

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 12, 2001

Present:

Bruce Bentley, Chair  
Susan Golub  
Kathleen Warren

Absent:

Karen Daubert  
James Fearn  
Yale Lewis

Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent  
Michele Daly, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. As there was no quorum present, the consent items including the approval of the June 28 minutes, acknowledgment of correspondence and two revocable use permits were not approved and the agenda moved forward to the Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience item.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

**Anne Knight**, representing Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks (FOSOP) spoke about the permit for driveways to Cheasty Boulevard for the University of Washington laundry facility. Anne distributed a drawing of the site and a sheet outlining three proposed amendments to the proposed permit. The driveways should be a secondary access only and not the primary access and no signs shall be erected to direct public access to the driveway. One of the Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks' goals is to protect Cheasty Boulevard from undue traffic as it is a very important link in the Olmsted Park boulevard system. The other issue with the permit is the driveway width is shown at 35 feet and FOSOP would like the size reduced to 24 feet or less.

Canada Gees Briefing:

At the last Park Board meeting a number of people unexpectedly testified before the Board about the Canada geese and the Board requested a briefing from Parks and Recreation Department, Health Department and United States Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services staff on what the approach has been over time and future strategy in respect to managing the Canada geese population.

**Donald Harris**, Director Environmental Services for the Department of Parks and Recreation, stated the Department takes its role as an environmental steward very seriously as do the other park and recreation agencies that are involved in this overall

problem. One of the paramount missions is to provide clean, safe park and recreation facilities. The Department has been involved in the management program related to Canada geese for 15 years. It is only been during the last two years that what has been referred to as lethal control has been employed by the USDA – Wildlife Services under an agreement with the Waterfowl Management Committee as an aspect of the overall management program. The role of this program has been and continues to be to alleviate health and safety problems and damage by Canada geese, particularly in public recreation areas. Canada geese are considered a “migratory” species but they are not migrating any longer and have found a comfortable home in the urban areas of western Washington. Because they are considered “migratory” they are regulated by the federal government and the population control measures undertaken are done in cooperation and through the USDA – Wildlife Services. Their authority is granted under federal law under the Animal Damage Control Act. The permits that are issued for this come from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services. In 1987 the Department recognized the geese problem was getting out of hand in the region. A Committee was formed that today includes Bothell, Bellevue, Federal Way, Kent, Kirkland, Redmond, Renton, SeaTac, Tukwila, King County, Woodinville, University of Washington and the Boeing Company. Seattle coordinates this committee, staff by Donald Harris.

Since 1987 the Waterfowl Management Committee has spent over \$200,000 in its contracts with the USDA for the management program. Numerous control methods have been employed. In the early 1990’s, trans-location (trapping and relocating) of geese began. Over 7,300 geese were taken to Eastern Washington until there were no other viable areas. In addition through last year over 10,000 eggs have been addled. This is a process where the wildlife agents go in and coat the eggs with a non-toxic mineral oil so that the eggs do not hatch. If you remove an egg from the geese nest they lay another egg. The addling program has been deemed to be a positive management technique and is being expanded. The idea of getting volunteers trained to addle eggs is a way to widely expand the program that the public finds acceptable but there are some details to be worked out.

The Waterfowl Management Committee has tried chemical repellents such as Rejects It but it was difficult to apply and would disappear if it rained or was windy. It was not cost effective over the large areas managed by Parks. Flight Control has also been tried. Some jurisdictions have employed canine patrols, which are costly and just move the problem to another area. Another thing that has been recommended is habitat manipulation. Plantings at the water edge tend to decrease the geese access to the beach area but planting a hedgerow along the beachfronts would not work for Seattle Parks. Letting the grass grow longer tends to be unattractive to geese but has not proven to be particularly successful. Manufacturers have suggested decoys that have been tried. Despite trying these geese control methods the Canada geese population continues to grow and the problems continue.

In Seattle Parks, staff work on a daily basis to remove geese droppings from beaches, rafts, docks, play areas and wading pools. The geese foul the small craft facilities, moorages, golf courses, pathways and sportsfields. The occurrence of swimmer’s itch has

increased. The parasite causing that problem begins with the waterfowl. The Department has focused on asking people to not feed the geese using signs.

Seattle Parks has had unanimous approval from all the agencies to support the regional contract for the range of control methods. Donald Harris distributed a copy of the Seattle/King County Board of Health's resolution supporting the decision to request the capture and euthanization of geese in a 12-county region in Western Washington and a copy of a Seattle Times editorial dated July 11, 2001 regarding the geese removal program.

**Roger Woodruff**, Assistant State Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services Program, distributed a brochure entitled "Managing Problems Caused by Urban Canada Geese." The Canada Geese problem is a regional problem and needs a regional solution. The decision to implement a program of population reduction of geese in problem areas was never entered into lightly by anyone. It is, however, a necessary step. All other viable options have been implemented to one extent or another and in combination none of these methods have been successful in reducing the problem on a regional basis. On a regional scale, the Canada goose population in Puget Sound has been growing at nearly 15% per year. This has caused a dramatic rise in the numbers of urban geese. The current goose population is estimated at 20,000-25,000. If populations are not reduced and this growth rate continues at the current rate, there could be as many as 50,000 geese within the next five years. That number could double again in another five years. The State of Virginia is currently trying to deal with the population of 250,000 geese. Once a population reaches those levels, management options become very limited and ineffective.

There are many problems the geese cause including aviation safety, health issues and drinking water concerns. There is contamination of watersheds and lakes and there is general fecal contamination of both public and private properties to the extent that they become unusable by their owners. There are also erosion and other concerns.

Although some groups philosophically oppose lethal removal of geese, the plan is well supported by both an ecological and biological standpoint. All the wildlife management agencies involved are in agreement that population reductions are needed and that population management is the best tool available to solving the current problem. These agencies include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and USDA – Wildlife Services. Some groups have contended that the problem can be controlled through a program of intensive egg addling, followed by harassment. The harassment program does not work on a regional basis. The Puget Sound area is dotted with urban lakes that are lined with parks, homes, golf courses, airports and playgrounds. When chased the geese just move to another location. On a large scale such a plan is both economically and socially irresponsible. Groups contend a more intensive addling program will lend sufficient relief to the situation. Geese are long-lived and sometimes live up to 20 years. If there are already more geese than the public is willing to tolerate an addling program will do nothing more than to maintain the status quo.

Over the last two years, the USDA-Wildlife Services has been able to assist numerous cities, organizations and individuals in reducing the number of problem geese in the Puget Sound area.

Seattle Parks has requested USDA assistance in both years and the results have been encouraging. Goose numbers in Seattle Parks have been reduced substantially after the first year's efforts and are expected to be further reduced following this year's removals. The removal program for 2001 has ended. There are still many geese around the area for people to enjoy. Future monitoring and coordination with wildlife agencies and the Waterfowl Committee can help insure that these problem areas continue to be addressed and acceptable numbers of geese can remain in the area.

**Larry Kirchner**, retired Deputy Chief of Environmental Health, briefed the Board on the background of how the King County Board of Health reached the conclusion to pass Resolution 00-303 supporting the decision of the Seattle Metropolitan Area Waterfowl Management Committee to invite the USDA-Wildlife Services to control the population of Canada Geese. During his tenure in the Health Department he and staff spent an enormous amount of time dealing with complaints of citizens regarding geese. The accumulation of goose feces at parks, beaches, children's play areas, playfields, moorages, reservoirs and golf course presents a public health concern throughout the region due to increased risk of exposure to disease organisms by humans who come into contact with the feces. Canada geese are an intermediate host for the parasite that causes swimmers' itch. Bacterial contamination traced to Canada geese feces has resulted in the closure of public swimming beaches. Canada goose feces contain disease-causing organisms that include salmonella, giardia and cryptosporidium. There is a risk to the public though the data is sparse. Exposure and a risk of pathogenic organisms are two elements that lead to the potential of disease. One of the main roles of the Health Department is the prevention of disease. The best way to prevent disease is to get the goose feces out of the areas. Numerous methods were employed to control the goose population including trapping, relocation, egg addling, repellents and harassment but the population of geese continued to increase. In May of 1999, the Seattle-King County Health Department provided a letter to USDA-Wildlife Services supporting the option of population reduction and in March 2000 the Board of Health adopted the resolution supporting that option.

There is no state or federal inspection of wild meat and donating the rounded up geese for public consumption would not be permitted without inspections in place. Even with an inspection program in place the cost of processing the meat to get it distributed would not be cost effective as it comes to approximately \$10 per pound.

Chair Bruce Bentley stated Park Board Commissioner James Fearn has discussed the possibility of working on a task force to help find solutions to the geese problem.

Cheasty Boulevard/University of Washington Laundry Revocable Use Permit

**Terry Dunning**, Parks Real Estate Manager, briefed the Board on the proposed revocable use permit to provide access driveways to the University of Washington Laundry Facility and the adjacent commercial property, formerly known as Value Village, to Winthrop Avenue, a portion of Cheasty Boulevard. The University has utilized two driveways that were displayed on a map. The westerly of these driveways serves the University Laundry facility by providing access to the facility's loading docks that would otherwise not be available due to the orientation of the existing buildings. The easterly driveway provides access to the commercial site formerly utilized by Value Village, which is now vacant, but reoccupation by a new tenant is imminent. The City has included conditions in the permit, which require the University to acquire permanent easements across the City's property in order to resolve access right problems. Acquisition of these rights would occur in conformance with the requirements of Initiative 42.

The Laundry is a critical component of the City's health care capabilities and provides laundry support to eight major hospitals and medical facilities through the City. The facility is also a major employer of nonskilled workers in the Rainier Valley. The old Value Village site is potentially a future "Town Center" associated with the development of the Sound Transit McClellan Street Station.

Neighbors in the Cheasty Boulevard area have been discussing several issues with the City officials related to the neighborhood. The possible town center project, the light rail station, redesign of the Winthrop Avenue area portion of Cheasty Boulevard as part of the light rail mitigation efforts, planning for the Pro Parks Cheasty Boulevard project, and various non-park issues all affect Cheasty Boulevard and its neighbors. Traffic circulation and safety have been major considerations in all of these discussions and plans. The proposed permit may have impacts on traffic and as such, testimony from both the University and others affected by the potential impacts of this permit should be heard. SeaTran has been consulted and both permit conditions and recommendations from SeaTran will be implemented to minimize the effects of increased traffic or the flow of traffic on the boulevard.

Terry Dunning stated there would be some small changes made to the permit language that was previously distributed. The University of Washington's legal advisors have suggested some changes to the indemnification language and has requested the westerly driveway also be available to service vehicles. The University is currently negotiating a lease with a new operator for the old Value Village building.

**Helen Shawcroft**, UW Medical Center Associate Administrator, thanked the Department staff for their work on this permit application. They have done a good job in trying to strike a balance between the interests of the public, the Park Department in the Cheasty Boulevard planning work and the UW Laundry. It is the UW's intent to retain the existing driveways that serve the consolidated laundry and the adjacent commercial building. The UW is not asking to use any Park Department property that has not been historically used as a driveway. They are asking to provide a mechanism for the Parks Department to recognize those existing driveways. When Value Village vacated the

property approximately 18 months ago, the UW has done a number of things to help block off the easterly driveway to keep people from cutting through the site. The UW believes it has legal rights to use the driveways because they are an abutting landlord and they have building permits that gave them the authorization for use. The UW has applied for the revocable use permit in order to comply with the Parks Department regulations. The UW is willing to pay the permit fees. The UW urges the Park Board to accept what the staff has proposed in concept. There are some details the UW would like to the opportunity to work out with the staff such as the width of the driveway. The UW wants to make sure the driveway width will allow a delivery truck the turning radius to get into the driveway.

Ms. Shawcroft gave the Park Board some background information on the laundry. The UW moved the laundry to that area at the request of the city in 1984 to bring small family wage jobs to the Rainier Valley. They have made some improvements to the property over the years and they have every intent on staying there, being a major employer in the area and being a good neighbor. The importance of the UW consolidated laundry as an employer in the neighborhood was recognized in the North Rainier Plan that was adopted a year ago. Maintenance of the driveways is essential to continuing the viability of those current uses of the laundry, the commercial building and to supporting the neighborhood's vision of the "town center" area.

The UW has actively participated in the planning process of the area in the North Rainier Neighborhood Plan. The UW has agreed not to expand the laundry in a way that they initially planned so that the town center could be accommodated. In addition in the spirit of being a good neighbor the UW has directed its truck drivers to not go west on Cheasty Boulevard. They have made concessions to the city and Sound Transit in order to accommodate plans for the McClellan transit station even though that involves loss of some of the UW property and existing access. Under the current plan for the McClellan station, the traffic patterns around the laundry will change considerably. When the town center gets developed, the cut-through access from Winthrop to 27th will be moot. The UW has also been following the Cheasty Boulevard improvement process and wants to be a positive contributor. They are willing to move the location of the easterly driveway to match up the planned access across Winthrop and minimize disruption to the planned median if that is what the Parks Department desires. The UW will continue to work with the Department and neighbors to help them achieve their goals for the area to the best of their ability given their needs to keep the laundry in operation.

The Superintendent referenced Anne Knight's comments earlier in the meeting regarding the driveways be secondary access rather than primary and the driveway width reduction and asked Terry Dunning to review the suggestions.

**Kathy Colombo**, Friends of Cheasty Boulevard, stated the neighbors are very concerned about the traffic on Cheasty Boulevard. She suggested it would be good to get input from the other neighbors involved. They just found out about this issue a few days ago and have not had time to contact the neighbors.

Kathleen Warren would like to see more assurances to the neighbors in writing such as the trucks not traveling on Cheasty Boulevard and the reduction of the width of the driveway. Susan Golub is aware that the use is historical but suggests it may be able to work better by getting more details included in the permit. Kathleen further related that sometimes-historical use means a way to maintain the abuse of the past.

The Superintendent stated there are two steps in the process. The first is the revocable use permit for the short term. There has to be a permanent solution such as a transfer of jurisdiction through easement or some other solution. In the context of a long-term solution a lot of the issues will have to be worked out before there is a transaction that allows the transfer of park property to occur. There are a lot of unknowns about what is really going to happen at that intersection.

The Board recommended the permit be revised after reviewing the comments made at this meeting, obtain public comment from the Cheasty Boulevard neighbors and return to the Park Board on July 26 for a discussion and recommendation.

#### Cascade Park Site & Building – Board Discussion/Recommendation

The Board held a briefing on June 14 and a public hearing on June 28 regarding the Cascade Park Site and Building. In 1994 the City Council authorized the Department to purchase the property at the southwest corner of Cascade Park at Minor and Thomas. In 1995 the Department purchased mid-block property and the lots at the southeast corner of Cascade Park. These purchases expanded the park to a full square block. The City Council directed the Department to initiate a planning process for the development of the entire park. Through a public process, seven alternative site schemes were developed and after many meetings the advisory committee selected two. Subsequently, the Council adopted both site plans. The only difference between the two schemes is that one retains an existing building for community purposes and the other replaces the building with open space for community gardens. Two schemes were adopted because neither the Cascade community at large nor the advisory committee could agree on a single scheme. Several developments have occurred in the park since the Council actions including P-Patch installation, salvage nursery, comfort station renovation, rain harvest project and community classrooms. A public meeting was held in March regarding which of the two schemes to pursue. Approximately 40 people attended and supported keeping the building as a community classroom. The community prepared a business plan which recommends the Parks Department enter into a 15-year agreement with Lutheran Social Services for the phased renovation and operation of the building. They have applied for a Community Development Block Grant and are requesting Pro Parks funds for the play area.

The Board could not make a recommendation on the Cascade Site and Building issue since there was no quorum present at this meeting. Bruce Bentley stated he is sympathetic to the community building and hopes the community can get the funding to

make it happen. Bruce is impressed and thinks the neighborhood has done a wonderful job.

The City Council Culture, Arts and Parks Committee sent a letter to the Board, following the Park Board briefing of July 11, which was reviewed and copies were distributed to each Board member and concerned citizens in the audience.

There is a decision before the Board, the Department and City Council whether to amend the master plan and incorporate the building or amend the master plan and take the building out. A secondary issue that would come back before the Board at a future date, assuming the building remains, is what are the long term uses, is there an organization that can support those issues, what role is the Department going to play in terms of staff or contracting with non-profit organization. If the building is going to be kept there are timing issues for securing funding.

Patty Borman, Cascade Neighborhood Council, expressed disappointment of the Board's recommendation postponement.

The Superintendent thinks the building should be included in the master plan. The outstanding questions are about funding and whether we can have an agreement with a viable organization that can commit to paying the utilities/insurance, address liability issues, future uses, delivering the services, making improvements if necessary and whether the city would provide resources to managing the facility and having programs that are delivered by the community or advisory councils. It is a long-term stewardship issue. The Department needs something solid and viable for the long term

Patty Borman stated she will pursue a Memorandum of Understanding, on an interim basis, which may help in obtaining Neighborhood Matching Funds. Herbye White, Director of the Central Division of Parks and Recreation stated it would be helpful to have a letter of support for the financial concepts. The Department would continue to be supportive of the community efforts but there are some things the Department's contract section requires which have not yet been addressed.

The Board will hold this item over to the July 26 Board meeting for a discussion and recommendation.

#### Volunteer Coordinators Presentation

The Superintendent introduced volunteer coordinators Joy Vanderwerff, South Division, Adam Cole, Central Division, Janine VanSanden and Theresa McEwen from the North Division. The Zoo and Aquarium volunteer coordinators could not attend this evening. One of the most important things that we do in the Department is to work with volunteers. The tens of thousands of Seattle neighbors who volunteer for programs, community centers or projects are key to fulfilling the Department's mission to be good environmental stewards. The volunteers are dedicated and energetic and continually make a difference in their neighborhood park or community center. Volunteers also serve



our recreation system as advisory council members, sports coaches and referees. In 2000 the volunteers logged in more than 100,000 hours.

The volunteer coordinators told the Board a little bit about their volunteer programs and introduced some very special guests who spoke about their commitment to volunteering.

**Adam Cole**, Central Division Volunteer Coordinator, has worked for the Department for one year. He stated one of the most positive things you can do is work with volunteers. He introduced Aaron Sims, employed by Bank of America, who volunteers at the Garfield Community Center as a track coach. He enjoys working with the kids and watching them excel. He films the races and also purchases shoes for some of his participants. He makes sure all the kids have a chance. He has started racing himself and now competes in races.

**Janine VanSanden**, North Division Volunteer Coordinator, has a horticulture background. She introduced Bill Levin, Hamilton Middle School teacher, who briefed the Board on the Wallingford Park Native Plants Garden. Mr. Levin outlined the project summary, how the students designed the garden, prepared the soil, studied the native plants, planted the garden and what they learned. The kids have a great appreciation of trees and plants and of volunteering. He referenced the Hamilton School web page: [seattleschools.org/schools/hamilton/native-plant-garden](http://seattleschools.org/schools/hamilton/native-plant-garden) for further information and pictures of the kids, volunteers and the garden.

**Joy Vanderwerff**, South Division Volunteer Coordinator, started working at the Aquarium 20 years ago, worked in the Central Division and now in the South Division. Volunteers are critical to the Department's programs and we could never do without them. Joy distributed flyers and ballpoint pens. A few years ago a group in the southeast section formed a group called SEPAL (SE Parks Alliance) which meets monthly. It is hoped to get a group organized for the SW section of the South Division. Joy introduced Joyce Moty who is very active in the community working on various projects including Bradner and Pro Parks. Joyce outlined the SEPAL group and discussed the pleasure of volunteering. You get involved in your community, indulge your interests and make a difference. It is also an opportunity for people to learn how to get help from Parks.

**Theresa McEwen**, North Division Volunteer Coordinator, schoolteacher, stated she loves to work with model programs. One of the most important things the volunteers do is growing good citizens, stewardship and good government. Theresa said the volunteer coordinators could not do their work without the support of the grounds staff.

Volunteer efforts can range from a few hours to an ongoing commitment. Some opportunities are seasonal, many are regularly scheduled and others can be done on a one-time-only basis. Volunteerism is the foundation on which Seattle's thriving parks system has been built.

Superintendent's Report

- **Sand Point Magnuson Park Implementation Plan** – The CAP Committee was briefed on July 11. C. David Hughbanks, Director of Sand Point/Magnuson Park, will forward copies of the briefing plan documents to the Board members.
- **Seward Park Environmental Education Center** – The City Council approved the education center on July 2.
- **CFT** – The County’s Conservation Futures Tax citizens committee recommended \$3.4 million for Seattle projects out of \$9.6 million available countywide.
- **Mayer Property** – Parks has reached preliminary agreement to purchase the 10-acre Mayer property in the West Duwamish Greenbelt.
- **67th & Linden** – A verbal agreement has been reached regarding the purchase price for property.
- **Park Naming** – Blakeley Crescent Park was designated as the official name for property along the Burke-Gilman trail between 25th and 27th, just south of NE Blakeley Street.
- **Kinnear Park Slide Mitigation** – A nomination of the park as a landmark has been submitted to the Landmark Preservation Board which will be considered on July 18.
- **Legacy Project** – A \$1 million check was presented to Parks by Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig on July 10 for improvements to Lower Woodland Fields.
- **July 4** – Over 60,000 people attended the fireworks event at Gas Works and over 300,000 people attended the daylong event at Myrtle Edwards Park. Many citizens were also at Alki and Harbor Island and other view sites.

Items of Interest to the Board

Kathleen Warren recently attended a national soccer tournament in Virginia competing against 52 teams, 40/50 year olds, and came home with a medal.

Karen Daubert has been named as Executive Director of the Park Foundation.

Bruce Bentley and Karen Daubert will be attending the Urban Parks meeting in New York the end of July.

Future Agenda

July 26 – Cascade Park Site and Building – Board Discussion/Recommendation  
 UW/Parks Revocable Use Permit – Cheasty Boulevard  
 Teatro Zanzinni/South Lake Union Briefing

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bruce Bentley, Chair