

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2005

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present: Jack Collins
Joanna Grist
Terry Holme
Kate Pflaumer, Chair

Excused: Angela Belbeck
Debbie Jackson
Amit Ranade

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Dewey Potter, Seattle Parks Communication Manager
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Dewey Potter, Seattle Parks Communication Manager, represented the Superintendent. **Commissioner Holme moved approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the October 27 minutes, and the November 10 agenda. Commissioner Collins seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed.**

Superintendent's Report

Ms. Potter reported on the following:

Occidental Square: The Hearing Examiner ruled in the City's favor on October 31, clearing the way for the project to move forward. Appellants have 21 days to appeal the decision to King County Superior Court. If the appellants appeal the decision to the Superior Court, they will have to post a bond equal to 10 percent of the construction contract – or approximately \$80,000. If the appellants do not appeal the decision, construction can begin after the first of the year.

Magnuson Park Shoreline: Parks has contacted the U.S Army Corps of Engineers about soil contamination at Magnuson Park. The Corps will address the needed cleanup as part of the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program. Parks will suspend the planned shoreline restoration project until the timeline for the cleanup is known.

Bikes for Katrina Victims: Citizens delivered over 300 bicycles to Magnuson Park, which were then transported to Louisiana for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Loyal Heights Playfield Improvement Project: Councilmember Della has taken off the table his proposal to remove the Pro Parks Levy funding from the Loyal Heights playfield renovation. Thanks were extended to Park Board Commissioners for sending letters to Councilmembers. Four citizen appeals were filed against the DNS

(Determination of Non-Significance) of the Pro Parks Loyal Heights Playfield Improvements project's SEPA (Washington State Environmental Protection Act) checklist. The appeals focus on the environmental and social impacts of the upgrade of the existing grass athletic field to a synthetic field. The appeal process will begin in the Hearing Examiner's office in early December.

City Hall Park: Parks staff members are working on a draft of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) following last week's meeting with King County staff and King County Executive Sims' office. The MOU would outline mutual objectives of a partnership to improve City Hall Park.

Cal Anderson Park: Anyone who hasn't yet visited this newly-remodeled park should go, as it is stunning. Staff members report a recent decrease in illegal behaviors at the park. During the past week, no graffiti was reported and no needles were found.

Community Learning Centers (CLCs): CLC staff are working with students identified as "at risk" with their homework, due to attendance, learning, or behavior problems. Additionally, staff members are collaborating with counselors, teachers, and administrators to ensure students have the needed resources to help them succeed. CLCs served 995 students this past week.

School/Parks Joint Use Operating Agreement: The joint use agreement is proceeding. Future steps are for the agreement to be signed by the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation and by the Seattle School District Superintendent. The Joint City/Schools Committee will be briefed on January 27.

Commissioner Holme asked about the duration of the agreement and Ms. Potter answered that it is usually five years. The Park Board will be briefed on the agreement prior to its being signed.

Decreased Illegal Activity in Seward Park: Councilmember Nick Licata and Police Captain Byers spoke on crime and crime prevention at the November 3 Rainier Chamber of Commerce luncheon, held at Rainier Community Center. According to Captain Byers, the decrease in illegal activity in Seward Park the past four years is due to having positive activities in the park such as environmental education programming and special events.

Learn to Swim: Parks is now half way through the Pro Parks Levy and continues to promote the Learn to Swim program. Attendance has not been as high as hoped and classroom presentations for all 3rd and 4th grade students in Seattle Public Schools are now being scheduled.

Furthering Sustainable Seafood Education: The Aquarium's Conservation Coordinator, Mark Plunkett, gave a lecture on sustainable seafood for the "Cuisine of the Northwest" class at the Seattle Art Institute culinary program on November 5. The Aquarium will likely continue this connection to provide environmental education to chefs of the future.

Meeting with Advisory Councils: Parks staff met with advisory council members at the annual business meeting on November 9. About 150 people were in attendance to hear a presentation of the "Partnership Modernization Project," including a strategic plan that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of Parks, Advisory Recreation Council (ARC), and advisory councils. Parks presented a great deal of information and advisory council members will need some time to digest it all. Staff will meet with individual advisory councils over the next few months to discuss the proposed changes in detail.

Langston Hughes Premieres 3rd Annual "Back to its Roots": Langston Hughes premieres the 3rd annual "Back to its Roots - Hip Hop Weekend," on November 11, 12, and 13. This annual showcase features local hip hop artists in performance and workshops. This year's production is made possible with support from the City of Seattle's Department of Neighborhood's Race and Social Justice fund.

Mountaineers Club Lease Negotiations Complete: The Building Committee of the Mountaineers met late last week to review the results of lease negotiations. The lease and its terms were approved by the committee. The Enterprise Division staff has begun to move the lease through the City's review process.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. No one signed up to testify.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Make Regrade Park's Off-Leash Area a Permanent Element of the Park

Charles Sablan, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, and presented a briefing on the proposal to Make Regrade Park's Off-Leash Area a Permanent Element of the Park. The Board heard a briefing, immediately followed by a public hearing on the 18-month off-leash pilot at Regrade Park at its April 24, 2003, meeting:

http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2003/04-24-03_Minutes.htm. At its May 8, 2003, meeting the Board voted to recommend to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation to allow the 18-month pilot:

http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2003/05-08-03_Minutes.htm. Tonight the Board is asked to consider making the off-leash area a permanent element of the Park. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

Based on the successful results of the 18-month Regrade Park Off-Leash Area (OLA) pilot program, we ask the Board of Park Commissioners to review the pilot evaluation and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Project Description and Background

In May 2003, the Board of Park Commissioners recommended that Parks create an OLA on a pilot basis at Regrade Park. Authorization of off-leash areas, per City Council Resolution 29628,

(<http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph->

[brs.exe?s1=&s2=&s3=29628&s4=&Sect4=AND&l=20&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=RESN1&Sect6=HITOFF&d=RESN&p=1&u=%2F%7Epublic%2Fresn1.htm&r=1&f=G](http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=&s2=&s3=29628&s4=&Sect4=AND&l=20&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=RESN1&Sect6=HITOFF&d=RESN&p=1&u=%2F%7Epublic%2Fresn1.htm&r=1&f=G))

requires:

- a local stewardship committee formed under the auspices of Citizens for Off-Leash Areas (COLA);
- an agreement signed by COLA and the City;
- periodic monitoring of the agreement; and
- after an appropriate period of operating experience, an evaluation and recommendation on whether the OLA should become permanent.

Public Involvement Process

One public meeting was held with the Regrade Park OLA Stakeholders on August 4, 2005. Twelve people attended the meeting and were mostly Belltown residents and OLA users.

Issues

Citizens who were invited to the August 4, 2005, Regrade Park OLA Stakeholder meeting included both supporters and detractors of the site. All identified themselves as residents of Belltown. A majority of attendees were in favor of making the OLA a permanent site. The overall theme of the comments was that the site builds community, discourages illegal activity, and serves urban dog owner needs. One dissenting Belltown resident showed a video of dogs barking and uncollected feces in the park. He wanted to highlight the excessive barking from the early morning to midnight, and the difficulty in getting his concerns addressed.

Budget

The site is budgeted for ongoing operations and maintenance.

Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends that the site be added to the network of OLAs operated at Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities in partnership with COLA.

Additional Information

Charles Sablan, charles.sablan@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing

Mr. Sablan briefly reviewed the information in the written briefing. He asked for input on the off-leash area from Seattle Police Department, Seattle Animal Control, and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) handles the port-a-potty located in the park. The overall comments were positive. The illegal behavior observed at the park prior to the off-leash area has now moved north of the park. Parks staff believes the complaints of excessive noise (barking) at the site can be successfully addressed with the dog owners.

Board Questions & Answers

Commissioner Holme asked if Mark Mead, Parks' Senior Urban Forester, periodically reviews the impact of the OLA on the park's vegetation. Mr. Sablan answered that most vegetation was removed in the small park, except for a few trees. As yet, he has found no impact to the trees. All the grass was removed and replaced with industrial hog fuel (sawmill wood waste which is primarily bark.) The hog fuel is changed out often, which helps avoid damage to the trees from the urine. Staff members have received complaints that the smell from the hog fuel and urine are more potent in the summer and plan for it to be changed out more often.

Commissioner Holme referred to the excessive barking noise issue and asked what both COLA and Parks can do to address the problem. Mr. Sablan answered that COLA's main thrust is education and they are very proactive with signage and educating the OLA users. Parks staff resources members monitor the site. It is important to note that Animal Control also should monitor the noise, which seems to be excessive in summer months after 8:00 p.m. Commissioner Holme asked if Animal Control officers work that late and Mr. Sablan was unsure if they did. Commissioner Holme asked if excessive noise was mentioned in Animal Control's report on this OLA and Mr. Sablan said it wasn't.

Commissioner Collins received information from a friend that the park's port-a-potty is a crime magnet. The port-a-potty is also unaesthetic. He recommends a permanent restroom be installed if this becomes a permanent off-leash area. A brief discussion followed on SPU's guidelines for the port-a-potty. Commissioner Holme noted that several other off-leash areas have port-a-potties. Ms. Potter will check with SPU and send additional information to the Board.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing began. The Chair reminded the audience that each person has up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. A total of 18 citizens testified; a very brief summary of their comments follows.

Jean Peters: She owns Wags to Whiskers doggy daycare in Belltown and stated that she and her clients utilize the off-leash area frequently. They also volunteer at every cleanup. The off-leash area is a great community asset and it is vital to make it permanent. Most of her clients, and their dogs, live in nearby condos. If the dogs have an area to run and play, that helps control barking tendencies.

Sylvia Wiedermann: She has managed nearby Lava Lounge for the past ten years. The off-leash area has been the largest deterrent of crime in Belltown as it has moved the crime from the general traffic area (Third Avenue.) Before the off-leash area was set up as a pilot at the park, it was frequently the site of crime and needles left by drug users. She urged that the OLA be made a permanent part of the park.

Kevin Catz: He is the Vice President of Diversity for Safeco and listed three reasons to make the off-leash area permanent: (1) sense of community, (2) different people coming together; and (3) safety. He has lived in the Belltown area for three years and before the off-leash area was installed at Regrade Park, he would avoid walking down that area of Third Avenue and the alleys. Now he does walk through that area often.

Gigi Carter: She is the Vice President and Manager at Washington Mutual and lives nearby. She has a very active and energetic dog and uses the OLA frequently. She has found a great sense of community at the park. She urged that it become a permanent element.

Eric Kodlus: He manages a nearby 60- unit condo building that is dog friendly. Part of its marketing strategy is the nearby off-leash area. He agreed that the crime has moved north from the park — much of it has shifted to the back area of his building. He is working with Seattle Police to resolve. However, the off-leash area outweighs any problems of shifting crime or noise and smell. His dog loves the OLA and he urged that it become a permanent element.

Derek Butler: He rents an apartment one-half block from the OLA. He moved to the area two years ago and now wouldn't move to an area that doesn't have an off-leash area. The park used to be a haven for crime. Some problems still exist, but the former problems were far worse.

Michele Guppy: She is the lead steward of the Regrade Park OLA. An effective tool against excessive barking is peer pressure by other dog owners. Dogs that persist with barking can be sprayed with water guns. COLA volunteers will continue to clean the park. She showed photos of parties that have been held at the park and stated that it is safe to go there now late at night.

Commissioner Collins asked if the position of off-leash steward is filled by a volunteer and Ms. Guppy answered yes. Stewards have already worked over 1,000 hours at this site.

Alley Rutzel: She is the Chair of COLA and stated that it is in COLA's best interest to help this OLA succeed. Additional OLAs are opening in urban areas. COLA wants them to succeed and expand to more sites. COLA is looking into grants, is raising funds, and is looking into alternative surfaces to more effectively control odor and urine. COLA doesn't want the OLA's to be a source of contention.

The public hearing concluded.

Questions and Answers

Commissioner Holme referred to a new off-leash area at Collanade Park and asked if the hours of operation are posted at Regrade. He believes it is important that the hours are posted and that users acknowledge these hours. Ms. Sablan stated the hours are posted and are 6:00 am-11:30 pm.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Sablan for the briefing. The proposal will be discussed at the December 8 meeting and a recommendation will be made to the Superintendent.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Green Lake Park/Lower Woodland Park Humane Rabbit Capture, Sterilization, and Relocation to a Sanctuary

Barb DeCaro, Seattle Parks Resource Conservation Coordinator, and Dewey Potter, Seattle Parks Communication Manager, presented a briefing on this proposal. The Commissioners received a written and verbal briefing; both are included in the minutes. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This to brief the Board on a Parks proposal for the humane removal, sterilization, and re location of the proliferating rabbit population at Woodland and Green Lake parks, and to request guidance on moving ahead with the proposal.

Project Description and Background

In 2004, Parks and Recreation ground crews noticed an increase in the number of rabbits in Woodland Park, their migration north into Green Lake Park, and an increase in damage to tree roots in Woodland Park. Parks Forestry staff examined the trees and roots, and ascertained that the rabbits had done the damage. In 2005, the nonprofit Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary staff estimated the peak rabbit population to be more than 300, and the rabbits had migrated as far north as the Bathhouse Theater in Green Lake Park. Late in 2004, a group convened to talk about potential solutions. It includes:

- Parks grounds staff
- Parks' resource conservation coordinator,
- A representative of the Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS),
- The manager of and a veterinarian from Seattle Animal Shelter
- A representative of the nonprofit Rabbits, Rodents and Ferrets and Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary
- The grounds maintenance manager for northwest Seattle, and
- Parks' communications manager.

Because Woodland Park is an Olmsted-designed park and has an approved Vegetation Management Plan (VMP), it is very important to maintain its assets in good condition, particularly its trees. The VMP notes the contribution of the rabbits to the erosion problems and to their undermining trees' root zones. Two of the VMP's action items are "Manage erosion from feral rabbits" and "Facilitate non-lethal removal of feral rabbits." Please see the attached photos that document the serious damage done to tree roots in two areas of the park.

Public Involvement Process

Parks has posted signs at the "rabbit warren" and at the triangle adjacent to Aurora Avenue N, asking people not to feed the rabbits. We understand the attraction of the rabbits to small children and their parents, who continue to feed them. A story ran in the Seattle Times in July 2005. We received calls in response, and with the exception of one person, all understood the situation and supported the proposal. This public hearing is the public's opportunity to comment on the proposal. A news release went out Friday, October 28 to about 30 media outlets, and we have sent a separate news release announcing the proposal.

Issues

Origin of the rabbits.

These are **feral domesticated European rabbits**. Many were once loved family companions later abandoned in the park. This **non-native population** has reproduced rapidly (one female can have 72 or more babies a year). Newly abandoned rabbits and a steady food supply also contribute to the population growth.

Damage by the rabbits.

They displace native wildlife species, cause habitat destruction, destroy plant life, and create potential dangers to park users.

They make underground tunnels called burrows. These burrows damage grass and the roots of other plants and trees often causing decline and death. Without the shelter and food that this vegetation provides, native wildlife species including songbirds, chorus frogs and chipmunks, will perish or move to another area that can sustain them. Walking over an area where rabbits have made a home can cause a burrow to collapse or visitors can trip on the openings and injure themselves. Rehabilitation of forest and landscapes is costly.

Dangers to the rabbits.

There is a common misconception that rabbits are better off in the “wild” and will live a happy full life after being released into the park. Unfortunately, they face **many dangers** and will only live for a short time in this environment. They are preyed upon by many predators, chased and maimed by dogs, and they can contract parasites and diseases. They are also subject to the elements, death by cars, and abuse by humans.

Another misconception is that rabbits readily welcome new rabbits into their family groups. Rabbits have a very strict hierarchy and are very territorial; they do not accept outsiders readily and will defend their area. Fights and injuries from domestic disputes are common.

Proposal.

To help ensure the safety of these rabbits and the protection of the park we are working on a plan to trap, sterilize, and relocate them. They will be moved to a large enclosed outdoor space that is safe from predators and the dangers they face in the park.

- Beginning in January 2006, Rabbit Meadow Sanctuary volunteers, under the supervision of Parks staff, will put up temporary fencing, lure rabbits with food, and capture them.
- Volunteers will take the rabbits to a temporary facility in a building at Magnuson Park, where they will be cared for before and just after their surgeries.
- Volunteers will take the rabbits to participating veterinarians for surgery and will return them to Magnuson Park.
- Volunteers will take the rabbits to the Rabbit Meadow Sanctuary in Redmond when they have recovered sufficiently.

Budget

The estimated number of rabbits is between 300 and 500 individuals. The cost for discounted sterilization surgery, food, medicine, and fundraising administrative costs is \$100 per rabbit; the total estimated program cost is between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Parks will absorb supervisory costs and costs of the use of the Magnuson Park building. With our partners in this venture, we will undertake a fund raising effort to defray the costs of the surgeries. The Rabbit Meadows Sanctuary will organize the collection and administration of donated funds. The landscape restoration effort is eligible for Community Response Fund monies, for which Parks forestry staff will submit an application. We will have more precise budget information within the next month.

Schedule

We hope to begin the program in mid-January, when the rabbit population is at its lowest. Please see the attached timeline.

Staff Recommendation

We ask the Board’s approval for continuing to develop the program.

Additional Information

Please see the attached photos of rabbit damage to trees, and the attached July 15, 2005 story from the Seattle Times.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing began. The Chair reminded the audience that each person has up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. A total of 18 citizens testified; a very brief summary of their comments follows.

Mark Pilger: He lives in a condo near Green Lake Park. Rabbits are the third most popular pet in the United States and pet rabbits usually live 12 years in a home environment. Rabbits in the park live a short and horrible life. He has rescued two from the park that are now his pets. One of them was living under a car. The number of rabbits in the park would be higher than 300 if they weren’t being killed by feral dogs. He has seen lots of rabbit abuse:

humans siccing their dogs on the rabbits, shooting them with bb guns, or throwing rocks at them. The rabbits are also hit and killed by vehicles; he has buried a number of them. He urged that kids and parents stop feeding the rabbits and that this proposal be approved.

Carrie Brittingham: Domesticated rabbits make great pets. They are not wild and should not be dropped off in the parks. Tonight's proposal is a really good plan to address this problem.

The public hearing concluded.

Board Questions & Answers

Commissioner Holme asked if there is an ordinance that prohibits releasing rabbits into the parks. Ms. Potter will work with Animal Control on rabbit regulations.

Ms. Potter stated that if the public sees a lot of rabbits in a particular park that some then think that is a good place to abandon their rabbit. Relocating the large rabbit population in these two parks will help eliminate this misconception.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. DeCaro and Ms. Potter for the briefing. At its December 8 meeting, the Commissioners will discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Update Briefing/Recommendation: Seattle Prep/Montlake Field Renovation

At its July 28, 2005 meeting, the Board heard a briefing and held a public hearing on this project <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/07-28-05.pdf>. At its August 11 meeting, the Board discussed the proposal and made a recommendation, which included bringing a Good Neighbor Agreement back to the Board <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/08-11-05.pdf>. Tonight, the Board is being briefed on the Good Neighbor Agreement between the community and Seattle Prep and is asked for a recommendation on that.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

Staff is requesting the Board make a recommendation regarding the configuration of the football/soccer field and track at Montlake Playfield. We are not asking the Board for a recommendation on the configuration of the baseball field at this time.

Background

Seattle Preparatory School has made a proposal to renovate the playfields at Montlake, including the existing soccer/football field and track and the existing baseball field. The Board held a public hearing and was initially briefed on the proposal on July 28. On August 25 staff presented a range of options for the Board to consider. The Board recommended:

- the project move forward to project status which anticipates acceptance of funds from Seattle Prep for the renovation; and
- Parks lead a two month community process attempting to reconcile different views on how the fields should be configured.

The recommendation for a community process arose from opposition from some neighbors to the proposed locations and size of the fields. Seattle Prep's proposal moves the soccer/football field to the west in order to move it out of wetlands area. The proposal for the baseball field is to increase the size of the field to better accommodate high school baseball which uses 90 foot basepaths and a larger field than the existing field. (For additional background information, staff's previous briefing papers regarding Montlake are being to the Board in a separate e-mail. The July 28 paper presents the complete history of this project.)

The Two Month Process

Parks convened a group consisting of 2 Seattle Prep representatives, 3 Montlake Community Club representatives and 1 Montlake Advisory Council representative. Seattle Prep's engineering consultant also attended. Three meetings were held with the goal of reaching agreement on:

- defining the specifics of the Seattle Prep proposal;
- configuration and location of the soccer/football field and track; and
- configuration and location of the baseball field.

Other issues, such as the determining the strongest way of keeping lights off the fields and the substance of the good neighbor agreement Prep and the Community Club plan to enter into, were discussed as well.

Areas of Agreement

1. Defining the Proposal: Attachment A to this paper is a description of the Seattle Prep proposal for field renovation and use at Montlake. All parties involved in the 2 month negotiation process, Seattle Prep, the Montlake Community Club and the Montlake Advisory Council, agree that this is what Seattle Prep is proposing. (Perhaps this seems like a minor point, but was a major part of the discussion!)

2. Soccer/football Field and Track: Prep's proposal shifts the existing soccer/football field and track west in order to move it farther out of the Montlake wetlands area. Currently, wetland reeds grow up through the track surface and considerable settling occurs because of the wet location. The proposal is for a synthetic field surface and a 4 lane track. (Prep originally proposed 4 lanes on the curves and 6 on the straight-aways, but reduced the track to 4 lanes to accommodate the communities' desire for additional separation between the track and the baseball field.) All parties to the negotiation process agree with this proposal.

Area of Disagreement

Baseball Field: Prep's proposal moves the existing baseball field 48 feet to the west and extends the outfield dimensions. High School baseball games are proposed for the field, while in recent years Prep has not played games at Montlake. Despite considerable effort by all parties, no agreement could be reached about this proposal. The community is concerned about the conversion of open park space to athletic field that results from shifting the field to the west and has safety concerns regarding the outfield dimensions and the proximity of the reconfigured field to the children's play area. The Montlake Community Club's concerns regarding the baseball field and those of the Montlake Advisory Council are being sent to the Board with this paper.

Options for the Board to Consider

1. Recommend approval of the soccer/football field and track, deferring action on the baseball field: Renovating the soccer/football field and track is Seattle Prep's first priority. Approving this piece of the project, which all parties agree upon, allows Prep to move ahead with engineering and environmental analysis, as well as their fundraising efforts. The renovated field and track will provide a benefit to the community as well as Seattle Prep. Parks, Seattle Prep and the community will continue to explore ideas for providing a 90 foot baseball diamond for the school and will return to the Park Board in February 2006 for an update briefing and recommendation.

2. Delay any recommendation until the baseball field issue is resolved: The Board may opt to recommend approval of the soccer/football field only after all issues at the park are resolved. This provides for a more comprehensive look at the fields, but may considerably delay the soccer/football field track part of the project about which there is agreement.

3. Recommend approval of the project as proposed: The Board could choose to recommend that the project proceed to engineering and environmental analysis as proposed by Seattle Prep. Doing so accomplishes Seattle Prep's goals for the project but does not address concerns that have been raised about the baseball field.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends option 1: recommend approval of the soccer/football field and track configuration now and defer action on the baseball field to a future meeting.

Additional Information

Susan Golub, susan.golub@seattle.gov, 684-7046

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Golub displayed a large drawing of the site and thanked the committee members from both the community and Seattle Prep for working on the agreement. The recommendation is to approve the soccer/football field and the track configuration now and defer a recommendation on the baseball field.

Bob Graby, Seattle Prep's Vice-president of Development, addressed the Board and thanked the other members of the committee. He stated that Seattle Prep hopes are that the agreement will be good for both the school and the community. He agreed with the recommendation to approve the agreement on the football/soccer/track field and hold in abeyance the baseball field until the committee can explore the options discussed with the Superintendent.

Bob Mohan, Montlake Community Club President, also thanked all the participants. He briefly reviewed the important areas that were addressed by the committee: (1) lighting: reached agreement on a strategy to assure the neighbors that lights will not be installed on the field in the future. The community is pleased with this and he thanked Seattle Prep; (2) Maximizing Seattle Prep field usage: Mr. Mohan believes this will be adequately resolved; (3) Shifting of football field/track field: the committee reached consensus on this; and (4) the baseball field is the remaining unresolved issue.

Montlake Community Club will continue working with Seattle Prep and Parks on the baseball field. He recommended that the project be green lighted, except for the baseball field, and that the footprint of the field not be changed for the baseball field.

Commissioner Holme asked whether the drawing displayed was the most current proposal. Ms. Golub answered that what is shown for the football/soccer/track field is what was worked out in the agreement. The baseball diamond, however, is what Seattle Prep has proposed, which is moving the diamond 48 feet forward, and shifting and enlarging the field. The community supports keeping the existing footprint of the baseball field.

Commissioner Holme asked whether neighbors object to the diamond being moved if the field remains a 60' field, rather than being expanded to a 90' one. After a bit of discussion, Ms. Golub and Mr. Mohan clarified that the community doesn't object to the field remaining in its footprint of a 60' field. The objection is to expanding and shifting the field to a 90' one. Commissioner Holme asked what are the alternatives for Prep to secure the 90' field they want. Mr. Graby commented that Seattle Prep may move the field elsewhere if resolution isn't reached at Montlake. Ms. Golub answered that the committee will continue working on the baseball field. The objective tonight is to approve the football/soccer/track field and move ahead on it and bring the baseball field back to the Board within a couple months. Commissioner Collins urged that a date be set tonight to bring the baseball field back to the Board for a recommendation.

Commissioner Holme moved approval of the staff recommendation of approval of the soccer/football field and track configuration now and deferral of action on the baseball field to a future meeting. Commissioner Collins seconded. The vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

The Commissioners commended the efforts of the community, Seattle Prep, and Seattle Parks staff Susan Golub and Susanne Friedman in their efforts on this project. This endeavor is a good model for other community groups.

Update Briefing: Downtown Task Force Recommendations: Management, Funding, Outreach, and Use Guidelines

Seattle Parks staff members Dewey Potter (Communication Manager), Christopher Williams (Operations Division Director and member of the Task Force's Operations Subcommittee), and Eric Friedli, (Enterprise Division Director and member of the Task Force's Programming and Special Events Subcommittee), were present to brief the Board on progress made by the Downtown Task Force. The Commissioners received written briefing information, as well as a verbal briefing. The Commissioners were previously briefed on this effort at the May 27,

2004, meeting http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2004/05-27-04_minutes.pdf, the August 12, 2004, meeting http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2004/08-12-04_minutes.pdf and the September 8, 2005 meeting, <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/09-08-05.pdf>.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is a briefing and update on the work of the Downtown Parks Task Force, and we would appreciate Board approval to continue with the work the Task Force is doing.

Project Description and Background

The Task Force is nearing its draft recommendations in four areas: management, funding, and use management guidelines for downtown parks, and a strategy for airing its recommendations and getting public input. The project is an element of Mayor Nickels' Downtown Parks Initiative.

Public Involvement Process

The Task Force has met 14 times since February 2005, and has worked through issues relating to the areas noted above.

Issues

Task Force Goal: A network of revitalized, vibrant, safe, attractive downtown parks that can be used and enjoyed in all seasons, day and night, by City residents, businesses, and visitors.

Overview of Task Force Progress

The Task Force has made considerable progress on all of the issues areas within its charge: Park Operations (maintenance, safety, and security); Park Activities (programming, special events and commercial activities); Park Management; and Park Funding options and opportunities. A brief summary of the Task Force's management and funding recommendations and the proposed approach to gaining public input on the draft recommendations is presented below.

1. Management Approach and Structure

Downtown parks are different from other parks. They are used differently and face a different set of management and operational challenges than do other Seattle parks. To make the best use of the City's downtown park assets and opportunities will require a collaborative effort and partnership by Parks and Recreation, other city departments, and the downtown community. The Task Force will recommend a management structure that will involve private partners and funders, remain accountable to citizens, and enable coordination across City agencies and downtown organizations to make downtown parks safer and more active. Key features of the proposed structure include:

- A new Downtown Parks Division within Parks, similar to the recently created Enterprise Division, to focus exclusively on the operational needs of downtown parks.
- A go-to position in the Mayor's Office with responsibility for troubleshooting and coordinating activities across City departments, including Police, Parks, Planning and Development, and others.
- A contract or agreement between Parks and an organization such as the Downtown Seattle Association for program planning and management. The organization selected would serve as a "master concessionaire" with responsibility for activating the parks, including subcontracting for programs and events; identification of commercial opportunities and coordination with tenants and neighboring businesses; and organizing and acting as liaison with advocacy groups for each major downtown destination park.

- Formation of a Downtown Parks Advisory Board to provide policy guidance. The Board would include representatives from the downtown community, interested citywide organizations, district councils, and others.

2. Funding Requirements. The Task Force has identified needs in four areas:

1. **Operations:** maintenance, baseline safety, and security.
2. **Enhanced security:** costs to be shared by the City and downtown interests, including adjacent buildings, businesses, and existing organizations.
3. **Programming:** a new function requiring organization and funding.
4. **Capital needs:** Parks will investigate opportunities for cost-sharing and partnerships to make improvements to downtown parks.

3. Proposed Public Outreach Process and Schedule

The Task Force is planning an outreach effort to publicize its findings and gather public input on recommendations in its Draft Report. The public involvement process is scheduled to begin in 1st Quarter 2006 with one and possibly two open houses and a series of three smaller public meetings. Per Task Force suggestions, meetings will be conveniently located and held at varied times of the day and week.

Proposed Schedule: January – Mid March 2006

- **1st Open House** – In mid to late January, present findings from the Downtown Parks Task Force, solicit input from the public in order to refine a final report.
- **Public Meetings** – In early February, hold three public meetings in different neighborhoods in downtown Seattle.
- **Task Force Meeting** – Early March
- **Possible 2nd Open House** – In mid March, to present final draft reflecting comments from the first open house and public meetings.

Meeting Plan and Design

- **First Open House:** The kickoff Open House in mid- to late January will be organized as an informal “fair” with informational booths explaining each of the key findings. Task Force members will be on hand to answer questions and talk, and there will be many opportunities to provide input. We will also work to have representatives of the existing park advocacy groups (Friends of...) participate and help at the booths.
- **Public Meetings:** Following the Open House, the Task Force will host three identical public meetings about the Draft Plan in three downtown neighborhoods.
- **Possible Second Open House:** to be held in mid-March, covering the final draft reflecting comments from the first open house and public meetings.
- **Other briefings:** may be scheduled as well, including briefings for downtown organizations and the neighborhood district councils.

4. Use Management Guidelines

Parks’ set of policies and procedures includes a policy called “use management guidelines for Seattle parks.” It contains very general guidelines about normal accepted uses in our parks. Parks has developed “supplemental” use management guidelines for some parks, including several in downtown: Waterfront Park, August 1983; Freeway Park, June 1982; Steinbrueck Park, August 1983; and Occidental Park, June 1982.

These documents outline what activities and special events are allowed in these parks, and in some cases limit the number and hours of events and flexibility on vendors.

The proposed revisions, as currently drafted, would consolidate the separate “supplemental” guidelines for downtown parks into a single document. The proposal consolidates the list of permissible special events, offers more flexibility, and allows a broader range of events. It maintains checks on the number of simultaneous events and allows additional requirements for large events. The specific proposal follows:

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL USE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN PARKS

- Permissible Special Events:
 - Concerts/plays/dances
 - Fundraisers and/or First Amendment-protected events
 - Events sponsored by Seafair as part of the annual Seafair week
 - Community festivals
 - Theme festivals, arts/crafts exhibits
 - Filming commercials or movies
 - Fine arts exhibits
 - Noon/midday concerts
 - Street fairs
 - Other special events compatible with each downtown park's theme
- No more than one special event will be scheduled in a single downtown park at the same time, unless two or more proposed events are determined by Parks not to conflict with one another.
- The number of participants in special events will be limited so as not to exceed the capacity of a park and result in spillover onto pedestrian walkways and into streets.
- Any event involving a large crowd is subject to special requirements as stipulated by Parks, such as portable toilets, dumpsters, cleanup, and other mitigating measures.
- Musical events that exceed noise levels set forth in Seattle Municipal Code 25.08 are prohibited.

Budget

Please see "Issues" above.

Schedule

- Park Board Public Hearing late March
- Mayor and City Council early April

Staff Recommendation (if applicable)

Not Applicable.

Verbal Briefing/Questions and Answers

Ms. Potter gave a brief overview of the written briefing and asked if the Commissioners had questions.

Commissioner Holme asked what is the track record of the Downtown Seattle Association to take over as "master concessionaire" with responsibility for activating the parks. Mr. Friedli answered that the Association currently schedules the downtown concert series and have event management staff. DSA would expand on this and is willing and able.

Commissioner Collins commented that this is a conceptual change in how parks are viewed, looking not just at an individual park but a system of parks. He believes this is a great leap forward and that the management and concessions ideas are good. Ms. Potter commented that Parks will probably get "push back" on commercialization of parks. Commissioner Pflaumer stated that she shares some of those concerns. The Commissioners asked several questions on the City's budget, which will most likely be approved by City Council during Thanksgiving week. Some of the budget proposals could affect Freeway Park and City Hall Park.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Potter, Mr. Friedli, and Mr. Williams for the update briefing.

Board of Park Commissioners' Business

- None

New/Old Business

Mayor’s Reception for Boards and Commissions: Wednesday, November 30, 6-8:00 pm at City Hall.

Invitations were sent to all Commissioners; guests are welcome.

Correspondence: The Coordinator will draft a response letter to Councilmember Larry Phillips regarding his letter of support for the Madrona Park Creek Daylighting project.

Upcoming Vacancy: The Mayor’s office and Parks staff are continuing efforts to find a replacement for Commissioner Grist, whose term expires on December 31.

Loyal Heights Playfield: Commissioner Holme referred to the controversy over the synthetic field planned for installation at Loyal Heights. He recommended that future press releases explain clearly to the community that the synthetic field sites are pre-determined. Commissioner Collins commented that during community meetings Parks staff blamed City Council for the pre-determination, rather than stating that the decision was a shared role between Council and Parks.

Seattle Management Association: Parks had several winners to be recognized at a December 8 luncheon.

Denny Awards: Will be presented on Wednesday, November 16.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____