



## Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
September 27, 2007

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

### ***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present:

Jackie Ramels, Acting Chair  
Neal Adams  
John Barber  
Terry Holme  
Christine Larsen

Excused:

Amit Ranade, Chair

### ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Christopher Williams, Interim Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Adams moved, and Commissioner Barber seconded, approval of the agenda. Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Adams seconded, approval of the September 13 minutes as presented. Motions carried.** The Record of Correspondence [correspondence received by the Board since the September 13 meeting] will be approved at the October 11 meeting.

Board members and Interim Superintendent Williams welcomed the Board's newest member, Christine Larsen. Commissioner Larsen was confirmed by the full City Council at its September 24 meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Interim Superintendent Christopher Williams reported on several park items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

New Superintendent Update: Interim Superintendent Williams reported at the September 13 meeting that Mayor Nickels has appointed Tim Gallagher as the new Seattle Parks Superintendent, pending City Council confirmation. The Council has set the schedule for the confirmation process and Mr. Gallagher will go before full City Council for a vote on Monday, November 26. As of October 1, he will work as a consultant to the Department, meeting staff and going out to meet the community. The Department is looking forward to working with him.

2008 Proposed Budget: Interim Superintendent Williams reported that the Mayor's proposed mid-biennial budget request is the best in his 14 years with Seattle Parks. The City's budget is a two-year cycle with 2008 being the second year. A big boon for the Department to help with the sunsetting of the Pro Parks Levy is the proposal to use general funds to pay for 2008 Pro Parks Levy expenses and use the \$6 million of Pro Parks Levy funds as a capital fund for neighborhood parks. Commissioner Holme, a member of the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee reported that the Committee approved a motion, forwarded to City Council, that this funding, if approved for the Pro Parks Levy, be kept under the oversight of the Committee.

Other proposals include: Strategic Business Plan = \$50,000; Pilot recycling system in outdoor parks = \$200,000; replace trees downed in last winter's storms = \$300,000; park rangers in downtown parks = \$462,000; surveillance cameras in four downtown park as a pilot program = \$850,000; West Nile prevention = \$62,000; increase Parks' support to manage Neighborhood Matching Fund park projects = \$46,000; sector review of neighborhood plans = \$100,000; fund City Neighborhood Council-selected major maintenance projects = \$243,000; and the list goes on and on. To read the budget highlight summary, see [http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/budget/pdf/2008\\_Proposed\\_Budget\\_Highlights-FINAL.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/budget/pdf/2008_Proposed_Budget_Highlights-FINAL.pdf). The Commissioners asked several questions on the proposed funding.

The first Council budget hearing is scheduled for October 10 in City Council Chambers at 5:00 pm. Speakers may begin registering at 3:00 pm. Written testimony may be sent to Councilmember Richard McIver, Chair of the Budget Committee.

Loyal Heights Playfield: Seattle Parks continues to work with Ballard Little League Football in an effort to get them playing at Loyal Heights Playfield again – within the field use permit restrictions placed on them several weeks ago. The original neighborhood complainants have reported getting harassing phone calls from football parents and, on at least one occasion, football league leadership posted personal information about the neighbors on the internet. The information has since been removed. Seattle Police have been notified about the harassment.

Center City Parks Award: The National Recreation and Parks Ethnic Minority Society selected Seattle Parks and Recreation to receive its 2007 Recognition Award for our "Celebrate Center City Parks" summer activation program. This award is for the initiation and sponsorship of an outstanding recreation and park program at the local, state, or national level for one or more years.

Victor Steinbrueck Park: The Downtown Seattle Association is hosting the "Sounds at Steinbrueck Park." This evening music series occurs twice a week through the end of September. Actively programming the parks helps keep illegal behavior lower. In response to citizen complaints about criminal activity in the park, Parks installed new lighting to improve security. The intent of the brighter lights was to allow better visibility of details and color, to decrease glare for upper story residents, and to provide more effective "eyes on the park." However, neighbors report dissatisfaction with the new light fixtures, citing increased glare into their apartments. The lighting manufacturer and local distributor are working with Parks and expect to have options to address the glare problems next week.

Strategic Business Plan: Seattle Parks completed negotiations this week and has issued a contract hiring Berk and Associates as consultants for the Department's Strategic Business Plan. Staff from Parks and Berk and Associates met earlier this month for a kick off meeting.

Lower Woodland Skateboard Park: After being delayed for a year due to litigation, this project will soon be underway. Seattle Parks issued a Notice to Proceed this week, with completion anticipated in early 2008.

Pro Parks Green Spaces Acquisitions: Harrison Ridge Green Space: The last parcel in the Harrison Ridge Green Space was purchased September 21 with Pro Parks Levy Green Spaces and King County Conservation Futures funding. The acquisition adds .9 acres to the 3.5 acre Harrison Ridge Green Space that is located in Seattle's Madison Valley along 32nd Avenue East between East Denny Way and East Thomas. Improved with a craftsman turn-of-the-century [19th] single-family residence that will be relocated to another site, the property has been targeted for acquisition by the City since the early 1990's because it is critical to the completion of the Harrison Ridge Green Space.

## **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. Two people signed up to testify.

Loren Hill: He is a member of the Magnuson Park Project Advisory Team and has been very supportive of the project. However, he is frustrated with the progress of the permit process for the Habitat/Wetland & Athletic Fields, which has been under review by the Army Corp of Engineers for 1-1/2 years. The buying power of the funding is diminishing because of this delay. He urged the Board to exert pressure to move this project ahead.

Kim Wells: She thanked the Park Board for scheduling the Magnuson Park briefing and asked that future briefing papers be available to the public prior to the meeting. She feels like she is operating in the dark by not having this information beforehand. [Staff explained to her that briefing papers are posted to the Park Board's web page approximately one week before the briefings at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/> and hard copies are available at the meeting.] She asked the Board to please keep in mind, while listening to the briefing, that the Army Corp of Engineers finds the filling of wetlands troubling. This area is not a wasteland; it is teeming with wildlife. She asked that prudence be used when going forward with this project.

She also asked for safety improvements to the 65<sup>th</sup> entrance and urged that these move ahead now, rather than waiting for the permitting process to finish. The area floods and endangers pedestrians, bikers, adults with baby strollers, and others.

## **Discussion/Recommendation: Make the Pilot Off-leash Areas at Plymouth Pillar and I-5 Colonnade Parks a Permanent Element**

Charles Sablan, Seattle Parks' Operations Division Manager, briefed the Board on the proposal to make the pilot off-leash areas at Plymouth Pillar and I-5 Colonnade Parks a permanent element at its September 13 meeting, followed by a public hearing. Tonight Commissioners are being asked to make a recommendation to the Superintendent on the proposal.

### ***Board Discussion and Recommendation***

Mr. Sablan gave additional information in response to Commissioners' questions at the September 13 meeting. Can pine needles be used in the off-leash areas? Mr. Sablan answered that one of the Department's crew chiefs had evaluated this possibility and found that they can be slippery when walked on, have a high level of acidity, are susceptible to being blown away in stronger winds, and can be a fire hazard. Can kiosks be installed at the I-5 Colonnade site [a park which is built under the I-5 freeway and is the first covered off-leash area]? Mr. Sablan answered that Facilities Maintenance Division will install two temporary kiosks at both entrances and will develop standards for a permanent kiosk in a covered site. He expects it will take six-eight months for these standards to be determined and to build and install the kiosk.

Commissioner Holme, in connection with a reference to pilot site monitoring in the site agreement, asked if the Park Board is making a recommendation to the Superintendent, who makes a recommendation to City Council, and Council votes on the site. Mr. Sablan agreed with this assessment.

Commissioner Barber toured both of the sites with the off-leash stewards and found this to be a great introduction to the off-leash areas. He was very impressed with the cleanliness of both sites and very impressed with the stewards. He commended Patrick Jones, off-leash steward at Plymouth Pillars, who spends a great deal of time maintaining the off-leash area. He noted that no phone # is posted for the steward Colonnade Park and recommended that a phone # be posted, as well as the e-mail contact that is already posted. Commissioner Adams asked Mr. Sablan to report back to the Board on the issues that have been raised and Mr. Sablan agreed.

Commissioner Ramels referred to the Department agreement with COLA on how citizens communicate about the off-leash areas. Mr. Sablan stated that communications come to him and he responds to the correspondence and involves COLA. Interim Superintendent Williams clarified that Parks is owner of the off-leash and is the primary respondent.

Commissioner Ramels commended COLA — they are doing hard and dirty work and doing a great job. Commissioner Adams agreed. This is a great working relationship between Parks and COLA and is not common. Mr. Sablan commented that it is based on mutual communication and respect.

**Commissioner Holme moved that the I-5 Colonnade and Pillar Park off-leash areas be made permanent after the kiosks are installed and phone #'s, per tonight's discussion, are installed. Commissioner Barber seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous in favor. Motion carried.**

Commissioners thanked Mr. Sablan for the briefing and other information and thanked COLA for their efforts.

## **Briefing/Public Hearing: Permanent Change in Operating Hours at Pier 62/Pier 63 and Waterfront Park**

Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks Enterprise Division Director, briefed the Park Board on the request to change the operating hours at Pier 62/63 and Waterfront Park. Seattle Police Department staff assisted in the briefing. Commissioners received a written briefing prior to the meeting. The written briefing and a summary of the verbal briefing are included.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

Seattle Parks will brief the Park Board on illegal activities occurring at Waterfront Park and Pier 62-63. To address the problem of this negative activity, *Parks staff recommends changing the closure time for Waterfront Park and Pier 62-63 to 10 p.m. from 11:30 p.m.* The opening hour for these parks will remain at 6 a.m.

#### **Project Description and Background**

This modification of the operating hours is proposed to help the Seattle Police Department (SPD) police the area more effectively in response to an evident increase in drinking, violent behavior, littering, narcotics use, and other violations and criminal offences, particularly at Pier 62-63. Waterfront Park is included in the proposal as it is practically adjacent to the pier, with only the Aquarium between. Parks staff and SPD believe after-hours use of the Pier would easily relocate to Waterfront if the two parks did not share the same operating hours.

Parks was alerted to problems of illegal activity at Waterfront Park and Pier 62-63 beginning earlier this summer as a result of citizen complaints submitted as phone calls to the Aquarium and as letters to the Superintendent and/or the Mayor. A fire caused by a cigarette occurred on Pier 62-63 on July 4. This is the first year in 10 years that the piers have not been used either for a summer concert series or closed for construction.

A July 30 letter to Mayor Nickels signed by five area businesses complained of criminal activity in the waterfront area in general and requested a "concerted effort" from the City to address the problem. Mayor's office staff took the lead in responding to these complaints.

Parks' contribution to the addressing the problem has been comprised of establishing an earlier closure time of 10 p.m. on an emergency, temporary basis -- first at Pier 62-63 and later adding Waterfront Park; removing all equipment and material from Pier 62-63 to allow for clear sight lines and a complete absence of hidden or sheltered areas; and installing signage listing prohibited activities including citations of applicable sections of the Seattle Municipal Code. Such signage allows SPD to issue citations on the spot.

The Seattle Police Department, which has stepped up its focus on the Seattle waterfront, supports the modified hours for the parks as a useful tool to help control illegal activity, and confirms that there has been an increase in criminal activity in the area. Statistics (attached) for Waterfront Park (including Pier 62-63) provided by SPD, comparing the level of problem activity during the summer 2007 as compared to the summer of 2006 indicate a clear increase in illegal activity in the significant categories listed below:

Assist State Agency-- Department of Corrections Warrants (DOC) includes those stopped for a lawful reason who are under active status with DOC and may or may not be booked into jail for a violation.

- Increase from zero to five incidents -- a five-fold increase.

Littering, Reckless Endangerment, Park Code Violation— This includes miscellaneous misdemeanor conduct necessitating a police contact.

- Increase from six to 17 incidents -- a 183% increase.

Narcotics—These include stops and arrest for narcotics enforcement.

- Increase from 11 to 39 -- a 254% increase.

Parks Exclusions— These are issued when a certain individual causes problems in a park, and SPD “excludes” them from that park.

- Increased from 4 to 14 -- a 250% increase.

Suspicious Circumstances, Person— This is usually an officer-initiated activity that may or may not result in an arrest or Parks Exclusion.

- Increase from 20 to 34 -- a 70% increase.

Parks Security staff drive by the park on a regular basis, and has increased their patrols since citizen complaints were submitted in early July. Any illegal activity is reported to SPD. Staff notes that some of the park users that are involved in suspected illegal activities are re-offenders.

### **Public Involvement Process**

Mayor’s office staff and Parks met with a small group of citizens in July. Mayor’s office has been in the lead on communication with citizens.

### **Issues**

Beneficial impacts: The 10 p.m. closure time allows officers to survey and clear the parks in a period when darkness is complete, but before the time of night when officers are most busy. This supports SPD’s efforts to keep the waterfront, including the parks, safe from the earlier hours of the night onward.

Parks security staff support the modified closure time as having a positive influence on park use. Parks maintenance crews do also, reporting a 20 to 30 percent reduction in litter and refuse since the earlier closure time and increased SPD surveillance.

Aquarium staff also desire the changed hours. While evening events at the Aquarium do go beyond 10 p.m., there is no need to use the parks for exiting from the events, and the increased safety of having the parks officially closed is considered a benefit.

Adverse impacts: The impact of changing park operating hours is a loss of 1.5 hours of public park use from 10 to 11:30 p.m.

Citizen concerns: Written comments submitted by area residents for the Sept. 27 Parks Board meeting state the desire for a closure time earlier than 10 p.m. — either at dusk or at 6 p.m. during the winter months. Parks staff recommend a consistent 10 p.m. time, in conjunction with the efforts from SPD, to retain the possibility of positive evening uses of these public parks.

### **Budget:**

We do not expect any budgetary impacts from this change.

**Schedule:**

The 90-day emergency and temporary period during which Pier 62-63 is closed at 10 p.m. expires on November 1. Without action by the Park Board, the closure time will revert to 11:30 p.m. Parks staff recommends that a permanent 10 p.m. closure time be established before then to maintain consistency.

**Additional Information**

Attachment: SPD data for Waterfront Park (including Pier 62-63)

*Verbal Briefing*

Mr. Friedli introduced Sgt. Gracy and Lt. Dermody of Seattle Police Department (SPD), who assisted in answering the Board's questions about the change in hours. Seattle Parks is asking to change the 11:30 pm closing time at these to parks to 10:00 pm in response to public safety concerns. Citizens have sent many letters to Mayor Nickels and Seattle Parks over the summer asking for the park to close earlier. On August 3, an emergency, one-time-only, 90-day permit was issued to change the closing time. That permit will expire on November 1 and may not be renewed. The Board is being asked to recommend that the change become permanent. Several other parks in Seattle already close at 10:00 p.m.

Parks and SPD staff explained that as long as the parks are open, anyone can be inside and police have no grounds to ask them to leave. However, once the parks are closed, it is illegal to be in the park and police can question people still there and ask them to leave. The most common complaint now from citizens is why the parks cannot be closed even earlier, possibly to a dusk-to-dawn schedule. Interim Superintendent Williams stated that none of Seattle's parks close on a dusk-to-dawn basis. That type of language is difficult to enforce, as the hours are difficult to interpret. In addition, Seattle Parks must balance park safety and park accessibility.

Commissioner Barber referred to the crime statistics and asked if the 90-day temporary change in closure hours has yielded a decrease in problems at these two parks. Sgt. Gracy, West Precinct Supervisor, answered that there has been a great deal of recent mayoral pressure to move drug dealers and other illegal behaviors out of the Pike-Pine Corridor. That has resulted in the illegal behavior moving to Victor Steinbrueck Park [located north of Pike Place Market], which closes at 10:00 pm. At 10:00 pm, the drug dealers and others then move to Pier 62/63 and Waterfront Park and continue their behaviors until 11:30 pm, when those parks close. Ideally, all three of these parks would have the same closure time.

Commissioner Barber asked if homeless people will be displaced because of this and Sgt. Gracy answered that there is little shelter at the two parks for the homeless. The illegal behavior — not the homeless — is the focus of this change. Pier 62/63 is an open wooden pier. Drug dealers move out to the end of the large pier, making it difficult for police to observe what they are doing. Commissioner Larsen asked if this closure places an additional burden on SPD and the officers answered no, that this is a helpful tool.

The discussion next turned to tourists who walk along the waterfront at night from the hotels to the restaurants who might go into the two parks. Sgt. Gracy commented that neither of the parks are appealing places for tourists, or anyone with legitimate reasons, to go into after dark. Interim Superintendent Williams answered that the mayor has proposed funds in the 2008 budget to improve the waterfront park corridor and to add elements to attract legitimate park use. He has assigned an interdepartmental team to look at types of programming. Unfortunately, mites are eating away the support columns of Pier 62/3 and no large events can be scheduled there.

Commissioner Barber asked if the temporary 10:00 pm closure is working well and SPD staff answered that it is. Victor Steinbrueck Park has a mass exodus at its 10:00 pm closure. Drug dealers closely note the park closure times and leave. They do not want to give SPD a reason to approach them by being in the park after it is closed.

Commissioner Holme asked what time the Seattle Aquarium, which is just south of these parks, closes. Staff will send that info to the Commissioners before the next meeting. The Aquarium rents its facilities for a number of night time events and many citizens walk by these parks. Commissioner Holme believes closing these waterfront parks in the summer at 10:00 pm would be problematic. There are many tourists in the area then and often it isn't quite dark at 10:00 pm. Visitors to the waterfront enjoy walking out on the piers to watch sunsets, etc.

Commissioner Holme asked if these parks are in any park exclusion zone [such as the one at Cal Anderson Park that the Park Board recently recommended approval] and Interim Superintendent Williams answered no. Commissioner Holme asked staff to come back to the Board in the near future and discuss creating a park exclusion zone for Victor Steinbrueck Park, Waterfront Park, and Pier 62/63. It makes sense to him to do that. [A park exclusion zone consists of several parks that are close to each other, and experiencing a high amount of illegal behavior. If SPD excludes someone from a park in the exclusion zone, they are then not allowed to be in any parks in that zone. This deters offenders from being expelled from one park and moving a few blocks away to another park — it is illegal for them to be in any of the parks listed in the exclusion zone.] Mr. Friedli agreed to review this option and believes a summer/winter hour closure option is reasonable. Interim Superintendent Williams also believes this to be a reasonable approach. With the summer/winter hour option, the parks could stay open later in the summer months and close earlier in the winter months. Staff will report back to the Board at the October 11 meeting. The newer Commissioners asked for more information on the exclusion zone and about hours at other Seattle Parks. Staff will provide that information.

Commissioner Larsen wondered why people would be in these parks after 7:00 pm in the winter — what they could be doing there, as the parks are not inviting after dark. She commented that Sculpture Park, which is north of these parks, is closing around 6:00 pm in the winter. Commissioner Ramels observed that, with Sculpture Park closing at 6:00 pm and gated, the criminal element probably doesn't move to that park. Sgt. Gracy agreed. The illegal activity tends to move back and forth from Victor Steinbrueck Park to the two waterfront parks. The Sculpture Park is much further away.

Commissioner Ramels asked how people will know the park is closed and noted that at Alki Beach Park, SPD officers drive through with a loud speaker announcing the park is closed. Mr. Friedli answered that the parks would have signs stating the closure time.

### *Public Hearing*

The public hearing began. Audience members were reminded that each person signed up to testify has up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. One citizen spoke.

Sharon Levine: Ms. Levine asked that the off-leash areas at Regrade and Plymouth Pillar Parks not be included in any exclusion zone.

### *Board Discussion – Continued*

Mr. Friedli will send the Board additional information to include the Aquarium's closure time and an analysis for an earlier or seasonal closure. The information will be sent to the Board prior to its October 11 meeting, where it is being asked to make a recommendation to the Department. SPD staff may be at that meeting, too.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Friedli and SPD staff for the briefing.

### **Update Briefing: Magnuson Park Habitat/Wetland & Athletic Fields Project**

At the September 13 meeting, Commissioner Holme asked for an update briefing on this portion of the Magnuson Park development, as he was concerned that the permit process has languished with the Army Corp of Engineers for 1-1/2 years.

Jon Jainga, Seattle Parks' project planner, and Guy Mikkelson of The Berger Partnership presented the briefing. Commissioners also received a written briefing prior to the meeting, which is included below.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

Seattle Parks and the landscape architecture firm The Berger Partnership will brief the Board of Park Commissioners on the current status of the Magnuson Park – Wetland, Habitat and Athletic Field Development project at Warren G. Magnuson Park. *This briefing is for informational purposes only.*

### **Project Description and Background**

The Warren G. Magnuson Park – Wetland, Habitat and Athletic Field Development project is a proposed 43-acre park development. Approximately 40.8 acres will be graded to construct new site drainage improvements, wetland and habitat areas, and new athletic fields.

This project is Phase 2 of the Magnuson Park Wetland, Habitat and Athletic Field Development Master Plan, which was approved by the City Council in 2004. Phase 1 of the project, the multi-purpose sports meadow and related habitat enhancements, was completed in 2006 and is now actively enjoyed by Magnuson Park visitors. Future, unfunded phases of the project will develop additional wetlands and athletics fields.

The Berger Partnership is providing services for design development, planning, land use, construction permitting, construction documents, and construction administration.

The 40.8 acres of wetlands and habitat enhancement will be located in the southeast section of Warren G. Magnuson Park. This will include ponds anticipated to be wet year round, seasonal wetlands and extensive native vegetation to encourage an increased diversity of habitats. Trails are designed to make portions of this area accessible for environmental education programs such as the successful Magnuson Outdoor Learning Laboratory currently operated in conjunction with the Burke Museum and the Seattle Public Schools.

The five ballfields, just north of the wetland and habitat area, will include:

- 1 synthetic rugby field with lighting (Field #5)
- 2 synthetic soccer fields, one of which will have lighting (Field #1 and #3)
- 1 Little League field (Field #6)
- 1 adult baseball field with a synthetic infield and natural turf outfield. It will also have field lighting. (Field #9)

Construction of wetlands and athletic fields is anticipated to begin in spring 2008 and be complete in fall 2008. Parks is awaiting the approval from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) for the Wetland Permit.

In 2006, additional funding from the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee and from the City Council allowed for added improvements to the project, including pedestrian improvements to the NE 65th Street park entrance, removal of the central parking lot by the tennis courts, and creation of additional habitat. Construction of these projects is also awaiting approval by the ACOE.

After nine months of waiting for the ACOE to send the final determination and comments regarding the wetland permit, on September 17, 2007, the ACOE finally sent some additional comments regarding our mitigation plan. They have also asked for some revisions and clarifications on the construction documents.

Staff and the design team are currently preparing the responses. The ACOE has indicated that they will probably have more comments and clarifications after reviewing Parks response.

The project bid packet has been ready since December 2006; award of the project is being held up by the ACOE final determination on our project.

### **Public Involvement Process**

The Project Advisory Team (PAT) for Warren G. Magnuson Wetland, Habitat and Athletic Fields project was very active in the public participation process for this project. The PAT met a total of 13 times during the design development and construction document period between February 2005 and March 2006. The PAT was very instrumental in the final design and layout of the wetlands and athletic fields. They concurred with the final design and layout in March 2006.



## Issues

Permits have been extremely difficult to obtain. As mentioned above, we continue to await issuance of the Coastal Zone Management Consistency Determination from the ACOE. Parks applied for this permit almost two years ago -- on January 28, 2006. Public comment on the permit has held up its approval. During the public comment period, the ACOE received 137 individual comments. They are required to investigate each one.

Parks waited more than a year for the Water Quality Certification Permit from the Department of Ecology (DOE). We applied for the permit on February 3, 2006, and received it on April 6, 2007.

A backlog of projects at the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) led to similar delays. Parks applied to DPD on January 25, 2005 for the Master Land Use Permit. Our application was approved a year and a half later -- on July 5, 2006. The most expeditious permit we received was our Construction Permit from DPD. Parks applied for this permit on January 8, 2007 and received it six months later -- on July 30, 2007.

All three of permits are good through January 1, 2009. Our concern is that if the ACOE permit continues to get delayed, our construction permits from DOE and DPD may expire before we have an opportunity to complete construction.

## Budget

- \$3 million for the Wetlands project (Pro Parks Levy)
- \$9.3 million for the Athletic Fields project (Pro Parks Levy)
- \$795,000 for pedestrian improvements and habitat restoration (City Council 2007 - 2008 budget).

In addition to Pro Parks Levy funds, the creation of Magnuson Park Wetland/Habitat Development Phase II was made possible in part through a WaterWorks grant awarded by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

## Schedule

**Planning:** 2001 - 2003

**Design:** 2006 -Construction Documents -100 percent complete

**Construction:** Tentative: Spring 2008

**Completion:** Tentative: Fall 2008

## Additional Information

Colleen Browne, Pro Parks Development Manager, (206) 684-4155; [colleen.browne@seattle.gov](mailto:colleen.browne@seattle.gov)

Jon Jainga, Project Manager, (206) 684-7054; [jon.jainga@seattle.gov](mailto:jon.jainga@seattle.gov)

Eric Friedli, Enterprise Division Director (206) 684-8369; [eric.friedli@seattle.gov](mailto:eric.friedli@seattle.gov)

Seattle Parks and Recreation Website: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ProParks/projects/Magnuson.htm>

## *Board Discussion*

Mr. Jainga and Mr. Mikkelson reviewed information in the written briefing and displayed two large maps of Magnuson Park showing the location of tonight's briefing topic. Mr. Jainga reported that staff Army Corp of Engineer staff contacted Berger Partnership this week to discuss the project.

Mr. Jainga gave a brief overview of the components of the project. [For detailed information, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Magnuson/projects.htm>.] For more detailed information on tonight's briefing topic, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ProParks/projects/Magnuson.htm>. He described the Sports Meadow project, which is now complete. It renovated an existing 12-acre ballfield into an unlit, natural grass sporting area and will accommodate soccer, Frisbee, and flag football. It is now open and is well used.

The project also includes demolishing the commissary and cleanup of that area. Additional funding from the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee and from City Council allowed for additional improvements, including pedestrian improvements to the NE 65th Street park entrance, removal of the central parking lot by the tennis courts, and creation of

additional habitat. The wetlands will be located in the southeast section of the park and the five ballfields are north of the new wetland area.

Mr. Jainga stated that there is a broken underground power line that has led to the restrooms being unusable because the lift stations don't operate without electricity. [Sewage lift/pump stations are used to move wastewater or sewage from lower to higher elevation, particularly where the elevation of the source is not sufficient for gravity flow and/or when the use of gravity conveyance will result in excessive excavation and higher construction costs.] Temporary portable toilets have been installed. The power line will be rerouted during this project, the restrooms brought back to working condition, and the temporary toilets removed. The public is very interested in getting these reopened.

Magnuson Park was used by the navy as a naval station and much of it was covered in asphalt. It is a major project to restore parts of the area to wetlands. Mr. Jainga and Mr. Mikkelson described one goal of the wetland system: develop a system where the athletic fields will soak up rain water like a sponge in the fall and winter months and slowly feed the water to the seasonal wetlands in the summer. He noted that human use of the park has been directed away from the wildlife habitat areas to protect the many species that live there.

Mr. Mikkelson reviewed the permit process. The Army Corp of Engineers permit is the last one needed. The other three permits expire on January 1, 2009. The ACOE is a burdened agency and reports it is doing the best it can to get to this permit. This is a large and popular project and ACOE report that it is already swamped with permit requests.

### *Board Discussion*

Commissioner Ramels noted that many of the Board members are new since the last briefing on Magnuson Park Development and asked staff to clarify what the ACOE permit will allow. Mr. Jainga and Mr. Mikkelson answered that it allows Parks to fill in some existing wetland and mitigate. The Corp of Engineers has control of the wetlands so anything having to do with wetlands must be approved by ACOE.

Commissioner Holme asked if the 65<sup>th</sup> Street end portion of the project must wait for the ACOE permit, as it is a safety concern. Mr. Mikkelson answered that it could be broken out as a separate project and completed earlier. Commissioner Holme is very concerned with this extremely long permit process, as construction dollars are being lost due to inflation. He urged that at least the 65<sup>th</sup> Street End project proceed quickly. He asked staff to report back to the Park Board on this.

Commissioner Holme asked if the lift stations that are out of service affect other services and Mr. Mikkelson answered no. Commissioner Holme commented that it is important for the Board to receive this update and he is pleased to hear about Phase II. He asked if there is anything interested citizens can do to help speed the ACOE permit process. Interim Superintendent Williams answered that the Army Corp of Engineers contacted the Department through the consultant this week. Seattle Parks may call and follow up with a letter to determine any barriers and then Parks will help to remove the barriers.

Commissioner Holme asked about the project schedule. Mr. Mikkelson answered that the schedule is aggressive, but worth shooting for, with the earthwork completed by the end of October 2008. Planting would need to be done after that. Commissioner Holme asked if Parks would have to apply for an extension if the project runs past January 1, 2009, and Mr. Jainga agreed that it would.

Commissioner Barber had visited the park and noted that much of it was paved and that the commissary parking lot had been deleted in the Master Plan. He asked if there were plans to demolish this parking lot. Mr. Mikkelson commented that a goal of the project is that the park feels completed at the end of Phase II, in the event there isn't funding for Phase III. Commissioner Barber asked if the project includes funding for additional restrooms and Mr. Mikkelson answered no. Commissioner Barber asked how many acres will be filled. Staff will send this information to him.

Commissioner Barber asked how the bird habitat will be protected during the construction stage. Mr. Mikkelson answered that there will be some noise disturbance but the project calls for keeping the substantial existing trees and vegetation. Commissioner Barber asked if Parks considered that there are 170 species of birds that live at Magnuson

Park. Mr. Mikkelson answered that an ecologist spoke to these issues before previous Park Boards. Commissioner Barber asked how the new wetlands will be monitored by professionals and maintained under professional supervision and Mr. Jainga answered that Parks will do this. Mr. Friedli said there were no plans to hire professionals, but anticipated that the University of Washington will participate in management of the new wetlands. Mr. Friedli commented that there is funding for a consultant to plan and put the specifications together and the Department will depend on volunteers to do much of the site analysis and data collection. Commissioner Barber replied that this is an unrealistic expectation, as volunteers are already busy. Mr. Friedli noted that a volunteer coordinator has been requested in the budget.

Commissioner Ramels, Acting Chair, asked Commissioner Barber, due to time constraints, to submit any additional questions to staff in writing.

Commissioner Adams referred to the public involvement process and asked about the Project Advisory Team (PAT) for this unusual and huge project. Who are the current PAT members? Mr. Friedli stated that work on the Master Plan began in 1998, with approval from City Council in 2004. Mr. Jainga answered that the PAT was formed after the City Council Master Plan approval to redefine a portion of the Plan. The PAT had a budget-driven parameter from City Council to fulfill the athletics and wetland needs of the Master Plan. It had discussions and made recommendations that shaped the design. Members of the PAT represented a variety of interests. Commissioner Ramels asked if additional outreach was made during this step. Mr. Jainga answered that an open house was held; however, most of the recommendations came from the Project Advisory Team. Interim Superintendent Williams commented that this has been a large project and one of Seattle Park's most controversial. There have been many stakeholders at the table during the process. Commissioner Adams reflected that consideration of a different type of management for this park might be in order.

Commissioner Larsen is new to the Board and stated that she likes that the ballfields and wetlands are co-located. She also believes it is each person's right to enjoy parks in the way they see fit. However, she leans towards the wetlands in this instance and asked if the Army Corp of Engineers is holding back on the permit process because of the wetlands. Mr. Mikkelson answered no, that the delay is due to ACOE's internal process and not because it objects to the project. ACOE staff members have asked questions related to the permit, but haven't raised concerns about the project.

Commissioner Larsen asked about the design process for Phase III. Mr. Mikkelson answered that a great deal more restoration is planned, as well as a host of improvements to balance the wetlands and programs. However, if there is no Phase III, there would still be a balanced park.

Commissioner Ramels, as Acting Chair, commented that the scope and direction of the Board's questions on this briefing went much farther than the briefing the Board requested at its September 13 meeting. She suggested the Board add a discussion on the focus and method of its questions at the annual retreat. She asked the Commissioners to submit any additional questions in writing.

Mr. Friedli and staff will come back before the Board with a more extensive overall briefing of the Magnuson Park development and arrange a tour of the park for the Commissioners. Mr. Jainga also noted that the park's website has extensive, up-to-date information. Commissioners thanked Mr. Jainga and Mr. Mikkelson for the briefing.

## **Old/New Business**

**Thank You Letter to Former Interim Superintendent Brooks:** Commissioner Ramels agreed to write this letter and send to the other Commissioners for their signature.

**Hiawatha Playfield Concerns:** Commissioner Ramels referred to a letter from the Friends of Olmsted Park addressed to the Landmark Preservation Board, with a copy to the Park Board. The letter voiced concerns on the current project at this Olmsted park. Interim Superintendent Williams will send a response to the letter and cc: the Park Board.

**Process for Filling 7<sup>th</sup> Park Board Position:** [For the first time, six members of the Park Board (three appointed by the Mayor and three by City Council) are to appoint the 7<sup>th</sup> position. The Board has no guidelines in place for the selection and appointed Commissioners Holme and Barber to develop a process for the Board's review and acceptance.]

Commissioner Holme thanked Ms. Brooks, the Park Board Coordinator, for the extensive amount of information she sent the committee to assist in the development. He believes that the committee's role is to boil all the considerations down

and bring to the other commissioners for consideration. The Board agreed to hold a special public meeting to discuss, refine, and adopt the proposed process. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 16, 7:00 pm, in the Park Board Room at 100 Dexter Avenue North. There was a brief discussion on review of resumes and selection of how many candidates (5) to interview. The committee will include as many of the suggestions as feasible. Commissioner Holme will finalize the information and distribute prior to the special meeting. Staff will advertise the meeting to the 500+ community groups, district council chairs, neighborhood service centers, and others, as well as send out a press release and post the information to the Park Department and Park Board web page.

Pro Parks Levy Update: Commissioner Holme is a member of the Pro Parks Oversight Levy Committee. A recent discussion there focused on the fact that Seattle Parks has 140 comfort stations in its system and only one per year is fixed up and improved. He asked that an update be added to the agenda to address the conditions and maintenance of comfort stations.

Retreat Topics:

Park Board Briefings: Commissioner Adams commented that he is bothered by the usefulness of staff briefings to the Board. How does the Board get what it wants from these briefings? Does the staff preparing the briefings know when there are new members on the Board? He would like to know what policy driven decision(s) has brought this project before the Park Board. At the Zoo's recent annual briefing he wanted more information about the Zoo's future direction, but the briefing included little information on that. How should Park Board members bring the community's issues forward? Commissioner Ramels suggested that, after reading the briefing papers, Commissioners submit written questions to the project managers that they would then answer during the briefing. Commissioner Holme suggested that the Board hash out at its retreat what it wants from the briefings. This is a good time to do this as there are several new members. Staff noted that a couple years ago the Board members at that time listed what they wanted in briefings and this has been the model being used. With new members, it is good to revisit this topic.

Citizen-submitted Questions: Commissioner Ramels would like to address the seven questions recently submitted to the Board by regular Board meeting attendee, Gary Gaffner, at the retreat.

Outdoor Pool Support: Commissioner Larsen has been asked by community members to help push forward support for an outdoor pool on the east side of I-5 and is working on a feasibility study. She is meeting this week with Councilmember Della who has agreed to propose \$200,000 into the Mayor's proposed budget for the study. He also urged that the proposal be include in Seattle Parks' strategic business plan. Commissioner Ramels praised the worthy effort, but wondered whether the council would decrease some of the mayor's recommendations for parks, in the budget, to find the \$200,000.

Seattle Parks' Use Fees: Commissioner Ramels recently observed a large baptism service at Alki Beach Park. She wondered how much the church paid the Department for using a large part of the park — which made it unavailable for public use. Interim Superintendent Williams commented that park use fees will be a driving question in the Department's Strategic Business Plan. City Council does not embrace park fees to offset general funds. However, it is the City's responsibility to fund parks and the Department gets many requests for large events to be held in the City's parks. The Department needs better direction on how to proceed. Commissioner Ramels asked for a Park Board briefing on community use of public parks.

Associated Recreation Council: Interim Superintendent Williams met with ARC Director Bill Keller and ARC President Bruce Bentley this week regarding the ARC modernization process, which is under way. Mr. Keller will present the semi-annual ARC update briefing to the Park Board at the October 11 meeting. Included in the briefing will be a discussion of appointing a Park Board member as a member of ARC's Board. Commissioner Holme suggested that, if it is agreed to appoint a Park Board member, that the Department wait until the Board has appointed its seventh member and then make the appointment.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Amit Ranade, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

