

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme
Debbie Jackson
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Amit Ranade

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Holme moved approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the February 23 minutes, and the March 9 agenda. Commissioner Ranade seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed.**

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent reported on the following:

Orchard Street Ravine: The Superintendent will meet on Friday, March 10, with neighbors and neighborhood group representatives to look at how to proceed with the connection before announcing his decision on this project. For more information, please see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/orchardStRavine.htm>
[Note: The Board of Park Commissioners heard a briefing and held a public hearing on this project at its February 9 meeting, followed by a discussion and recommendation at the February 23 meeting. To view the minutes of these meetings, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2006/02-09-06.pdf>, pages 5-10, and <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2006/02-23-06.pdf>, pages 9-10.]

South Lake Union: The Superintendent presented a briefing to City Council last week on this project and asked for an additional \$2.6 million to replace the north and west bulkheads. The bulkheads are now 40 years old and have a life expectancy of 50 years. Mayor Nickels has recommended that the bulkheads be replaced during this project, rather than coming back later. For more information on South Lake Union Park project, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/SouthLakeUnionPark.htm>

South Park Community Center Hosts WASL Camp: South Park Community Center, in partnership with the Denny Community Learning Center, hosted a Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) practice camp during the mid-winter break for middle and high school students. The goal was to give low-income families and at-risk youth extra assistance and practice to prepare for the WASL. The cost of the camp was offset by support from the South Park Advisory Council. For more information on South Park Community Center, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/southpark.htm>. For more information on the Advisory Council, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/SouthPark/advisory.htm>

Hiawatha Community Center Mourns Loss: Dorothy Poplawski, a Hiawatha Community Center Advisory Council member for the past 30 years, passed away on Thursday, February 23. A memorial service was held at the Community Center on February 27. For more information on Hiawatha Community Center Advisory Council, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/hiawatha/advisory.htm>

“Youth Speaks” Program awarded \$25,000: Langston Hughes “Youth Speaks” program was recently awarded \$15,000 from Starbucks and \$10,000 from ArtPatch. These program funds will support writing residencies in local high schools and the annual Teen Poetry slam. For more information on Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/langston.htm>

Dakota Place (Formerly California Substation): The Hiawatha Advisory Council was the successful candidate selected to run this facility, which was purchased from Seattle City Light with Pro Parks Levy funds. For more information on this project, please see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/CaliforniaSubstation.htm>

Aquarium Awarded Grant: The Education Section of the Aquarium was awarded a \$23,000 grant from the Puget Sound Action Team to carry out the Beach Naturalist Program for 2006 and to begin developing ways to replicate the program around Puget Sound. To learn more on the Beach Naturalist Program, please see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/conservation/beach/>. For more general information on the Seattle Aquarium, please see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/>

Specialized Program Coordinator is Honored: Nick Bicknell received the award of ‘Staff Star’ at the annual Association Recreation Council (ARC) meeting on March 6. This honor goes to Parks staff who epitomizes excellence their field of practice, represents Parks professionally, and provide quality public service. For more information on the ARC, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/arc/>

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant: The Associated Recreation Council (ARC) has been awarded a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for community center computer labs. The total grant award is \$377,948.

Upcoming Events

Montlake Community Center: On March 4 the Montlake community, Mayor Nickels, Superintendent Bounds, and Councilmember David Della celebrated the official groundbreaking for the community center’s expansion project. About 70 community members joined with Parks staff on a sunny afternoon to enjoy remarks and light refreshments, and several community members helped lead the official first shovel. Construction began this week. For more information on Montlake Community Center, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/montlakeecc.htm>

Ballard Commons Park Opening: On Saturday, March 4, about 1,000 community members joined six members of the City Council and Mayor Greg Nickels for the opening of this brand new park in Ballard. The event was attended by the neighborhood and skateboard enthusiasts. The day was one of the first beautiful spring days of the year and children played in the water feature, enjoyed a clown making balloon toys, and made arts and crafts. Everyone enjoyed snacks provided by local merchants, and crowded around the skate bowl to watch the skaters. For more information on Ballard Commons Park, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkspaces/BallardCommonsPark.htm>

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. No one signed up to testify.

Discussion/Recommendation: Jefferson Park Expansion Project Schematic Design

Randy Robinson, Seattle Parks' project manager, briefed the Board on this project's schematic design at the February 23 meeting. To learn more about the design and to see drawings, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/pro Parks/projects/JeffersonPark.htm>. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing at that meeting, followed by a public hearing. [To read the minutes of this meeting, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2006/02-23-06.pdf>]. Tonight the Board will discuss the project and make a recommendation to the Superintendent on the schematic design. Elements of the schematic design, presented at the February 23 meeting, are as follows:

This project will construct park improvements in Jefferson Park and the Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) site that was formerly dedicated to water storage at the North and South Beacon Reservoirs.

The Schematic Design Plan envisions an expansive park with large open spaces for passive and active recreation, many inviting pathways that offer spectacular views of downtown Seattle and the region, areas dedicated for families and children, interesting land forms, water features, and opportunities for art. The Schematic Design Plan strives to create a beautiful neighborhood park with regional attributes that reflect the diversity of Beacon Hill.

Park entries will be developed that invite people into the park. Pathways will lead people around and through the new park areas with a network of wide promenade walks and smaller paths designed for different walking experiences. Paths will lead to several viewpoints that take advantage of the spectacular northwest views that make Jefferson Park the great park that it is. The play area will be created for different age groups with exciting opportunities. The plaza will accommodate local events and incorporate reflections of the diversity of the neighborhood. Water will play a role in reminding people of the old reservoirs and also serve a storm water function. Large open grass areas will allow a variety of activities ranging from family picnicking to soccer for little kids. Dedicated fields for soccer and baseball will crown the reservoir lid in the center of the park and the Jefferson Field in the southwest corner of the park will serve soccer, baseball, and Samoan Cricket. Improved access and parking will enhance the Community Center, Lawn Bowling area, and the entrance at 15th Avenue and Dakota Street. Space is also provided for a future pedestrian overpass on Spokane Street, a potential skateboard park, bocce ball courts, and additional tennis and basketball courts.

Some of the highest priority elements of the Schematic Plan will advance to the next stage of design — Design Development. These elements will be determined through the public involvement process or are infrastructure components that sequentially are needed to precede future park development. These elements are concentrated in the former reservoir land in the north central areas of the park and may include: the plaza, some pathways, play area, tennis courts, athletic fields, open lawn areas, viewpoints, picnic areas, storm water features, tree groves, planting, and a new restroom. Budgetary factors will determine how many new park elements will eventually be constructed as part of this project.

Discussion/Recommendation

The Commissioners asked several questions at the February 23 briefing and requested Mr. Robinson provide additional information, which was forwarded to the Commissioners prior to tonight's discussion.

Samoan Cricket Field: Discussion first focused on the possibility of moving the cricket field to the new athletic field that will be built on the reservoir lid. Commissioner Pflaumer asked if it is possible to move the pitch, located at the Samoan cricket field, to the reservoir lid. [Note: In cricket, a pitch is the central strip of the playing area between the wickets. The pitch is 66 feet long and 10 feet wide. The surface is very flat and in amateur matches,

artificial pitches are commonly used. These can be a slab of concrete, overlaid with a coir mat, or artificial turf. The pitch at Jefferson is made from concrete.]

Mr. Robinson answered that some discussions have been held with the cricket league and they think that the reservoir lid field would work for cricket. The Superintendent asked if fencing would be required on the lid to accommodate cricket games to keep the balls from flying out of the area. Mr. Robinson answered that Seattle Public Utility already has some fencing at the site; however, it might need to be higher.

Samoan cricket is played in the summer and doesn't generally require field lights. The 66 foot long pitch would have to be moved twice yearly — onto the cricket field at the beginning of the season and off the field at the end of the season. The cricket league has 500 members and there are approximately as many spectators at the games as there are players. The games are a communal event and often include food and staging for music. Serving/eating food on the synthetic fields is problematic, as food debris can be more damaging to synthetic fields than it is to grass fields. The Superintendent commented that putting staging and having food/music events on the reservoir lid could prove problematic.

Baseball season overlaps with the Samoan cricket season and Jefferson Park athletic fields are not currently large enough to accommodate both. Once the cricket pitch was moved, other sports, some of which have multiple teams, could use the space for practices and games from September-January. These sports would require athletic field lights.

Field distribution in Seattle: Mr. Robinson displayed a map with yellow and red designations to show both Parks' and Seattle School District's athletic field distribution. Commissioner Collins commented that it appeared the number of fields is evenly distributed between north and south Seattle. Mr. Robinson commented that the Beacon Hill area does need additional fields.

Cost of lighting the athletic field over the reservoir: Mr. Robinson was asked at the February 23 public hearing for approximate costs to light the athletic field over the reservoir lid. Staff have now calculated a cost of \$900,000 to illuminate the footprint to accommodate both baseball and soccer games. Seattle Public Utilities requires that all light poles be located outside the reservoir lid. If the electrical conduits were installed at this time to allow for future light installation, the approximate cost would be \$100,000.

Environmental Impact Statement Language: Commissioners asked for the language from the Jefferson Park Site Plan EIS from June 2002 and Mr. Robinson sent the following: “**Light and Glare.** If the Sports Plateau fields are not lit, there would not be a noticeable difference in the appearance of the park interior during late evening and nighttime hours. Should Parks choose to light these fields, nighttime views of the City and Elliott Bay from locations such as the lawn bowling facility, would be substantially affected. The lit area would dominate the immediate foreground and block distant nighttime views of the City. Views from adjacent roadways and residential areas would include a block of light at the location of the fields. The effect of this additional light would be minimal for viewers along Beacon Avenue South, due to the dominance of the existing high-wattage driving range lights. Viewers traveling on 15th Avenue South, residences across 15th Avenue South to the west, and residences across South Spokane Street to the north would notice a greater concentration of light than is currently produced by the driving range lights. Lights for the soccer field and running track would be the most noticeable to the group of viewers to the west of 15th Avenue South as it would be located along the west edge of the bluff above the Terrace (Figure 2-2). Lights for the Sports Plateau could remain on until 11 p.m. when fields are in use. With the exception of a limited number of park users in the vicinity of the lawn bowling facility, impacts associated with lighting the Sports Plateau fields are not expected to be substantial with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures.”

Golf Driving Range Lights: The existing lights were described as 5 light banks mounted over the driving range structure, pointing north. An un-funded proposal shows four more light banks on the west side of the driving range with lights facing east (this configuration reflects community input). The Chair asked that when this un-funded change at the golf driving range is scheduled, that it first be brought before the Board of Park Commissioners and

the Superintendent agreed. Commissioner Holme asked about the height of the lights and Mr. Robinson answered that the lights would be mounted on the poles at 80' high on the existing 115' high poles.

MOTIONS

The Commissioners made three motions, with the second one being rescinded after discussion.

Motion #1:

Commissioner Belbeck asked for clarification on what the Board is being asked to recommend. Mr. Robinson answered that the Board is being asked to recommend the approval of the Schematic Design Plan that, like the 2002 site plan, does not include athletic field lighting on the reservoir lid. Commissioner Belbeck asked if the lighting could be changed in the future and the Superintendent answered that the addition of lighting would require the site plan to be changed.

After several revisions, **Commissioner Holme moved to recommend to the Superintendent the schematic design plan as shown, except for lighting, and that the lighting be voted on as a separate issue. Commissioner Belbeck seconded.**

Discussion of the motion: Commissioner Holme stated that he is primarily concerned with field lighting and parking at the horticulture center. He recommended that the horticulture site be included in the plan to accommodate additional parking, as several people testified that parking needs to be increased at the park and utilizing this site could create additional parking spaces. The Superintendent asked Mr. Robinson if the horticulture parking is inside the footprint of the project and Mr. Robinson answered yes.

Vote on Motion #1 — **Commissioner Jackson abstained as she was absent from the February 9 meeting. Motion passed, with four votes in favor (Belbeck, Collins, Holme, and Ranade.) The Chair does not vote unless there is a tie.**

Motion #2:

Commissioner Holme moved to recommend the Jefferson Park plan be altered to include lighting infrastructure on the athletic fields over the reservoir lid. Commissioner Belbeck seconded.

Discussion: Superintendent Bounds asked for clarification that the motion recommends adopting the plan with no lights, but adding infrastructure for lights. Commissioner Holme stated he believes it will be financially prohibitive to add the lights later and thinks the reservoir lid is the best site on Beacon Hill to add lighting. Those testifying for a lighted field at the reservoir are not asking for the main projects' funds to pay for the lights. He urged the soccer players to find the funding to pay for the actual lighting.

The Chair asked if Commissioner Holme's motion means, if next year funds are available, that the public process would open up again and Commissioner Holme agreed. Commissioner Belbeck stated that she thinks those who testified for lights on the lid did so because they heard there is a possibility of lights being added. Commissioner Collins stated that the neighborhood plan does not include lights at the reservoir lid and if the infrastructure for lights is installed, that implies that lights will be added in the future. The community has spent many years developing the plan for this park and he believes that the lights would interfere with the view and that interference is most important to him. There are many places for soccer players to play, but there is only this one spectacular Jefferson Park view. He has previously supported lighted fields and synthetic surfaces and will continue to do so, but believes the soccer players came late to this process.

Commissioner Holme stated that the current view includes an empty reservoir, a shack, and other manmade items. He doesn't think the poles themselves will have much impact, but believes the lights will. Those who support a lighted field at this site are not Johnny-come-lately — they did not know the reservoir would be hard lidded until the neighborhood plan was far along in the process. In the Board's 2002 public hearing process, over 300 people

signed a petition asking for lights over the fields at Jefferson Park and during the current public hearing have submitted another petition.

Commissioner Holme stated that soccer players feel shut out of the process, that Beacon Hill youth soccer club is the most culturally diverse club in the City and the soccer club provides its own support, that the additional lighted fields will help kids' soccer teams, and that it would be of equal or greater value to adult soccer teams.

Commissioner Ranade stated that he also believes if lighting infrastructure is installed, it implies that lights will someday be installed. The Board has heard lots of citizen testimony and he is uncomfortable separating the decision on lights at the playfield from lights at the reservoir lid.

Commissioner Holme stated that he is asking for a public process that focuses only on the lighting issue. Commissioner Collins stated that the Board has just held a public process and wondered if Commissioner Holme expects a different outcome at a future one. He believes the community is divided on this issue, that the poles are inappropriate at the reservoir lid site, and he urged that the Board make a decision tonight on the lighting issue.

The Superintendent asked Mr. Robinson to summarize what the Board of Park Commissioners recommended in 2002. Mr. Robinson answered that the Board recommended an unlit soccer and baseball field over the reservoir lid. The Superintendent stated that what has changed since that 2002 recommendation was the City's process on lidding its reservoirs, with each one now slated for a hard lid. The Department is now ready to move forward with the plan. Pro Parks Levy Manager Michael Shiosaki commented that the lighting was not a big community issue in 2002 — it came in late during the planning process.

Seattle Public Utilities will not allow any poles to be installed on the reservoir lid itself. Commissioner Ranade asked if there are practical solutions to installing poles under these restrictions. Mr. Robinson answered that the light poles may need to be taller and the lights angled. It would be easier to install the lights for soccer and more difficult to install them to allow for lit baseball games.

Commissioner Holme stated that the only new lighted fields added to the Parks system in over 20 years have been at Lower Woodland Playfield #1 and Genesee Playfield. He would like to leave the opportunity open for further consideration of lights at the reservoir lid and is uncomfortable agreeing to a recommendation that would close the door on further discussion of this opportunity.

Commissioner Jackson stated that she is unsure what compelling new information would be received in a further public process that the Board does not already know. Commissioner Holme stated that Parks staff had recommended no lights be included in the schematic design at the lid. The new public process would look at whether to have lights there or not. Commissioner Ranade then stated that the Board should not vote to recommend that the schematic design be approved with infrastructure for lighting to be installed, and then do a public process on whether to install lights or not. Commissioner Jackson suggested that Commissioner Holme could withdraw Motion #2. He agreed to do so and Commissioner Belbeck, who seconded the motion, also agreed.

Motion #3:

Commissioners Holme moved that Parks staff go through a new formal public process to determine whether to light the Jefferson Park athletic fields. Commissioner Belbeck seconded.

Discussion: Commissioner Collins commented that he is influenced by the petitions, but is not driven by them. It would be difficult for him to change his mind to agree to add lights to the athletic field on the reservoir lid. The Superintendent clarified that this new process would only include a public hearing by the Board of Park Commissioners and not a new series of public workshops. Commissioner Holme requested that staff members mail notice of the additional public hearing to the Jefferson Park community, to all who testified during this public hearing, and to all who attended the public workshops, as well as posting signage at Jefferson Park. **The vote was taken and passed unanimously.**

New/Old Business

- Park Board Committee Reports: Commissioners reported on the various committees they serve on as representatives of the Park Board, as follows:
 - Commissioner Pflaumer serves on the Restore Our Waters committee, which meets monthly and has been focusing on the tunnel over the Viaduct. To read more about Mayor Nickels Restore Our Waters strategy, please see <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/mayor/issues/row.htm> She is also an Ex Officio member of the Seattle Art Museum and noted the progress of the Olympic Art Sculpture Park, slated to open this fall. Several Commissioners recently toured the site of this exciting new park. A huge crane fell over last week at the construction site and, luckily, no one was hurt. For more information on the Olympic Art Sculpture Park, please see <http://iamsamcampaign.org/>
 - Commissioner Collins serves on the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) and showed a very large map of the Washington Park Arboretum and other gardens that comprise the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. State Route 520 runs through the middle of these gardens and the Washington State Department of Transportation project to widening this road is a major issue of concern for the Arboretum. Good news is that Dave Towne, former Woodland Park Zoo Director and Seattle Parks Superintendent, is Governor Gregoire's recent appointee to the ABGC. The Arboretum's Master Plan is now in the implementation stage and an exciting project is the Japanese Garden Entry. A briefing on this project and the South Entry/Madrona Park Terrace project, which recently received an anonymous \$1 million donation, are scheduled before the Park Board this spring. The Arboretum is also implementing a spectacular Wayfinding and Interpretive Sign system, which will be very beneficial to visitors. Commissioner Holme commented that he attended the recent Japanese Garden opening celebration.
 - Commissioner Jackson serves on the Parks Naming Committee. Two new parks were recently named: Pinehurst Pocket Park and Maple Leaf Community Garden.
 - Commissioner Belbeck serves on the Waterfront Committee and, due to work schedules, has recently found the 3-hour, Friday meetings difficult to attend. She hopes her schedule soon allows for a resumption in her attendance to the meetings.
 - Commissioner Holme serves on the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee. The Levy process is nearing its end and the committee is discussing the closure concepts to ensure that all aspects of the Levy are completed.
 - Commissioner nominee, Jackie Ramels, agreed to represent the Board on the Seattle Parks Foundation, once she is confirmed by City Council.
- Annual Retreat: Commissioners asked that a portion of the retreat focus on the Department's public involvement process and that the 30 minutes allowed for a briefing and question and answer session from the Director of Ethics Commission be shortened. The Board will also spend time on its communication procedures.
- Mayor's Letter: Board members received a letter from Mayor Nickels earlier today, asking the Board to consider a review process of the Department's public involvement policy. It was moved and approved that Commission Chair Pflaumer draft the Board's response to the Mayor. The Board asked staff to gather information from Parks Departments in U.S. cities with populations comparable to Seattle on their public involvement policies. The Board will discuss this further at the annual retreat.
- Urban Cities Conference: Commissioners Pflaumer and Collins will both attend the Urban Cities Conference to be held in Chicago in May.
- Commissioner Holme:
 - Study Circles: These are used by cities and municipalities to work on contentious issues and provide facilitators. The study circles have been found to be very effective and could be helpful in working out neighborhood differences regarding park projects.
 - Trees at Stan Sayres: Park staff will follow up with the Horticulture unit for a report on a number of trees that were moved near Stan Sayres Pits last summer and subsequently died.

Commissioner Holme would like to ensure that staff members have measures to avoid this happening in the future. The information is to be sent to all the Commissioners and the Superintendent.

- Magnuson Park Athletic Fields: A few weeks ago, the Board received an e-mail regarding funding shortages for the synthetic rugby field at Magnuson Park. The Superintendent commented that there is a shortage of \$750,000 for the project and the tradeoff would be no lights for the field. Commissioner Holme asked the Superintendent to keep the Board apprised of any developments.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____