

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 22, 2001

PRESENT: Bruce Bentley, Chair

Karen Daubert

Susan Golub

Michael Shiosaki

Kathleen Warren

EXCUSED: James Fearn

STAFF: Patricia McInturff, Deputy Superintendent

Michele Daly, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Bentley at 7:08 p.m. The agenda was approved as distributed.

Correspondence: Letters from Stephanie Colony regarding the Arboretum Master Plan, League of Women Voters regarding alternative sites for the new aquarium, **e-mails** from Karin Link regarding siting of the aquarium, Wendy Truitt regarding public tennis courts at Sand Point, Mr. Carlson et al relating to the Seacrest water taxi and a copy of the Superintendent's water taxi response to the numerous e-mails, **memos** from Fritz Hedges to the Board regarding the Tree Policy interpretation and Ann Hirschi, Urban Forester, regarding the Madrona Ravine with a draft plan attached.

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:

Paul Riggs, Friends of Seacrest, West Seattle resident and scuba diver, protested the loss of the valuable community and recreational asset at Seacrest Park by scuba divers to accommodate the water taxi. The benefits of the transportation needs are far outweighed by the loss of this unique recreational and premiere diving opportunity in Seattle. The dive site location in Elliott Bay makes it a protected, safe and easily accessible area. In addition he does not feel the taxi provides the best critical transportation option for most people in West Seattle. He can get to downtown by Seattle Metro bus from Arbor Heights faster than he could by the water taxi. Transportation issues are important but

recreation is just as important and he does not think we should be turning parks into park and ride lots. The diving site is used year-round by people from all over the northwest as well as from British Columbia, Idaho and other states.

Randol Williams, President of Marker Buoy Dive Club, Friends of Seacrest member, spoke against the closure of Seacrest Park for the water taxi use. There are groups of dive students and school students who regularly ask him to speak about diving in Puget Sound and one of the areas that they glean items to show them is Seacrest. The Dive Club has been fighting this issue for four years. They do not think it is right to exclude their use of a public park. He thinks this proposal is a waste of money for a county that cannot keep the Medic I program going but somehow can come up with a lot of money to keep a water taxi going. He personally suggests putting more express buses on the West Seattle route, take that same kind of money to give everybody a free bus pass and you will move a lot more people more efficiently. The Dive Club and Friends of Seacrest have been actively gathering petition signatures and will be attending the King County sponsored public meeting on March 27 in the Alki Elementary School, 3010 – 59th SW, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. There is a major Harbor Code revision proposed to the Harbor Code. The divers have worked very hard to come up with a balance of a 150 foot exclusion zone around the pier. A large group of divers was organized to construct an underwater marking system to put in buoys to delineate and define the diving area. Money was spent and groups of people were ready to go and now it is proposed to close the entire area. No diver has interfered with the running of the water taxi in the past in Cove 1 and 3. Closing the complete diving area of Seacrest is not necessary. The closure of Cove 2 would be workable. He urges the areas be kept open to diving.

Fritz Merkel, Marker Buoy Dive Club and Friends of Seacrest member, related this will be the fourth time for the water taxi and the ridership for the taxi has been poor, averaging 15 people per trip. The average taxi trip with boarding, crossing and unloading takes about 30 minutes. They found that over 50% of the people who were going to take the water taxi drove to the site and parked as close as possible on the street. Therefore we are not mitigating driving or parking. Time is not being saved as it would take just as much or more time to get across on the water taxi as it would getting to downtown Seattle by bus. Since the last water taxi study, HOV lanes have been put in and people are getting downtown by bus quicker than they were before. It was acknowledged by the Executive Summary that parking and the price have been a problem. A transportation project really needs to be competent, capable, show that it is feasible and financially in keeping with the other alternatives that are out there. Without putting in major facilities such as docks and purchasing the taxi, it is costing over \$3 million. At the current level it is costing approximately \$8.50 to get a person across on the ferry where it would cost \$2 or \$3 to bus the same person in the same or faster time frame. They think this proposal is using the park in an inappropriate way and would be servicing a small number of people and excluding people who are appropriately prescribed to use the park.

Patricia McInturff stated the County wants to operate the water taxi over a full year to collect additional data about whether it is a viable option for year-round commuters. She read the Superintendent's statement regarding the King County water taxi proposal. He is committed to the use of Seacrest Park for recreational purposes. In the interest of interagency cooperation in finding solutions to our worsening traffic woes, he has offered tentative support to the project. The demonstration project will end one year after it begins. King County will finance the improvements to the Seacrest dock necessary to make it safe for use during the demonstration project, King County will, during the demonstration project, make active progress toward securing another West Seattle terminus for the water taxi. This means locating a site, beginning feasibility studies, environmental studies, permit application, and other actions on a timetable amenable to Seattle Parks. If the demonstration project proceeds this year, there are impacts on scuba divers. The Seattle Harbor Code now prohibits diving 300 feet of a ferry dock. This law would effectively close all of the central pocket beach and part of the north beach to divers during the demonstration project. He supports an amendment to the code that would allow for a smaller buffer zone, since the water taxi is not the full size ferry contemplated in the code language. He is writing to the Police Harbor Patrol to make a formal request for such an amendment in time to reduce the impact of decreased diving opportunities at Seacrest.

Jackie Ramels informed the Board that she and Bill Keller, the Executive Director of the Associated Recreation Council, would be attending the Board of Park Commissioner meetings on an alternating basis.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Ken Bounds is hosting a dinner this evening for the Urban Park and Recreation Alliance visitors. The Park Board members attended a reception with the Alliance members last evening. On behalf of the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent Patricia McInturff informed the Board of the following:

- **Field Scheduling** – The Scheduling Office has turned down more field requests in the past two weeks than in the last 25 years combined due to lack of facilities available at the time people want to play.
- **Mardi Gras** – The Department has been reviewing what they can do to program more activities at community centers for youth during Mardi Gras week.
- **Name the Baby Elephant Contest** – KING 5's Evening Magazine will host the live announcement of the finalists and the grand winner of the contest on Monday, March 26th. There will be a party held at the Zoo's Rain Forest food pavilion with the ten finalists on hand and the winner being named and congratulated by Mayor Schell.

- **Green Lake** – After 2-1/2 weeks of closure due to earthquake damage, the Green Lake Community Complex opened on March 19th. The quake split the lobby along the lines of the old field house (1927) and the "new" building (1954). The repair work to the walls and the floor will continue for several weeks.
- **South Lake Union** – Park staff met with Human Service Department staff and the Salvation Army about utilizing the South Lake Union Park Armory for a severe weather (below 32 degrees) shelter during the 2001-2001 winter season.
- **Beacon Hill** – Mayor Schell toured North Beacon Hill on March 20th visiting Jose Rizal Off-Leash Dog Area, Beacon Bluff, Beacon Avenue P-Patch, El Centro de la Raza, and the business district. The Mayor highlighted Park's commitment to make improvements to North Beacon Hill Playfield and Jefferson Park/SPU hard lid reservoir proposal.
- **Belltown Neighborhood Center** – The site selection process is proceeding. The Board will be briefed in May.
- **Staff:** After a national search, Erin Devoto has been appointed to the Department's new Director of Planning and Development Division. She was previously employed as the Director of Facility Asset Management at Seattle Center, worked for a private general contracting firm as their Manager of Operations and was the Department's Buildings & Structures Manager.
- **Oversight Committee** – Karen Daubert is serving as Chair of the Levy Oversight Committee and Commissioner Susan Golub is actively serving on the Committee.

Kathleen Warren inquired about the figure quoted in an earthquake damage report for Golden Gardens of \$500,000 and asked if that was a typo. That figure will be investigated.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 8, 2001 Board meeting were approved as distributed.

Items of Interest to the Board:

Karen Daubert expressed concern about the water taxi issue and feels the Superintendent's memo lays out the issues very well but wondered if it would be of value for the Park Board to echo those views that recreation should be the primary use of a park. She made a motion that the Park Board send a letter of concern, similar in tone to the letter that the Superintendent wrote. Susan Golub

would like to discuss the water taxi issue at its Retreat next week. She questioned if it was an Initiative 42 issue.

Michael Shiosaki inquired if the Retreat Agenda has been finalized. The agenda is being reviewed by the Chair and Superintendent. Michael suggested a section of the agenda also include a review of key project issues.

Bruce Bentley inquired about the Japanese Garden pond filtration system and if the construction of the system was going to be placed outside of the fence area near the northeast corner of Interlaken and Lake Washington. Staff will be asked for a report.

Michael Shiosaki referenced the memo sent to the Board by Fritz Hedges, Director of Citywide Division regarding the Tree Policy. Michael noted some of the interpretations were a little different. Bruce Bentley thought the memo came pretty close to what the Board discussed. Kathleen Warren did not think the memo came quite as close to the Board's discussion and was "business as usual." Michael noted that it was written like the "door was still open" if you could combine view issues with other benefits. Susan Golub stated view cutting has been allowed in the past and the new policy will not consider proposals to remove trees solely for view relief. Mark Mead addressed the Board from the audience and introduced himself as the new Parks Senior Urban Forester. He appreciated the Board's input on view relief issue of the policy. The Tree Policy will make the Urban Forester's job a lot easier as it tightens the criteria for proposals. The Tree Policy memo prepared by Fritz Hedges was accepted. The policy will be reviewed by the Park Board next spring. Karen Daubert stated she is looking forward to the Board having the opportunity to have a full report on the type of applications and how they are handled

Madrona Park "Ravine" Forest Restoration Plan Briefing

Ann Hirschi, Urban Forestry Program, briefed the Board on the restoration plan for the Madrona Park Ravine. A Power-point presentation was shown. Two public meetings were held and numerous on-site, volunteer work parties were conducted in conjunction with the Department's public involvement process. A new group of neighbors who live in close proximity to the Ravine have played an active role. Madrona Park "Ravine" was annexed by the City in 1992 as part of the Open Space Program. It is part of the same forest ecosystem that links it directly to Madrona "Woods." The goal with this forest restoration plan is to encourage the establishment of a self-sustaining forest, comprised mainly of native plants that will fall into step with the natural forest succession of the area. The creek that was previously channeled to a large storm water culvert, is daylighted for 20 yards before entering a large catchment sandbox that connects to the storm sewer. This portion of the creek bed will be improved and replanted. The Madrona Woods Action Plan calls for the future restoration of this entire creek, creating a riparian corridor to the Woods. The Spring Street right-of-way

that borders the top of the Ravine on the north, near 37th Avenue, will be included in the plan. Neighborhood residents have expressed interest in working with SeaTran to seek resources to help with the funding.

Ann reviewed the concepts. Concept 1: "Use existing native plant communities as identified in the "Woods" master plan, as an organizational basis for restoration efforts. Concept 2: Remove cherry laurel and English holly, as well as herbaceous layer of non-native invasive species. Plant large Douglas fir, western red cedar, hemlock and grand fir in cleared areas. Selectively remove individual big-leaf maples, if problems are identified, to favor conifer replacement and more desirable species. Concept 3: Take advantage of the 36" frontage of the park on 37th Avenue to develop a user-friendly landscape utilizing native plantings that can provide an entry to the ravine and encourage stewardship by neighborhood residents. Concept 4: Clean up the edge conditions and encourage planting along the above-ground portion of the creek that runs through the ravine. Plan for future enhancement of the creek in conjunction with the Woods work. Concept 5: Determine a program to provide limited access to the ravine. Concept 6: Utilize latest Parks and Recreation findings on heavy mulching and other maintenance plans such as ivy control, to encourage protection of new planting as they become established.

Ann reviewed the Urban Forest Plan Objectives: Promote native character, assist natural process, conserve soil and water quality, protect and enhance wildlife habitat, buffer land uses, and insure public safety. The existing vegetation evaluation and implementation strategies were outlined. The draft of the plan was included in the Board's packets, which included site plans and a proposed timeline.

Michael Shiosaki inquired if planting trees will result in view issues later at this site. Ann replied there is no view now at the site except in the winter when you can see through to the lake. View has not been an issue. Susan Golub inquired how the invasives along the riparian would be removed. The Department is contracting with Earth Corps, which is a non-profit group, which specializes in natural area restoration. They have crews of ten people they train. They will be pulling back ivy and cutting cherry laurel. Some pesticides will be used just on the cherry laurel. Chipping will be done on site and the mulch used there. Bruce Bentley inquired about daylighting the creek. Friends of Madrona Woods have been pressing for exposure of the Spring Street side and the Department is working with SPU on the daylighting issue. Kathleen Warren asked about the size of the ravine area. The ravine is less than one acre, the Woods is about 9 acres and Madrona Park, with the playfield, is approximately 30 acres.

Mark Mead noted that Ann has done an excellent job in getting the neighbors actively involved in the project. He further noted SPU has generated approximately \$50,000 for the creek project. Volunteer efforts at Madrona Woods

are going very well. Ann encouraged the Board to take a walk in Madrona Woods to see the work that has been accomplished, including the waterfall.

Central Waterfront Aquarium South Option Board Discussion/Recommendation

The Board held a briefing on the Central Waterfront Aquarium South Option on February 22, 2001 and a public hearing on March 8, 2001.

Michael Shiosaki served on the Citizens Advisory Committee. He noted the 25 member Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was representative of people who had different opinions and there was controversy at times. The Committee thoroughly reviewed alternatives which included redevelopment of Pier 59 at its current site, complete removal of Pier 59 and construction of an entirely new facility immediately to the south of the current location of Pier 59 and relocation of the pier shed on Pier 59 to the former site of Pier 58 and development of the new Aquarium on the current site of Pier 59.

The Board of Park Commissioners unanimously approved a motion to recommend that the Superintendent endorse the conclusions of the Citizens Advisory Committee on the Central Waterfront. The Committee concluded that it was feasible to construct an aquarium on the southern portion of the site. We support the Committee's conclusion and recommend the City Council endorse Alternatives 1 & 3 for further analysis, and expeditiously begin preliminary design and environmental review of these two alternatives. The Board also recommends that the Superintendent express appreciation to the Committee for its contribution in resolving this difficult issue.

Public Involvement Plan for the Woodland Park Zoo Long Range Plan 2001 – Briefing

Mike Waller, Director of the Woodland Park Zoo, and Jim Maxwell, Manager of Zoo Planning & Development, reviewed the updated Long-Range Master Plan 2001 (LRP 2001). The LRP 2001 will update the 1976 plan as the guide for Zoo development for the next 20 years. The planning process started in June 1999. A Public Involvement Plan was approved in February 2001. The methods to be used to keep individuals and community groups, agencies, etc. informed and of opportunities to participate in both the LRP 2001 and the EIS "Scoping" phase of the EIS process will include use of the Zoo's extensive mailing list of Zoo neighbors and community groups, letters, news releases, signs and Internet postings.

Today 65% of the Zoo is naturalistic. The LRP 2001 will address the remaining 35%. As the Zoo and Zoo programming has grown, the Zoo Society has taken an increasing role in funding and expanding zoo programs and visitor services. About 40 percent of the Zoo staff now work for the Zoo Society. Current

attendance is approximately 1.1 million annually. It is projected to grow to 1.5 million. The Zoo reaches maximum attendance in the summer. The goal is to increase attendance during the other months.

The proposed Long-Range Plan includes new animal exhibits including Wild Dogs, Jaguar, Asian Rhino, Phase 2 Northern Trail-Asian Highlands, Asian Bears and Tigers, Elephant Conservation, Australasia, Desert, and Cougar. Visitor and program spaces include Discovery Village, African Village, Signage and Wayfinding, East Plaza Improvements, Northwest Entry and Plaza, Gardens and Parks, Carousel and Event Center. The Service and Infrastructure includes Parking, Offices, Bird, Reptile and Mammal Conservation, Major Utilities, Shops and Service Areas and Off-site Conservation Center.

The Carousel has been the subject of several public and community meetings since the Fall of 1999. The Seattle Zoological Society accepted the gift from Linda and Tom Allen. The project was carefully reviewed to ensure that the carousel would help meet the Zoo's education, conservation, exhibition and recreation goals. The public will have further opportunities to comment during the EIS review process and City Council consideration of the LRP 2001.

There are currently 750 parking stalls. Zoo visitor parking overflows into the surrounding neighborhood. Zoo staff has been discussing the parking issues with the neighbors. Neighbors south of the zoo are petitioning for a Restricted Parking Zone. The current revenue from parking is \$500,000. The current parking rate is \$3.50 for 4 hours. The goal is to find ways to increase parking stalls for the visitors to 1,500. It is proposed to build a new garage with 5 or 6 levels, going down at least one level. Another option would be to have smaller parking structures at the south and west.

During the planning process, four presentations have been made to the Seattle Design Commission, including one site tour. In January 2001 preliminary draft copies of the Long Range Plan 2001 were reviewed by Department staff and the authors of the 1976 Plan for their review and comment. The City Council will be briefed on March 26. The Draft EIS will be issued for review on April 2. The formal public hearing on the EIS is scheduled for April 25 at the Zoo. The public EIS review period ends on May 1. The Park Board will hold a public hearing on the Long Range Plan on May 10. The City Council will review the plan in May-June. The Final EIS is due July 18. These processes will culminate with City Council adoption of the plan in the summer of 2001.

New Business/Old Business: none

Park Board Retreat: The agenda packet will be distributed to the Board members prior to the March 27 Retreat at the Zoo ARC. New Park Board Commissioner O. Yale Lewis, Jr. will be in attendance. The Board members are invited to visit the baby elephant and gorilla prior to the Retreat.

Future Agenda: The Board requested Art Placement and Arts & Culture Plan briefing materials be forwarded to them for review prior to the April 12 meeting and a "micro" presentation be presentation due to the full meeting agenda.

A public hearing on the Arboretum Master Plan before the Culture, Arts and Parks Committee of the Seattle City Council and the Board of Park Commissioners is slated for March 28, at 5:30 p.m. Telephone and e-mail hearing is from 5 to 5:30 p.m. TV-Sea, Seattle Municipal cable television station, will broadcast the hearing live beginning at 5 p.m. on Channel 21 or 28.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair