

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2013

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

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<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Antoinette Angulo
Bob Edmiston
Diana Kincaid, Chair
Barbara Wright
Jourdan Keith, Vice-chair
Brice Maryman
Yazmin Mehdi
Tom Tierney
Mazohra Thami

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator
Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Diana Kincaid called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Commissioner Kincaid asks for approval of the Agenda, August and September minutes and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence; Commissioner Wright approves, seconded by Commissioner Mehdi. The consent items are approved.

To hear and view the full meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591331>

Chair's Report

Mazohra Thami is the new Get Engaged member of the Board of Park Commissioners. She is working on her Masters in Architecture from the University of Washington. She is a Washington native and is passionate about parks.

The Park Board will hold its retreat on December 5. A retreat committee has been formed. Commissioner Mehdi, Commissioner Tierney and Parks staff will work to create an agenda. The goal of the retreat will be to create a work plan for 2014 and create subcommittees to review policies and address issues.

Oral communication from the audience

Dorsol Plants – works for the Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition – King County study found 1 in 5 kids are obese and 1/3 of those who participated in the study admitted drinking soda that day. Dorsol supports the soda tax idea as long as the tax is high enough to affect consumption.

David Zaitzeff – thanks the Park Board for not passing anti-nudity policy because he walks in a thong or brazilian around Green Lake almost every day of the summer. He would like to know whether the Park Board considers his garment “reasonable affront” because that is the legal verbiage used and he wants to make sure the law is on his side if there was ever a complaint lodged against him.

Donna Hartmann-Miller – 2 things to say.

- The soda tax should not be general funds money
- Approves the Park Board going back to 2 meetings a month

Sherrie Rhodes – lives adjacent to Magnolia off-leash area; this off-leash area needs to go away. She and her neighbors deal with incessant barking dogs and terrible smells and it has diminished her quality of life. SPR does not do anything about it and the residents feel they have no recourse.

Sugar sweetened drink tax

Hall Walker from the City Budget Office presents the proposed tax increase on sugar-sweetened beverages.

- This includes: soda, energy drinks, sports drinks and juice with added caloric sweeteners.
- This does not include: beverages sweetened with non-caloric sweeteners, natural juices/water mixtures that contain no added caloric sweeteners, products where the primary ingredient is milk, dietary aides, infant formula, alcoholic beverages or unsweetened drinks to which someone could add caloric sweetener (coffee/tea).
- The city can impose taxes using the business municipal license tax for purposes of revenue and regulation.
- The rate would be \$.01-.02/ounce; this would equal about a 10%-20% increase in the cost of these beverages. Study shows a 10-20% increase in cost would equal a 10% decrease in consumption but there is not a lot of supporting data.
- The purpose of the tax is to help combat obesity and obesity-related health risks such as diabetes and heart disease.
- The estimated \$20million would be spent on healthier food for kids in schools or more activities and hours in community centers; activities and programs, that would foster healthier lifestyles.
- This money would be in addition to funding from Levy and/or general fund
- Commissioner Keith cautions that stopping them from drinking caloric drinks could lead them to think other drinks are better when, in fact, they have their own negative health effects. *Non-sugar sweetened drinks are*
- Since this would be a tax on the business, the business owners would decide how to distribute the tax. This means they could distribute the cost of the tax by increasing the cost of each product a little instead of taxing sugary drinks.
- Commissioner Mehdi does not understand why Hall is briefing the Park Board on this issue; she is confused by how the mayor sees this revenue source as opposed to the general fund and where the money would go. She feels there are too many questions and unknown variables to really evaluate it.

Panel Presentation: Park Connections and Transportation

The mission of Seattle Neighborhood Greenways is to be an active partner with the City of Seattle to create a connected network of safe and healthy streets that are irresistibly pleasurable for people of all ages and abilities to get around while walking or biking.

We have around 1,000 volunteers in 23 Neighborhood Greenway groups, which represent most of the city. Our ages range widely and include people from high school to well into their 70's.

- Parents of school age children get involved because they want to raise children who are healthy, self-sufficient and traffic savvy. If kids can get themselves to and from school safely like we did when we were children, parents have more free time.
- Our retiree volunteers want to be able to get around with dignity and comfort in their own communities. Gracefully aging in place is their goal. They join because they want to ensure that they have safe walking routes to local businesses, parks, community centers, libraries and transit stops.
- Perceptive local business owners who are faced with limited on-street parking are realizing that desirable walking and biking routes are a way to expand their business potential.
- Community Councils are getting involved because they want to maintain and enhance the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

The greenways video is found here: <http://youtu.be/DNNxwF1BPKE>

Sam Woods from SDOT

- Neighborhood greenways will provide a family-friendly network to various community amenities such as parks, libraries and schools.
- The streets selected to be greenways parallel high volume arterials and have pre-existing low speeds
- 70% of Seattle streets are residential which allows for a wide swath of options for greenways.
- 244 miles of greenways in the updated Bike Master Plan
- They want these greenways to connect to urban trail networks (ie burke gilman)
- Tools used to designate greenways are signage, sharrows and arterial crossings
- Greenways designed for usage by people of all ages and abilities; predominantly family use; not high-speed commuters
- SDOT to work with SPR on park connections and bicycle infrastructure in parks
- Park board requesting a written report in 6 months on progress regarding greenways between SDOT and SPR

Bicycle Use Policy Briefing

Original Bicycle Use Policy was written in 1995; mountain biking has gained popularity and the sport continues to grow.

- There are well-established standards for trails that allow shared use by bikers, hikers and horses.
- SPR has many large natural areas that could use love – bringing in trail systems could be great and the trail could be designed in a way that would minimize impact.
- I-5 Colonnade – brought positive use and energy to an area that had been dingy and full of homeless encampments; however, this mountain biking park is not beginner or kid-friendly.

- St. Edwards – a WA state park; trails open to bikes for 20 years and the forest is well taken care of and isn't eroding. It allows great access and amenities to walkers and bikers.
- David Graves spoke with NRU people and they said if the trail was built correctly, they could sustain the impacts from bikers and hikers. SPR trail people feel they could handle it.
- International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) designs trails that will last and not require much maintenance.
- Speed controls are designed into the course by using rock queues or twists – this gives the mountain biker the feeling of going fast but not fast enough to create a hazardous condition for hikers and others.
- SPR would look to volunteer groups to construct trails and there would be a forest stewardship/restoration and trail maintenance agreement; the mountain bikers would have to work in coordination with Green Steward Partnership (GSP).
- The Board of Park Commissioners had many questions and David has offered to answer them all at the November 14 Park Board meeting. October 31 is deadline for Commissioners to get their questions to David Graves regarding the Bicycle Use policy.
- Written public comments will be accepted until November 12.

Public Hearing on Bicycle Use Policy

Brock Howell – Policy and Government Affairs Manager at Cascade Bicycle Club; CBC has 22,000 supporters in Seattle. Emphasizes the Bike Master Plan is not final and encourages Parks to work with SDOT. CBC teaches people to ride bikes on the grass and dirt at Magnuson.

Catherine Alexander – Friends of Seward Park, requests that bikes be kept off trails and kept on the pavement at Seward Park and that the Bicycle Use policy be changed.

Cathy Tuttle – Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, she speaks to families who are sad they have to drive to parks to ride bikes. Now is a great opportunity to advocate for children so they can ride to get to places.

Jodi Connelly – Seattle Bike Advisory Board – this is a critical conversation regarding the Bike Master Plan. Thanks Parks for already engaging with the Bicycle Advisory Board to work on the mountain bike policy. There needs to be more equitable access in the city.

Paul Shannon – Grateful for the process by which citizens who live near parks can be a part of decisions. Parks and citizens groups provide a “local laboratory” to allow new things to be tried.

Ryan Harrison – 2 things to say

- Works for Bike Works and wants equity and access to parks – Bike Works get bikes in hands of under-served families and they are built for off-road use.
- Rides through parks and greenways during his daily commute; he adapts to his environment and the ride through the parks and on the greenways are calming, unlike the frantic, fast-paced riding to keep up with the cars.

Don Brubeck – President of West Seattle Bike Connections supports SPR to enlarge bicycle use and expanding connectivity with greenways. Tells a story about his nephew who was a freshman in high school and lost his older brother; mountain biking and helping with the I-5 Colonnade project turned his life around.

Mark Cannon – Ophthalmologist and avid cyclist. Cardiovascular health is good for the eyes. Wishes there was mountain biking nearby and is excited for greenways because it will get his willing but wary wife to ride with him.

Tom Lindy – Supports Cheasty Greenspace as a treasure for its natural habitat but feels the opposition is wrong for not wanting the mountain bikers. The Cheasty Greenspace is choked with invasive species and homeless people. Bringing in mountain biking would serve as a social and economic benefit because Seattle would have a new feature to bring people into the neighborhoods.

Randy Surf – Lived here for 25 years and raised kids here; supports building mountain bike trails because:

- he raised boys and they need opportunities to do stupid stuff in appropriate ways;
- brings people closer to the woods and nature and this connection to nature is what will save the world
- another way to combat childhood obesity
- brings a sense of community and these spaces need to be created in all neighborhoods

Paul Talbert – Friends of Seward Park; thinks biking on paved surfaces at Seward Park is great and they host many bicycling events at Seward Park such as Bicycle Sunday. Would like to see the Magnificent Forest, Seattle's largest piece of virgin forest in Seattle, protected by updating the Bicycle Use Policy to disallow mountain biking on trails 60" or wider.

Allan Smith – Friends of Seward Park, does not want mountain bikes in Seward Park. He also has a problem with greenways – the city needs to stop treating cyclists like children who can't learn to ride with traffic. Instead of creating "safer" places to ride, people need to be educated on how to ride on city streets.

Ruth Williams – GSP Forest Steward – requests that SPR approach the changing of the Bicycle Use Policy with caution because allowing mountain bikes does not increase availability but expands the usage. Inquired as to whether SPR has thought about how the new ADA trails will work in conjunction with hiking and biking. She feels SPR should focus on ADA first and then biking. Mountain bikers do not have good reputations with the forest stewards and environmentalists.

Troy Kasper – Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance – project manager for building trails on Beacon Hill, coaches kids in mountain biking; the all-dirt camps and mountain biking classes are all full. The sport is growing!

Matthew Weintaub – Cyclo-cross racer and forest ecologist who supports mountain biking in parks and would like to suggest an adaptive/progressive management style of the greenspaces.

Martin Niset – Friends of Cheasty Greenspace – performed restoration on Southend of Cheasty Greenspace; thinks updating the Bicycle Use policy would bring positive use into the area.

- Mountain biking is another activity that helps combat obesity.
- The greenspace is only used by homeless now
- When they brought up putting a mountain bike track in there the first time they had over 100,000 hours of pledged volunteer hours because people want it in the city.

Mary Dejong – Friends of Cheasty Greenspace – She supports the changes in the Bicycle Use policy because studies show that exposure to nature can change a person's emotional and psychological well-being resulting in less violence in the community and better health. She feels there are currently too many variables that prevent youth from going to the woods.

Joel Dejong – Friends of Cheasty Greenspace and volunteer GSP – there is a lot of volunteer support; people and organizations came out to support the idea of mountain biking at Cheasty and equaled \$415,000 worth of volunteer hours.

John Barber – Leschi Community Council and former Park Board member feels that SPR should focus on the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Ensure that SPR integrates the neighborhood's thoughts and feelings in their plans and wants to preserve the natural areas.

Celeste Gilman – Supports the changes to the Bicycle Use Policy and Cheasty Greenspace. Her 3-year old daughter loves riding bikes with her husband. They need safe places to ride. The youth do not have enough to do and biking is good for them. Currently, Cheasty is dead and needs positive human interaction.

Nathaniel Ekonicek – Cheasty Greenspace – wants more access available through the updates to the Bicycle Use Policy to expand access and increase usage.

Gary Gaffner – President of the Discovery Park Advisory Council – Invitation to bicyclists to come to Discovery Park and bike on their parade grounds and through Fort Lawton – if the roads can handle tanks, then they can handle mountain biking.

Donna Hartmann-Miller

- Bike policy – walking is also popular in parks – the separation of walking and biking at Greenlake works. She suggests having a height restriction in the urban forests for bicycling.
- The policy for trails and trail maintenance needs to be for urban forests because there is a smaller ecology and footprint.

Old/New Business

- Magnuson Park Advisory Committee invites everyone to the Building 30 celebration. SPR spent \$8million renovating the building which is now home to wonderful artists and non-profits.
- Yazmin requests that at the beginning of a briefing, the Commissioners given the purpose of the briefing.

Commissioner Keith moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Tierney seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 9:05 pm.

APPROVED:

Jordan I. Keith

Diana Kincaid, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE 11/14/13

Jordan Keith, Vice Chair