

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
Meeting Minutes
September 28, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme
Debbie Jackson
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Jackie Ramels
Amit Ranade

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commissioner Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. **Commissioner Holme moved and Commissioner Jackson seconded approval of the agenda. The vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.**

Due to the Coordinator having an extended illness, the minutes from the August 24, September 14, and September 28 meeting, and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence will be reviewed for approval at the October 12 meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bounds reported on the following items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Southshore School Building Agreement: Seattle School District is building a new school to replace Southshore School. The current school shares a building with the Rainier Beach Community Center and swimming pool. Parks has reached a temporary use agreement with the School District, with Parks operating the gym, locker rooms, restrooms, and half of the classroom space. The School District will operate the southern half of the current building's classroom space as an enrollment center. For more information on Rainier Beach Community Center, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Centers/rainierbeach.htm>. For more information on Rainier Pool, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Aquatics/rainierbeachpool.htm>.

Citywide Skatepark Plan: Parks will host a second round of public meetings in early October on the Citywide Skatepark Planning process. Planners are doing significant outreach to engage those interested in the process. For more information on the Citywide Skatepark Plan, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark.htm>.

Queen Anne Boulevard Improvements: More than 70 people attended the first meeting on this Pro Parks Levy project that will improve Queen Anne Boulevard. The turnout was better than expected. People expressed concerns about pedestrian safety, maintenance, and the Boulevard's character. The next public meeting is scheduled for mid-November. For more information on Queen Anne Boulevard, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/QueenAnneBlvd.htm>.

Japanese Garden Events: On Monday, September 18, the Japanese Garden Advisory Council hosted "Respect for the Elderly" day. More than 100 seniors took advantage of the free admission and a variety of entertainment and activities. That evening a celebration of the 25th anniversary of ties between the University of Washington and the Urasenke Foundation of Kyoto, Japan, highlighted the study of Japanese arts in the field of Chado, the Way of Tea. The Superintendent attended and acknowledged the partnerships between the UW, Parks, the Urasenke Foundation, and the Japanese Garden Advisory Council. For more information on the Japanese Garden, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark.htm>.

Day of Caring: More than 1,000 volunteers contributed 5,500 volunteer hours at 28 park sites for this annual United Way Day event. Nordstrom volunteers removed a ton of debris from the new Sculpture Park shoreline; Parks truck drivers delivered chips to volunteer groups and removed brush. Washington Mutual folks donned garden gloves and weeded and spread 10 yards of fresh wood chips near the Green Lake Bathhouse. For more information on the Day of Caring, see <http://www.uwkc.org/volunteer/dayofcaring/default.asp>.

UPS Foundation Grant: The UPS Foundation will contribute \$100,000 toward the Brighton Playfield and Science Park, which also has \$100,000 for development from the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund. To find out more about Brighton Playfield and this project, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/brightonplayfield.htm>.

Arboretum Jamboree: On September 21 and 22, the Lake Washington Boulevard at the Arboretum was closed to the public while City Light, University of Washington tree crews, Parks tree crews, Parks cement and sewer crew, and all Parks Resource districts kept the road busy with dozens of projects. This annual two-day event provides an opportunity to remove invasive plants, hydro seed, grade, and work on the shrub beds adjacent to the boulevard. To read more about the Washington Park Arboretum, see <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/>.

Othello Park: On September 24, the Othello Park Concert had approximately 175 people to attend, in addition to another 60 -70 people using the park for other activities. The final of the four concerts at this park will be held on Sunday, October 1. To learn more about Othello Park, please see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/othello.htm>

Chinese Moon Garden Festival: On Saturday, September 30, 11 am – 5:00 pm, the Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Seattle Parks will co-sponsor this celebration to be held in Hing Hay Park. To learn more about Hing Hay Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/hinghaypark.htm>.

Loyal Heights Playfield Project: Commissioner Pflaumer asked about correspondence from Kelly Jones, of Ballard Little League, and whether the Superintendent will respond to her letter to the Board regarding Councilmember Conlin's proposal to limit the play schedule at Loyal Heights Playfield. The Superintendent stated that this failed at Council committee. The Council passed land use action to allow the light poles to go up to 125 feet. They also added a section that Parks must attach to the permit, which is basically a technical and lighting program plan showing how Parks will implement the limits of lighting until 10:00 pm, six nights per week, which includes a public process. The attachment is an "Illumination Management Plan", which Parks has not previously done. According to the ordinance, Parks must show how it will implement the conditions of the lighting schedule.

Commissioner Collins asked when the height of the light poles arose, as the Board didn't hear this at its public hearing. The Superintendent answered that this came up when the Department decided to replace the lights at Loyal Heights to light the field at the lowest level for safe play. Higher light poles and less light was part of the mitigation for this project. This decision had to go to Council to change the height of the light poles. Commissioner Holme

commented that the precedent for the light poles was set at Lower Woodland Field #1, Genesee Playfield, and then by Seattle School District. The process is more administrative and must go through Council. To learn more about Loyal Heights Playfield and this project, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/loyalheightsplayfield.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.

Discussion/Recommendation: Motorized Aircraft in Seattle Parks

Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks Enterprise Director, and Charles Ng, Manager of Magnuson Park and Business Resources, briefed the Board at its September 14 meeting on a permit issued and revoked for flying motorized aircraft in Seattle Parks. The minutes from that meeting may be viewed at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/>. Tonight the Board will discuss the permit and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Board Discussion & Recommendation

Commissioner Pflaumer commented that the Board has received a great deal of correspondence regarding this permit, with some in favor of the permit and others opposed. Commissioner Collins asked staff to clarify how far Parks property extends beyond the shoreline. Mr. Ng checked first with Seattle Parks' property management staff and then the City's Law Department and the property generally extends 100' into the water. Mr. Dick Weaver, President of the Sawyer Lake Motorized Aircraft Club, stated that he checked with the Department of Natural Resources and their map shows Parks' boundaries extending into the water at various lengths. Commissioner Collins commented that the point is that Parks property extends out into the bay. The area beyond that is not Parks Department's jurisdiction.

Commissioner Jackson asked what were the actual hours the planes were allowed to fly [during the time period the permit was valid] and Mr. Ng answered each Thursday and one Saturday from 10 am – 3 pm. She then asked how many other clubs use the motorized float planes in the city. Mr. Weaver answered that his club is the only one he is aware of and they also use Marymoor and several other sites.

Commissioner Holme asked if there are newer types of motorized airplanes, with electric motors, that are quieter. Mr. Weaver answered yes, the electric planes are quieter and are referred to as "park planes", although they aren't used as much as the non-electric planes.

Commissioner Belbeck asked how the approximate length of each flight and Mr. Weaver answered 15-20 minutes, with usually 4-5 flying at any given time. The Club maintains logs of when each plane starts flying and when the club leaves the site. They have flown on only a few Saturdays. The Club is willing to eliminate the Saturday flying and adjust the hours on Thursday when the planes could fly.

The Board briefly discussed its options for a motion. Commissioner Collins stated that the Board could (1) urge the Superintendent to reconsider the original permit; (2) maintain the Department's current position of no permit; or (3) grant a permit for more restricted hours of use.

Commissioner Collins moved that the Board urge the Superintendent to maintain the Department's current position of no permit to be issued. Motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Belbeck moved that the Superintendent consider a new permit and look at restricting the flying time to no more than three hours one day a week. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Jackson.

Discussion: Commissioner Holme asked to clarify the day the flights would be allowed. Commissioner Belbeck responded that the Board doesn't know which weekday works for the Club and that would be left for the Department to determine. Commissioner Holme commented that the original permit was issued on a temporary basis and asked if any type of revocation date should be attached to the permit. After more discussion, the Board agreed that the terms of the permit should be very clear.

Commissioner Collins spoke against the motion with the following comments: (1) the Board has heard previously that at some parks basketball players use the courts late at night and bother nearby neighbors and the Board has responded by voting to change the hours of operation of these parks; (2) the naturalist stated that the planes bother the birds in the park; and (3) why is the City being asked to provide the space for this activity, when the Club members live all over King County. Commissioner Pflaumer responded that the Board wasn't asked to change the park hours because of basketball playing, but because of drug dealing and other illegal behavior.

Commissioner Jackson responded that she lives nearby and it is a busy and noisy area. No one wrote in the testimony that they were home during the day and heard the noise from the planes firsthand. Commissioner Holme commented that he walks in the area and the planes can be heard from any part of Seward Park. He would prefer that the planes not fly on weekends.

Commissioner Ranade commented that he was surprised with the number of testimonies the Board received and at how many people were aware of the planes flying. He would support the planes flying on weekdays only.

Commissioner Holme made a friendly amendment that the planes not be allowed to fly on weekends and Commissioner Belbeck accepted the amendment.

Commissioner Pflaumer commented that it is important to accommodate the activities and demographics of various age groups. She urged the Club to be very diligent and continue to carefully log their activities. She was impressed with the Club's oversight of its activities, which isn't seen in many other park constituents.

Commissioner Ramels and Ranade were absent the prior meeting and did not have the opportunity to listen to the tapes. Consequently, both abstained from voting. The vote was taken with three votes in favor (Commissioners Belbeck, Holme, and Jackson) and one against (Commissioner Collins.) The Chair only votes in case of a tie. Motion carried.

The Chair reminded the Club that the Park Board is advisory only to the Superintendent and he will make the final decision on the permit.

The Board thanked Mr. Friedli, Mr. Ng, and Mr. Weaver.

Briefing: Green Lake Pitch and Putt Request for Proposal

Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks Enterprise Division Director, briefed the Board on the current Request for Proposal for Green Lake Pitch and Putt. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing, with both included in these minutes. To read more about the Pitch and Putt, see: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Athletics/golfcrse.htm>.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for informational purposes. The department's policy and procedures call for briefing the Board of Park Commissioners about renewals of long-term concession agreements and to provide opportunity for feedback from the Commissioners (DPR policy & procedure 3.9.1.1).

Project Description and Background

What is being proposed? A public Request for Proposal (RFP) process is being proposed to secure a long term operator for the department’s Green Lake Pitch and Putt Golf Course (See attached map). The current agreement with Marlene Taitch, dba/Interbay NW Management, Inc., ends in first quarter 2007. Since 1986, the concessionaire and Parks have entered into a series of annual agreements. Parks is using this RFP process to select a concessionaire for a long term agreement that will offer more stability to the operation of the facility and provide opportunities for other potential proposers to participate in the process.

The RFP process is a standard tool that Parks uses to provide open and competitive opportunities to people and businesses who are interested in doing business with us. This RFP process will result in a concession contract with a concessionaire to operate the golf course, perform general and routine maintenance, provide a snack food and beverage amenity, and make a monetary payment to the city during the term of the contract. In exchange, the operator is afforded a five (5) years contract (with an option for another 5years) by Parks. The proposed term of the contract will ensure that a long term commitment is made by both parties to continue providing this recreational service to the public. The responsibility for specific types of maintenance items of the facility will be negotiated as part of the contract negotiations.

What is the project background? Construction began in 1947 on the Pitch and Putt Golf Course at Green Lake Park by the then concessionaire, Gloria Henrich, and the course opened for play in 1948. In 1953 the Parks purchased all the improvements made by the concessionaire. The course has 9 holes and is considered to be a beginners course or for a casual short game of golf.

Since 1953 the course has been operated by a series of concession permits. In 1983 the City Council approved Ordinance #111280 with D & P Enterprises for the operation of Green Lake Pitch and Putt for two years. In 1985, Ordinance #112192 was approved to execute a concession contract with Marlene Taitch, dba/Interbay NW Management, Inc., for the operation of Green Lake Pitch and Putt concession. In 1986 there was an amendment to the agreement and since that time there have been a series of annual extensions. The concessionaire provides staff, routine maintenance and repairs, and the equipment necessary to operate the facility. Parks provides some grounds and facility maintenance.

This facility has over \$100,000 in gross sales, generates approximately \$13,500.00 annually in revenue for Parks, and provides a welcome amenity for visitors to Green Lake Park. Approximately 19,000 rounds of golf are played each year at this facility.

Public Involvement Process

Parks is not proposing changes to the park facilities or programs. Parks does not plan a public involvement process related to the RFP.

Issues

We are not aware of any issues related to this proposal.

Budget

Existing staff time and nominal printing/advertising costs are involved to implement the RFP process.

Schedule

The Parks’ proposed schedule for the Green Lake Pitch and Putt Golf RFP Submittals and final selection of the Operator is as follows:

- September 28, 2006 Briefing to Park Board
- October 11, 2006 Advertisement begins
- October 11, 2006 RFP Packages available
- October 25, 2006 Deadline for written questions to the Parks.

- November 1, 2006 Deadline for Parks responses to proposers' questions.
- November 15, 2006 RFP Submittal Deadline. 4:30 PM.
- November 16-17, 2006 Evaluation Panel reviews and scores RFP Submittals.
- November 28-29, 2006 Oral interviews – If needed, optional by Parks.
- December 1, 2006 Final Panel recommendation to Superintendent.
- December 5, 2006 Superintendent decision, agreement award announcement.
- December 8, 2006 Superintendent includes award information in his report to Park Board.

- December 15, 2006 Contract awarded.
- December 15, 2006 Staff mails announcement letters to all Respondents.
- Jan. 2007 – Feb. 2007 Negotiations with awarded proposer.
- March 1, 2007 Interim Contract while preparing for legislative approval.

Staff Recommendation (if applicable)

Not applicable.

Additional Information

Charles Ng, at charles.ng@seattle.gov or 684-8001

Verbal Briefing

Commissioner Collins recused himself from the discussion, as he has a relative interested in this project. Mr. Friedli introduced himself and gave an overview of the written briefing.

Board Questions and Answers

Commissioner Pflaumer commented that she has played at the Pitch & Putt and asked how broadly the RFP is being disseminated. Mr. Friedli answered that it was advertised to the Daily Journal of Commerce; King County's database of golf recreation providers; and a sign was posted at the facility. Mr. Ng added that it was also advertised in the ethnic media to encourage minorities to participate in the bid.

Commissioner Ranade asked if the RFP is because the current concessionaire is leaving and Mr. Friedli answered no. The concessionaire's current agreement is in one-year increments. He plans to submit a proposal, as he would like to enter into a longer contract with Parks. He is interested in investing more in the Pitch and Putt if he is assured of a longer contract.

Commissioner Belbeck asked about the current vending contract and whether the RFP asks for a food proposal. Mr. Friedli stated that staff will open the door for a vending contract, but have not detailed it in the RFP.

Commissioner Belbeck noted that there is an interim contract until March 1, 2007. Mr. Friedli answered that City Council must approve any long-term contracts. Parks will need an interim contract to keep the facility running from the end of the current contract until the longer contract is effective.

Commissioner Holme asked whether Parks or the concessionaire handles maintenance at the facility. Mr. Ng answered that Parks mows and does the irrigation at a cost of about \$8,000 each year. The concessionaire maintains the building. Mr. Friedli stated that the current relationship has evolved over the past 20 years and the RFP will clearly detail who handles what maintenance.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked who controls pesticide usage at this facility and staff answered that it is usually the vendor, with some assistance from staff at Jackson Golf. Commissioner Pflaumer commented that even though a concessionaire manages a facility, they should still operate under the Department's pest management program, especially golf greens. Mr. Friedli stated that this would be clearly defined in the proposal and monitored.

Commissioner Ramels asked what portion of the sales Seattle Parks receives and Mr. Ng answered 12 per cent. Each concessionaire negotiates their percentage with the Department. Commissioner Belbeck asked who owns the rental equipment and Mr. Friedli answered that it is owned by the concessionaire.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Friedli and Mr. Ng.

Briefing: Proposed 2007-2008 Parks Department Budget

Carol Iverson, Seattle Parks Budget Director, presented the Board with a three-page summary of the Department's proposed 2007-2008 budget. Mayor Nickels announced the Budget on Monday, September 25. Parks staff will make a presentation to City Council on September 29 and there is a hearing on October 11 and 25. Commissioners asked that they be notified by e-mail if staff want them to attend.

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Iverson next reviewed the information in the three documents and gave further details. (1) The Operating Budget by Budget Control Level listed the following categories: Enterprise; Environmental Learning and Programs; Facility and Structure Maintenance; Finance and Administration; Golf; Golf Capital Reserves; Horticulture and Urban Forestry; Judgment and Claims; Park Cleaning, Landscaping, and Restoration; Planning, Development, and Acquisition; Policy Direction and Leadership; Recreation Facilities and Programs; Seattle Aquarium; Seattle Conservation Corps; Swimming, Boating, and Aquatics; and Woodland Park Zoo. The Department's major new operating budget initiatives in 2007-2008 are: Aquarium Expansion; Center City Parks Initiative; Utilities Conservation Proposal; Green Equipment; Urban Forest Management Plan; Graffiti removal; South Park Initiative; Southeast District Playground Program; Update of Golf Financial Forecast and Policies; Post Levy Strategy for new Facilities Costs; and Strategic Business Plan.

(2) The Operating Budget by Revenue Source listed the following categories: General Fund & Charter Revenue; Concessions & Other Revenue; Fees & Charges; Bonds, Levies, and Cumulative Reserve Fund; and Other Intergovernmental Revenue.

(3) The Capital Budget included Debt Issued in 2007 to Finance Projects; Debt Service on Previous and New Debt; CRF Projects: Levy Project; and Miscellaneous Funding Source Projects.

Board Questions & Answers

The Commissioners asked a number of questions about the budget and were very interested in the section on Utilities Conservation Proposal and Green Equipment. Ms. Iverson stated that the Department is working hard to reduce its impacts on the environment. Parks has been borrowing a Seattle Public Utilities staff person to help with this effort and has also had good support from Puget Power. Many large facilities find they need a staff person to oversee these efforts and Parks is working on this. Highlights of this effort include 2-stroke engines; hybrid and electric riding mowers to be purchased first for golf courses; and will continue mulching leaves back into the soil. Commissioner Collins commented that Parks investment in 2007-8 seems modest when compared to Seattle Public Utilities. The Superintendent commented that Parks has been moving towards these goals for several years and this is another step towards the goals. Commissioners Collins and Pflaumer urged the Department to take carbon footprints to analyze the lawnmowers, weed eaters, etc. The Superintendent commented that the City has already determined this would be done.

Commissioner Holme asked where the large drop in the Finance & Administration section is coming from. Ms. Iverson answered that in 2005, Parks made a \$5 million dollar balloon payment on the Westbridge Maintenance Facility. The drop in that Operating Budget line item reflects this one-time payment. Commissioner Pflaumer asked whether the improvements at the Aquarium are up to the Aquarium Society to raise funds to pay for. The Superintendent commented that Parks designated \$20 million for the improvements, with the Society raising the remainder. It is hoped that the Aquarium revenue will soon be high enough that it will not need funds from the General Fund.

Commissioners also asked a number of questions on the Revenue table Chart. Ms. Iverson explained the \$600,000 decrease in concession revenue, as shown on the Revenue Table Chart. This was because Aquarium gift shop revenues are shown in the Aquarium line of Fees & Charges beginning in 2007 and there was a one-time contribution by the Associated Recreation Council for the Pyramid Project in 2006. Commissioners then asked a number of questions on golf revenues and were told that 3.5% of the gross revenues at the courses is used to cover all the overhead of golf. The rest of the net revenue goes into capital improvements for golf programs. All monies collected at the golf courses come to Parks as revenue, the concessionaire receives their percentage according to their contract, and the remainder goes into the Parks Fund. Commissioner Collins read in the Mayor's Executive Summary that there are some fee increases. The Superintendent answered that there is an increase in fees for sponsors of youth athletic for the fields — which will still be lower than other King County jurisdictions, and an increase in Aquarium admission. Ms. Iverson briefly reviewed the Capitol Budget.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Iverson and the Superintendent for the briefing and stated that it is very, very helpful for them to be briefed on the budget before it goes to City Council.

Briefing: Urban Forest Management Plan

This briefing was postponed to the October 12 meeting, due to tonight's very full agenda.

Briefing: Pesticide Management Plan

Barb DeCaro, Seattle Parks' Resource Conservation Coordinator, presented a briefing on the Department's Pesticide Management Plan. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is a 5 year report of Parks' pesticide reduction program, which is a key component of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs and environmental performance. No action from the Board is requested.

Program Description and Background

The two main goals of the Pesticide Reduction Program are:

(1) To eliminate the use of the most potentially hazardous herbicides and insecticides (2) To achieve a 30 percent reduction in overall pesticide use.

Since the Initiative was launched in 1999, all 5 City Departments which manage landscapes have set pesticide use reduction goals and have been collaborating on strategies to reduce the use of all pesticides in landscapes, greenhouses, and golf.

The results of this program have been good. Seattle Parks in particular has reduced its use of pesticides increasingly since that time. In 2005, Parks achieved a 34% reduction on overall pesticide use by the entire department. This was the first year that Parks has met the departmental goal. We have also been systematically eliminating the use of the most hazardous insecticides and herbicides, and have been looking at ways to reduce fungicide use on golf courses, where a 21% use reduction was achieved the last 2 consecutive years. Our non-golf programs have consistently reduced pesticide use beyond 30%, culminating in an 80% reduction for landscape maintenance and greenhouse programs in 2005.

By implementing IPM and hazardous materials management programs, Parks has consistently reduced its pesticide use since the late 1970's. This has resulted in an estimated 80% drop in labor hours associated with pesticide applications. (Previously, pesticide application was tracked in labor hours. Today it is tracked in amounts applied.)

This program is an outgrowth of the Seattle Environmental Management Program (EMP) which was adopted to promote environmental stewardship in City operations. The EMP Chemical Use Policy establishes a framework for evaluating potentially hazardous materials and prioritizing products for phase out and replacement with less hazardous alternatives. Pesticides were the first product group addressed under the policy because they are

potentially hazardous chemicals intentionally placed directly into the environment. As this was a citywide program, the Office of Sustainability provided coordination, oversight, and direction initially.

Public Involvement Process

This program was initiated at a citywide level and a collaborative team of landscape supervisor/integrated pest management specialists was created to help guide direction of the program. Dubbed the Grounds Maintenance Task Force, or GMTF, this group meets intermittently to review and assess the continuing program and to discuss sustainability of the program into the future. The program was publicly reviewed and discussed through ongoing meetings between Environmental groups such as Washington Toxics Coalition and Mayor Shell and later, Mayor Nickels.

Grounds staff were involved from the inception of the program which resulted in a widely accepted approach that stretched our idea of what was possible. This approach provided staff with the means, tools, and freedom to test strategies. This program has succeeded by building on the existing environmental ethic and technical expertise of the people that do the work.

Employee self-assessment of IPM programs and the innovations that were developed within the program have resulted in the elimination of most highest-toxicity insecticides and herbicides in park landscapes and in greenhouses, (except in a limited number of programs) and a reduction in overall pesticide use.

Successful Programs include:

- Use of corn gluten in nursery stock for weed control
- System-wide invasive plant suppression, and mulching programs
- Geographic distribution of 22 Pesticide-Free Parks (PFPs)
- 283 play areas, water features, and picnic areas that are pesticide-free zones.

Issues/Next steps

In 2004, Seattle Parks began an expansion of the Pesticide Reduction Program into a more formal and sustainable program, which included additional PFPs and more focus on other aspects of park design, contracted work, and looked at revising Best Management Practices and other landscape and forestry management and design standards that could improve our environmental performance in this regard.

While we have made good progress in current programs, we continue to expand our goals toward better management of landscapes that are less reliant on pesticides, and continue to improve our reductions in areas that historically rely more heavily on pesticide use to preserve valuable assets, such as golf and greenhouse operations.

Examples include:

- Pesticide reduction programs in landscape maintenance contracts.
- Researching new products that use less active ingredients to achieve suppression of weed, insect, and disease pests
- Expanded use of biocontrols, such as insect predators for greenhouses and nursery programs
- Softer, more environmentally-friendly pesticide products
- Future design guidelines for low-pesticide use and low- maintenance landscapes
- Improved construction standards for pest management.

Budget

The initial pesticide reduction program was budgeted for approximately \$133,000. This funding, which combined several interdepartmental funding sources, was targeted on citywide pilot programs to test new strategies and landscape practices which specifically addressed use of pesticides in golf, greenhouse and landscapes. All current programs are operating within existing resources and budgets.

Additional Information

Barb DeCaro

Resource Conservation Coordinator

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Barbara.decaro@seattle.gov, 206-615-1660

Parks' Resource Conservation Programs

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Horticulture/resourceconservation.htm>

Parks' Pesticide Reduction Programs

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Horticulture/pesticide.htm>

Office of Sustainability and Environment Pesticide Reduction Program Information

<http://www.seattle.gov/environment/pesticides.htm>

[Commissioners also received the following Frequently Asked Questions]

What is Integrated Pest Management?

Pests are “injurious” insect species, plant pathogens, noxious or invasive vegetation, vertebrate animals such as rodents, structural pests or and other factors that create an unhealthy environment for landscapes and structures. Integrated pest management, or IPM, is a decision-making process to determine if, when, where and how pests will be managed.

An IPM program includes all potential pest control strategies but focuses on non-chemical controls whenever possible.

What is Seattle Parks IPM program?

IPM is a standard operating procedure and a component of the Landscape, Horticulture, and Urban Forestry Best Management Practices (1999) and the Environmental Stewardship Programs (ESP) for each of the four municipal golf courses.

Parks' landscape management integrates with pest management strategies. An IPM program begins with attention to plant care and culture, as healthy plants resist pests. When pests are observed, the facility use and landscape asset value is considered in determining an injury threshold for the particular pest. This philosophy allows staff to respond to both continuing pest issues and also new, unique, or specific pest problems.

What are some of the pest control strategies used in parks?

Parks IPM program includes cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical control methods. For example, cultural could mean planting the right plant in the right place, mechanical might mean hand-weeding, biological could be insect predators or bacterial products for mosquito control, and chemical might be a synthetic or naturally derived herbicide such as Round-Up or vinegar products.

What are the most common pesticides applied in parks?

The most common pesticides used in outdoor parks are herbicides for weed control on hard surfaces and in shrub beds, while fungicide use for disease is more common in the Rose Garden and on golf greens. Insect pests and diseases are common in the artificial growing conditions found in Parks greenhouses, where insecticides and fungicides are used.

How does IPM work in park management?

An IPM program considers the anticipation of potential pest problems to be an important component. Parks staff are knowledgeable, landscape maintenance professionals who understand the cultural plant needs and monitor landscape assets continuously in their daily work. Each park facility is vegetatively and aesthetically unique, which allows for

differential determination of the thresholds for aesthetic and economic injury. If those thresholds are met and injury is imminent and unacceptable, a specific IPM strategy will be designed and implemented. Staff evaluate the success of the strategy over time and make adjustments as needed for long-term successful asset management.

Who manages pests in parks?

Parks horticultural and grounds maintenance staff share responsibility for managing pest problems in 6,006 acres of parks; about 10% of the City's total land area. 2,300 acres of this is "developed" parkland. Staff who apply pesticides are required to have a public pesticide operator's license and attend continuing education classes in IPM on an annual basis.

The department also employs an IPM Coordinator who monitors overall programs, and insures that regulatory requirements are met, including tracking pesticide use. This coordinator works with staff to research and develop new pest management strategies, especially regarding pesticide alternatives. The Coordinator also sits on the citywide Grounds Maintenance Task Force, which reviews IPM programs annually, and is the department's liaison on pest management issues to a variety of stakeholders.

How does the City of Seattle Pesticide Reduction Program fit into Parks IPM?

By implementing IPM and hazardous materials management programs, Parks has consistently reduced its pesticide use since the late 1970's. This has resulted in an estimated 80% drop in labor hours associated with pesticide applications. (Previously, pesticide application was tracked in labor hours. Today it is tracked in amounts applied.)

In 1999, as part of a commitment to manage public land in an environmentally responsible manner, the City developed Pest Reduction Strategy Goals which seek to achieve a 30% reduction in use of pesticides by quantity and phase out use of the most potentially hazardous products.

In the last 6 consecutive years, Parks has reduced its use of pesticides by implementing alternative strategies. Next steps include more targeted analysis of products and application data and more research for alternative strategies, especially for golf.

Board Questions and Answers

Ms. DeCaro introduced herself. Mr. Penttila also answered several questions. Commissioner Pflaumer asked about the public involvement in setting this policy. Ms. DeCaro explained how the program evolved. Staff looked at ways to reduce the use of pesticides. Increasing the labor (for hand weeding, etc.) was not feasible, so other methods had to be found. Parks' gardeners and other staff developed the program in concert with the public, on some levels. Staff also worked closely with the Washington Toxic Coalition and hired a coordinator. The Superintendent commented that staff have been very supportive of this program. Ms. DeCaro reviewed some of the successes of the program: use of corn gluten in nursery stock for weed control; volunteers and staff use system-wide invasive plant suppression, and mulching programs; geographic distribution of 22 Pesticide-Free Parks (PFPs); and 283 play areas, water features, and picnic areas that are pesticide-free zones.

Mr. Penttila clarified that pesticides include herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and rodenticides. There is no data on citywide pesticide use reduction, but there is for the parks. Since the mid-1970's, Parks has reduced its pesticide use by 75%.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked who manages the pesticide use on Seattle Parks' golf greens. Ms. DeCaro stated that Parks staff maintain all the golf courses, except for Greenlake Pitch and Putt, [see briefing earlier in meeting.] Commissioner Pflaumer asked for clarification on the reduction of pesticide figures in golf courses and the remaining park areas. After a brief discussion, Mr. Penttila clarified that about 70% of all pesticide use in Seattle Parks occurs on golf courses. The Superintendent stated that golf courses are the toughest issue for pesticide management. In 2001, City Council brought in experts from around the country to talk with Council about how to manage golf courses in the Northwest and minimize or eliminate pesticides. There was no solution: if you have a golf course, it must include the greens, which require pesticides.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. DeCaro for the briefing.

Old Business/New Business

Correspondence Request: Commissioner Pflaumer referred to correspondence from the Seattle Community Council Federation with suggestions for changes to the Department's Project Advisory Teams (PAT). The correspondence will be forwarded to the other Commissioners.

Pro Parks Levy Update: Commissioner Holme reported that, at the last Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee, members voted to add funds to projects and to cover inflation. He read aloud the list of project.

Magnuson Park Advisory Council: Commissioners referred to correspondence received from the Advisory Council regarding Magnuson Park use. The Superintendent will respond to the Council.

Southeast Sector Tour: The Commissioners tabled setting a date for its next sector tour until early 2007.

Park Board Upcoming Vacancies: At its September 25 meeting, City Council decided to wait until December to vote on restructuring the Park Board from seven Mayoral appointed members, confirmed by City Council, to four Mayoral appointed members, confirmed by City Council, and four members appointed by City Council. Three current members' first terms expire December 31. All are interested in serving a second term and paperwork will be submitted, as usual, to the Mayor's Office and City Council.

SR 520: Commissioner Collins stated that WSDOT denied the UW's request to extend the comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the SR520 project. The Board of Park Commissioners also wrote WSDOT, asking for an extension and the four-week extension has now been approved. Councilmember Conlin released a draft resolution today favoring the Pacific Interchange alternative, with lots of mitigation.

After discussion, it was agreed that Commissioner Collins would meet with the Superintendent and other Parks staff and go through the alternative item by item. The results of this meeting will come to the Park Board for a vote at the October 12 meeting, under Old Business.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____