown Hill meets the established criteria to permanently change the operating hours. Staff recommend approval of changing the operating hours to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. in order to continue the progress made during this pilot. This adjustment in hours, over the 9-month pilot period, reduced the illegal behaviors and reduced the number of complaints and negative impacts on the Crown Hill neighborhood.

Park Description and location

Baker Park, located at 8347 14th Ave NW, Seattle, WA, 98117 is categorized as a Neighborhood Park. Baker Park has a small "natural play" area - no play equipment, only wood chips and two large rocks - with a pedestrian path that meanders through it, and a Totem Pole made from a monkey puzzle tree. In 2013, Parks and Recreation bought the property southeast of the park, expanding it by .23 acres, and demolished the house that had been on the property. Planning is underway for the "Baker Park Addition."

Issues

At this site, there have been continuous complaints about illegal behavior occurring at the park. Drinking and vandalism occur in the evening hours and people congregate at all hours. Neighbors and Parks staff cite four specific reasons for requesting the change in hours:

- 1) Maintenance workers are burdened with cleaning beer cans, broken glass, and laden trash. The park benches were often found damaged.
- 2) Tagging is pervasive especially late at night and after the park has closed. At sites with similar issues, changing the closing time to 10:00 p.m. enabled SPD to do a sweep through the park and enforce the closure time.
- 3) Neighbors frequently call 911 because of the late night activities which often include loud and boisterous behavior, in addition to illegal activity.
- 4) Community members do not feel safe confronting those who loiter in the park after hours and the earlier closure time enables the police to enforce the rules.

Additional Information

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Attachments

Maps