

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Debbie Jackson
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Kate Pflaumer, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

B.J. Brooks, Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer was at another community meeting; Deputy Superintendent B.J. Brooks attended for Superintendent Bounds. Acting Chair Terry Holme called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Belbeck moved approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the March 9 minutes, and the March 23 agenda. Commissioner Jackson seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed.**

Superintendent's Report

Deputy Superintendent Brooks reported on the following:

New Park Named Counterbalance Park: This is the name selected for the new park located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Queen Anne Ave N and Roy Street. The name honors the counterbalance trolley system that once took people up and down Queen Anne Avenue, a unique element of Seattle's history. For more information on the naming, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/news/detail.asp?ID=5976&Dept=14>

Online Registration Pilot Project: Online registration is now available for 14 community centers. During last week alone, 157 registrations for spring quarter classes were scheduled online. This compares to 67 online registrations for all of fall quarter. The system is still a work in progress, but clearly the word is getting out about this option. For more information on the "Seattle Park and Recreation Connection (SPARC)" online registration pilot, please see <http://egov1.seattle.gov/parks/Start/Start.asp?SCheck=532108811&SDT=38806.3667013889>

Commissioners asked about Parks' future plans for online registration and whether those without computer access will still be able to register by telephone or mail. Staff assured the Commissioners that the online system is in addition to, and not a replacement of, the current telephone and mail registration system.

Spring Clean Partnership with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU): Parks and SPU included an “Earth Month” flyer in a mailing to 5,000 Seattle homes advertising a diversity of stewardship programs and community events in celebration of Earth Day, which is Saturday, April 22. A full color Earth Month poster in different languages will be distributed soon. For additional information on the Spring Clean program, please see http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Garbage/Reduce_Garbage_&_Litter/Spring_Clean/index.asp

Washington Park Arboretum Open House: Seattle Parks and Recreation, the University of Washington and the Arboretum Foundation have scheduled an Open House on Wednesday, April 5, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., at the Graham Visitor's Center in the Arboretum, 2300 Arboretum Drive E. Two projects will be the topic of the Open House: the Mainline Irrigation Project and the Holly Re-establishment Project, which is part of the larger Madrona Terrace Project. For more information on the projects, please see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/arboretum.htm>

Laurelhurst Community Center Groundbreaking Ceremony: The groundbreaking for this Pro Parks Levy project was held on Saturday, March 25, with Mayor Nickels and a number of community members present. For more information on the project, please see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/laurelhurst.htm>

AIDS Quilt Exhibited at Langston Hughes: Portions of the national AIDS quilt were displayed at Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center. The display was part of a unique collaboration between Department of Health and Human Services, African Americans Reach and Teach Health, Rise and Shine, and People of Color against AIDS Network. For more information on the AIDS quilt, please see <http://www.aidsquilt.org/>. For more information on Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/langston.htm>

Starbucks Parks Grant to Benefit Powell Barnett Park: Great news is that earlier today, City Council’s Parks, Education, Libraries, and Labor Committee approved legislation to accept \$550,000 in Starbucks Neighborhoods Parks Grant funds. On Monday, April 3, the full City Council will consider the legislation. The Starbucks donation will be added to a Pro Parks Levy Opportunity fund grant to make improvements to Powell Barnett Park in the Central District. Work on the project is expected to get underway this spring with a scheduled completion in the fall. For more information on the Starbucks Parks Grant program, please see <http://www.starbucks.com/aboutus/grantsparks.asp>

Van Asselt Bids Received: Van Asselt, the last community center that Parks will build through the 1999 Community Center Levy, has bid within budget and Parks has awarded the contract. The anticipated completion is the end of 2006. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held on Saturday, April 1, from 12:30-1:30 pm. Community members, Parks’ Superintendent Bounds, and representatives of Starbucks Coffee, the Seattle Supersonics, and Seattle Storm will attend. For more information on the project, please see http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/current/Van_Asselt_Community_Center.htm

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: Mayor’s Downtown Parks Initiative

Deputy Superintendent B.J. Brooks briefed the Commissioners on the latest report from the Downtown Parks Task Force on the Mayor’s Downtown Parks Initiative. The Commissioners had previously heard briefings on this initiative at several other meetings. Minutes of those meetings are available at: http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2004/03-25-04_minutes.pdf <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/09-08-05.pdf> and <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/11-10-05.pdf>

Deputy Superintendent Brooks introduced Dewey Potter, Seattle Parks Communication Manager, and consultant Bonnie Burke. She also introduced members of the Task Force in the audience: community members David Brewster, Tina Bueche, Peggy Dreisinger, and Kate Joncas; and City staff Jorgen Royer from the Mayor's Office and Christa Dempsey from Department of Neighborhoods. All assisted in the briefing or in answering questions from the Commissioners.

To read the Executive Summary, please see: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown.asp>. To read the report, please see: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown/Report.pdf>

The Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing, with both included in the minutes. A public hearing immediately followed the briefing, and the Commissioners plan to discuss the Initiative at the April 27 meeting and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is a briefing only.

Project Description and Background

The Downtown Parks Task Force, an element of the Mayor's Downtown Parks Initiative, has developed a draft report with recommendations for 24 Center City parks in the following areas:

- Management partnership
- Maintenance
- Programming
- Commercial activities
- Funding options and opportunities

In late 2004, Mayor Nickels appointed the Downtown Parks Task Force comprised of representatives from the Downtown Seattle Association, the Mayor's Office, downtown businesses, community members, and Parks.

The Task Force has met sixteen times since February 2005; its goal is to make recommendations on how to revitalize downtown parks and create a network of vibrant, safe, and attractive urban public spaces that can be used and enjoyed in all seasons, day and night, by everyone in the city.

Seattle's downtown parks are underused assets that can help Seattle's Center City evolve into a vibrant urban place. Cities across the country with successful downtown park systems have recognized the catalytic role of parks in creating people-friendly, livable downtowns, and are investing significant capital, maintenance, security, and programming resources in those spaces. Recognizing the complexity, special operating needs, and funding requirements for a vital, active downtown park system, many cities have designed new management systems and structures to meet those needs most effectively.

Seattle's downtown parks need an infusion of energy, activity, investment, focused management, and coordinated provision of human services to those who need them. This initiative will mean new partnerships between the City and the downtown community, and a renewed emphasis on the provision of services to people who need them.

In making its recommendations, the Task Force considered the different kinds of parks in downtown Seattle. Of the 24, the Task Force identified ten "destination parks" of interest to the broad community; seven "neighborhood parks" that are desirable for neighborhood use; and seven small "beauty spots" that help keep downtown vibrant but are not large enough for substantial park facilities or programming.

Public Involvement Process

This is a draft report. Task Force activities to date include:

- Met sixteen times
- Crafted and distributed a draft report and executive summary
- Conducted a community outreach process in late 2005 and early 2006 that comprised:
 - December 2005, early 2006: Briefing of Downtown Seattle Association
 - Invited other City departments to comment
 - Second week of January 2006: Open House
 - Third week of January 2006: Public Meeting #1
 - Fourth week of January 2006: Public Meeting #2
 - Second week of February 2006: public comment deadline
 - First week of March 2006: Final Task Force meeting
 - Second week of March 2006: issue revised report
 - March 23, 2006: Brief Board of Park Commissioners
 - Invited and incorporated comments from the public and from other City departments: Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Department of Planning and Development (DPD), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), and Seattle Police Department (SPD.)

Issues: Task Force Recommendations

Action Plan Parks should develop a downtown parks action plan to include the following recommendations:

City's Role and Contributions:

Parks: Organization. Parks should create a new Downtown Parks Division, similar to the recently created Enterprise Division. The division would focus exclusively on the needs of downtown parks, including maintenance and security.

Parks: Enhanced Security. Parks should request funding for a new "ranger" security force of uniformed, unarmed Parks staff to be a presence in the nine destination parks. The ranger force would be supplemented by SPD officers hired by Parks for evenings, weekends, and holidays to provide security coverage overnight for downtown parks. Rangers would call SPD by radio to report illegal activities.

Portland, Los Angeles, Boston, and smaller cities, including Nashville and Mesa, Arizona, use park rangers. In Seattle they would play a community policing role by answering questions, giving directions, and ensuring that park visitors have a safe experience. They would patrol parks with a focus on patrons' behavior, not their appearance.

Mayor's Office: A staff person in the Mayor's Office would be responsible for troubleshooting and coordinating activities across City departments, including SDOT, Police, Parks, DPD, and others.

Police Department: Parks should work with SPD on a coordinated plan and operating procedures for improving security in downtown parks. The plan should encompass coordination with the ranger team, uniform approaches to enforcing City ordinances, and enforcement of the code of conduct to be posted in every park.

Parks: Legislative Changes: Some current regulations hamper the City's ability to achieve the objectives of the Task Force to revitalize downtown parks. Parks should update park use management guidelines under the city's rulemaking authority, and should propose legislation that would:

Make the panhandling ordinance apply in parks;

Revise the fee structure for events;

Amend the noise ordinance for downtown parks (in keeping with noise ordinances in other cities); and

Allow longer-term (up to five years) agreements for concessions and vending in the parks, as is the case at Magnuson Park.

Use Management Guidelines: Revise them to reflect desired activities in downtown parks (already under way).

Planning and Development: In 2001, The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) inventoried downtown public and private places. Parks should work with DPD to update and map those spaces, and should develop a long-range downtown parks plan and update the downtown parks component of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Interdepartmental Parks Ownership Issues: In several parks, ownership and/or maintenance responsibilities are split between City departments, particularly between Parks and SDOT. Parks, working with SDOT, should identify the properties that abut downtown parks and consider making Parks responsible for their operations and management.

Interagency Coordination of Services: Parks will work with Human Services, the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID), the ranger team, and other agencies to focus on providing information about human services available to people who need them.

Interagency Coordination of Maintenance: Some park properties in downtown are maintained by a mix of agencies, including Parks, SDOT, SPU, the Port of Seattle, and WSDOT. Because some inefficiencies exist in coordinating maintenance by multiple agencies, Parks should work with those agencies to create a coordinated plan for efficient service delivery, to include development of cross-agency service and maintenance standards.

Parks: Wayfinding System: Parks should improve signs and develop brochures and maps that connect and provide information about the network of downtown parks and open spaces.

Parks: Ornamental Fencing: Consider the use of ornamental fencing to define the edges of selected downtown parks and to protect vegetation.

Parks: Code of Conduct: Parks should develop a code of conduct through a public process informed by stakeholder input and models from around the country, and post it in each park.

Community Role and Contributions

Develop a Partnership with a Private Nonprofit to Activate and Support Downtown Parks Revitalization. Parks can achieve this objective by starting a new organization, partnering with an existing organization(s), or a combination of the two. The Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) has been active on the Task Force, and sees downtown parks as a priority for the livability of downtown. The DSA is interested in discussing this opportunity further and possibly in taking on a role in implementing these recommendations. The partnership could manage these activities:

Programming and Events

- Programming of activities in the parks, including marketing and publicity.
- Special events, including design and management of new events.
- Helping organizations and individuals navigate the event permitting process, including coordination with the permitting agencies.

Community Organizing and Capacity Building

- Liaison and capacity-building for existing park-specific advocacy groups in downtown.
- Organizing and building community support for neighborhood-focused parks.
- Engaging with the downtown community by organizing volunteers.
- Developing new partnerships, relationships, and sponsorships.

Fundraising and Advocacy

- Fundraising to support capital improvements and supplemental maintenance needs.
- Advocacy for downtown parks, including potential new parks.

Liaison with Businesses

- Extending the Adopt-a-Park program and coordinating with businesses next to parks.
- Working with building owners and managers to improve and publicize downtown's private open spaces.

Budget

Funding to Implement Recommendations

Parks needs funding both for both enhanced operations and for capital improvements /major maintenance in downtown parks, and to request them through the CIP budget process. Operations cost categories include improved park security through implementation of a park ranger program, and active programming and special events services.

Major maintenance requirements include repair and upgrading of park infrastructure, landscape and hardscape improvements, and refurbishing park facilities and amenities.

Specific costs:

Park rangers/added security: \$317,000 per year, plus \$75,000 for uniforms and equipment for rangers; \$238,000 for a contract with SPD.

New partnership for implementation and support: \$450,000 per year for staffing, including a community organizer and fundraiser and administration. DSA would work to leverage City funds with grants and donations.

Administrative staffing. Parks needs to examine existing staff coverage to determine staffing and other costs associated with creation of a Downtown Parks Division.

Summary of Task Force Recommendations

- The main elements of the Task Force recommendations are as follows:
- Create a new Downtown Parks Division to focus on downtown parks operations and maintenance.
- Add park rangers and more security for downtown parks.
- Designate a person in the Mayor's Office to help coordinate actions for downtown parks across City departments.
- Work with SPD to develop a coordinated security plan for downtown parks.
- Propose legislation to extend the panhandling ordinance to parks, revise the fee structure (budget process), revise the noise ordinance for downtown, and allow long-term agreements on concessions and vending.
- Revise use management guidelines using the city's administrative rulemaking authority.
- Working with DPD, update the list and create a map of public spaces downtown.
- Create an interdepartmental team to consolidate maintenance responsibilities under Parks of downtown parks or parts of parks owned by other City departments.
- Create a partnership with a nonprofit to implement and support revitalization of downtown parks, to include programming, community building, fund raising, and advocacy.
- Request funding through the budget process to implement the recommendations that carry a price tag.

Legislation/Council Action Needed

Parks will need legislation is needed to extend the panhandling ordinance to parks, revise the fee structure, revise the noise ordinance, and authorize long-term agreements on concessions and vending.

Schedule

Parks and the Task Force will brief the Mayor in April and the City Council's Parks, Education, Libraries and Labor (PELL) Committee in May. Parks will then begin implementation of administrative recommendations, and will request funding through the budget process.

Verbal Briefing

Deputy Superintendent Brooks thanked the task force and City staff working on this initiative. Co-chairs are: Ken Bounds, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation; Kate Joncas, President of the Downtown Seattle Association; and Catherine Stanford, Former Director of Real Estate for the Pike Place Market PDA.

The Task Force and staff are here tonight to share with the Board of Park Commissioners the comments heard at community meetings and from Departments. The final recommendation is being presented to the Board and the Task Force is asking for the Board's recommendation on how it should move forward and on its next steps.

Deputy Superintendent Brooks and Ms. Potter gave a ten-minute Powerpoint presentation with information on the Task Force's purpose, members, role, goals, research, and background. They also showed a list of the 24 downtown parks (10 destination, 7 neighborhood parks, and 7 small public spaces, aka "beauty spots"), the Task Force's vision, and a summary of its recommendations.

Destinations parks: Westlake; Freeway; Occidental Square; Victor Steinbrueck; City Hall; Myrtle Edwards; Pier 62-63 & Waterfront; Hing Hay; and South Lake Union.

Neighborhood parks: Kobe Terrace; International Children's; Regrade; Belltown P-Patch and Cottages; Denny Park and Playground; Plymouth Pillars; and Cascade Playground.

Beauty spots: Pioneer Square Park; Prefontaine Place; Tilikum Place; Union Station Square; McGraw Square; Westlake Square; and Washington Street Boat Landing.

Ms. Potter gave additional information on the recommendations, which were posted on the Department's website, and public feedback. To date, 30 comments have been received. A summary of those comments included:

Homeless: most comments concerned the homeless who use the parks.

Fencing: there were also some objections to installing fencing at the parks.

Park Rangers: some objections were received to having Park Rangers. Ms. Potter stressed that the Task Force focus is on park users' behavior and not on their appearance or income. Members of the homeless population are being included in the revitalization effort. Seattle Parks is the lead department, working with a number of other City departments. The Park Rangers would be unarmed, would provide a presence in the parks, and would call Seattle Police if trouble occurs in the parks.

Wayfinding plan, web page map, and printed brochure: comments were favorable.

P-Patch: some comments requested a P-Patch be added at one of the parks.

Play Equipment: some want more play equipment.

Noise: some concerns about noise from events; City staff will pursue a noise ordinance change.

Board Questions and Answers

Commissioner Collins commented that this is a fabulous report and a positive, forward thinking plan. His main issues of interest are fencing, the homeless park users, and security.

Commissioner Holme commented that the plan (posted on Seattle Parks' website) is great; however, it implies the City must give financial commitment. He recommends that the report include funding information. Deputy Superintendent Brooks stated that the Plan calls for multiple funding level. Parks has Pro Parks Levy and some other funds for some of the projects. The Task Force Plan assumes a budget paper will be prepared and presented to the Mayor and then City Council. In addition, some of the recommendations do not require funding, rather they require an effort with other departments and sources such as the Adopt-a-Park programs.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. Five people signed up and testified. Each is a member of the Task Force and gave extensive, supportive testimony. A very brief summary is included below:

Peggy Dreisinger: She is the field manager for the Downtown Metropolitan Improvement District and is a member of the Task Force. She listed several elements to make this initiative a success: activation and programming elements; public safety officer/park rangers; successful public and private partnerships; and a Seattle Park Division dedicated to the older and historic downtown parks.

Tina Bueche: She is a member of the Task Force and stated it was the most satisfying task force she has ever worked on. She is a business owner in the Pioneer Square area and has talked with many homeless people about changes in downtown parks. She has found most are looking forward to the changes and new programming.

David Brewster: He is a member of the Task Force and Freeway Park Association President. He previously managed Town Hall, located near Freeway Park. Seattle has many lovely parks, but those in downtown are lagging behind, with many of them empty and neglected. He believes the Initiative is a great opportunity and that the future of downtown parks has turned a corner.

Kate Joncas: She is president of the Downtown Seattle Association and a member of the Task Force. Thousands more people are expected to move to downtown in the near future and there are few parks in this area for moms and kids to spend an afternoon. Downtown residents are ready to partner with Seattle Parks and this plan lays out the way for that to happen.

Bruce Bentley: He is an at-large member of the Task Force and former chair of the Board of Park Commissioners. He referred to questions about the homeless population and stressed that this plan is not about dealing with homelessness — it is about making the homeless and other visitors feel safe in the parks. It is about changing behavior in the parks. There are concerns about the perception of fencing the parks — the fencing would be decorative and help keep children/balls from going into the nearby streets. He urged that the Plan move forward.

The public hearing closed.

Board Questions and Answers

Homeless references:

Commissioner Collins asked for more explanation on why the report includes so many references to the homeless park users. Seattle Parks Operations Manager Christopher Williams answered that the Task Force did a survey of 15 other major cities' parks, as well as those in downtown Seattle. If there is a large adult male homeless population who use the downtown parks during the day, women and children generally aren't observed there. The goal is to have parks with a variety of users. Mr. Bader stated that there are lots of homeless and non-homeless who simultaneously use Victor Steinbrueck Park at Pike Place Market. The Task Force is striving for a similar mix of park visitors in other downtown parks. The park users who visit the parks for illegal behaviors, such as drug selling/using, do so because there are few others in the parks to report their illegal behavior. Commissioner Collins commented that the other great gathering place in the City is the Seattle Public Library – anyone can go there and the library has a good mix of homeless and non-homeless users. Mr. Williams stressed that the target is illegal behavior in the parks, not excluding the homeless. The Task Force has had intentional discussions on the homeless in an effort to be sensitive to them and not exclude them in the recommendations.

Fencing:

Commissioner Belbeck referred to the section in the report that refers to fencing some of the parks. She asked about the reference to wrought iron fencing around City Hall Park and closing it at night. Ms. Potter answered that all of Seattle's parks are closed by 11:30 pm — this is not a new closing time for the park. She gave Golden Gardens Parks as an example — a security guard goes through the park each night and clears out any visitors who haven't left by closing time. Commissioner Collins suggested that the report's wording be changed to reflect that all Seattle parks close no later than 11:30 pm.

Mr. Bentley commented that fences can also be used to protect park assets, protect children from running into busy streets, and stop balls from bouncing out of the park. Commissioner Holme commented that the Board recently

heard the briefing on fencing at Colonnade Park, a pro Parks Levy project. He felt strongly that this fencing should have been ornamental; however, the budget dictated a black vinyl-coating fencing. He urged that the Task Force put some teeth into the type of fencing that would be installed — don't install it unless it is ornamental.

Park Rangers/Crime:

Commissioner Belbeck asked if the park rangers will have any authority to issue citations. Mr. Williams answered that the Task Force would like for them to have authority to enforce the Park Code, while Seattle Police officers would enforce the Municipal Code. The rangers, partnered with Seattle Police Department officers, would give a presence in the parks and the public would become familiar with them. Commissioner Belbeck asked if the panhandling code would be written into the Park Code or just extended to these parks. Mr. Williams answered that the City and the Task Force would like for the park rangers to have the authority to enforce the Park Code, while SPD officers would enforce the municipal code. The Task Force is discussing the roles of Park Rangers with both the Law Department and Seattle Police as it involves both 1st and 4th amendment issues. The right type of personalities will be sought to fill the ranger positions. Mr. Bader stated that the downtown ambassadors face the same issue. Mr. Williams commented that the rangers would take notes, which would be entered into a customer service database. The Metropolitan Improvement District currently uses this procedure.

Commissioner Jackson suggested there be rangers assigned at all parks and not just downtown. Ms. Dreisinger commented that the Task Force asked other cities questions about their downtown parks. Chicago has 65 police officers assigned to their downtown parks. Commissioner Jackson suggested that the Task Force also look at where illegal activities will shift to if they move from the parks. Mr. Bader answered that the City is already looking at when crimes occur and where they move to when they are displaced from an area. If the crimes move, the City tracks that and makes it uncomfortable. A challenge in the downtown parks, unlike most other parts of the city, is that there isn't neighborhood "ownership" of the parks. Those who have illegal behavior in the parks have felt comfortable doing so, because the parks have seemed abandoned for some time.

Deputy Superintendent Brooks commented that Seattle Police are the best at managing security in the downtown parks and the beauty of the park rangers is that they will partner with SPD and build on their efforts. Commissioner Holme asked if the rangers will be Park Department employees and Deputy Superintendent Brooks answered yes. Mr. Williams stated that a downtown park programmer was approved in the last budget process and was hired this past week. They will work to bring new activities/visitors to the parks. Legal behavior always replaces illegal behavior.

Commissioner Holme commented that some of the cities mentioned in the briefing paper budget more of their funds for downtown parks for police. In Seattle, the majority of the funds are budgeted for maintenance. He suggested that City Council review this in future budgets and also include more funding to police the parks.

Noise Ordinance:

Commissioner Belbeck referred to the noise ordinance and asked if any special events will be allowed a higher noise level. Deputy Superintendent Brooks stated that the City's Department of Planning and Development the lead agency is reviewing the noise ordinance. Special events coordinators who would schedule performance groups in the downtown parks have stated that some cities allow higher levels of noise for special events in their downtown areas than Seattle currently does. The City also wants to protect those who live downtown with the noise ordinance and is working to clarify this. Parks will bring back all recommendations to the Board. Commissioner Holme asked if the parks' hours of operation might be adjusted in the noise ordinance. Ms. Potter stated that if any hours of operation are proposed to be changed, it would first be brought forth to the Park Board.

Restrooms:

Commissioner Holme asked if the Task Force has any recommendations on the three automatic public restrooms located in downtown parks. Deputy Superintendent Brooks and Cheryl Frazier answered that the restrooms are managed by Seattle Public Utilities under an eight-year contract and work only erratically. [For more information on the automatic public toilets, please see http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/News/News_Releases/2004-3-

[IS_200405140853104.asp](#)] SPU receives a great deal of pressure to remove the toilets, and then receives pressure to put them back. Park users want restrooms in a building where they feel safe. Commissioner Holme asked staff to present a more in-depth briefing on restroom facilities under this initiative at a future Park Board meeting.

Organizational issues:

Commissioner Collins expressed concerns about the Parks Department creating a new division dedicated to oversee these downtown parks and he asked for more information on this idea in the next briefing to the Board. He is uncomfortable with the Department re-organizing just to accommodate one component. Deputy Superintendent Brooks stated that this idea is being looked at very carefully. It may not be a new division. Jorgen Royer commented that the goal is to have one person in Parks as the “go to” for all downtown parks.

Commissioner Holme commented that this was an excellent and clearly presented report. This is a very important initiative and he was very impressed with the strong testimony given tonight in favor of the initiative.

The Board will discuss the Task Force recommendations at its April 27 meeting and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

New/Old Business

- o Annual Retreat: Commissioners reviewed the draft agenda for the Board’s April 13 annual retreat. Commissioners’ previous suggestions were incorporated into the draft and a few additional suggestions were made. The retreat is scheduled at Yesler Community Center and will begin approximately 2:00 pm.
- o Jefferson Park Expansion Project: The four Commissioners present briefly discussed their March 9 approved motion to hold a separate public hearing process for lighting at this project site and discussed the Superintendent’s subsequent recommendation that they reconsider that motion. It was agreed that all seven Commissioners should be present for the discussion. All will be present at the retreat and the discussion may continue at that time.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____