

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
November 14, 2002**

Present:

Bruce Bentley
James Fearn, Jr.
Susan Golub
O. Yale Lewis, Jr.
Sarah Neilson
Kate Pflaumer
Kathleen Warren

Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda consent items, corrected minutes of the October 24 meeting, and the acknowledgment of correspondence be approved. The vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Ken Bounds reported on the following:

Homer Harris Park: A large crowd turned out for the Seattle Park Foundation's announcement of an anonymous \$1.2 million donation to build a park in honor of Dr. Homer Harris in the Central Area. The T.T. Minor choir performed and Dr. Harris was in attendance. Park Foundation Executive Director Karen Daubert did a great job organizing this event.

International District Community Center Name: The Parks Naming Committee recommended to Ken that the official name of the new center be "International District/Chinatown Community Center." Ken has accepted this recommendation and indicated this to the Library Board, which will soon name the area's new library.

Associated Recreation Council Award: This week the Council announced that grants totaling \$83,000 have been awarded to 11 community centers. This is the first round of funding under this innovative program that will supplement the programming capacity in everything from computer labs to Junior Naturalist training to cultural programs at the Japanese Garden to expanding summer day camps and playgrounds.

Staff Training: Community Center Coordinators recently attended a training to further develop their working relationship with the Associated Recreation Council.

Beach Naturalist Program Funding: The King County Conversation District has reviewed the Seattle Aquarium's success in the 2002 Beach Naturalist program and has agreed to provide another \$15,000 grant for the 2003 program.

Sad News: We were saddened by the recent deaths of three members of the Parks and Recreation family. Roger Peter, a 38-year employee, who was most recently the Montlake Community Center coordinator, passed away after a long illness. A youth scholarship fund has been created in his name. Also passing away were longtime Parks volunteer and advisory council member Fabiola Woods (Rainier Beach and Van Asselt community centers), and martial arts teacher and youth mentor Guy Kurose (Rainier Community Center.)

Fall YES Program: A special fall session of the Youth Engaged in Service (YES) after-school program has been added to our schedule. This pilot program, which provides teens with job-readiness skills and community service experience, is funded through budget savings from the summer YES program. Twenty YES teens are assisting Pro Parks Teen Development Leaders with teen activities and are supporting the community center office staff. The fall session will run 10 weeks, ending on December 20.

Japanese Garden: Seattle has been selected to host the annual International Symposium of Japanese Gardens in 2004. Parks and Recreation staff assisted nonprofit organizations and the steering committee in its application process. The event will bring further recognition to one of the world's outstanding Japanese gardens.

Loyal Heights Vandalized: The new Loyal Heights playground was extensively vandalized between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m. on Friday, November 8. Media quickly swarmed the site to cover the disturbing scene. Approximately 65-75% of the trees, shrubs, and groundcovers had been ripped out of the planting beds and thrown on the asphalt path and over the temporary fence protecting the field area. The community and Parks staff pulled together to reinstall trees and shrubs.

2003-2004 Budget: This week City Council is scheduled to adopt the 2003-2004 budget. On Tuesday, November 12, Ken was asked to cut an additional \$320,000 from Parks' budget because the newest forecast is that next year's charter revenues will be less than what is in the budget. Today the Council passed its budget-balancing action, which cut an additional three-quarter million dollars from the budget that was submitted to the Mayor. A good portion of this cut is non-specific and the Department is trying to figure out what that means exactly. These cuts will have to come from maintenance and programming. The Council will take a final vote on Monday, November 18. Board members were encouraged to contact City Council members before the vote.

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:

Bruce explained that the general public comment portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had or are not scheduled for a public hearing. One person signed up to give testimony.

Rev. Bobby Roe Helm: representing homeless youth and young adults at Bobby Morris Park; some youth stay at the park with their dogs; there aren't that many places where you can stay overnight with a dog; he also asked that police officers give pamphlets listing what can and can't be done, rather than just telling young people what they can't do in a park.

Cheasty Boulevard Improvement Plan Briefing and Public Hearing:

David Goldberg, Parks' project manager, came before the Board in July to give a briefing on the concept plan for the Cheasty Boulevard Improvement Plan. At tonight's meeting, he gave a briefing on the design plan. Prior to the meeting, Board members had also received a written briefing, which is included in these minutes. David distributed copies of the Draft Cheasty Boulevard Improvement Plan, which includes the vision statement, project goals and objectives, design concept and program elements, and phasing plan. He also posted several large drawings, which he used to point out various areas of work proposed in the plan.

WRITTEN BRIEFING

PROJECT SCOPE

This project includes planning, design, and construction phases. It is funded through \$1.0 million in Pro Parks funds and a small grant from the Department of Neighborhoods. Parks has worked with a Project Advisory Team (PAT) and consultant (J. A. Brennan Assoc.) over the past year to develop a Cheasty Boulevard Improvement Plan. The Plan provides the first guide for improving this portion of Seattle's Olmsted boulevards. It recommends a range of improvements including a walking path, drainage enhancements, amenities, traffic calming measures, and landscape enhancements. Design of Phase 1 improvements that can be funded with the Pro Parks budget will begin this winter. Parks and Recreation has begun the restoration of Cheasty Boulevard in accordance with The Policy on Non-Parks Uses of City Park Lands that requires that park land be available for public use and enjoyment. The plan guides restoration by identifying the appropriate character to which park land should be restored.

PARKS BOARD ACTION

Planning and Development is requesting review, comment, and recommendation for adoption of the Cheasty Boulevard Improvement Plan by the Board of Park Commissioners. This briefing provides a description of the overall plan and of the improvements to be made within the available Pro Parks funding. The briefing also discusses community issues concerning some elements of the Draft Plan for improvements to Cheasty Boulevard. Planning and Development is seeking Park Board review of staff recommendations on these issues.

VISION AND CONCEPT PLAN

Public Involvement

PAT: Parks recruited community representatives to establish a Project Advisory Team (PAT).

- Kathy Colombo, Resident
- Jeff Detweiler, Resident
- Marion Fukuma, Resident
- Cameron Justam, Resident
- Anne Knight, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks
- Barbara Marino, No. Rainier Community Council
- Frederica Merrell, Jefferson Park Alliance
- Emmanuel Okoye, UWMC Laundry
- Kevin Lee, No. Beacon Hill Community Council
- Reginald Frye, Property Owner
- Cheryl Fraser, SE Parks and Recreation Manager

Consultants: Jim Brennan, Principal and Tanja Wilcox, Project Manager

Public Workshops: Parks and the PAT hosted three community-wide public workshops.

Community Councils: The Project Planner met with North Rainier, North Beacon Hill, and the Friends of Cheasty Boulevard community organizations to review plan recommendation and to collect comments.

There will be further community input into the specific design of improvements.

Vision (Summary)

The plan provides a vision that Cheasty Boulevard should be a quiet, calm, and scenic historic parkway within an informal natural landscape and residential neighborhood. It should be identifiable as a public space and element of the Olmsted Boulevard system. Infrastructure within the corridor should be unobtrusive but functional.

Concept Plan

The concept plan defines a "complete" or long-term design for the Boulevard that is appropriate for a Park facility which never had a guiding design. Since Pro Parks does not provide enough money to implement all elements, the Plan includes Phase 1 list of improvements.

1. **Pedestrian Circulation** - There is currently an informal path along portions of the boulevard, but it is not a safe walkway. Both the North Beacon Hill and North Rainier neighborhood plans recommended construction of a soft-surface walkway along the boulevard. The North Beacon Hill plan recommendation to build a trail around Jefferson Golf Course is currently being implemented and would connect with the Cheasty walkway.

Proposal: Construct a soft-surface walkway alternating on either side of the Boulevard.

- Create a trail along the Boulevard, alternating sides. Municipal Golf has agreed to move portions of the fence along the south edge of Jefferson Golf Course to better accommodate the trail.
- Install retaining walls and drainage as required.
- Extend Hanford Stairway across Cheasty to 27th Ave.

Issues: Most of the general community supports this proposal; however there are many residents on Cheasty Boulevard who feel that the path should not be built unless we can demonstrate that all drainage problems are addressed first.

PAT members also expressed opposition to staff proposal that trails through the Boulevard and Green space to adjacent neighborhoods be considered in the future when security issues are addressed. Pro View supports this staff recommendation.

2. **Drainage** - There are numerous drainage problems and several unstable slopes in the Cheasty Green Space and Boulevard area. Drainage is currently handled by a system of drainage ditches. Some channel water across the boulevard into the green space, and others connect to SPU facilities.

Proposal: The project planner and consultant are recommending corrective measures for only those situations that create problems for the Boulevard and associated improvements, or for the adjacent residences.

- Repair existing catch basins.
- Enhance drainage swales and create landscaped detention ponds.
- Create a wetland pond for storm water and seep storage.

Issues: Many residents on Cheasty Boulevard strongly believe that the proposed drainage improvements are insufficient. They are concerned that the amount budgeted will not be sufficient. Staff and consultant support the cost estimates and focus of drainage improvements. Further design and cost estimating will be conducted in the next phase.

3. **Landscape Character** - There is a mix of landscapes that range from wild areas to residential ones, with shrubs and ornamental plantings that are not in keeping with Boulevard Policies. There are also considerable areas where invasive plants impact the health of the Boulevard's green space.

Proposal: The plan proposes a series of landscape character designations within an overall natural theme that responds to the existing context. These will guide improvements and restoration in areas where the landscape has been disturbed by invasive plants or private development.

- Add informal landscaping to fill in gaps primarily on the west side of the Boulevard, with a large variety of primarily native trees and shrubs, using a mixture of flowering, evergreen, and deciduous trees.

- Transition landscaping is made adjacent to residences moving from ornamental plantings to more native plantings.
- Use a row of street trees, comprised of a variety of species and add native shrubs where possible (generally on the east-side of the road).
- Provide seed money for an invasive plant removal project along the Boulevard.

Issues: The plan doesn't contemplate wholesale re-landscaping of areas that have been landscaped and cared for by adjacent residents. While many of the areas don't conform to Boulevard Policies, the Policies provide varying requirements for permitting and/or removing non-park uses. Consequently restoration is likely to occur piecemeal over time. The landscape character designations described above will guide those efforts as they occur.

4. **Traffic Calming** - Cheasty Boulevard is an attractive route for through traffic, with several straight sections where residents have observed excessive speeds. The proposed walkway will cross the boulevard at two locations.

Proposal: The plan proposes to install unobtrusive but effective traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures.

- Add street trees which help slow speed of drivers
- Install as needed textured and/or raised crossings and curb bulbs to facilitate safe pedestrian crossing and to slow traffic along straight-aways. The design will be subtle and effective.
- Add stop sign on S. Della St where it intersects with Cheasty.

Issues: SDOT is currently considering issues related to roles for street design and liability on Boulevards. We expect that they will develop an issue paper in the coming months. We are currently reviewing improvements with SDOT. They have some concerns about the impacts of traffic calming measures to bike riders (Cheasty is a designated bike route), and possibly the proximity of drainage improvements to the road edge. Additionally, the stop signs on S. Della St. may not meet their criteria. *Many* of the residents want traffic calming measures but *some* don't want anything that is obtrusive.

5. **Hardscape Elements** - Cheasty Boulevard is currently not identifiable as a park and component of the Seattle Olmsted Boulevard system. The existing character is very natural and informal and the community would like this look to be retained.

Proposal: Install physical elements that identify and unify the Boulevard without imposing an overly formal design.

- Accent both ends of Cheasty with stone gateway markers.
- Install rustic/plain bollards along certain areas on the east-side of the roadway.
- Maintain current spacing and light intensity. Use a standard SCL steel pole with a "cobra" or "shoebox" fixture.

- Consider a limited number of interpretive signs
6. **On-Street Parking** - There is currently informal and illegal parking along the Boulevard. On-street parking is used by residents but is also used in some areas by people stopping and engaging in illegal activities.

Proposal: Generally prohibit parking to deter illegal activities, to protect landscape improvements and to remove encroachments. Parking is available on cross streets and Beacon Ave.

7. **Maintenance**

Proposal: The Southeast Parks and Recreation Manager and Crew Chief have prepared an estimate of Maintenance and Operations cost for the entire plan. This will be modified to reflect only constructed improvements. It will be more than Pro Parks provides.

- The consultant is recommending a grass-line swale that has more gradual sides than current ditches. These will require additional mowing and leaf collection, but should require less maintenance overall.
- Bollards and street trees will be added to discourage dumping.
- The plan recommends devoting a portion of the funds to initiate a landscape restoration/ivy removal project, which would require a Parks/community partnership.
- The plan will also identify opportunities for partnerships including Earth Corp. and Friends of Cheasty Boulevard.
- Some ongoing maintenance funding has been identified with in the Pro Parks Levy. Develop budget requests for additional funding to meet maintenance needs.

Issues: The community has high expectations for Parks' maintenance. This will be especially problematic in Boulevard areas that residents have maintained as their front yards. The area is also natural and characterized by dense vegetation, steep slopes, and wet areas that are difficult to maintain using traditional techniques.

8. **Restoration of Non-Park Uses** - Parks and Recreation has begun the restoration of Cheasty Boulevard in accordance with The Policy on Non-Parks Uses of City Park Lands (City Council Resolution #29475, Oct. 1996). This resolution directs that City-owned park land be available for public use and enjoyment.

Proposal:

- The Boulevard plan identifies improvements and the desired character of the various sections of Cheasty. This will guide restoration.
- Property markers will be installed at key locations to clearly mark Park's property.
- No restoration actions will be taken by Parks or required of park neighbors until the planning process is complete.

Issues: This is a key issue that affects a number of people. An ongoing effort will be needed to resolve encroachments.

9. **S. Winthrop St./McClellan Light Rail Station** - Sound transit is required to improve the South Winthrop St. portion of Cheasty Boulevard.

Proposals: The design for this portion of the Boulevard will reflect the design of Mt. Baker Blvd in order to be compatible with the area's urban character and to provide a connection to that segment of the Olmsted system.

COST OF IMPROVEMENTS

The total cost to construct all of the recommended improvements is approximately \$2.57 million. Pro Parks Levy provides \$1 million in funding and the Neighborhood Matching Fund is providing a small amount for the pathway. The Pro Parks construction budget including contingencies is approximately \$700,000. We have worked with the PAT to prioritize improvements within this budget. Their proposal is attached. While close to the budget, the list of improvements may need further trimming if costs increase during detailed design.

Phase 1 Improvements - **The recommended Phase 1 improvements place an emphasis on completing the pathway, improving drainage and adding a moderate degree of landscaping.**

- Retaining wall construction limited to locations where a 3 ft. to 5 ft. wall is necessary (lower walls would be replaced with a relatively steep, 2:1, slope)
- Parks typical ditch design utilized throughout.
- Springhead drains and interceptor drains installed to intercept subsurface seep water and keep it off paths and roadways.
- Street as identified
- Moderate vegetation enhancement including moderate planting around the wetland ponds, hydroseeding and some vegetation along drainage ditches.
- Four to five foot wide pedestrian path
- Bollards limited to select steep slope areas on the east side of the roadway, at pedestrian crossings, and used as property boundary markers.
- Gateway marker at Winthrop Street (to signify the park/boulevard entry)
- Pedestrian safety achieved through the separation of pedestrians from the roadway, installation of stop signs on S. Della St. intersection, traffic choker at the 24th Place crossing, and a raised crosswalk at the 24th Place crossing.
- Replacement of the existing streetlights by City Light using a simple cobra or box fixture on a steel pole at no cost to the project. This alternative would be simple and would not significantly change the current character of the Boulevard.

QUESTIONS & ANSWER SESSION

The Project Advisory Team recommended there be no parking on the Boulevard, but Parks Real Estate staff recently recommended that the parking be maintained. Ken asked where the parking would be located and David pointed out several possible sites on the map. Kathleen asked if vehicles can currently be parked along the Boulevard and David answered that there are signs posted, but they do not clearly delineate where parking is allowed.

Kathleen also asked how many homes are on the Boulevard. There are approximately 40 properties addressed on the Boulevard and 39 that have driveway access from the Boulevard. We don't have a count of the number who could be permitted to have access.

James asked if the path will exacerbate the drainage problems. David answered that it would result in additional runoff, because the path is not a pervious surface. The consultant has recommended better drainage ditches and construction of two detention areas to accommodate the runoff. Some neighbors want the drainage issues solved first, and then install the pathways. The Pro Parks project language states, "Improve Cheasty Boulevard including pedestrian pathway, drainage, landscaping and other amenities." Consequently, Parks has proposed a plan that includes a package of improvements that addresses each element and stays within the budget. David pointed out that some areas of the pathway will need a retaining wall.

Kate asked where the ditches run and David showed where water would run. Drainage is currently handled by a mix of systems; some of which connect to SPU facilities and some that drain to the green space. Parks hopes to link the SPU system at points. There are also spots where water sheets across the Boulevard from adjacent streets, which is SPU's responsibility. Unfortunately, the utility has little money to deal with these drainage problems.

David said this is a big project with a small budget, and needs more funds than what is currently earmarked. Susan asked why the path crosses the Boulevard. David answered that it follows an existing footpath between S. Andover St. and 24th Pl. S. This allows the path to avoid a series of steep driveways and very steep areas. Sarah asked if crushed rock will allow adequate drainage. David answered that crushed rock with dust (soft surfacing) is proposed for the pathway. This type of surfacing is compactable and doesn't scatter easily, as pea gravel does. The compactable pathway is safer for pedestrians and bicyclists; however, it doesn't absorb water and consequently increases runoff by a moderate amount. Ken asked about the grade of the pathway. David answered that it is relatively steep since it follows the road. James asked (I think) if the path would be slippery. David stated that since it's gravel it wouldn't be slippery, however, pedestrians could potentially still slide on wet leaves. Bruce asked if the entire trail will be soft surfaced, and David answered yes. Sarah asked about bicycles on the trail. David said the path won't be built for bikers - they will ride on the paved road. Cheasty is included in the Seattle bike map published by Seattle Transportation, but it is not signed or striped. Seattle Transportation has voiced concern that the traffic calming bumps may be a safety issue for bicyclists.

Kate thought the description of the phasing cycles on page 17 of the Plan was unclear. David said this will be stated more clearly in the final report. Kathleen asked about the volume of water running down the hill. David said they have not completed a calculation of the total runoff on the Boulevard and greenspace. There is water runoff from both natural springs on the property and the nearby golf course irrigation. Some areas of the hill remain wet year round, even in very dry summers.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

One person signed up to give testimony on this issue.

Tim Klass: is a member, but not an officer, of Stewards of Cheasty Boulevard; he is not speaking as a representative of the organization; feels City's management of this project has been benign; his group was mostly left out of the original neighborhood planning discussions and believes that the three groups most involved were the North Rainier, North Beacon Hill, and South Beacon Hill planning areas; the plan will require more water-diverting devices in an area that already has slides; many homeowners already have special construction around the foundation because of slides; he likes the proposed trail at the golf course; would like a good trail at Cheasty but believes a minimal drainage system won't bring this about; he agreed that David described the current drainage issues correctly; and asked that the drainage be dealt with first - give it 1-2 years (or at least one "wet" season) to assess how it is working, then decide on the trail

Susan asked why only one person showed up to testify. David said a community meeting was held last Saturday and notice was given there of tonight's Park Board meeting. He also mailed a notice to his entire mailing list. Ken asked if the PAT has minutes from its meetings. David has notes from each of them with some specific comments from various groups. These notes will be forwarded to Board members.

Ken commented that the budget lists costs of \$25,000 for the trail and \$200,000 for retaining walls and asked David to describe the relationship of the two. David said the retaining walls are the biggest portion of the project to complete. The trail is a small amount of work; however, the two are a "hand and glove" project and should be constructed at the same time.

David will come back before the Board at its December 12 meeting to answer any additional questions. The Board will then vote on the proposal and make its recommendation to the Superintendent. The Board thanked David for the briefing.

Park Board Business:

None

Other Business:

- One position on the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee is to be filled by a Park Board member. Ken asked James if he had reached a decision to fill this position. James declined, as Sara is very interested and agreed to join the Committee.
- Following up on an inquiry by one of her friends, Sara asked about the small number of bike racks at Greenlake Park.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair