

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2014

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Bob Edmiston
Jourdan Keith, Vice-chair
Diana Kincaid, Chair
Brice Maryman
Yazmin Mehdi
Tom Tierney

Excused:

Antoinette Angulo
Mazohra Thami
Barbara Wright

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Eric Friedli, Deputy Superintendent
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator
Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Kincaid calls the meeting to order at 6:31pm. Commissioner Kincaid asks for approval of the Agenda, the November minutes and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence; Commissioner Edmiston moves to approve the consent items and Commissioner Maryman seconds. The consent items are approved.

To hear and view the full meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591331>

Superintendent's Report

Deputy Superintendent Friedli highlights the exemplary service of two Parks employees who played life-saving roles in recent days:

- A patron at Amy Yee Tennis Center had a heart attack and Jeannie Shek and Jody Bartee did a great job remaining calm under pressure while using the handheld AED device and performing CPR.
- A female had a heart attack in the parking lot at Greenlake Community Center and Parks staff went to her aid, and employed life-saving techniques.

Proud to have staff that are well-trained and willing to jump into situations like these.

Parks held an expanded Executive Team retreat at Belltown Community Center, which included all managers, supervisors and directors. The Mayor came for a question and answer session, the City Budget Office came and had a good meet and greet discussion with them. Councilmember Godden and her staff also came to get acquainted with staff and vice versa.

Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) sent Parks a letter asking to relocate the PI Globe to Myrtle Edwards Park. The owner of the building where it is currently located no longer wants it on the roof. The Globe weighs 19 tons and is 48 feet high; the neon tubes are rusting and need to be replaced. Furthermore, the globe would need a 20-foot plinth to suspend it off the ground. As discussed at the July meeting there are shoreline and utility issues with putting it in Myrtle Edwards. There also remains the question of whether the PI Globe is art or commercial advertisement. Commissioner Tierney asks if there has been further conversations with Parks regarding the placement of the Globe and Deputy Superintendent Friedli says the letter from MOHAI is a formal request. There are questions of land use; there is one location that could work if they moved another art piece. Placing the globe in Myrtle Edwards Park would have significant impacts on the use and character of the park.

Rainier Beach Community Center – Issues have arisen partly due to the success of the community center and partly due to the community in which it sits; there are citizens spending time in front of the community center that others find less than welcoming. There are safety concerns in the surrounding neighborhood that have spilled into the community center grounds. Parks has formed a safety team partnership with the Seattle Police Department (SPD), Department of Neighborhoods and Seattle Schools. Parks has hired an off-duty officer to be at the center during after-school hours.

Parks staff will also be meeting with youth to figure out a better way to use the community center.

Bobby Morris Playfields – The drug users and transient population who loiter on the ballfields intimidate the parents and kids who sign up to use those fields for baseball and soccer. Parks will hire a ball field attendant to be present during game times and will coordinate more SPD patrols. Commissioner Mehdi says that she has been there for her kids' games and the adult soccer players were hassling the kids soccer game but enough parents were there to make them move.

East Duwamish Greenbelts Encampments – The city developed a protocol several years ago to deal with encampments. The protocol requires a combined encampment clean-up effort between Parks, Human Services Department and SPD, with Human Services staff providing assistance connecting the homeless with resources. The encampment has increased to 20, which poses some challenges with Human Services Department because they are not comfortable going in. The Conservation Corp and Dept. of Corrections crews will go in with heavy equipment and remove personal items, fill in latrines, clean the area and remove lower growing shrubs.

Legacy Plan – The Parks Legacy Citizen's Advisory Committee (PLCAC) resumes meeting next Thursday. The January public meetings were very successful with 200-250 attendees. The meetings at the International District and High Point had great turnout and the meeting at Bitter Lake CC was packed. The facilitators did a great job. The deadline to submit public comment to the PLCAC is February 20. The PLCAC will finish their final recommendation on March 6. Mayor makes his own recommendations on March 17.

Personnel – Kevin Stoops retired and Parks staff are throwing him a retirement party on February 19 at the Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing Center. Kevin worked for Parks for 37 years!

Washington Recreation & Park Association is holding their annual conference in Seattle at Magnuson Park this year from April 8 to April 11. Seattle Park Commissioners are welcome to attend.

Mayor recognizes the importance of neighborhoods in Seattle working together; he is having a Seattle Neighborhood Summit at Seattle Center on April 5. There is a survey on his website in which he is asking people to participate.

Parks is excited about the new year and the relationships with Councilmember Godden, the new chair of the City Council's Parks Committee, and the new Mayor.

Now that there is a quorum, Commissioner Maryman moves to approve the February 13 Agenda, the January minutes, and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, Commissioner Mehdi seconds and everyone says aye.

Oral Requests from the Audience

Linda Mitchell – Downtown Residents Council, completed a survey of 100 downtown residents regarding current uses and suggestions to make it better. The public overwhelmingly asked for a smoking ban in downtown parks, more family-friendly play equipment and programming. Dan Biederman's presentation at the DSA breakfast made great suggestions for improving public spaces. His speech can be found here: <http://www.downtownseattle.com/sod/>

Denise Derr – there are going to be changes to the area adjoining the Queen Anne Bowl. This area is a lovely open space but it is being developed into an 124-unit memory care senior housing. The character of the bowl will change and there will be increased parking frustrations; moreover, the service area for the development, which consumes the SW corner, will be very close to where kids are playing. She implores Parks staff to attend the design meeting and/or put comments into the Department of Planning and Development regarding this issue. The design meeting is on Wednesday, March 19 at the Queen Anne Community Center.

Sharon LeVine – Member of Queen Anne Community Council – The Parks department was asked by the Queen Anne Community Council to swap land with Aegis in order to acquire parking and with the idea that Parks would buy 2 houses and use that land as a park. However, due to this land swap, Aegis has increased the number of units to 120 and permitting allows them to build within 5 feet of the Queen Anne bowl property line. Much to her dismay, Parks was only able to negotiate 8 parking spaces out of 30 spots. Aegis now has substantial parkland that could have been better used by the community and the community got 8 parking spots. She requests Parks participate in the design process to create the best design possible. The design process is open until next week.

Legacy Plan

Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor for Seattle Parks and Recreation, presents on the Legacy Plan and the work of the Parks Legacy Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee (PLCAC). For more information about the Investment Initiatives and the updates to the Legacy Plan, please follow this link: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/legacy/committee.htm>

Oversight for new ballot measure

At the January Park Board meeting, the Commissioners discussed several options for oversight of a potential ballot measure. Parks staff explained how they are moving forward with the Legacy Plan document.

Several options for oversight were discussed at January meeting; at this point Parks staff recommend a hybrid oversight committee; this would entail 4 members of the Park Board and 7 members of the public and chosen by the City Council and representative of each district. The members of the Park Board would rotate. The discussions surrounding oversight for this levy are very different from past levies because this encompasses all aspects of Parks work: maintenance, programs, operations and acquisitions. This makes the Board a critical component for oversight.

Parks staff are refining the scope of work the Oversight Committee. It would certainly include making allocations for the opportunity fund (now called the major project challenge fund). The committee would participate in the annual report process, which would entail: implementation concerns, consulting with the Superintendent during the preparation of Parks budget and performing a thorough review of Parks priorities every six years. Seattle residents feel reviewing the priorities every six years is an important part of the plan.

The Commissioners have mixed feelings about the hybrid oversight committee. They express concerns that if each councilmember appointed someone from his or her own district it would create balkanization; the Mayor and City Council already appointed the Park Board commissioners. Commissioner Edmiston feels the hybrid model is great because it allows for more people to have eyes on the project and keep parks open. Commissioner Keith comments that other levy oversight committees had members from different geographic zones of the city. She adds that it will be difficult to combat the years of racism that was implicit in the way this city was designed; most predominately African-American neighborhoods do not have the space for parks anymore. The Commissioners should have the option to opt out because participating in the oversight would require a lot of time.

Commissioner Mehdi feels the Park Board should review the budget and funding by source; the Oversight Committee would use their reviews as a stepping off piece for an audit and the Opportunity Fund. She feels the Park Board is in a better position to assess whether levy dollars are being spent the right way if they are looking at the whole budget. Commissioner Tierney agrees with Commissioner Mehdi and adds that someone has to have overall accountability over the heart of what Parks does and the hybrid model puts accountability into different pots.

Legacy Plan

Susan gives the Park Board the deadline of January 30 for edits and additions to the Plan. The final plan will include:

- An expanded section on recreational trends that addresses trends in land management
- How the plan fits into the Comprehensive plan
- More information on the Olmsted Legacy

The Legacy Plan is a good snapshot of where we are but also helps us look toward meeting future needs. Parks staff would like to have the Park Board make a recommendation on the Legacy Plan. Commissioner Mehdi emphasizes that the document help Parks make decisions in times of scarcity.

Commissioner Kincaid thanks Parks staff for all their hard work.

Old/New Business

2014 Workplan: Commissioner Maryman created a timeline for Park Board planning, which includes budget planning, policy issues, board business, tours and events.

Access to Parks: The Commissioners would like to be more actively engaged with other city departments to create access to parks by public transit, bicycle and walkways. They discuss the Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and the city-wide Comprehensive Plan and try to figure out how connecting to parks fits in those plans. The Commissioners feel that greater inter-agency cooperation could lead to mutually beneficial relationships. Deputy Superintendent Friedli states that Parks is at staff capacity right now but next steps would be analysis and meeting with other department staff to figure out what areas are under or over served.

PLCAC public meetings: The public meetings were well-attended and the facilitator's notes are posted on the web here: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/legacy/committee.htm>

The public was willing to give the higher level of funds the PLCAC recommended and there was more support for the 6 or 12 year levy versus the Metropolitan Park District. The priorities were well received. Lifelong Recreation was well supported. Good outreach to diverse communities and had good turnout.

The last 3 meetings will take place the next 3 Thursdays at Miller Community Center. Ben Noble will talk about the trade-offs with the different funding mechanisms on February 27th. March 6th the PLCAC will approve their final report.

Central Waterfront – Design is reaching 30%. The sub-committees have been dissolved. The Mayor formed the Office of the Waterfront, which will bring in construction experts. Waterfront Week is March 5-9 at Fisher Pavilion. Park Board would like to be more engaged with the waterfront work; a retreat is suggested.

Commissioner Keith would like the Park Board to address homelessness. The One Night Count happened and there has been a 14% increase in homeless in King County. The February issue of Parks and Recreation has a great article elucidating strategies used by various Parks and Recreation departments to address homelessness. Deputy Superintendent Friedli suggests having the Committee to End Homelessness present their work to the Park Board.

Commissioner Mehdi moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Keith seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 9:01 pm.

APPROVED: 
Diana Kincaid, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE March 27, 2014

