

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
May 27, 2010

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams, Vice-chair
John Barber
Terry Holme
Jourdan Keith
Diana Kincaid
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Announcement: *The Board of Park Commissioners meetings are taped for viewing by Seattle Channel and posted to the Board's web page. Beginning with these minutes, the written briefing paper for all non-public hearing topics will be included in the written minutes. The minutes will not include the verbal staff presentation and the Board's question and answer segment. To listen to the briefing and hear the Board's discussion, please see the tape at:*
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

For public hearings (where the Board is asked to vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent), the minutes will include the written briefing paper and any updates, a summary of the verbal public testimony, a summary of the Board's discussion and recommendation, and a link to the Seattle Channel tape.

The minutes will continue to include a summary of the Superintendent's Report, Oral Communications, and Old/New Business.

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and reviewed the meeting agenda topics.

Commissioner Holme moved approval of the agenda, March 25 and April 8 minutes as corrected, and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence received by the Board. Commissioner Adams seconded. The vote was taken, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reported on the following items. To learn more about Seattle Parks, see the website at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Joint Use Agreement: Parks and the School District are close to completing negotiations for the 5-year renewal of the Joint Use Agreement for facilities that are shared, such as swimming pools, athletic fields, and gymnasiums. The agreement expires at the end of August 2010. Staff will brief the Council's Parks Committee and the School District's Operations Committee this summer. The renewal of the agreement does not require City Council or School Board approval.

Shared use of swimming pools and performing arts centers are the last two issues under active negotiation:

- Because of the recent later start and finish time for high schools, high school swimming teams would like to push out their practice times at Parks' pools. This would bump into swimming lesson and private swim team practice times. These lessons and private swim teams provide an important service to the community and are a major revenue source for Parks' Aquatics program.
- Parks would like access to the District's high school performing arts facilities, especially through 2011 when Langston Hughes is closed for renovations. The District's main challenge is that they don't have theater managers, and would need to use existing drama teachers to staff the facilities while in Parks use.

Fence Complaint at Thomas C. Wales Park: Helen Swint of the Windwatch Condos adjacent to Thomas C. Wales Park has written the Board several times regarding the wooden fence that was installed as part of the project. The park's design was created by professionals with years of experience in park design and wetland enhancement. The design was reviewed through the public involvement policy process used by Seattle Parks. The Board of Park Commissioners reviewed the Thomas C. Wales Park design at a presentation and public hearing on July 26, 2007, and approved the design at its August 7, 2007 meeting.

The completed design utilizes the park's legal boundaries and was designed to provide what staff believe is the best way to meet the Department's responsibility to the neighborhood to provide a physical barrier between private property and public park space. Parks Planning and Development Division managers will discuss Ms. Swint's concerns to see if there are any improvements needed.

Golf Request for Proposals (RFP): The Department received eight proposals in response to the Golf RFP. The Golf RFP evaluation team, consisting of Parks staff, a representative of the Golf Steering Advisory Committee, a Central Council Staff member, and a representative of the City Budget Office are currently evaluating and scoring these proposals and plan to make a recommendation to the Superintendent by June 14th. A final selection is scheduled for June 21st.

Levy Oversight Meeting: At the May 24 Levy Oversight Committee meeting, the Committee concurred with a staff recommendation to use unallocated Pro Parks interest earnings to match a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for further wetland restoration at Magnuson Park and tabled a staff recommendation to add \$1,000,000 in neighborhood park acquisition funds to augment the Bell Street Boulevard project that is now in design. The Bell Street Boulevard project will cost \$3.5 million, with \$2.5 million of that funded. The Committee also heard staff evaluations of the 95 Opportunity Fund applications. The Committee will meet twice in June to review the evaluations and to hear from the various applicants.

For more information on the Levy Oversight Committee, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/levy/oversight.asp>.

Kids and Families Congress: As part of the Mayor's Kids and Families Initiative, delegates selected from the numerous public meetings will convene on June 5 at Seattle Center. These delegates will review and refine priorities for the initiative, which will lead to the development of action plans. Five general public meetings were held in February and March, a youth summit was held in May, and 131 community caucuses were held. The agenda includes group sessions addressing Health, Neighborhood Safety, Race & Social Justice, Strong Neighborhoods, and Youth Development. The afternoon sessions are focused on Education. The youth and families web site has information collected from all the public meetings at <http://youthandfamilies.seattle.gov/>.

Northwest Senior Games: Northwest Senior Games (NWSG) began in 1998 as the Greater Seattle Senior Games, in partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation. In an effort to broaden its goals, NWSG has expanded its partners to include representatives from seven regional city agencies that specialize in recreation and community services for people age 50+. The NWSG is now in its third year of a broader

collaborative venture with other partner cities of Redmond, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Bellevue, Shoreline, Renton, and Seattle. Seattle Park Department's Lifelong Recreation has helped NWSG become an independent project while continuing (along with the other cities) to provide access to facilities and equipment, fields, in-kind staff support and consultation.

The mission of NWSG is to promote healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and social engagement and to provide a positive public image for people age 50+ through participation in various levels of athletic competitions. NWSG is an incorporated not-for-profit whose board is made up of community members age 50+ who are passionate about competition and staying fit. This spring and summer, NWSG expects more than 400 senior athletes to participate in different sports events including track and field, basketball, ice hockey, pickle ball, swimming, tennis, badminton, table tennis, line and ballroom dancing and more. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli noted that he participated in the games this past year, as a member of an ice hockey team.

For more information on the Northwest Senior Games, see http://www.northwestseniorgames.org/general_info.php.

Furlough Schedule for Memorial Day Weekend: Many Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities will be closed on Friday, May 28, and Tuesday, June 1, for a furlough day [City employees agreed to take 10 days of unpaid leave in 2010 to help the City's budget.] All facilities will be closed on Monday, May 31, in observance of Memorial Day. Seattle Parks and Recreation has worked hard to schedule furlough days in a way that has the smallest possible impact on customers, and that provides as much coverage as possible. However, park visitors can expect some impacts from the upcoming furlough. Parks will not take furloughs in July and August – the peak season for park users.

For more information on furloughs, see "**Facilities and Offices to Close for Furloughs in 2010**": To help accomplish 2010 budget reductions, Parks and Recreation staff are taking off 10 days this year without pay. For more information, please see: » [Furlough Schedule](#) 📄

Meetings with Community: Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reported on three recent community meetings:

1. He met with the Bell Street Community Center's Project Advisory Team (PAT). There is only \$1.8 million slated for this community center and Parks staff are working with the PAT to help it understand the limitations.
2. The Magnuson Park Advisory Committee met last night, with Councilmember Sally Bagshaw attending. Commissioner Adams represents the Park Board on this committee. A topic of high interest is the proposed demolition of Building 41, with the legislation scheduled for consideration at City Council's June 3 Parks and Seattle Center Committee. Commissioner Adams noted this is a relatively new committee and is still finding its way. Last night's meeting was fairly well attended. Building 41 is the site of a gas station on the former Sand Point naval base and is located in the Sand Point Historic District. He remembers getting fuel at the site while in military service. Parks staff and the developers have been developing plans for this park for the past five years and some decisions have already been made. However, he believes they should do as much as possible to compensate for the loss of any historic elements. People left the meeting with a better understanding of what the Department faces with these historic buildings.
3. Meeting with Senior Advisory Council: Acting Superintendent Williams and Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli met with the Department's Senior Advisory Council this week. Some discussion was held that park levies are approved in order to leave a legacy of parks and recreation for youth. At least one 50+ attendee, who testified during tonight's meeting during Oral Communications, disagreed and wants parks and recreation programs to also be geared for her age group.

Citywide Special Events Committee: Virginia Swanson began working with the City's special events program in 1962 and retired from the City in 1993. She returned soon after as a temporary and then as a contractor

to continue heading this committee. Ms. Swanson is now leaving this position and Joanne Orsucci, who manages Seattle Parks' scheduling offices, will head the Special Events Committee.

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 two minutes each and will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. The Board's usual process is for 10 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. Eight people testified, with a brief summary of their testimony included below. To hear the full testimony, see:

Linnea Mattson: She is a member of the Lifelong Learning Advisory Council and asked that the Board support this program to keep it intact. Lifelong Learning serves those over 50 and one-third of Seattle's population is now in that age group. The program's staff are specially trained to work with this age group and she urged that the staff not be disbursed into other programs. She gave each Commissioner a CD about the program to view.

Helen Swint: She is a resident of the Windwatch Condominiums, located just to the west of Thomas C. Wales Park. This new park's current design is not what was presented to the public and includes, among other things, a wooden fence which segregates the condo residents from the park. Residents are requesting a swath of brambles be installed to serve the same purpose as a wooden fence. Ms. Swint left a copy of her written testimony for the Commissioners' review.

Terry Rosso: He is a member of the Specialized Programs Advisory Council and has a child with Down Syndrome. He stated that his family cannot get the services provided by the Department's Specialized Programs anywhere else. This provides respite for him and other parents with special needs kids. It also provides social connections for the kids. One of the program's summer camps, COHO, has already been lost to budget cuts. Please don't jeopardize this program.

Chuck Fleming: He is also a member of the Specialized Programs Advisory Council. His son is an amputee and began playing basketball in the Special Populations program in the 4th grade. Mr. Fleming became involved in the program and has watched it grow and expand. Seattle Parks stepped up to the plate and offered its facilities. He asked that the Board be an advocate for this worthy program.

Susan Casey: She has a garden at Interbay P-Patch and believes it is misguided to limit the length of time a person can garden at a particular P-Patch. Gardeners not only grow vegetables and flowers – they also grow community and connections. She urged the Commissioners to read *Green Cities, Growing Communities*.

Ray Schultz: He is president of the P-Patch Trust. During the last month, positive steps have been taken to develop a coalition for the community gardens program. He acknowledged that 53% of Seattle's P-Patch plots are located on Seattle Park property, with Picardo P-Patch being the first one developed. He noted that P-Patches provide open space, reduce area crime, and add value to nearby property. Gardening is the #1 pastime in America.

Tami English: Ms. English spoke in support of the Department's Specialized Programs and believes this is an appropriate use of Parks' facilities.

Zak Meyer: He is a young teen who has played wheel chair basketball for 4 years. He stated that it is the best thing in his life and has given him confidence and made him a better person and student. He spoke in support of the Department's Specialized Programs.

Briefing: Seattle Parks' Specialized Programs

David Jensen, Seattle Parks' Specialized Programs Manager, and Michael Figuero, Specialized Programs Coordinator, presented information on this program. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, included in these minutes and posted to the Board's web page for public review. This briefing is for informational purposes only and the Board is not asked for a recommendation. Mr. Jensen introduced himself and reviewed the Specialized Programs, which included a Powerpoint presentation.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for information purposes only to provide the Board with information about Parks Specialized Programs serving youth and adults with disabilities.

Description and Background

Specialized Programs provide activities for youth and adults with physical and mental disabilities, while offering support and education to their families, community members and service providers. The Program provides opportunities for individuals to participate in activities specifically designed and conducted by staff trained to provide professional adaptive recreation services. Programs are provided city-wide and are held at community centers, schools, parks and fields. Line staff running the programs have extensive experience and training with skills in adaptive recreation, behavior management, communication and an understanding of how to address multiple disabilities.

The population of Seattle shows an increase in people with disabilities, particularly a 'spike' in new cases of autism syndromes. The facility Fircrest and other programs serving people with disabilities have recently been cut back or closed and parents need more options for respite from 24-7 care of their children. Parks staff believe that Specialized Programs provide an essential service, as research has shown that recreational/respite (social, fitness and arts) activities have a significant positive impact on the health of families and individuals with disabilities.

In 2009, in response to a City Council Statement of Legislative Intent, Specialized Programs staff developed new programs to serve youth in after-school programs and day camps, developed an adaptive sports clinic program for people with physical disabilities and increased Special Olympic programs.

In addition to providing programs for youths and adults with disabilities, the Specialized Program staff are the link between Parks and the community regarding the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

Public Involvement Process

Specialized Program outreach includes:

- Parent forums and outreach activities of the Specialized Programs Advisory Council; and
- Movin' for Money and other fundraising efforts

Stakeholders include the community center staff, the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), participants, residential providers, schools, community disabled service providers, and parents.

Issues

Issues facing Specialized Programs include:

- Recent budget adjustments and program reductions;
- Lack of adequate funding to support needs of the disabled population; and
- Continued incidence of waiting lists for programs.

Budget

The total 2010 budget for Specialized Programs is \$712,404, all from the City's General Fund. This includes an increase of \$100,000 over the 2009 budget that resulted from the 2009 City Council Statement of

Legislative Intent. Ninety-four percent of budget is for staff costs. In addition, the Specialized Programs Advisory Council makes an annual \$51,000 contribution for camps, equipment and special events.

Specialized Programs goal is to creatively use existing staff and volunteers to continue programming into 2011 and be budget neutral. Staff is 'specialized' in terms of skills, competencies and responsibilities (as well as the level of liability and safety requirements) and ongoing training is essential for all staff.

Additional Information

Contact information: David Jensen, Manager-Lifelong Recreation and Specialized Programs; 206-615-0140; David.Jensen@Seattle.Gov; <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/seniors/index.htm>

Link to Verbal Briefing and Discussion

Commissioners thanked Mr. Jensen and Mr. Figuero for the briefing and Powerpoint presentation. To hear the verbal briefing, view the Powerpoint screens, and hear the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591050>. Drag pointer under screen to position 42.

Briefing: Community Gardens Program

Ron Harris-White, Seattle Parks' Manager of Special Projects, introduced himself and briefed the Board on the Community Gardens Program. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, included in these minutes and posted to the Board's web page for public review. Several people assisted with the briefing, including: Ray Schultz, President of the P-Patch Trust, and Rich Macdonald, Department of Neighborhoods' Manager of P-Patches. This briefing was for informational purposes only and the Board was not asked for a recommendation.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is to provide the Board with historical background and updated information about Parks and Recreation's Urban Food Systems and its relationship to the Department of Neighborhoods' P-Patch program. No Board action is requested.

Project Description and Background

Seattle Parks and Recreation through its Healthy Parks, Healthy You Initiative and Strategic Action Plan has taken a leadership role in ensuring children and families have nutritious food choices that promote health, reduce the incidence of obesity and certain diseases, and promote wellness. The Mayor and City Council recently declared 2010 as The Year of Urban Agriculture.

In light of the public's growing interest in urban farming, Seattle Parks and Recreation conducted an inventory identifying current services, programs and spaces associated with urban food systems. The inventory results were amazing. The inventory identifies Parks and Recreation having more than 150 different programs, services and/or spaces dedicated to residents as they relate to urban food systems. The more than 150 Parks programs are distributed throughout Seattle.

Parks and Recreation's new United Urban Food Systems Committee is a working group supporting Parks Strategic Action Plan, Healthy Parks, Healthy You and Race and Social Justice Initiatives. The committee is dedicated to promoting good food programs that provide a valuable recreation activity and can contribute to community building, environmental awareness, social equity and community education.

P-Patch Program and Parks and Recreation

In addition to Parks' own programs and activities, the department has an ongoing relationship with the Department of Neighborhoods' very successful P-Patch program. The P-Patch Community Gardening Program, in conjunction with [P-Patch Trust](#), a nonprofit organization, oversees 73 P-Patches distributed

throughout the city, equaling approximately 23 acres and serving 2,056 households. There are 23 P-Patches on Parks property accounting for approximately 53 percent of all P-Patch participants.

A community garden is a space where neighbors come together to grow community and steward - *plan, plant, and maintain* – a piece of open space. Traditionally, community gardens involve individual gardening plots which community members pay an annual fee for, while all shared spaces throughout the garden are cared for together.

P-Patch is the name given to community gardens that are managed by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods P-Patch Community Gardening Program. The name, P-Patch, originated from its first community garden, Picardo Farm. Gardens come in many shapes, sizes, and ownerships. For the past 37 years, P-Patch community gardeners have been nurturing civic engagement, practicing organic gardening techniques, feeding the hungry and more.

P-Patch Community Gardens provide a way to give back to the community: gardeners contributed over 18,500 hours in 2009 (equivalent to 9 full time workers) and show their concern for the value of organic vegetables and community by supplying fresh produce to Seattle food banks and feeding programs. In 2009, P-Patch gardeners donated 12.4 tons (25,000 pounds) of food, of which 19,000 pounds of produce was derived from Parks property.

In recent years the demand for space in P-Patch community gardens has grown. The P-Patch Community Gardening Program has taken steps to shrink the waitlists. In 2010, all gardens will be assigned a maximum square foot limit as a tool to open up more gardening space. In 2008, citizens passed the Parks and Green Spaces Levy which includes \$2 million dedicated to the development of new P-Patch community gardens; new Gardens will be built over the next two to three years with these funds.

To address the broadening interest in urban agriculture and increase the palette of choices available to neighborhoods when they are creating community gardens or urban farms, Parks and Recreation and the Department of Neighborhoods P-Patch Program are experimenting with different models of urban agriculture and community gardening. These include large tracts for food growth, collective gardens that do not have individual garden plots, and giving gardens.

In last year or so, there has been an attempt to formalize the relationship between Parks and Recreation and the Department of Neighborhoods P-Patch program through a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Recently the following memorandum was issued jointly by the Department of Neighborhoods and Parks and Recreation:

"We are writing this letter to share the results of our joint meeting with Mayor McGinn and his staff about P-Patch community gardens and the use of Parks property.

Mayor McGinn is very supportive of the continued use of parks and other city properties for P-Patch Community Gardens and the commitment, leadership and stewardship that gardeners bring to public land. He is also sensitive to access and the frustration of those who want to garden and yet face a long waitlist. Fundamentally the real issue is how to make more space available both for community gardening and more generally for urban agriculture. With his support we have reached the following steps about P-Patch community gardens on Parks.

1) Move Forward with Strategic Planning

One of the major recommendations of the 2009 P-Patch Evaluation (the document can be found at <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/whatsnew.htm>) is to conduct a strategic planning process to address the challenges of demand and emerging opportunities around availability of gardening land for Seattle's residents. In the strategic planning process, we will include

community members that represent waitlist members, P-Patch gardeners, neighborhood stewards and partner organizations. Survey questions will address time on the waitlist and geographic access, community interest, and how best to increase supply or reduce demand. These questions will spur a host of ideas, some of which have already been discussed for example, developing more P-patch community gardens, changing some high demand gardens to communal spaces, or limiting gardening tenure.

2) No changes at this time to P-Patch community gardens

No operation or policy changes will be made at this time. All new and proposed P-Patch community gardens on Parks properties will proceed. Everyone should understand that community outreach as part of the strategic planning process may influence the ultimate structure of P-Patch community gardens. New projects proposed by the community, through the levy selection process or otherwise will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

3) Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) discussions around developing a Memorandum of Understanding will continue after completion of the strategic planning process."

Strategic Action Plan

- Using park land for community gardens meets Strategic Action Plan Goal 3 – Actively Engage and Build Relationships with Seattle’s Diverse Population:
 - 3.A Establish and implement new approaches to outreach and relationship building; and
 - 3.C Provide volunteer opportunities and community stewardship projects.

Issues Resolved

- P-Patches in parks: Pending the strategic planning process, the status quo relationship between Parks and DON over P-Patches will continue.
- No alternate community gardening program: There will be no Parks run P-Patch community gardening program; Parks has no desire to replace an existing program that works well. Parks is interested in urban agriculture and will continue to pursue opportunities on department-owned land.
- Parks will use care when using the term community gardening: Parks staff has realized that nationally the term community gardening most often describes programs like P-Patch. Staff recognizes that terminology sometimes gets in the way of discussion.
- Strategic Planning Process: Parks is happy that this process will go forward and looks forward to participating as one of many stakeholders.
- P-Patch is a valuable program: Parks likes what P-Patches brings to parks and wants them to continue.
- Parks is not in the business of managing the P-Patch Program.

Additional Information

Ron Harris-White: ron.harris-white@seattle.gov

[Link to Verbal Briefing and Discussion](#)

Commissioners thanked Mr. White, Mr. Schultz, and Mr. Macdonald for the briefing and asked for updates as the program moves forward. To hear the verbal briefing, view the Powerpoint presentation, and hear the Board’s discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591050> and drag pointer under screen to position 68.

Briefing: Seattle Parks’ Tree Management Maintenance, Pruning and/or Removal Policy

Mark Mead, Seattle Parks Senior Urban Forester, introduced himself and briefed the Board on the Departments’ Tree Management Maintenance, Pruning and/or Removal Policy. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, included in these minutes, and posted to the Board’s web

page for public review. This briefing was for informational purposes only and the Board is not asked for a recommendation.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is to provide information to the Board of Park Commissioners about the Tree Management, Maintenance, Pruning and/or Removal Policy (Policy 5.6.1, Attachment 1). Recent citizen questions about the Policy have led Parks to impose a moratorium on new tree trimming permits; the moratorium will continue until after review of the Policy by the City's Urban Forestry Commission and the Park Board. No action is being requested from the Board at this time.

Policy Description and Background

For decades Parks and Recreation allowed tree removal, topping or trimming of park trees. In the mid 1990's Parks began to manage park trees more carefully and deliberately, due to greater recognition of the value of the urban forest. In 2000, a process began to review existing policies related to park trees. The department held a series of meetings across the city in 2000 and 2001 to allow citizen review and comment on tree policies. The issue of tree trimming permits was the point of largest contention at the meetings. A majority of the audiences at these meetings were not in favor of allowing permits for trimming trees for views.

To create a more useful and coordinated policy, all tree related issues were combined within a single policy: Policy 5.6.1 – Tree Management, Maintenance, Pruning and/or Removal (Attachment 1). After review by the Board of Park Commissioners the new policy was approved by the Superintendent. Responding to the public input and the Board's recommendation, the policy sets four standards for trimming park trees:

1. Parks will not allow topping of trees through permits;
2. All work will be done according to International Society of Arboriculture Trimming standards and applicable land use regulations;
3. All work will provide public benefit to Parks resources; and
4. No tree will be removed for private view enhancement.

Regarding the requirement that there be a public benefit for tree trimming to be allowed, Parks has required some invasive species removal and the planting of a limited number of native understory plants in the immediate area of the trees trimmed to qualify as public benefit. This specific benefit is described in a Vegetation Management Agreement that is part of the permitting package signed by the applicant for the tree trimming permit and the contractor performing the work. In cases where the permit requires planting and management of the site for several years, an escrow account is set up with the appropriate amount to be paid to the contractor as the work is done.

Over the last eight years Parks has worked with adjacent property owners to implement this policy. A significant change from earlier tree policy has been the elimination of the practice of topping trees for private view enhancement. Topping, the indiscriminate "hedging" of trees, was once considered an appropriate pruning practice. However, professional organizations and citizen advocates have recognized the practice of topping as being detrimental to tree health and safety. Since the mid 1900's Parks has not allowed the topping conifers; in the 1980's the department began to limit the extent of topping deciduous trees. However, because of earlier management practices, many of the trees in park green spaces are Bigleaf maples that have been previously topped. With greater emphasis on tree care and proper arboricultural practices in the late 1990's Parks began an effort to eliminate the topping of trees for any purpose other than the maintenance of dedicated public viewpoints.

To accommodate private views, Parks has issued permits allowing a trimming process known as drop-crotching or crown reduction to create some height reduction in the trees. Canopy reduction is still limited to no greater than 25% of the trees overall canopy, and all pruning cuts must be done to International Society

of Arborist standards. In some cases pruning is done in conjunction with the application of hormonal growth regulator, which reduces the elongation of cells in the tree stems, thereby reducing the length the limbs will grow after the pruning. While the above practices do have negative impacts on trees, they will not cause the same level of rapid decline that topping will have on a tree.

Possible Issues for Additional Review

1. What extent of public benefit should be required to issue a pruning permit?

The tree policy includes criteria for determining the public benefit of a pruning request (Section 6.4) and a process for the Senior Urban Forester's review. Since the policy was approved in 2001, pruning permits have been issued if the applicant commits to site improvement or vegetation management. Citizens have recently questioned whether the standard for meeting the public benefit requirement should be raised. Some have suggested that the public benefit must be directly related to the work on the tree(s) that are the subject of the permit, meaning pruning for the health of the tree or safety of the public. Holding to this standard for public benefit would in effect eliminate the great majority of tree pruning permits.

2. Should Parks revisit the fees charged for tree pruning/removal permits?

The department charges \$35 to apply for a tree trimming/removal permit and \$100 if the permit is approved. The cost in staff time to review the permit application and subsequently monitor the work is not covered by the fees.

Next Steps

If the Board is interested in continuing to discuss the tree policy, staff will prepare additional material for review, including recommended changes and bring the material back to a future Board meeting. In addition, the City's Urban Forest Commission will be reviewing the policy, and staff will report back to the Board the outcome of that review.

Additional Information

Mark Mead: mark.mead@seattle.gov

[Link to Verbal Briefing and Discussion](#)

Commissioners thanked Mr. Mead for the informative briefing. To hear the verbal briefing and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591050> and drag pointer under screen to position 101.

Old/New Business

Disclosure: Commissioner Barber stated that he has a P-Patch plot and because this is a conflict of interest, he refrained from joining in the discussion during the briefing.

Budget: Commissioner Adams asked how the Board will know if a program is slated for budget reductions and how the Board can best support the programs. Mr. Friedli responded that the Department was given a budget target figure for 2011-2012 and has submitted its proposed budget to the Mayor. The Mayor will consider all the City department's budgets and submit his version in late September to City Council. Until the Mayor announces his proposal, the Departments may share only minimal information about their proposals. Once the Mayor announces his proposal, the information is available to the public. Council will then make some adjustments and adopt the 2011-2012 budget in late November. The Mayor will announce the mid-year 2010 budget cuts in early June. This round of cuts may not be as severe as was earlier anticipated.

Commissioner Adams reflected that program supporters should testify at budget hearings. Commissioner Ramels and Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli noted that several who testified tonight also testified in support of their program at the recent City Council budget hearings and presented compelling stories.

Attendance at Upcoming Meetings: Commissioner Kostka will miss the June 10 and June 24 meetings.

Superintendent Search: Commissioner Holme asked that the Board be kept apprised of the search for a new Parks Superintendent.

Conservation Futures Impact Levy: Commissioner Holme has heard a rumor that King County may scrap its Conservation Futures Levy. [Note: The Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) levy funds are collected from property taxes levied throughout King County and its cities for the purchase and permanent protection of open space lands. CFT funds are allocated during the King County annual budget each November, based on an application review process conducted by the King County Conservation Futures Citizens Committee in the spring.] Commissioner Holme asked that an update on this be included in the next Superintendent's report.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Jackie Ramels, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____