

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 10, 2002**

**Present:**

Bruce Bentley, Chair  
James Fearn  
Susan Golub  
Sarah Neilson  
Kate Pflaumer

**Absent:**

O. Yale Lewis

**Excused:**

Kathleen Warren

**Staff:**

Ken Bounds, Superintendent  
Michele Daly, Acting Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The consent items including the agenda for October 10, the meeting minutes of September 26 and acknowledgement of correspondence were approved. It was later noted item IV listed on the agenda as Park Board Foundation Update should be corrected to read "Seattle Parks Foundation Update."

**Superintendent's Report**

**JAFDP:** Ken Bounds distributed a copy of a Seattle City Council Resolution, passed on October 7, "stating the Council's support for improving the City's athletic field system to increased playing capacity, clarifying the conditions under which Council extends its support, and directing the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation to prioritize the order that athletic fields will be improved and to collect additional information that will more clearly link the proposed improvements with demand for particular sports." The resolution provides general direction to Parks in the area of lighting shut-off times, requests a study any potential impacts of lights on fields situated near critical habitat areas, requests information on the scheduling policy, consider several factors when establishing user fees, conduct public involvement process for specific site improvements, mitigate impacts to the extent possible and explore options for using underutilized athletic facilities. The Council did not approve the Joint Athletic Facility Development Program(JAFDP). The Department will work on clarifying the policy and establish project priorities after the budget process.

**Budget:** The Mayor presented his 2003-2004 proposed budget and the City Council has scheduled public hearings. An amended budget version will be adopted by the end of November.

**South Lake Union Armory:** The Armory will serve as a homeless shelter for a second year.

**Conservation Futures Tax :** The King County Council's Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space Committee recommended the award of \$6.5 million in 2002 CFT proceeds. This amount includes \$2.3 million for 10 Pro Parks Levy acquisition projects: Central Area Park, Northgate Park, Whittier Park, Ballard parks, Fremont Peak Park, Duwamish/Georgetown Waterway, Greenwood Park, Maple Leaf Community Garden, Erolini property and Pinehurst Park.

**Sand Point/Magnuson Park:** 135 non-native poplar trees were removed from the Magnuson Community Garden this week in preparation for planting several hundred naïve plants. The removals were consistent with the vegetation plan. Poplars have invasive root systems that rapidly colonize new areas, which makes them incompatible with the garden.

**Colman Park Tree Cutting:** 108 trees were cut down in Colman Park overlooking Lake Washington with an estimated value of \$137,000, which does not include site cleanup, restoration or staff time. The Law Department and King County Prosecutor's Office are actively pursuing the case. Civil action to recover damages is also being considered.

**Magnolia Boulevard:** A large park property pine tree was removed by a tree service hired by new adjacent owner's construction company. The guilty parties have been forthright and fully intend to pay for their mistake.

**Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee Strategic Planning Retreat:** The Superintendent and Park Board Commissioner James Fearn attended the ABGC Strategic Planning Retreat along with representatives from the University of Washington, Urban Foresters, Center for Urban Horticulture staff and citizens. The facilitator was noted as a taskmaster resulting in a very well run retreat. The mission was determined and assignments were established.

**Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:** None

### **Seattle Parks Foundation Update**

Karen Daubert, Executive Director of the Seattle Parks Foundation, briefed the Board on the accomplishments of the Parks Foundation. The Foundation is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to conserving, improving and expanding the quality of Seattle's parks, green spaces, and programs and to building community support for parks. The Board of Directors has expertise in parks and open space, planning, environment, real estate, financing, philanthropy, fund raising and volunteer recruitment. The early work of

the Foundation focused on neighborhood projects and children's play areas. A leadership gift from the Foundation board members launched three neighborhood projects. Whitworth Children's Play area was designed by students, teachers and neighbors and includes a variety of play equipment for young children. Maple Exploration Area was constructed for the youngest children at Maple and School and for those in the community. Graham Hill Imagination Garden is an area where students can gather and pretend they are on two outdoor stages. The area was designed by teams of neighbors as part of a large project to transform an asphalt field to a variety of imaginative play areas

Five small neighborhood park projects have been identified including Beer Sheva, Benefit Park, an additional Maple School project, Sherman Rock and the Volunteer Park lily ponds. The two historic pools at Volunteer Park sit empty and in disrepair and it is hoped they can be repaired in time for the 2003 Olmsted Centennial celebration. The repair cost is estimated at \$200,000 with \$140,000 of that cost donated. Camp Long's Sherman Rock has received a \$45,000 matching grant from REI to help with the \$90,000 repairs.

The Parks Foundation has identified several potential major park projects. Board members are working with representatives from neighboring groups and the City at South Lake Union Park. The project cost is estimated at \$10-25 million.

The Foundation held a reception and lecture to kick off the South Lake Union Park and celebrate the park system on Thursday, September 26.

Karen announced a donor gave \$1 million today towards the purchase of property for a new park at 24th & Howell. An endowment for maintenance is proposed.

The Park Board praised the Seattle Parks Foundation accomplishments.

### **Central Waterfront Master Plan and Memorandum of Understanding between the Seattle Aquarium and Seattle Aquarium Society Briefing**

John Braden, Deputy Director of the Seattle Aquarium, introduced Bob Davidson, Chief Executive Officer of the Seattle Aquarium Society (SEAS). John distributed a Life on the Edge exhibit brochure. The Aquarium has had an increase in attendance and revenue. The new Life on the Edge exhibit, which opened in May, produced a 24% increase in local attendance and the highest summer attendance since 1993. The attendance has particularly gone up over the summer with King County residents. They were the main target of the Aquarium's marketing so staff is very pleased with the result. Sharkabet, a new exhibit displaying original shark artworks by Ray Troll, shark researcher and artist, opened at the Aquarium today. A poster was distributed to the Board members. Ray Troll, in conjunction with a lot of volunteers, repainted some of Aquarium walls which now have elaborate shark decorations on them. The exhibit will be at the Aquarium October 11 through January 15.

John Braden stated this briefing provides an overview of the strategy to maintain the Aquarium over the next eight years and to provide an update of the activities currently under way, including the negotiation of an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and SEAS. With the significant delay in proceeding with the design and development of the new Pacific Northwest Aquarium (PNA) the Department, working closely with the SEAS, is developing a coordinated strategy to maintain the viability of the Aquarium

In 2001 the Department and SEAS completed a revised conceptual design for the proposed PNA, based on what was termed a "south option." This approach altered the Master Plan to locate the new Aquarium to the south, incorporating a redeveloped Pier 59 and new construction in the area of the existing Waterfront Park and Pier 60. A new park would be developed to the north in the area of Pier 62/63, retaining open space in that area. This approach has been very positively received. The conceptual design has been approved by the Design Commission and a Controls and Incentives Agreement was reached with the Landmarks Board for Pier 59.

The uncertainty surrounding the potential replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall has caused a significant delay in proceeding with the PNA. This is caused by the potential major disruptions to the Central Waterfront during construction, as well as the reluctance of private donors to commit to funding with so much uncertainty surrounding the Viaduct/Seawall Project. Until there is clarity surrounding the schedule for this major project, a schedule for the new Aquarium cannot be determined. Construction of the new Aquarium could not begin before 2008 at the earliest.

It is necessary to develop a strategy for this interim period. The strategy is to focus on redirecting the efforts of the Department and SEAS to insure the Seattle Aquarium can remain financially viable and perform its education mission over the next 8 to 10 years, while continuing to work toward the long-range goal of developing the PNA.

The Department has initiated discussions with SEAS regarding an amendment to the MOU signed in June of 2000 reflecting the delay in proceeding with the project. It is intended that this will be followed by other specific agreements on schedule, operations and management. It will not deal with all outstanding issues, just those relating to the immediate schedule and SEAS commitment to assisting the current facility. Amendments will include defer design work on PNA and City contributions until 2005-2006 Biennium, recognize the need for SEAS to support the current facility, transition to SEAS management and address the change in location of new Aquarium. An amendment will clarify that the Department anticipates that a revised Master Plan will be adopted, after appropriate environmental review.

The delay in proceeding with the schematic design for PNA, as well as other park improvements, precludes proceeding with a project EIS at this time. In order to finalize the Addendum to the adopted Master Plan for the Central Waterfront, it will be necessary to complete an environmental review of the proposed Addendum. The Addendum proposes a new preferred alternative to the Master Plan with the location of PNA at Pier

59 and Waterfront Park and a new park in the area of Pier 62/63. The City Council authorized inclusion of this approach as the preferred alternative in Resolution 30271.

The Department, after consultation with the Law Department, is proceeding with an expanded checklist and a Declaration of Non-significance for the Addendum. The Department is developing a scope defining the issues to be addressed, including: the shift in location of the PNA, the change in "Historic Resources" as a result of the designation of Pier 59 as a City of Seattle landmark, the relocation of new over water construction to avoid the near shore environment to facilitate fish passage, the reduced scale and altered design of the proposed Aquarium and preliminary design program for the reconfigure park/open space.

Another step in the development process for the new Aquarium which can and should proceed at this time is the public hearing regarding the designation of the new Aquarium project as appropriate for the design/build approach under State law. The City Council passed a resolution making a preliminary determination regarding design/build and authorizing the holding of a public hearing. The required Capital Fiscal Note has been prepared, and the City Council has scheduled a public hearing on November 7. The Department will prepare a report responding to any concerns raised by the public for presentation with a final resolution in December.

A major part of the interim strategy for maintaining the viability of the existing Aquarium for the next 8-10 years involves the reprogramming of the 2001-2002 CIP funds not required for the Master Plan work under the revised schedule. The Department estimates that \$1,330,000 is available from these funds. Of this amount \$800,000 would be used to cover a portion of unanticipated costs for repairs to Pier 62/63. The remaining \$530,000 would be used in combination with other funding sources, primarily for improvements to the current Aquarium. A small portion will be reserved to continue some limited staffing for Master Plan work. The City Council passed a resolution that reprogrammed an initial \$292,000 of these funds to cover the initial requirements for repairs to Pier 62/63 (\$270,000) and established a Seattle Aquarium Projects Program to proceed with the initial design for improvements to the existing Aquarium.

The Draft Interim Capital Improvement Plan for the Aquarium is based on the assumption that construction of the PNA will commence no earlier than 2008. The Plan will focus on physical improvements that address the following outcomes: maintain structural integrity and safety of the existing facility; maintain or contribute to the improvement to a structure that will become part of PNA, generate revenue through new and improved exhibits and programs attracting additional customers, generate revenue through improvements associated with lease and concession agreements and leverage private investment that achieves these outcomes. A copy of the Draft Capital Improvement Plan Summary (2002-2008) was distributed to the Board members.

The timetable anticipated in the MOU would have had the PNA under construction in 2004 and even with the several previous delays significant funds would have been required to proceed with design of the 2003-2004 Biennium, totaling as much as \$6-

8,000,000. The delay will mean that the City will have to continue to provide subsidy for the Aquarium as well as major maintenance. The CIP indicates that over the 2002-2008 investments of \$5-8,000,000 will be required to maintain the viability of the current facility, though some of these funds will come from private fundraising or sponsorships. It is still the intent to proceed with the development of the PNA and that funding, while deferred, will still be required in the future.

Bob Davidson distributed a letter from SEAS to the Board. Last winter and spring SEAS met with over 70 community leaders and potential donors in preparation for an Aquarium Society Board retreat focused on the new Aquarium. The Seattle Aquarium Society and the City are committed to bringing a new Aquarium to the Waterfront. There is strong support for this project in the community. The Nisqually Earthquake and the economic recession have forced SEAS to review the timetable. In consultation with the city leaders, community leaders and donor community, the Board of Directors of the Aquarium Society has adopted a new Pacific Northwest Aquarium Action Plan. SEAS will:

- Take a leadership role in the community dialogue and decisions related to the Viaduct/Seawall project and its impact on the Central Waterfront
- Develop a timeline for the new Aquarium Capital Campaign with the City and other interested levels of government in the context of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall project.
- Provide support to the existing Seattle Aquarium during this "bridge period," serving to expand and enhance its vital educational, research and family-centered role within the Puget Sound region.
- Build public awareness and ownership of the case for the new Aquarium, garnering community support to make the PNA our next great civic project
- Seek to be in a position to identify leadership gifts for a new Aquarium by 2004, and to secure capital campaign and public partnership commitments starting in 2005.
- Build the new Aquarium at the most appropriate time for construction and access by the public.

SEAS' immediate challenge is to expand the Aquarium's educational and research program and advance its campaign readiness during the "bridge" period before the actual launch of the capital campaign.

New program emphasis includes: expand and update the Aquarium's education role and programming; build constituencies for the new Aquarium, build fundraising infrastructure and scale and develop the public/private partnership with the city to ultimately shift Aquarium management to the Aquarium Society. The 2000 Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Aquarium Society established this operating principle, based upon successful models with other great aquariums and, this year, with the Woodland Park Zoo. Proceed with the City (a) to update the Central Waterfront Master Plan to reflect the decision to site the new Aquarium on Pier 59 and areas immediately north and south, and (b) to confirm the "design build" concept for the new Aquarium as set forth in the 2000 MOU.

Susan Golub expressed concern of having two different funding sources for staff. John Braden stated it is planned to address Aquarium staff systematically. The Superintendent noted where two different funding sources becomes a problem is when people are hired in the same classifications. The Aquarium Development and Marketing staff are different from other department staff classifications.

The Seattle Aquarium was reaccredited following a recent reassessment process at the AZA annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas. The Superintendent acknowledged the work of Bob Davidson and SEAS in support of the existing Aquarium. Some of the improvements include an outside ticket booth, signage on the Aquarium and new exhibits. The Superintendent further noted having increased revenue and attendance growth in today's market and economy is phenomenal.

### **Parks and Recreation Department Proposed 2003-2004 Budget Briefing**

Superintendent Ken Bounds distributed a budget review document that included an overview and initial issues identification and a copy of the View from Denny Park outlining the Mayor's 2003-2004 proposed budget.

Mayor Greg Nickels released his 2003-2004 proposed budget the week of September 23. The budget includes city department initiatives to improve Seattle's business climate, strengthen public safety, improve transportation and build communities. Because the city faces nearly \$60 million budget gap due to declining revenues and higher costs, the Mayor's budget strives to spread the budget reductions over all city services in a way that is sustainable over time.

Sarah Welch, Director of Finance, Budget and Administrative, outlined the Park Fund from which the Department makes its operating expenditures. It is comprised of revenues from three main sources: The "Charter revenues," from a provision of the City Charter that provides that 20% of all revenues to the City from fines, penalties and licenses go to the Park Fund; fees for services, grants and other miscellaneous sources, such as swimming pools, the Aquarium, and State grants, and the General Fund (city tax revenues).

The Superintendent and Sarah Welch reviewed the 2003-2004 proposed expenditures. The Department followed the Mayor's instructions to cut overhead first, services last. In order to minimize the impact to the public, the first priority was to reduce administrative costs. The Department's \$4 million share of the reduction amounts to a 15% cut in General Fund, or about 7% "discretionary" revenue (Charter revenues plus General Fund). Unfortunately, the Department could not make a cut of this magnitude without some effect on services and fees. In making these difficult decisions the Department has proposed cuts that would have the least impact on the public and that would maintain the integrity of the programming and maintenance funded by the 2000 Pro Parks Levy.

There are no reductions in the voter approved Pro Parks Levy and Community Center Levy Program that both fund dozens of park improvements, acquisitions, building

renovations, recreation programs and maintenance. The Department will continue aggressive implementation of these and other capital projects. Most of the major after-school programs, summer day camp, athletics, aquatics, community center programs, environmental stewardship programs, senior adults and special populations will continue.

The administration reductions include eliminating 18 positions by consolidating several operating divisions into one. For a savings of \$1,640,000, the Department proposes to transfer a portion of its responsibility for Salmon Homecoming to the Salmon Homecoming Alliance, a private non-profit organization; convert 80% of the city's funding for KidsPlace and Key Project into scholarship funds for advisory council after-school programs; reduce backfill of community center custodians; have floor maintenance done on a contract; have litter picked up by Park Maintenance Aides rather than by Laborers; reduce the number of vehicles and phones; increase salary savings money to 1%; implement a "rolling closure" at community centers involved in major construction projects; transfer the "community nights in schools" program to the Seattle School District, and reorganize Athletics staffing.

The Department will increase revenue by \$327,000 through modest user fee increases at the Aquarium, swimming pools and other programs.

The Department will save \$474,000 by reducing activities during non-peak times: reduce basic community center hours from an average of 53 to 46 hours per week; reduce the number of community centers operating seven days a week from six to two (Green Lake and Rainier Beach) in the summer; close all indoor swimming pools for one week; reduce milfoil harvesting capacity; reduce high school intern program by 50%; reduce park cleaning in the winter by 5% and abrogate one of the Volunteer Coordinator positions.

Other direct service reductions, to achieve \$846,000 more in savings, include: closing Pritchard Beach for the summer; reduce administration support for the Conservation Corps; abrogate one Assistant Civil Engineering Specialist position; reduce the number of landscape and turf projects; reduce the Late Night Recreation Program from 5 hours to 4 hours per night, and close seven playground sites that have no wading pool and/or low attendance and shorten the season at the other 21 sites. The Superintendent noted that the summer lunch program at the closed playground sites would be eliminated but parents would be directed to nearby sites for lunch programs.

The Department will continue to carry out its mission to be good stewards of our environment and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn contemplate and build community. Efforts will include: operation and maintenance of 23 community centers, 10 pools, one performing arts center, four environmental learning centers, one tennis center, the Aquarium, two boating centers, and many other facilities; maintenance of 6,000-plus acres of park land; continuation of efforts to implement Best Management Practices, including pesticide reduction and resource conservation; continuation of vigorous outreach and coordination with volunteers; implementation of Community Center and Pro Parks Levy projects; forward progress on major park initiatives such as South Lake Union, Sand Point/Magnuson, Northgate, Lincoln Reservoir, and on active



partnerships; vigorous implementation of the Public Involvement Policy and continuation of efforts to incorporate environmental programs and projects in all the Department does.

Sarah Neilson requests staff figure out a way to keep the summer lunch program operating at park playground sites. Sarah Welch will check with Trevor Gregg, Program Coordinator for Youth Program Development, on the lunch program status. Bruce Bentley suggested perhaps the Advisory Councils could help with staffing so the lunch program can continue at those sites.

The Superintendent has been working with employees affected by the budget reductions since June. It is a complicated process with some of the classifications. There will be 6-12 layoffs after cutting 78 positions. The City's Project Hire program will help place the employees in danger of layoff. The City had an early separation program and 34 staff participated in the early retirement program.

### **Items of Interest to the Board**

Sarah Neilson requested a tour of athletic field lighting. The Superintendent will have staff arrange a tour. A Park Board lighting tour was held just prior to Sarah's arrival on the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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