

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 13, 2001

Present:

Bruce Bentley, Chair
James Fearn
Sarah Neilson
Kate Pflaumer
Kathleen Warren

Excused:

Susan Golub
Yale Lewis

Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Michele Daly, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The agenda consent items were approved as submitted: approval of the December 13 agenda, meeting minutes of November 8 and December 3, Revocable Use Permits 1) Geological Survey to install data collection of weather monitoring instrumentation at three strategic locations on park property - Magnolia Boulevard, the roof of the Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park, and the roof of the public restroom at Don Armeni Boat Ramp, and 2) Installation of buried Qwest telephone service wires from 24th Avenue East to serve properties at 2125 and 2133 East Interlaken Boulevard. Correspondence included a letter from Ellen Monrad, Chair of the Queen Anne Community Council, and Roger M. Belanich regarding the Kerry Viewpoint Park vegetation plan.

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:

Sharon LeVine, Queen Anne resident, shared concerns she has with following the Public Involvement Policy as amended in July, 1, 1999, especially with relation to the Kerry Park project. She does not think interested people and groups were notified of the amendments or changes that resulted from the public process. Ms. LeVine stated a letter should have been posted on the internet, a sign placed in the park and petition signers and park neighbors should have been notified of the public hearing. The Queen Anne News had an article about the project and hearing as a result of a reporter being at a recent Queen Anne Community Council meeting. Ms. LeVine has concerns about how the Department keeps people informed of all the projects throughout the city. She would like the Department to revisit their notification process.

Kerry Viewpoint Park Revegetation Management Plan - Public Hearing:

Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester, gave an overview of the project, the current proposal, the public process and public comments received prior to the hearing. Kerry Viewpoint is a designated viewpoint of the Park's system and as such the view from the park is

required to be maintained. Pam Alspaugh, Parks Landscape Architect, informed the Board that Kerry Park is protected under the landmarks portion of the Seattle Municipal Code. Because the view is protected, buildings cannot be built that would block certain views of downtown areas.

The intent of the project is to preserve views from the top of the hill, to reduce maintenance requirements, to remove hazardous trees, and to establish erosion-reducing plants along the slope. The current plan is to remove all the spruce trees and five to seven of the maple trees. In 3 to 8 years the remaining maples will be removed and replaced with appropriate species, depending on establishment of plantings. Mark Mead stated past pruning on the maples on the site has weakened the structure of the trees and additional topping can result in the death of the maples, as well as create unsightly trees.

The public process has included the installation of a project sign at the park in early 2000 with four meeting notices posted. Two mailings of public meeting notices were sent to approximately 500 properties. A public meeting was held on February 9, 2000 to initiate the public involvement process for a forest restoration plan for Kerry Viewpoint. Ten citizens attended. On April 2-3, 2000, Galen Wright of Washington Forestry Consultants, Inc. performed a tree assessment of the maple trees. Preliminary assessment found all trees requiring some level of ongoing maintenance for view maintenance and safety. A second public meeting was held on April 15, 2000 with eight citizens attending. Tremendous was at the park on April 15 to sign-up volunteers and has accomplished two invasive projects along the hill.

Mark Mead attended three Queen Anne Community Council Parks Committee meetings. Discussions at these meetings revolved around the number and type of trees removed and the types of trees to be replanted. At the October 25, 2001 Park Board briefing, it was requested that Mark Mead return to the Queen Anne Community Council to further discuss the project. Mark Mead and Landscape Architect Pam Alspaugh attended the Queen Anne Community Council November 7 meeting to present the full plan. The public hearing slated for the November 8 Park Board meeting was carried over to the December 13 agenda

The Parks Public Information Office prepares news releases outlining the Board meeting agendas that are widely distributed to the local press. The Park Board agendas are posted on the City's website as well as distributed to interested citizens, Neighborhood Service Centers, recreation advisory council, community centers, and appropriate department staff

Don Harper, Queen Anne resident, Chair of the Queen Anne Community Council's Parks Committee, stated he would like to see the tree cutting schedule drawn out longer with fewer trees cut "right off the bat." He would like to see the new plantings succeed before more trees are removed and he would like a staggered plan of cutting and replanting. He is pleased that there is a definition of a view and requested that definition be forwarded to the Community Council.

Perry Jones, park neighbor and caretaker for 27 years, stated it would be a shame to see the little urban forest at Kerry Park go away on the south side of the hill. His primary concern is that the canopy trees be maintained. The time element is the most important thing in seeing this park transfer over, if needed, to a lower canopy than the existing one. The community has had several arborists tell them that the side hill trees can be maintained with shaping and pruning to afford the view. Mr. Jones referenced the Queen Anne Community Council's letter and hopes the Board will support what the community has come up with after a long and deliberative process. A large part of the park that is not canopy now is basically blackberries, very unsightly and hard to maintain. He is concerned that getting things to grow on the steep south slope will be difficult and there will be problems in terms of soil stability, aesthetics and a number of other issues.

Sy Iffert, referenced the picture that was shown earlier and stated there is a lot better view today than the picture showed, though you might have to move 20 feet or so. He would like the park to be kept exactly as it is. Blackberry bushes form a barrier against erosion and provide a hindrance to the wind velocity at the top of the hill. In addition, the blackberry bushes also provide a barrier for "tourists" that visit the park. There is noise from the "tourists" at 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. The "tourists" relieve themselves in the park, drink and make a lot of noise. The neighbors hire a guard on holidays in order to protect their condominium residences. If the park is made into a tailored park you will have the beer drinkers coming up and down the steep hill at all hours making noise. If the park is going to be extended for tourism, then it needs to be controlled. He does not think the local residents should need to pay for additional control.

Stephen Groudon, Queen Anne resident, stated he thinks Kerry Park is one of the great assets of Queen Anne and also of all Seattle. Approximately a year ago he noticed the view from Kerry Park was getting obstructed and made a call to the City and found out that the view was being addressed. The process has dragged on and he wants to encourage everyone to move forward, take action and thinks a reasonable plan has been developed. The photo shown earlier was not deceptive as the view is significantly obstructed. A moderate, reasonable phased plan of trimming trees and eliminating trees is what is needed.

Karen Carlson-Iffert, Queen Anne resident, has worked with arboretums in Kitsap County and stated sometimes "less is more." It is sometimes nice to not have everything straight and flat but to have more "peekaboo" views. She is concerned about erosion that would take place if vegetation is taken down on a fast basis and agrees that it should be taken down on a more minor basis.

Sharon LeVine, Queen Anne resident, supports the thoughtful proposal that has been given by the Queen Anne Community Council as it does incorporate most of what the Parks Department wants to actualize but it does it over a more extended period of time. Everyone has argued over the past years of what is a view and not everyone agrees. At some place within the viewpoint you can see everything - you just cannot see everything from every square foot. The "peekaboo" views are what make it exciting. A lot of people think the trees are a view. The Community Council has come up with a plan that does not

destroy everything at once. They want to be sensitive to the environment, erosion, canopy, wildlife, nature and all the concerns. A Memorandum of Understanding has been requested. A written agreement is needed as people tend to forget what a board or community council did a couple of years ago. If we take a slow approach to this vegetation plan she thinks everybody's needs will be satisfied.

Roger Belanich, Queen Anne resident, does not know why there is a public hearing this evening. This is about maintaining a view that has already been defined and procedures are already in place through growth management and ordinances. It is superfluous to have a public hearing about a matter that the Department is supposed to be maintaining. It is a requirement of the city and we pay taxes on those requirements. What is the mystery of what is the viewpoint? He has been living on Queen Anne all his life. The view has been maintained until the last 20 years and now it has become an entitlement having to do with trees. He wonders why the spruce trees were planted at the viewpoint years ago. There has not been enough money to maintain views at the parks at Kerry or Marshall Park. It is not a Queen Anne issue as the view is for everyone. There are issues in the park relative to beer parties but that is a separate control issue. He urged the Department to get to the maintenance of the viewpoints.

Elizabeth Burden, Queen Anne resident, endorses the Queen Anne Community Council's compromise view of what should be done with Kerry Park. Her family makes use of the viewpoint part of the park as well as the lower portion of the park. As you move through the park you can get a good view of the city. She questions the issues of erosion and the budget for maintaining the park the way it should be maintained over a long period of time. She urged the Board to look at a long range plan for the maintenance and reforestation of the park.

Joseph Brown, park neighbor, has concerns about the current costs and future maintenance costs. The big trees are wildlife habitats for birds. The view is important but chopping trees down will destroy the view. When you are downtown and you look at Queen Anne you see the radio towers, big trees on Prospect and Bigelow and buildings. The views of Queen Anne from Alki and downtown will change if the trees at Kerry Park are cut down. Chopping trees down will increase the sunlight and make invasive plants grow. He drives by the park twice a day and did not see a sign about this hearing. He questions the number of trees that are to be cut down as the documents are not clear and he thinks "logging" of Kerry Park seems to summarize it. He is definitely against taking out the trees.

Paul Barrett, lives directly across the street from Kerry Park, and has wondered for years why the park has not been maintained and why the trees at the viewpoint have not been topped. Mr. Barrett supports the Queen Anne Community Council letter. There are views from the park and he wonders where in the park the photo shown earlier was taken. The trees are beautiful and a pleasure to look at. If a tree becomes a danger the city has the power to cut the tree down. He thinks it is wrong that the petition signers did not get notice of the hearing. Mr. Barrett supports the Queen Anne Community Council's proposal.

Lauren Braden, Seattle Audubon Society, supports preserving wildlife habitats and requested a copy of the Queen Anne Community Council letter. She will forward written comments to the Board.

Mr. Iffert inquired who is responsible for maintaining law and order in the park itself. He was informed the Seattle Police are the enforcement authority throughout the city including all the parks. The police need to be called when the neighbors hear the noise in the park early in the morning.

Public comment on the Kerry Viewpoint Park Vegetation Plan may be submitted until the Park Board's January 10, 2002 meeting. The Board has scheduled a discussion of the proposed plan and will make a recommendation to the Superintendent at that meeting.

The petition signed by 75 individuals in 2000 stated a position and that position was considered during the planning process. The Superintendent stated there have been issues in the past where we have had 500 petition names and it is not feasible for the Department to send individual notices to all petition signers. After a decision is made all the people who testified at the public hearing are notified of the outcome. Kathleen Warren requested the public involvement policy be doublechecked regarding the public hearing notification process. It was suggested that the project signs installed in parks be updated with public meeting and hearing notices.

Bruce Bentley reiterated the Board had spirited discussions about the tree policy issue in Seattle and discussed view parks and personal views. During those discussions the topping of trees was discussed and it was determined that topping of trees was hazardous to the health of trees. The Superintendent has delegated the vegetation management plan decision process to Fritz Hedges, Director of the Citywide Division. The Superintendent recused himself from any discussions regarding views as he lives on a bluff above a park.

Sand Point/Magnuson Park Vegetation Management Plan Board Discussion/Recommendation

The plan reflects years of citywide policies related to parks and open spaces with the City. The Park Board held a briefing on October 25 and a public hearing was held on November 8, 2001. Four public meetings were held between late June and mid-October. A project summary was distributed on November 8 that explained the public involvement process, the development and content of the plan, the major issues addressed and a summary of the proposed changes of the draft document. "The plan establishes nine landscape management zones, with each containing smaller management areas. Prescriptions for each area include plant establishment and maintenance, planting, pruning, plant removal, and weeding and invasive control. In addition, the plan contains chapters that prescribe park-wide management and maintenance practices, plan implementation, and plan monitoring. The guiding concept for the plan is that it is a working document. As the transformation continues from military base to urban park, the plan will be revised to reflect new conditions."

Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester, reviewed the Sand Point Magnuson Park Vegetation Management Plan changes. The revised plan includes upgraded graphics, an addendum and a monitoring checklist. Mark introduced Diane Sheldon and Marsha Fisher and expressed his appreciation for the consultants, the Sand Point staff and Urban Forester Eliza Davidson's work involved in the preparation of the plan.

C. David Hughbanks, Sand Point Magnuson Park Director, reiterated the plan will direct, manage and execute ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation and enhancement of the horticultural landscape of this developing park. Many groups and individuals already volunteer their time to restore the natural environment and keep things in good shape. This plan will help guide the volunteers as well as staff. The groundwork that was established for the Plan will be a part of the Environmental Impact Statement. The draft EIS for the Drainage, Wetlands, Sports Fields/Courts Project will be distributed on January 3, 2002. A public hearing is slated for February 4, 2002. Public comments are due by February 28, 2002. The Park Board will be briefed on the EIS in the spring with the document scheduled to go to the City Council in June or July.

James Fearn recommended approval of the Vegetation Management Plan as it does a good job of setting forth a way to approach the management of the vegetation in the park and it also strikes a good balance in terms of the needs of Sand Point and the concerns of neighbors. Kathleen Warren seconded the motion. Bruce Bentley thanked the staff for listening to all the different viewpoints during the public involvement process. The motion carried. Kate Plaumer abstained as she has not been involved in the earlier process.

The Board welcomed Kate Pflaumer, new Board of Park Commissioner, to her first Board meeting. Kate was appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council at their October 29 meeting.

Superintendent's Report

- The City Council is scheduled to vote on the Zoo Agreement on Monday, December 17. The agreement was amended to clearly deal with animal care and financial records that deal with the city's money. Public disclosure issues are being addressed.
- \$400,000 in State grant money for the South Lake Union wharf project has been "thawed." Project staging equipment will start being placed on-site next week.
- The Department's slide protocol has been reviewed to make sure current staff names and phone numbers are correct. No major slides have been reported following the recent rainstorms.
- The Department held a surprise party for Mayor Paul Schell at South Lake Union on December 12. Board members Kate Pflaumer and Kathleen Warren attended.
- Bev Ross, Southeast District Crew Chief, retired last week. Bev started with the department as a swim instructor 28 years ago.

- The Central Waterfront Citizen Advisory Committee enthusiastically endorsed the latest version of the Pacific Northwest Aquarium siting and preliminary design. The Park Board will be briefed in February 2002.
- Westbridge Property - The Council approved a lease with an option to purchase property located at 4201 W. Marginal Way SW for the Roy Street Shops replacement. The property consists of a building of approximately 114,000 square feet and 5 acres of land. Actual move-in for the shops is likely to occur in mid to late spring.
- Return of the Chum: This species of salmon is returning in record numbers up the fish ladder at the Aquarium.
- Fauntleroy Park and Creek - Volunteers counted 167 Coho salmon returning this year which is a 32% increase from last year.
- South Lake Union Park Shelter - Operation of the shelter is going well. There were 45 homeless people who used the shelter last week and this week there were 69. There have been a few minor problems but Parks staff is working with the Salvation Army and the city's Department of Human Services.
- Camp Long is experiencing some personnel issues which the Department is dealing with in a confidential way but staff has gone to the local press. The Park Board may receive letters from Advisory Councils, park users and staff.
- The Department is in the process of selecting an architect for the new Yesler Community Center project.
- The Christmas Ship is cruising Seattle waterways and programs are scheduled at various park sites. A schedule will be forwarded to the Board members.

Items of Interest to the Board

Sarah Neilson asked for an update to what is happening at Myrtle Edwards Park. Metro has a large combined sewer overflow project involving the installation of new pipe, replacing and upgrading the pump station in Myrtle Edwards Park and they are building a large retention facility along Elliott in the old Blackstock Lumber site. The construction will have a large impact on the park through next summer. After the construction is completed a new pathway will be installed and new vegetation planted by Metro.

Kathleen Warren attended the Green Lake Pathway lighting event, which was very well attended. Kathleen also went to hear Andy Lipkis of TreePeople speak to the Social Venture Partners group. In Los Angeles they have made it legal to recycle gray water. Kathleen would like to revisit the issue of gray water usage. Parks is working with SPU on this issue.

Bruce Bentley referenced last evening's ARC Board meeting and the recent advisory council recruitment work. Bruce thanked Christopher Williams, South Division Director for his help in this process.

The Board canceled the December 27, 2001 meeting and will meet again on January 10, 2002 at 7 p.m. at 100 Dexter Avenue North.

The Park Board has scheduled a retreat on Saturday, January 26. The Superintendent suggested the Cedar River Watershed facility as the retreat location.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair