

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
February 13, 2003**

Present:

Bruce Bentley
Susan Golub
Sarah Neilson

Excused:

James Fearn, Jr.
O. Yale Lewis, Jr.
Kate Pflaumer
Kathleen Warren

Staff:

Ken Bounds, Parks Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

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

A quorum was not present and approval of the January 23 minutes and acknowledgement of correspondence was postponed until the March 13 meeting. Bruce said that absent members will be encouraged to listen to the tapes of this meeting and will be mailed any handouts to help the Board form an opinion on Initiative 80.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Ken Bounds reported on the following:

Greenlake Algae Toxins: Parks received good news recently from the Seattle King County Health Department regarding the toxins. The Health Department has reviewed the lake's water sample test results and found the water to be safe for full recreational use. Toxin levels in January and February were low and within acceptable levels; microcystin levels were below the World Health Organization drinking water standard of 1.0 micrograms per liter, which does not pose a potential health hazard.

Langston Hughes Birthday Party at the Paramount: As a celebration of the 101st birthday of Langston Hughes, the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center and Seattle Theater Group co-presented "Amateur Night at the Apollo" at the Paramount Theater on February 1. 340 people auditioned; 14 were selected to compete; and there was one winner of the \$1,000 prize and the opportunity to appear at New York's Apollo Theater.

Volleyball Olympian at Miller Community Center: On January 31, a member of the 1992 US Olympic Volleyball Team, Ruth Lawanson, held a volleyball skills clinic for 40 girls.

Ruth is currently the assistant women's volleyball coach at Fresno State. Co-sponsored by the Women's Sports Foundation and the Seattle Sports Advisory Council, the clinic was part of the observance of National Girls and Women's Sports Day.

Magnuson Community Garden: On February 1, approximately 100 people attended a successful open house and tour of the garden project.

Westcrest Park Update: On February 4, City Council approved the Park Board's recommendation on Westcrest Park, 6-3. Ken thanked Bruce for attending the hearing.

Colman Park Trees Update: The news of the \$500,000 settlement with Judge Ferris for cutting down trees in Colman Park was covered by both dailies and all four television stations. The settlement will allow Parks to re-vegetate the area that was vandalized, make improvements on the Olmsted-designed trail, maintain the site for five years to get the plants established, and have summer Youth Corp work in Colman and adjacent parks to pull out ivy and other invasive plants.

Sarah asked if Judge Ferris had apologized or made any statement. Ken said that the Judge acknowledged that mistakes were made and a copy of the agreement will be sent to the Board members.

Medgar Ever Pool is Hopping: Last year the Pro Parks Learn to Swim program faced some difficulties getting 3rd and 4th graders to sign up for the swim program outside of school hours. The program jumped off to a great start this year, due to a more aggressive marketing program with the schools. Nearly 1/3 of those signing up for swim lessons at Medgar Evers Pool last month used the Learn to Swim vouchers that were mailed to Seattle Public Schools' third and fourth graders. Almost all of these users are new to the facility, indicating that we are reaching the targeted market.

Encampments: There are several large transient encampments within Cheasty Boulevard Greenspace and Ballard greenspace. Parks has been working with the Police and Health Departments to clean out these encampments and to identify shelters for the transients.

Miller Community Center Celebration: Miller Community Center will celebrate the five-year anniversary of its new building on Saturday, April 26. Ken will keep Park Board members posted with additional information.

Olmsted Park Walking Tour: The February tour will be held at Hiawatha Park and Playfield on Saturday, February 15. Park Board members are invited to attend.

Youth Present Martin Luther King, Jr. Video:

On January 15, 200 teens from around the city joined with staff from their neighborhood community centers to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday. They marched from Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park to the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center for dinner and for teen presentations.

Each of the 22 Park Department community centers, along with Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center and the Garfield Teen Life Center, has teen development leaders. Patti Petesch (Park Department Recreation Manager), Ron Davis (Garfield Teen Life Center), and two teenagers from the Teen Life Center came before the Board to share one of the teen presentations with the Board.

This yearly event, supported by the Pro Parks Levy, invites teens to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. King. Teens designed the flyers describing the event and also designed a commemorative tee shirt. Teens from each of the community centers had a piece of a puzzle that they brought to the presentation. When the puzzle pieces were assembled, it spelled Dr. King's name.

The two teens, Edwina Motley and Eutevia Bailey, gave a video presentation that they had shown at the celebration. They combined one of Dr. King's less-well-known speeches and a series of pictures depicting events from his life, and then added music the teens thought was appropriate. A hearty round of applause followed the video.

Six teens will travel to Birmingham, Alabama, on a learning trip. Included in their trip will be a visit to the historic Tuskegee University campus. The teens hope to raise funds by selling \$10 calendars, depicting teen involvement with a theme of "Our Future is Bright". For more information on the calendars or the Teen Life Center, please call 206-684-4550. Bruce thanked the teens, saying "Our future is bright" and that the youth are one of the reasons he continues to volunteer his time.

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. Testimony is limited to three minutes per speaker. Four people gave testimony.

Renee Barton: is an advocate for creeks; Meadowbrook Creek is in her neighborhood and is a good draw - people come from all over to see the birds, native plants, beavers, and urban salmon; I-80 is seeking to give neighborhood creeks to other neighborhoods; I-80 will reduce pesticides and is a perfect fit for parks; daylighting helps creeks to breathe and can encourage more fish to inhabit the creeks

Molly Burke: lives in the Victory Heights neighborhood; encourages Parks Department to support I-80

Janet Way: member of Thornton Creek Legal Defense fund; lives in Shoreline near Jackson Park golf course and next to Paramount Park \$20-25,000 transformed this park into a lovely, beneficial area for the neighborhood; the University of Washington will lead tours through Paramount Park the next two Saturdays; parks could benefit from I-80; creeks could benefit, as well as open space, schools, salmon, and clean water; in regards to pesticides being used near creeks, believes 200' is a minimum to ask; she still has issues with the Northgate library/community center/park being located at the old Bon Tire Center site next to Thornton Creek

Gloria Butts: lives in Broadview; has worked for two decades to restore Carkeek Creek and on neighborhood planning; it is time that Park Board members support I-80; daylighting would clear creeks and help with flooding and both Carkeek and Thornton Creeks have experienced flooding; creeks are good for neighborhoods; 24,000 signatures were obtained for I-80; believes Janet has done a good job restoring Paramount Park

Oral requests and communications concluded. Bruce thanked those who testified.

Citizen's Briefing of Initiative 80:

Board members were mailed a set of questions and answers on I-80 prior to the meeting. These questions and answers are included in the minutes as follows:

"What requirements of I-80 will apply to the Seattle Parks Department?"

I-80 has limited application to Seattle Parks. The two requirements are:

- Develop a plan for daylighting creeks in Seattle parks within 20 years (by 2023). This project is almost complete.
- Phase out use of pesticides within 200 feet of creeks on park property.

What Seattle creeks will be protected by I-80?

It is safe to assume that I-80's requirements will apply to all creeks running through park property.

How will the Parks Department pay for these projects?

Initiative 80 states that all of its requirements will be paid for out of a new Creek Restoration Account. This Account will be funded by a new revenue source not from the Parks Department budget. The public costs are capped at five dollars per household per year.

What is daylighting?

Before we understood the importance of our urban environment, some of our creeks were directed into underground pipes, destroying the creek's habitat and flood protection capacity. "Daylighting" means restoring such a creek by redirecting it back into a natural, open channel.

Will the Parks Department's implementation of I-80 help salmon recovery?

I-80 was written in collaboration with leaders in the salmon recovery effort.

It is well recognized that pesticides in creeks pose a significant threat to aquatic habitat in our creeks and in Puget Sound. Eliminating pesticide use within 200 feet of creeks will reduce this threat. While this phase-out will be most challenging on golf courses, Seattle can and should be a leader in this effort.

What are the benefits of daylighting?

Last month, the City of Kirkland required Northwest College to complete a daylighting

project as a condition for a new development. Before doing so, Kirkland studied daylighting and concluded:

- 'Daylighting streams can be beneficial to the overall health of a stream within a basin. Major benefits of stream daylighting include:
- Reduction of stream velocities
- Reduction of streambed scouring and erosion downstream by reducing runoff velocities
- Relieve flooding problems
- Improve water quality by exposing water to air, sunlight, vegetation, and soil, all of which help to transform, bind, or otherwise neutralize pollutants and sediments
- Recreate aquatic habitat for aquatic organisms, insects, amphibians, and fish
- Recreate valuable riparian habitat through planting native riparian vegetation, providing temperature moderation of stream corridors for wildlife use
- Provide nutrients and insects for downstream waters, such as lakes or downstream reaches
- Improves the aesthetics of the area and provides greenspace within urban environment

August 5, 2002, City of Kirkland Study, prepared by Adolfsen Environmental'

Will the Creek Restoration Account have enough money to daylight the creeks on park property?

Superintendent Ken Bounds acknowledges most creeks through our parks are already daylighted. The Creek Restoration Account should have enough money to finish the job in 20 years. If the Account doesn't have enough money, the City Council could extend the timeline.

Will Seattle Parks enjoy other benefits from I-80?

I-80 requires the City to take a more comprehensive approach to restoring creeks. For example, the City is required to take measures to reduce stormwater pollution entering creeks. This, in turn, will benefit the riparian habitat on park property.

Will I-80 increase the buffer requirements for creeks?

No, Seattle's Critical Areas Ordinance already prohibits building over creeks and their buffers. I-80 restates this requirement, but defers to existing law for buffer requirements.

Could daylighting displace other recreational uses?

The City Parks have enough room to restore our Creeks and to maintain recreational uses. We have heard of no examples where I-80 would displace existing uses. Indeed, I-80 is specific that daylighting is not required where a culvert is necessary because of existing structures or right-of-way crossings. The 20-year timeline provides ample opportunity to modify existing uses if a conflict arises. For example, Parks has acknowledged that if given eight years, there would be no conflict between daylighting Ravenna Creek and maintaining existing uses at Ravenna Park.

Would eliminating pesticides within 200 feet of creeks impact golf courses?

The Parks Department acknowledges that there would not be an impact of 'playability' for at least five years. During that time, we can move forward on non-pesticide alternatives for maintaining our golf courses. Seattle can and should be a leader in this effort.

Could other park developments or community centers be considered a 'major creekside development' requiring additional creek restoration?

No, such developments are not defined as a 'major creekside development,' under I-80. The City usually voluntarily includes creek restoration as part of its creekside projects and we hope such efforts will continue.

Who is supporting I-80?

I-80 is being sponsored by Yes for Seattle, the group that passed Initiative 63, which increased water conservation for salmon. I-80 is supported by environmental and neighborhood organizations throughout Seattle and is endorsed by groups like Sierra Club, Seattle Audubon, Washington Conservation Voters, the Green Party, Ravenna Creek Alliance, Laurelhurst Community Council, Seattle Community Council Federation, and the Livable Communities Coalition. Yes for Seattle's polling shows that over 78% of registered voters support the programs in I-80.

Why should the Parks Commission endorse I-80?

I-80 represents a commitment of Seattle citizens to increase their support for creek restoration. I-80 will provide an opportunity for restoring creeks on Parks property without taking a bite out of the Department's current budget. Other programs in I-80 will improve the water quality in Seattle creeks, which will in turn improve the creek habitat in Seattle parks.

How can I help the campaign?

Please contact Yes for Seattle at (206) 956-8050, visit our webpage at www.yesforseattle.org, or contact us at info@yesforseattle.org to help.

Paid for by Yes for Seattle - Save Seattle Creeks"

Pam Johnson, Co-chair of Yes for Seattle, came before the Board to give a verbal briefing on how I-80 would affect the Parks Department. Yes for Seattle is one of the sponsors of I-80. Several groups have worked on I-80 as a collaborative effort. Why was the Initiative launched? Many groups have been working on creek restoration and protection for a long time. The most difficult issue is daylighting creeks.

Two issues led to Initiative 80:

(1) Two years ago, when Greg Nickels ran for Mayor, part of his campaign was a promise to daylight Thornton Creek. Many of the groups working on Initiative 80 endorsed his campaign. After his election, the Mayor announced that his vision for Northgate was to turn Thornton Creek into a detention pond for storm water.

(2) A number of creek groups were concerned that not enough was being done for creek protection/restoration.

To think about this issue in a bigger context, the area has seen 100 years of development. During much of this time there was no mitigation for development to protect creeks. Now there is. I-80 asks that once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to save Seattle's creeks be taken.

There are two parts to I-80:

1. dealing with private development
2. City must do a long-term creek restoration program. (This affects Parks Department and Park Board.)

Another part of I-80 is that the City must look at stormwater measures and how to protect the creeks from runoff. During the first runoff of the season, pesticides can kill off salmon.

Prior to this meeting, the Board was mailed a copy of the briefing (see above). The Board had already received a copy of I-80 and a copy of the Mayor's alternative and related documents.

Last week, King County said that I-80 had the required 24,000 signatures. Seattle City Council now has 45 days to decide what to do and the clock is running. City Council may pass I-80 as is, put it on the ballot, or put it on the ballot with an alternative. Currently there is an alternative from the Mayor's office. Yes for Seattle is asking for the Park Board to support I-80 and to contact City Council with words of support or any concerns before the Council makes a decisions.

Questions & Answers

Susan asked if this will be a fall ballot issue and Pam answered that it will probably come before Seattle voters in September. Susan asked for a description of the increase in taxes. Pam said there is a \$5/household cap and it will be left up to City Council to determine how these funds are raised. Susan then asked how much would be raised from this increase. Pam answered approximately \$2 million per year, which is in addition to the approximately \$4 million the City already spends yearly on creeks. Over the next 20 years, enough money would be raised to daylight the creeks.

Ken asked Pam to elaborate on how I-80 would affect the creeks in parks. Pam listed lots of creeks, including the historical ones. She discussed Thornton Creek, which is mostly underground. She said that the intent is if it used to be a creek, and the opportunity arises to daylight, then it should be daylighted.

Sarah asked about the Municipal League report. She also asked if I-80 would affect the Japanese Garden. Pam said that I-80 doesn't lay out exactly how everything will be played out. City Council and Parks will have to make some of these decisions.

Susan asked who is opposed to I-80. The Mayor's Office and Councilmember Margaret Pageler are opposed and say it is not the best plan for salmon. Pam said this is not a salmon recovery program and to become such a program, I-80 would have to cover much larger issues. Pam said that I-80 is written for creeks, while the Mayor's Alternative is written for shorelines.

Sarah asked about pesticide use. What is used in parks and what is the rationale? I-80 reads "in 18 months, no more pesticides within 200' of creeks." Ken said there is no 100% labor solution on golfing greens. Major cities are trying to reduce the use of pesticides; however there is not yet a known non-pesticide alternative for golf greens. If pesticides aren't used on the greens, over time the greens will be lost. Pam said that Parks is working on pesticide reduction because pesticides are bad for fish; some golf courses outside the United States don't have perfect golf greens and don't use pesticides.

Ken said that 17-20 golf greens would be affected. An important issue is to keep pesticides out of creeks; however, it is unclear that the 200' will accomplish this. Sarah asked how I-80 writers selected the 200' boundary. Pam said they worked with David Stitzell and the 200' buffer was shown to be effective.

Susan asked if the Park Board should take a position on the issue. Ken asked if the Board wants to give comments to City Council before it makes a decision. Pam said she was disappointed that Ken briefed City Council before briefing the Park Board, due to the "rush" from the Mayor's Office and Councilmember Pageler. Ken said the Park Board met once in December (on the 13th), and after that (December 17) Ken was asked to write the briefing memo. At that time, it was possible that City Council could have acted on the issue as early as the first part of January.

Bruce said a quorum is needed to decide if the Board wants to take a stand. Due to the joint Park Board/Library Board community meeting on February 24, the regular February 27 Park Board meeting has been cancelled. The next regular meeting where the Board could take a vote is on March 13.

Ken said it is difficult to interpret what creeks would need to be daylighted. There are historical creeks, listed on old maps that no longer exist. Pam said that a huge amount of damage has been done to creeks.

Genesee Park is over an area that once was a creek, then a landfill, and eventually turned into a park. Sarah asked if Genesee would be considered an "existing use". Pam answered yes, that creeks would be daylighted on a case-by-case basis. City Council has the final authority.

Susan asked if there is latitude to interpret the guidelines. Pam answered that if City Council makes a decision and a citizen thought the I-80 ordinance was misinterpreted, then City Council could be challenged.

Ken said that it can't be assumed that citizens won't sue. Pam said there is more

discussion on the possibility of suing in the ordinance. Susan asked why the wording of the ordinance wasn't more tightly written, and Pam answered that she thinks it is tight.

Sarah stated she was uncomfortable with the timing. Bruce said if a quorum had been present, the issue could have been discussed at tonight's meeting. If time allows, the Board may discuss this issue after the Northgate Site Plan public meeting on February 24. Susan asked if March 13 (the next regular Park Board meeting) is within the timeframe of the "45-day clock". Ken answered that it may be and urged the Park Board to review and analyze the initiative. Pam said that City Council may not select I-80 or the Mayor's Alternative, but may come up with its own alternative. This is a good time for questions and concerns to go to City Council both as individuals and as Park Board members.

Bruce thanked Yes for Seattle for the briefing.

Northgate Library/Community Center/Park Site Plan Briefing:

Parks' staff members Erin Devoto, Director of Planning and Development, and Tim Motzer, Senior Project Coordinator, came before the Board to give a briefing on the site plan. On February 24, the Park Board of Commissioners and Library Board of Trustees will hold a joint community meeting to view the recommended site plan(s) and to hear community comments. This meeting will be held at Olympic View Elementary School cafeteria/gymnasium, 504 NE 95th Street, at 7:00 pm. Tonight's briefing is to give Park Board members a preview before the February 24 meeting.

Erin gave a history of this project: the site is located in the Northgate area, on the east side of 5th Avenue where the old Bon Tire store was formerly located. In 1998 the Libraries for All was approved by the voters, in 1999 the Community Center Levy was approved, and in November 2002 the Pro Parks levy was approved. Funding for this new facility is from these three. After the site was acquired, Library and Parks began work on the principal design and requirements.

ARC Architects was hired to design the site plan and came up with four different designs. Erin and Tim displayed the four designs and Erin described each one. Various combinations of the library, community center, park, and parking lot were displayed. Because space is limited on the site, Susan asked if there is funding for underground parking. Ken said this option would gain 10,000 more square feet of usable space, but is an option that may not be affordable. A Board member asked if parking across 5th Avenue (at Northgate Mall) could be used. This is being considered. Erin said that 5th Avenue is a heavily-used street with bus stops nearby. Sarah suggested that the northwest corner of the site be made friendly and conducive to bus riders using the facility.

Sarah asked what is expected of the Board after the February 24 meeting. Erin answered that once it is determined which scheme is affordable and the two Boards are in agreement, then a design consultant will be selected. Sarah asked if the Board could have paper copies of the drawings sent to them before the February 24 meeting. Erin said she would check on this; however, ARC has only prepared large drawings to date.

The Board thanked Erin and Tim for the presentation.

2003 Work Plan:

Ken distributed copies of the Work Plan/Accountability Agreement for 2003 and told Board members that this plan is geared towards division directors. It lists objectives; the baseline on 1/1/03; milestones on 6/30/03; milestones on 12/31/03; and responsible staff. This will be further discussed at the Park Board retreat.

Park Board Business:

- Dates for the Park Board retreat were discussed and Saturday, March 15, was selected as a tentative date. Mayor Nickels and the City Council Parks, Education and Library Committee members Councilmembers Steinbrueck, Pageler, and Drago - will be invited to attend a portion of the retreat to discuss process and expectations.
- Sarah invited Park Board members to attend the March 12 Seattle Youth Involvement Day event.
- Bruce asked what is the status of the agreement between the Parks Department and Seattle Audubon. Ken answered that completion of the agreement is near and should be finalized within the next month or so. The agreement will be brought to the Park Board for a recommendation to the Superintendent.
- Susan gave an update on the conservation futures tax, which will be reviewed by a citizens' committee. King County used half the money, which is a violation of its own ordinance. Some County Council members claimed they didn't know about this. Susan said Parks Department staff member Donald Harris does a good job representing the City at the meetings and is there at every meeting.
- Sarah asked what the Board should do in regards to I-80 and the Mayor's Alternative. Susan recommended that the Board discuss and vote at its March 13 meeting. Ken said that the City Council might vote before that date. He will keep the Board updated.
- Bruce said that in the minutes he reported that the ARC Board meeting was on the 19th of February, not the other date.

Other Business:

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____

Bruce Bentley, Chair