



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2007

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams
John Barber
Terry Holme
Jackie Ramels, Acting chair

Excused:

Amit Ranade, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

B.J. Brooks, Interim Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. In separate motions **Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Adams seconded, approval of the agenda, June 28 minutes, and July 12 minutes as corrected. Motions carried.** Commissioner Ramels acknowledged the correspondence the Board has received during the past two weeks.

Superintendent's Report

Interim Deputy Superintendent B.J. Brooks reported on several park items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Aquarium Revenues Soar: The Aquarium had a very successful re-opening in June with several new and exciting exhibits. Revenues are up 48 percent over the same time last year: revenue for June 2006 was \$453,000 and \$673,000 for June 2007. Aquarium Director John Braden and his staff are doing a great job! For more information on the Aquarium, see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?&pid=183&srcid=-2>.

Northwest Seaport Notified to Remove Wawona: Last week Parks sent a letter to Northwest Seaport notifying the organization leadership that it needs to begin working with the City immediately to remove the Schooner Wawona from Lake Union Park. Construction at the park has reached a critical phase, necessitating the removal of the ship by mid-October. Parks is working closely with Seattle Parks Foundation and the park planners. For more information on Lake Union Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/lakeunionpark.htm>. For more information on the Wawona, see <http://www.nwseaport.org/wawona.html>.

Parks Holds Successful Summer Concerts: Parks is holding summer concerts at Cal Anderson Park, Golden Gardens Bathhouse, and Othello Parks, as well as showing movies and scheduling buskers and other events in the downtown parks. Events have been highly successful and well attended. Approximately 700 people attended the Cal Anderson concert, 200 people came to the Golden Gardens event, and Othello Park was overflowing with concert goers. The concerts continue on August 12 and September 9. For more information on the concerts and other summer events in Seattle's parks, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/SummerInTheCity.htm>.

Lower Woodland Skatepark: Following a citizen lawsuit and a ruling this week, construction will begin on the new skatepark in mid-August. Parks will issue the notice to proceed to the contractor within the next two weeks. For more information on the skatepark, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/maintenance/lowerwoodland.htm>.

Commissioner Holme asked if this is the end of the lawsuit and Interim Superintendent Brooks answered that it isn't a final resolution; however, the City's attorneys believe Parks will receive a favorable ruling. She feels comfortable moving ahead with the construction. Commissioner Holme asked that the Board be kept informed of the lawsuit and be sent a copy of the latest ruling. Parks staff will send this information to the Board.

International District Pro Parks Acquisition: The Parks, Education, Library and Labor, committee (PELL) voted to support expansion of Hing Hay Park through the acquisition of the adjacent post office property by negotiation or condemnation. The full City Council must also vote on this. Interim Superintendent Brooks will keep the Board informed on progress of this acquisition.

Freeway Park Update: Parks staff gave an update to the Freeway Park Neighborhood Association (FPNA) regarding the progress and plans for capital improvements to the park. Programming at Freeway Park is also going well. Lunchtime events include a vendor, the popular Friends of the Library book sale cart, and either a musical performer (amplified to overcome the noise of the fountains and traffic) or a free weekly tai chi class (which had 12 participants last week.) FPNA, Parks, and Downtown Seattle Association have worked as a team to set up *Dancing 'Til Dusk* — five Thursday evenings of free dance instruction and dance time with live music and an outdoor dance floor. Starting on August 2, each Thursday night will feature a different dance style ranging from waltz to Zydeco and salsa to swing. For more information on Freeway Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/FreewayPark.htm>.

Upcoming Events

Pinehurst Pocket Park: The dedication and celebration for Pinehurst Pocket Park is scheduled for Saturday, July 28, at 11:00 a.m. at 11700 19th Ave. N.E. The Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund contributed \$100,000 toward the construction of a quiet park featuring native plants, a plaza incorporating children's games in its surface, and several pieces of custom art.

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.

Update Briefing/Public Hearing: Dexter Pit Project

At its June 28 meeting, Patrick Donahue, Seattle Parks' project manager, presented a briefing on the Dexter Pit Project. Tonight he gave the Board updated information, immediately followed by a public hearing.

Verbal Update Briefing and Board Discussion

Mr. Donahue introduced Mark Brands of SiteWorkshop, project consultant, and Kelly Davidson of the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs. The Board heard a briefing on this project at its June 28 meeting. Minutes of that meeting are available at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2007/06-28-07.pdf>. Mr. Donahue reported no changes to the

project since that briefing. He presented the project overview in a Powerpoint presentation and briefly described the project background, concept development, concept plan view, benches, bioswale, gambion walls, and the walking paths.

Board Questions/Comments

Gambion walls: Mr. Donahue pointed out the proposed location of the gambion walls. These walls are constructed of gravel enclosed in mesh wire and will mimic the history of the site as a gravel quarry. Commissioner Adams asked if the gambion wall will be low maintenance. Mr. Donahue answered that the wall has a 30-year lifespan and unless they are vandalized, the maintenance should be low.

Artwork: Commissioner Barber asked if the artist will guarantee the integrity of the art piece. Mr. Donahue answered that the stainless steel has a lifespan of 30 years. Ms. Davidson commented that the artwork is guaranteed for two years, which is the City's standard for art projects.

Wetland designation: The site is currently designated as a wetland, with the very lowest rating that can still be designated a wetland. Parks has been told by the Corp of Engineers that it cannot add water sources in the future to keep the site as a wetland and cannot ask for it to be reclassified.

Tree removal/modification: Commissioner Barber referred to the concept drawing showing the trees to be limbed, with vegetation remaining nearer the tops of the trees. Mr. Brands answered that he does not expect the limbing to be to the height depicted in the concept plan. The plan calls for approximately 1/3 of the trees (total of seven) to be removed and some limbing performed so Seattle Police Department can see into the park and increase safety.

Vegetation/buffer: Mr. Donahue commented that the center of the park is very quiet and located away from traffic. Commissioner Barber asked if the intent is for it to be a meditative spot and Mr. Donahue answered yes. Commissioner Holmes commented that Commissioners previously were told that the artist would like the blackberries to remain right next to the gambion walls. He urged that a vegetation buffer be included in the project. Mr. Donahue and Mr. Brands answered that there are extensive blackberry vines in the site which will be removed to 20' from the gambion walls. The long-term goal is to remove all the blackberries and other invasive plants; however, the budget does not allow for that at this time. The current plan is to leave the remaining blackberries and keep them from reinvading the buffer and park area. Native plants will be planted to help deter the blackberries. Volunteers will be solicited to help with the invasive removal.

Maintenance funds: Commissioner Ramels asked if the \$750,000 budget includes any maintenance funds and Mr. Donahue answered that \$12,000 is slated for maintenance.

Outlook: Commissioner Adams asked if there are any major barriers to this project. Mr. Donahue answered no, the project is moving in the right direction. There is a long permit process ahead before any construction begins.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. Speakers were reminded that they have up to three minutes each to speak and will be timed. Seven citizens testified.

Don Harper: He is a member of the Queen Anne Community Council and the Seattle Parks Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee. He was very surprised at the beginning of this Pro Parks Levy project to learn that the Queen Anne Community Council was not involved. Parks' initial public involvement effort for this project was poor. However, he is now impressed with the project that is being presented. He thanked Mr. Donahue, Ms. Davidson, Mr. Brands, and the artist, Andy Cao, for their work to bring the project to this point. He is very impressed at the amazing job they did to bring the project back into scope. His only concern is the cost to light the art project.

Matt Long: He manages Viewpoint Retirement Community on the north side of the park and is very pleased with the current plan. He appreciated seeing the plans for the location of the pathway. The cedar trees at the site have been a source of real concern to the residents. He is pleased that the trees will be trimmed and that some of them will be

removed as homeless people now live in the area. His other concern is that the park be maintained well once it is completed. Congratulations on a much better plan for the park and community.

Stephanie Warden: She is a resident of Windwatch condominiums, located next to the park. She thanked the Board for the public hearing and thanked the City and project planners for this great new park. She appreciates the difficulty of the both the design and the siting. And she looks forward to looking down into the artists' lighted project that depicts the Big Dipper constellation. The blackberries provide slope stability; don't remove until there is funding for a good replacement. She asked that this new park be renamed from "Dexter Pit."

Susan Pazina: She is concerned with pedestrian access into the park. Cars speed by as they are going south on Dexter Avenue. She asked that a crosswalk be added and the sidewalks completed. She is concerned with security in the park, soil stability, access, and parking. She has been living in the area since the 1980's and really appreciates this new green space for the community's enjoyment.

Sharon Levine: She helped save this parcel of land so it could be developed into a park. She is concerned with the public involvement policy and will send the Board her concerns in writing. She has several other concerns with the project: the design does not reflect the Queen Anne area; only the nearby condo residents will appreciate the light portion of the project; there is no water feature or reflection of vegetation; the "pods" are too large for the site at 12 foot tall; there is no written tree plan; all the cedar trees should be retained; and there is no mural with the names of local residents. She believes the Board should make the designer go back to the drawing board and involve Queen Anne residents in the project. She thanked Mr. Donahue for taking over the project.

David Johnson: He is also a resident of Windwatch condominiums, is grateful for the new park, and looks forward to using it. He noted that there seems to be a construction project at the south end of the park that may be encroaching on park property. Mr. Donahue will check on this and report to the Commissioners.

Helen Swift: She is also a resident of Windwatch and believes this park has a great design. She didn't realize this area was part of Queen Anne. [Mr. Brand listed the boundaries of Queen Anne which does include this area.] Many local residents enjoy walking through the area and she thinks the park will work well for the community.

The public hearing closed.

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Commissioners had a number of questions and comments on the project, which have been grouped by topic.

Artist selection process/public involvement: Commissioner Barber stated that he was hearing that neighbors were involved in the design and asked for a description of the public involvement process and how the project got to this point. Did the Arts Commission hold a public hearing on the project/artist selection? Mr. Donahue answered that he has been working on this project for the past three months. The initial project manager held one public meeting and then accepted a position with another agency. Mr. Donahue then held a public meeting in April. At that meeting, the project was revised by the community and artist. A second public meeting was held in the community and the current design was presented at that meeting. Commissioner Holme asked Parks staff to e-mail the Board a timeline of the public involvement process so it is included in the public record. He believes that public involvement should be front and center.

Commissioner Barber asked about the cost aspect and competitive bid process for the artist. Ms. Davidson and Mr. Donahue answered that the \$130,000 of the budget is for the installation and fabrication of the art project, while the artist will receive \$35,000. This is the first artist led Parks' project. Ms. Davidson will send the Board a copy of the Arts & Cultural Affairs' written policy on hiring artists. Near the end of the meeting, under New/Old Business, Commissioner Barber asked that any such future projects ensure that the Arts & Cultural Affairs Office artist selection process satisfies the Parks Department's public involvement policy.

Electricity: Commissioner Holme asked about the electricity for the art project. Mr. Donahue answered that it is yet unknown what the cost of the electricity will be; he and Mr. Brands are determining this with City Light and will have the information by the next Park Board meeting.

Tree removal: Commissioner Holme commented that the Park Board gets “hammered” on tree removal and urged that due diligence be used to inform the public prior to any tree removal. Mr. Brands stated that the frontage is Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) property. He and Mr. Donahue are waiting to meet with the SDOT forester to discuss removing 7 of the 30 trees. Due diligence will be used to inform the public of any tree removal. Mr. Donahue is very familiar with Seattle Parks’ tree removal process. He has recently worked on the Occidental Square tree removal, which has received a great deal of publicity.

Naming of Park: Commissioner Holme noted that Commissioner Ramels is the Board’s representative to the Park Naming Committee. He agreed with citizen testimony that this park is a good candidate for a new name.

Access/Pedestrian Safety/Parking: Commissioner Holme referred to the testimony regarding access and pedestrian safety and asked if staff will work with SDOT on these. Mr. Donahue answered yes, staff must address these with SDOT. Commissioner Holme commented that it is very helpful for the community to directly contact SDOT to help initiate improvements. Commissioner Ramels commented that she is also concerned with access into the park and asked if the only entrance is from Dexter Avenue. Mr. Donahue answered yes, the other bordering properties are privately owned.

Commissioner Adams asked where visitors will park. Mr. Donahue answered that they may park on Dexter Avenue. The frontage is owned by SDOT and will not accommodate a parking lot. It is expected that most visitors will walk to the park.

Vote on project: Commissioners discussed whether to vote tonight on a recommendation to the Interim Superintendent or wait until the next meeting. They determined that it is best to vote at the August 9 meeting. In the meantime, staff will send the additional information the Commissioners requested. Written testimony will be accepted through Wednesday, August 8.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Donahue, Mr. Brands, and Ms. Davidson.

Briefing: Gas Works Park Sediment Project

Colleen Browne, Acting Director of Seattle Parks’ Project Planning and Development Division, Sarah McKearnan, Seattle Public Utilities Strategic Policy Advisor, and Pete Rude, Seattle Public Utilities Senior Sediment Scientist, presented a briefing on the Gas Works Park Sediment Removal project. Commissioners received a copy of the written briefing paper prior to this meeting.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for informational purposes only. No Board action is required at this time.

Briefing Objectives

Seattle Parks and Recreation is working with the City's lead agency, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), to develop a cleanup action plan for sediments near Gas Works Park. This briefing provides:

- An overview of the project, covering: why the site is contaminated, how the project is organized, expected schedule for construction, public outreach and potential impacts to Parks operations; and
- A description of a likely sampling effort this September in the northeast corner of the Park.

Project History and Background

- The former Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) at Gas Works Park (1906 – early 1960s), and other activities in the vicinity of the plant contaminated the soil and offshore sediments.

- Clean-up is a regulatory requirement under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) administered by the Department of Ecology (Ecology).
- Cleanup of Gas Works **Uplands** was completed by the City and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) in 2001.
- Ecology named the City and PSE “Potentially Liable Persons” (PLPs) for sediment contamination in 2002.
- Mayors Office asked SPU to lead on behalf of all affected departments – SPU, Parks, Fleets and Facilities, and Police.
- MTCA cleanups have defined phases: 1) Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS; **current phase**); 2) Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) and Consent Decree; 3) Remedial Design; 4) Construction; 5) Monitoring and Maintenance
- Goal of cleanup is to protect human health and the environment (e.g. organisms living on/in the lake bottom.)

Progress on Gas Works Sediment Project to Date

- “Area of Investigation” includes 40 acres of sediments wrapping around the Park (See Figure #1.1). There is an Eastern Study Area and a Western Study Area.
- RI/FSs for each area are in progress.
- Significant scientific information has been collected. It shows:
 - Primary contaminants in the sediments are petroleum-based PAHs (coal tars) and metals;
 - PAHs came from historic operations of the gas plant and other nearby industrial facilities; and
 - Sources of metals are likely historic and current operations at the adjacent shipyard
- City and PSE will finalize reports (RI/FSs) to Ecology in 2008. These reports detail the nature of the contamination and identify a preferred approach to cleanup.
- Capping is most likely remedy for whole site; construction will occur 2010/2011.

Opportunities and Impacts of Project

- Opportunity to restore habitat in major Chinook migratory corridor.
- Opportunity to build shoreline boardwalk / path with interpretive signage (to prevent human access to salmon habitat areas and discourage swimming).
- During construction, Park will be open to the public.
- There will be access restrictions near construction areas to protect public safety.

Public Involvement Process

- Limited public outreach to date on sediment cleanup.
- SPU and Parks will launch informal outreach effort with Gas Works Park stakeholders and Wallingford/Fremont community leaders this fall.
- Ecology begins formal public review in 2008.
- During design, SPU will work with Parks on structured public involvement process to gather input on shoreline design elements.

Upcoming NE Corner Investigation

- This fall, SPU, Parks and PSE will conduct sampling in the Park to test soil.
- Investigation addresses whether there are areas of tar underground that could migrate to sediments and recontaminate cleaned-up area.
- Upland tar “seeps” have already occurred and been removed by Parks staff.
- Investigation will take 2-3 days in August, 5-7 days in September.
- No Parks events will be scheduled in play barn (near study area) at this time.
- Park visitor safety will be addressed through establishment of fenced-off “exclusion” zone and noise and air monitoring.
- SPU will work with Parks and Ecology to provide public notice (signs, mailing).

Additional Information:

- Contact Colleen Browne (Parks: 684-4155); Sarah McKearnan (SPU: 615-0567)

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Commissioner Ramels thanked staff for the early “heads up” to the Board and reminded Commissioners that this is an early briefing to give the Board an overview of this large project. The work may take years to complete and Commissioners’ questions at this early stage are best related to the overall scope of the project, rather than detailed questions.

Ms. Brown introduced Ms. McKearnan and Mr. Rude and Ms. McKearnan thanked the Board for hearing the presentation. She is the policy lead on the project and Mr. Rude is the technical lead. They next gave a Powerpoint presentation on the project, pointed out affected areas at Gas Works Park, and reviewed the information in the written briefing.

Commissioner Barber understands that some of the area was previously capped and asked how the re-cap will be done. Ms. McKearnan answered that the current cap doesn’t extend to the end of the park. The process used to cap will be to excavate and fill with clean material and then create habitat. There will be no capping in the offshore area.

Commissioner Adams asked about the financing to pay for the sediment removal. Ms. McKearnan answered that determination is made by who is the current owner and who is responsible for the contamination. The costs for each will be determined by negotiation, mediation, the courts, and a process between Puget Sound Energy and the City of Seattle. Once that determination is reached, the City must then determine how to allocate its costs between Seattle Public Utilities and other General Fund departments. Commissioner Adams asked if there is any federal financing available. Ms. McKearnan answered that there is good State funding, which could pay up to 50% of the sediment removal costs.

Commissioner Holme referred to the “crossover” property ownership and asked if the majority of the site is owned by the State of Washington. Ms. McKearnan agreed and stated that the City owns one acre of the land. Commissioner Holme pointed out that the State did not name itself as liable, as a current owner, to help pay for the cleanup. Ms. McKearnan stated that it is up to the City to determine if the State is liable.

Commissioner Holme asked if dredging will affect navigation at Gas Works Park. Mr. Rude answered that there is adequate space for boats to go around the dredging area. The water depth generally drops quickly to 30-40 feet. However, the more shallow water depth at the Harbor Patrol is of concern. A different type of cap will be used in that area.

Commissioner Holme asked if Northlake Shipyard Dry Dock is still a property owner in the affected area. Ms. McKearnan answered that it is, although it is outside the area she pointed out earlier on the map. It continues to produce contaminants, which is a serious concern for this project. The City wants sediment removal completed at North Lake Dry Dock concurrent with this project and wants measures put into place at Northlake to ensure it doesn’t re-contaminate the Gas Works Park area.

Commissioner Holme recommended that staff post the project site as early as possible to keep the public informed of this project. Ms. McKearnan answered that the City is committed to good public involvement. Commissioner Ramels asked if Seattle Parks’ public involvement policy will be followed. Ms. Brown answered yes, that the current policy will be used as a foundation and other levels added to it. This will be a lengthy public involvement policy, and Parks is the lead on this portion.

Commissioner Holme asked if it is likely the land cap will look natural. Mr. Rude answered that it is unknown at this early stage. Ms. Brown answered that staff will try to make the cap look as much like the park as possible and less “barrier-like.” Ms. McKearnan added that it is a goal to have design choices; however, the project must also meet Department of Energy requirements. Everyone involved wants the cap to work for the park users and be creative, as well as meet requirements.

Interim Superintendent Brooks thanked Ms. McKearnan, Mr. Rude, and Ms. Brown for the briefing. Parks’ goal is to work closely with other City Departments on this project. Parks will come back to the Board to present a briefing on the

public involvement policy. This is a very complex project that will require a more extensive public involvement process than covered in the Department's current policy. Parks has been working with the Law Department on the posting and staff have been briefed on the project so they will know where to direct questions.

Ms. Brown will keep the Park Board informed of new developments.

Old/New Business

Project Advisory Team: Commissioner Barber attended his first meeting as a Park Board representative to the Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan's Project Advisory Team. He briefly reported on the extent of the project and brought a copy of the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP.) He also referred to issues challenging the VMP, tree replacement, Olmsted requirements, community issues, and viewpoints. Commissioners asked for time on the next agenda for all committee representatives to report on their committee's recent activities.

Retreat Agenda Item: Recently a Commissioner contacted a citizen to clarify testimony on the Woodland Park Zoo garage. The Board heard the testimony during Oral Communications. The Commissioner called the citizen to clarify her testimony during his review of the draft minutes and then asked that the minutes be changed. Commissioner Ramels suggested the Board discuss in what ways the Board contacts citizens at its next retreat.

Immersion Weekends: Commissioner Ramels recently logged into the City of Chicago's website and noted they have a tourism program called "Immersion Weekends."

http://egov.cityofchicago.org/city/webportal/portalContentItemAction.do?BV_SessionID=@@@@1354081717.1186079996@@@@&BV_EngineID=cccfaaddlhkeglhcefecelldffhdfn.0&contentOID=536949135&contentType=COC_EDITORIAL&topChannelName=SubAgency&entityName=Tourism&deptMainCategoryOID=-536897306&blockName=Cultural+Affairs/Tourism/Content&context=dept

Commissioner Ramels wondered if this program could be modified for "immersion tours" of Seattle's parks. Interim Superintendent Brooks will discuss this great suggestion with Enterprise Director Eric Friedli. She has also asked Enterprise staff to package information on Seattle's parks presented at last fall's National Recreation and Park Association national meeting that was held in Seattle. The information was presented by Seattle Parks' staff and was very well received by park representatives from around the country.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Amit Ranade, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____