

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
May 8, 2003**

Present:

Bruce Bentley, Chair
Susan Golub
Sarah Neilson
Kate Pflaumer
Kathleen Warren

Excused:

James Fearn

Staff:

Patricia McInturff, Deputy Parks Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. **Kate moved that the agenda consent items be approved as submitted, including approval of the May 8 agenda, April 24 minutes, and acknowledgment of correspondence. Susan seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.**

At Kate's suggestion, Bruce reminded the audience that oral testimony on public hearing issues is accepted by the Board at the public hearing, and written testimony is accepted up until the day of the discussion/recommendation to the Superintendent.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ken Bounds was absent; Deputy Superintendent Patricia McInturff reported on the following:

- Soundview Terrace Park and Rachel's Playground: Parks joined the community on Sunday, April 27, for a ribbon cutting on the newly-renovated Soundview terrace and Rachel's Playground. Rachel died in an airline crash several years ago. Ken Bounds and Ralph Pearson, Rachel's grandfather, shared the ribbon-cutting honors, along with several neighborhood children. About 100 people attend the ceremony, hosted by the Friends of Rachel's Park. This group raised more than \$400,000 in grants, matching funds, and donated labor. The play area has been in non-stop use since the ribbon cutting.
- High Point Community Center Groundbreaking: Patricia and Bruce both attended this event, held on Saturday, May 3. The architect of the new building was also there.
- National Olmsted Conference: Approximately 200 people from around the United States and Canada attended this event, held at South Lake Union, from May 1-4. Parks and Recreation Department staff did an outstanding job and played key roles in preparing for the Conference, coordinating workshops and giving

presentations, leading tours, and transforming the South Lake Union site. Receptions were held nightly. Patricia led a well-attended panel on health and parks, including a guest speaker from the Center for Disease Control. Mayor Nickels gave opening remarks for the successful Conference.

- Life as a Drifter at the Aquarium: This new exhibit at the Aquarium will open on May 15, with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10:00 am. KMPS will broadcast a live remove during the opening hours. Starbucks Coffee and Krispy Kreme donuts will provide refreshments.
- Japanese Garden Children Day: Over 614 children and adults attended this celebration last weekend. Dreary weather did not dampen the attendance or fun!
- African American Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame: The Pacific Northwest Chapter of the African American Ethnic Sports Hall of Fame inducted four famous Garfield High School athletes at a well-attended May 3 ceremony. The inductees included Dr. Homer Harris, Charlie Russell (who played football with Dr. Harris at Garfield High School and played for the UW Huskies as the second African American running back in Huskies history), Joyce Walker (now the Garfield High Girl's basketball team coach and former LSU all-time great female basketball player), and Bill North (a premiere centerfielder who played for the Chicago Cubs, Oakland A's, and Los Angeles Dodgers.)
- Cascade Use Agreement: The Park Board heard a briefing on Cascade Park several months ago. Parks staff are now wrapping up the agreement with the Cascade Neighborhood Council for programming, maintenance and management of the Cascade People's Center. Community review and the Law Department review are complete and the agreement has been submitted to the City Council.
- Maple Leaf Community Garden Bears Fruit: An agreement has been signed to purchase a vacant 15,000 sq. ft. site on NE 103rd just east of 5th Ave NE for use as a community garden or other park use, as determined by a community process. First nominated for acquisition by the Maple Leaf Community Council in 1988, this acquisition will utilize funding provided by the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund, King County Conservation Futures, and a Neighborhood Matching Fund award. Closing of the purchase is scheduled to occur in August 2003.
- Interlaken Park - Seattle Hebrew Academy Access: Legislation has been prepared to grant an easement for an existing driveway from Interlaken Drive E to Seattle Hebrew Academy. The existing use was established in 1911 by action of the Board of Park Commissioners as "a perpetual easement...". However, this was never specifically directed by City Council, nor was it defined by legal description or recorded. The community supports the plan. The legislation will be sent through the City Council approval process as soon as the survey work is completed and the precise legal description is defined.
- West Point Lighthouse: Parks and Historic Seattle joined forces in submitting an application to acquire the West Point Light Station and surrounding property. The proposed use is to incorporate the lighthouse site and buildings into Discovery Park. There will be educational programs on site and the buildings will be open to the public when park staff is present. So far we have received a positive reaction on this proposal.

- Alki Beach is Scene of Pit Bull Attack: A second incident of a Pit Bull attacking a small dog occurred at Alki on April 29. It seems large groups of older teens hang out with several of these dogs and they intimidate park users. Parks staff has shared this concern at the West Precinct meeting. We have also learned that Animal Control does not have staff in the evenings or weekends due to budget cuts and Police do not have emergency support for Animal Control when an incident occurs after hours or on weekends.
- Amateur Night at the Apollo: Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center and Seattle Theater Group's Amateur Night at the Apollo winner, TURF, won first place in New York City when they competed against all other national winners the weekend of April 26. TURF will now go on to compete for the real Amateur Night at the Apollo at the end of May.

Oral Requests and Communication 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. One person signed up to give testimony on non-public hearing topics:

Katherine Bruaglon: She attended the Gas Works Park public hearing and was impressed with the public process and involvement. She distributed a video and letter to all Park Board members and stated that she opposes the Canada goose kill. She has heard that the gassings are going forward again this year and said the process is horrific. Agents use bread to lure the geese into trucks, where they are gassed. People nearby can hear their hissing and beating wings against the interior of the truck. This is a public relations nightmare for the Parks Department and the process is very costly, as sometimes the Harbor Patrol and Police must be called when protestors are at the site of the gassings. Parks has hired the United States Department of Agriculture agents to do the actual killing. Currently there are two agents working in this area. 60 volunteers are available to do the addling (shaking eggs before they hatch). She asked the Board to please watch the video and weigh in with their comments. She asked if the Board would a.) Weigh in with a decision tonight, and b.) reconsider the kills this year.

Patricia explained that the decision is not up to the Park Board. Sarah asked who citizens should send their comments to and Patricia answered that they should be sent to the Parks Department. Patricia stated that a problem of addling the eggs is identifying nests on private property. Nests on public property are easily identified and eggs can be addled. A letter was written to every property owner around every lake this year asking them to call Parks Department to have the USDA come in to addle the eggs.

Katherine B. asked if the Park Board would be willing to hold a public hearing on May 22. Patricia answered that this would be up to the Park Board. The May 22 agenda is already full. The Board will discuss later if it wishes to hold a public hearing. Kathleen stated that the Park Board has spent considerable time on this issue in the past few years.

Barbara Sheldon came before the Board to talk about Regrade Park off-leash area, which had a public hearing on April 24. Bruce explained that no oral testimony is heard on public hearing issues after the public hearing has been held.

Fremont Park Briefing

Andy Sheffler came before the Board to give an oral briefing on Fremont Park, aka "Slippery Slope." A written briefing was also presented to the Board and is included below:

Written Briefing

Action Requested

A briefing and public hearing for Fremont neighborhood park will be held May 8, followed by a discussion and recommendation on May 22. Planning and Development is requesting your review and comment on this new park. This memo summarizes the design that will guide the creation of a new Fremont park funded by \$396,000 from the Pro Parks Levy and \$50,000 from Seattle Public Library's Libraries for All funds.

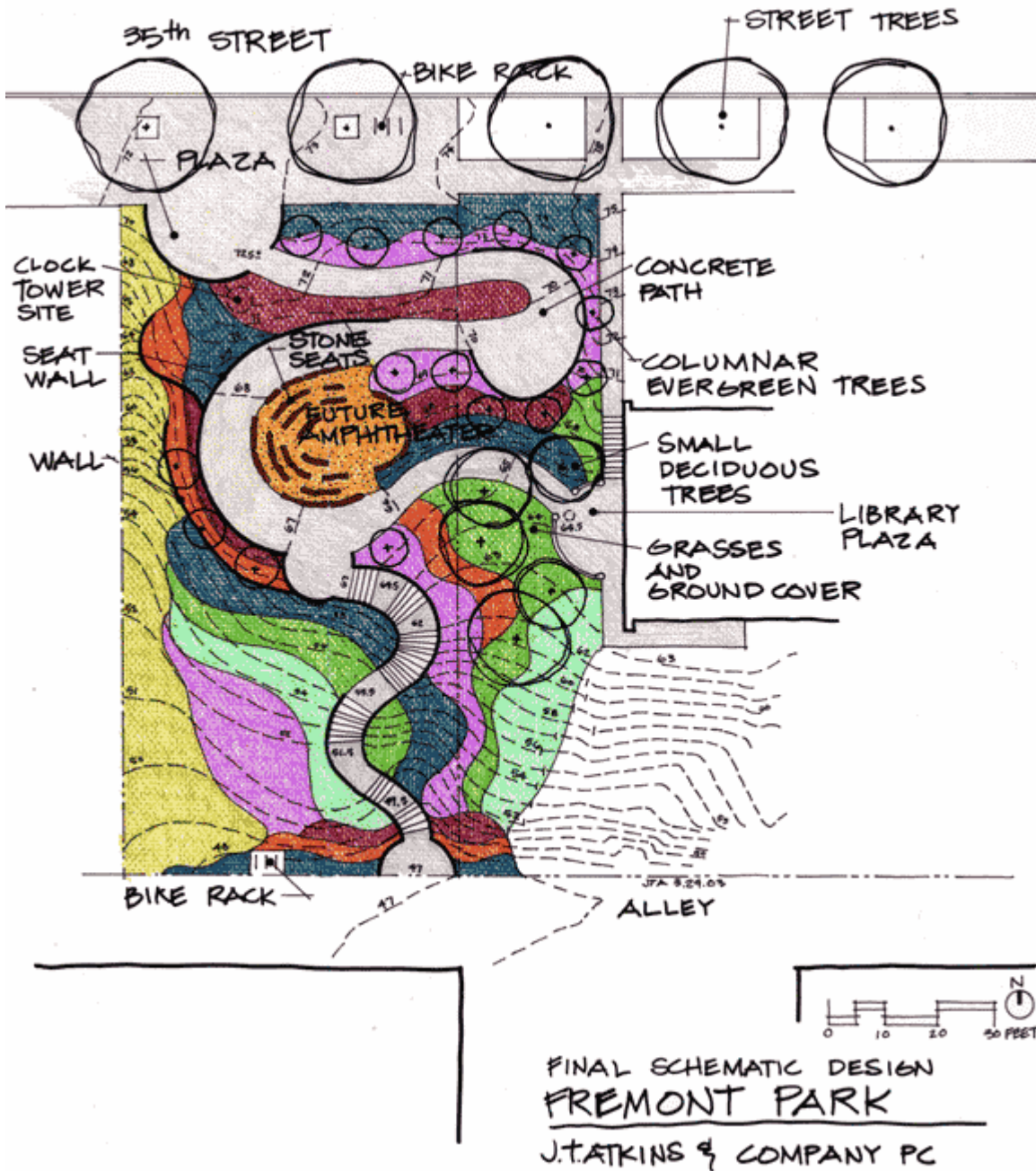
Project intent

The intent of the project is to develop Park property at 723 N 35th Street and adjacent Fremont Library property into a new Fremont park that is safe and accessible to all.

Project Background

The Fremont Neighborhood Plan recommended the City "develop the property west of the Fremont Library. Provide pedestrian access through the site connecting N 35th Street and the alley between N 34th and N 35th Streets...to comply with ADA standards."

Parks acquired a 7,215 square-foot property adjacent to the Fremont Library in 1998 and is now developing it into a park with funding and a Memo of Agreement with Seattle Public Library. Major design elements include an amphitheater and community gathering space, an accessible path from the park to the library's community meeting room, plants, benches and other amenities. The design for the Fremont neighborhood park will allow for additions of later community-funded projects. The initial phase of development will prepare the site, and add paths and plazas, utilities, vegetation and furnishings at a level that will make the site safe and accessible to the public.



Conceptual Design and Construction Documents

Conceptual plans were developed by design firms JT Atkins and Pomegranate Center. The engineering firm SvR was hired to create construction documents. All designs incorporated community input, Parks review, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) ideas.

Public Process

1. The first public meeting in June 2002 informed the community about a new park planned for Fremont and came to a community consensus on desired park activities.
2. The second community meeting in September 2002 gave community members a chance to sketch out their ideas in the context of a design charette. A strong desire for playful gathering spaces incorporating community art was expressed. Parks supports this goal and has an overall goal of designing a new park to reflect the community's character, as well as remaining safe and accessible.
3. The third community meeting in April 2003 provided opportunities for community comments on the proposed schematic design, and discussed the Parks naming process.
4. A final community meeting in June 2003 will provide the opportunity for community to review construction impacts.

Parks also attended additional meetings with the Friends of Fremont neighborhood park to discuss ideas for the future park's use and development. Information was also shared with the public through notification of local media, the project website and project sign.

Fremont has long been a mecca for Seattle's visual and performance artists. At public meetings for the park, vocabulary such as "fun," "quirky," and "kid-friendly" conveyed the nature of the park the community wished to create. Many interactive and playful elements were suggested by the community that can be integrated into a later phases of the park development including: stone paving for the amphitheater, a community-wound clock tower, wind sculptures, a paved meditation maze, decorative handrails and bike racks, inlaid chess boards, sculpture, and tiles.

Two elements that stood out with overwhelming community support were the addition of a ground-level slide or series of slides within the park, and vertical poles adjacent to the amphitheater plaza that could be used to hold theatrical banners and backdrops. Grading for these and other art elements will be provided for later community development.

Project Schedule

Construction documents will be completed by June 2003. The project will be built in late summer 2003.

Project Budget

\$396,000 is available from the Pro Parks Levy, with an additional \$50,000 from Libraries for All.

Additional Information

Andrew Sheffer, Seattle Parks Planner, 684-7041; or andrew.sheffer@seattle.gov

Oral Briefing

Andy displayed a large drawing of the proposed park and gave an overview of the project. The purpose of the project is four-fold: 1.) to create usable open space on a very steep slope; 2.) facilitate circulation to the lower level of the library where there is a

frequently-used community meeting hall; 3.) bring in water and electrical infrastructure into the park so that it can grow and change in the future; and 4.) set the foundation for future park development on this site, including efforts by the very active neighborhood group involved with this project.

Public process: Four public meetings were held and were very productive. The design has been a community involvement process. The main issue that arose was the taking down of poplar trees, which currently hide the façade of the library. The poplars are on the property line between Parks' property and the Library's property. The design calls for a looped walkway that loops back and forth through the line of poplars. Poplars have a relatively short life and often lift up nearby concrete. Long-living legacy trees (cypress and oaks) will be planted as replacements. Other poplars and laurel on the Library's property will remain. Andy referred to a discussion he had with the city arborist and the arborist concurred that the poplars need to be removed.

Sarah asked where the library's property line is and Andy stated that it runs where the poplars are that will be removed. The Board asked if all the poplars will be removed and Andy answered yes. When poplars have their roots disturbed, they tend to fall. The line of trees cannot be thinned because then they lose their support of each other and may fall.

A second issue that arose was the stairway. The compromise solution is to put the stairs on Parks space.

A major portion of the ongoing public process is for the review committee to follow how the walls will take shape and so the walls will facilitate future artwork. Future development of this park will be focused on what volunteers can do.

New vegetation: There will be classical vegetation on the east side with a Mediterranean flair, further down will be dry native plants, and the lower area will be a shade garden. There is lots of community excitement about the plantings.

Walls: ecology blocks will be used to stabilize the area. They are economical and caps can be poured on top to make them more appealing.

Erosion: Kate asked how erosion would be controlled when construction is going on and the trees have been removed. Andy said that construction is planned for the dry months. The erosion problem is primarily caused by people using the space to get from 34th to 35th Streets and the new pathway will help eliminate this problem.

ADA: one community suggestion was for the ramp to go all the way from 34th to 35th. Currently the plan calls for a ramp part of the way and the stairway next to the Library will remain.

Kate thanked Andy for the summary of community input. Andy remarked that this was a very positive part of this project.

Terry Holme (new Park Board member) visited the site and asked if the stairs would be re-built, as the stairs have settled and one of the treads have broken. Andy said no, that Pro Parks funds cannot be used to re-build Library's infrastructure. A very new design in the ramp has been suggested. Andy meets monthly with the Library project staff and will address this suggestion. Terry observed that there is parking above the site and asked if there will be any parking below? Andy answered that the community is adamant that there be no parking at the lower part of the park, as they feel it would be taken advantage of. Terry asked if the upper half of the site to the west, that is privately owned, will be developed in the future and would it be integrated into the design of the park? Andy answered that it is a possibility; however, he hasn't talked to the developer.

Public Hearing

No one signed up to give comments, however, one audience member asked to speak.

Sharon Levine: Queen Anne residents asked the Parks Department to remove trees at Kerry Park on a 20-year removal plan. It was heartbreaking to her that Parks staff came in and removed all the trees in one day, when the birds were nesting. Neighbors were horrified to see birds dying and injured on the ground. Now the poplar trees will be taken down at Fremont Park during the summer when birds will be nesting there. She asked that Parks ensure that trees are cleared of wildlife before taking them down.

Bruce commented that this was the first time since he has been on the Park Board that no one signed up to give testimony at a public hearing. The Board said this was a testimony to Andy and thanked him for his presentation.

Regrade Park Pilot Dogs Off Leash Area - Briefing/Public Hearing

At its April 24 meeting, the Park Board heard a briefing from Parks project manager David Goldberg on the proposed 18-month pilot for an off leash area at Regrade Park, which was followed by a public hearing. At tonight's meeting, the Board will discuss and make a recommendation to the Parks Superintendent.

David gave a brief review of the project. He has received 65 pieces of correspondence on the issue, including e-mails and phone calls. 52 supported the off leash area and 12 were opposed. Those in opposition are all Belltown residents.

David reminded the Board that the off leash area is not a Parks Department proposal; it is a proposal that came from the community.

Questions & Answers

Kathleen asked if social service agencies in the area have weighed in on the issue. David had talked to only one, a woman from Marvin Gardens who was not in favor. She said Regrade Park is used by the homeless and they have nowhere else to go.

Kathleen asked how often the basketball courts are in use. David stated the courts are used at different times and are the most used portion of the park. It is possible to have an off leash area and keep the basketball court. Kerry Lasko, Parks Department Manager of the Central West Sector, stated that compared to heavily-used Denny Playfield, the Regrade court has light, but fairly regular, usage. Bruce drove by the park on the way to tonight's Board meeting and the courts were in use.

Kate asked if the basketball court remains, what else would remain in the 10,000 sq ft. park. David answered that the off leash area could be 6,000 sq. ft.; however, Parks is not yet to the point yet of designing the area.

Kate commented that if the off leash area is fenced in from the basketball court, that would leave a separate area unfenced. Wasn't it the intent of fencing the area to serve as a deterrent to drug dealing, as drug dealers do not want to be trapped into a fenced area where they can't easily escape? Susan asked if the proposal is to use the entire park as an off leash area. David answered, yes, that is the intent but Parks is not to the design stage yet and is not certain of the best way to add the off leash area.

Kate commented that there has been an outpouring of comments from people who have committed to helping maintain the off leash area. Will they actually be there to do the maintenance if an off leash is installed? David said one caller said that an off leash environment at Regrade would make people comfortable to be there, as it would provide positive social interaction.

Kathleen said she appreciated Sharon Levine's comments from the April 24 public hearing. She believes there should be seating both inside the fenced area, where dogs will be, and outside the fenced area away from the animals. She feels that we are trying to solve a drug problem with a park when it is a community problem. She believes this violates the guidelines set up by City Council for an off leash area and wants it noted in the minutes that this is an exception. She could live with a pilot program that: states that this is an exception to the rules; and would leave the basketball court intact.

Kate agreed that the basketball court should remain and would help disrupt any drug dealing. She doesn't believe there is room for seating both inside and outside the fenced area and asked that everything except the basketball court be fenced. She shares Kathleen's concerns that the off leash guidelines are not being met.

Susan stated that she feels strongly that seating should be provided both inside the off leash area and outside the area. She is not comfortable with seating inside the off leash area only. Pointing to a large drawing of Regrade Park, David stated that the outside seating might be possible on the east side of the park near the grocery store on 3rd Avenue. Kerry suggested that the fence could be brought in on Bell Street and said that seating would be easier to incorporate on Bell Street than on Third Avenue. Sarah liked this compromise.

Bruce stated that he believes this has been a very short public process for making a park single use and is concerned that the Park Board hasn't heard from everyone it should. The Belltown residents he spoke to are in favor of this change; however, the Board must look at the long-term effect.

Kathleen moved to approve the 18-month pilot project (with the language that it be considered an exception and is in violation of the off leash guidelines this is a very special situation); that the Board does not wish to design the park but urges that the basketball court be saved and that seating be installed both inside and outside the off leash area. Susan seconded.

Kate said that City Council gave a checklist to assess when the requirements of an off leash area have been met and this site meets some, but not all, of the requirements. **Kate made a friendly amendment to change the language from "in violation" to "an assessment has been made and that not all factors have been met, but there is a good reason to have an off leash area here."** Sarah seconded. Kathleen stated that Kate's wording was too mild and preferred that "in violation" be replaced by "is not consistent". **Bruce called for the vote on the friendly amendment. Kate and Sarah voted for. Kathleen, Susan, and Bruce voted against. The amendment failed.**

The motion to be voted on reads as follows:

Kathleen moved to approve the 18-month pilot project (with the language that it be considered an exception and is not consistent with the off leash guidelines this is a very special situation); that the Board does not wish to design the park but urges that the basketball court be saved and that seating be installed both inside and outside the off leash area. Susan seconded.

Bruce then called for the vote on the motion. The vote was taken and Kathleen's motion, with the wording "is not consistent" replacing the word "in violation" passed unanimously.

The Board thanked David for his presentation.

Park Board Business

1. Park Board agendas are very busy for the next several months. Several members gave dates that they will be absent from Board meetings.
2. Sarah asked that the Board investigate other commissions for ways to streamline the current Park Board hearing process and gave the Design Commission as an example. This began a discussion on what point the Park Board should begin weighing in on issues.

Sarah thought tonight's process on Regrade Park, where the Board is involved early on and can make recommendations on the design, is very helpful. Usually

the Board becomes involved in projects much later in the process. Michael Shiosaki said that public meetings on the projects are a good opportunity for the Board to become involved. (Note of explanation: each project may have three or more public meetings before coming before the Park Board and multiple projects are in process at any given time.) Kate said that Board members cannot be asked to spend more than 50 hours per month on Park Board issues.

Susan suggested that Parks look ahead at projects to determine which projects are likely to be controversial and involve the Board members at an earlier stage on these.

Kathleen said that the Board spent a year working to streamline the Park Department's public involvement policy. She attended meetings all over the city to hear input on making the system work better. With the volume of projects that the Parks Department has at any given time, it is difficult for the Board to not be surprised with some issues. The Park Board is considered a model for other City departments for its public involvement policy.

Kate said that she thought Sarah's point is not the public involvement policy, but rather, at what stage does the Park Board get involved in issues. Kate believes that the Board often comes late into an issue and she and Sarah feel that the Board should have input earlier in the process. Bruce remarked that the Board was surprised when the controversy at Gas Works Park for a citizen-proposed off leash area was overshadowed by the controversy over the proposed cutting of a number of trees in the park. Patricia suggested that this is a good topic for further discussion at the Park Board retreat.

3. Bruce and Park Superintendent Ken Bounds were moderators at the Olmsted Conference for a workshop, "Roles of Parks Today, in the Past, and in the Future". They were pleased that the audience was "standing room only" for their 1-1/2 hour presentation. The Rainier Club presented the first annual Olmsted Legacy award given to a citizen volunteer. The award was presented to Anne Knight and Jerry Arbes, both hard working members of the Friends of Olmsted. An identical award will be displayed in the Park Board Room at 100 Dexter Ave N.
4. Board members were reminded of Mayor Nickels' boards and commission's reception on June 9 at Benaroya Hall, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Formal invitations are being sent by the Mayor's staff.
5. Bruce asked Kathleen to write an article for the Associated Recreation Council's newsletter, Connections, which is mailed to area recreation advisory councils. Kathleen wrote an enlightening article titled "The Life and Times of a Park Board Commissioner." A copy of the newsletter will be given to each Board member.
6. Susan gave an update on her role on the citizen's oversight committee of the King County Conservation Futures Tax.

7. Patricia gave information on "Top Off", a disaster drill that will take place in both Seattle and Chicago on Tuesday, May 13. Parks Department staff are very involved in this drill, as the community centers are Seattle's primary shelter system. Kate remarked that, after the World Trade Organization was held in Seattle, a lesson learned is that spending funds on good planning is less costly than not spending funds good planning.
8. Patricia reported on a recent article on National Public Radio. New York City spent \$10,000 to get some areas of their parks wired as laptop computer "hot spots", - areas where a person can bring their laptop to the park and access the internet without an internet connection. This could be considered for a Seattle park/parks.
9. Sarah will attend a retreat on Friday, May 9, to discuss implementation of the Washington Park Arboretum master plan.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair