

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 22, 2001

Present: Bruce Bentley, Chair

James Fearn

Susan Golub

Michael Shiosaki

Excused: Karen Daubert

Kathleen Warren

Staff: Ken Bounds, Superintendent

Michele Daly, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Bentley at 7:04 p.m.
The agenda was approved as distributed.

Correspondence: Sand Point/Magnuson Park sportsfield complex – letter of support from Seattle Sports Advisory Council, e-mails of support – Anne Stevens, Paul Huston, Martha DuHamel, Kelly Malone, John Hults, Bill & Nan Allen, Jon Manos, Rex Thompson, Cassandra Peterson, Paul Cullom, Chad Raymond; Proposed Tree Policy – e-mail from John Spear, letters from Geraldine Cannon, Margery S. Hellmann, A. J. Maletzky. Department letter regarding park naming to City Clerk.

Oral Request and Communications from the Audience – none

Superintendent's Report: [Return to the Top](#)

- **Interbay Golf** – The Superintendent reported the City of Seattle had the winning bid (\$5.65 million) for the Interbay facility contract at the February 9th Family Golf Centers, Inc. bankruptcy auction in New York. The second highest bidder protested the city's bid and made an additional offer. The city is expecting the court to validate its winning bid. An interim company will be retained to take over management of the facility for the city on March 1 until a permanent management contract company is found. Susan Golub visited the facility last weekend and noted clubhouse roof leaks.
- **Park Board** -The Mayor has recommended O. Yale Lewis, Jr. fill the vacant Board of Park Commissioner position. The confirmation process has begun.

- **South Division Director** - Christopher Williams has been named by the Superintendent as Director of the South Division. He was selected after a national search that produced several excellent in-house and out-of-town candidates. Christopher has been with the Department eight years, holding several positions. In all of his positions he has demonstrated a unique and dynamic style of leadership that brings out the best in others and generates results.
- **Belltown Community Center** – Staff facilitated a public meeting on February 15 focused on selecting a site for the new center. A Park Board briefing is proposed for March 22.
- **Yesler Community Center** – Seattle Housing and Parks Department staff have selected NBBJ to begin the site selection process.
- **Teen Life Center** – 25 participants from the Teen Life Center, Yesler and Meadowbrook community centers, took part in a trip to Snoqualmie Ski Summit. They quickly mastered basic snowboard techniques and were up the ski lift to enjoy a day on the slopes.
- **Neighborhood Appreciation Day** – The Zoo, Aquarium and community centers throughout the city held events on February 12 to show appreciation to neighbors. The events were successful and continue to grow every year.

Approval of Minutes: [Return to the Top](#)

The minutes of February 8, 2001 were reviewed. Susan Golub requested minor corrections to page 5, last paragraph, as follows: Trees that to some are "evasive" be changed to "invasive" and the words "confident need" changed to "forest" and "sunset" be changed to "sunrise." The minutes were approved as corrected.

Items of Interest to the Board:

Michael Shiosaki inquired if the Department received further comments regarding the Woodland Park Zoo's elephant treatment while on breeding loan in Missouri. A news release was presented on February 7 in response to statements made by an animal rights organization. The Superintendent stated the Department received approximately five e-mails.

The Superintendent reported the fur seal "Buster" died. He was the world's first Northern fur seal to be born (1983) in captivity. His parents were among the original group of seals collected in 1976.

James Fearn inquired about the "new park coming" sign at 22nd and Madison. The Superintendent informed the Board a new park is planned for the Planned Parenthood site. It will be a publicly accessible park but under the control of the Planned Parenthood organization.

Burke-Gilman Trail Closure: [Return to the Top](#)

Terry Dunning, Parks Real Estate Manager, and Laura Scharf, SeaTran Project Manager, briefed the Board on the Interdepartmental Memorandum of Agreement concerning the necessary closure of a portion of the Burke-Gilman Trail to accommodate SeaTran's construction of a new Princeton Avenue Bridge. The bridge is located immediately west of Sand Point Way NE. Maps were displayed. An historic assessment of the bridge was completed. The bridge, which serves as a primary access route for the Hawthorne Hills and View Ridge neighborhoods and is on a Metro bus line, is badly deteriorated. The existing bridge cannot be repaired to current design standards and seismic loading requirements. The new bridge will be widened by three feet. The bridge walls will be textured per the community's request. Construction is expected to last 9-12 months beginning in May 2001. Trail users will be detoured from the trail on 40th to NE 55, east on 55th to Princeton where NE 55th becomes Pullman NE, continuing northeasterly on Pullman to NE 60th, east on NE 60th and back to the Trail. Faster bicycle traffic will be encouraged to use Sand Point Way. Temporary stairs will be installed at the 45th street right of way for people north of Sand Point Way to walk to businesses.

SeaTran has held public meetings and will continue to be responsible for public notification and information during the project. Signs will briefly explain the project, the timeframe, describe the detour route and list a contact person to handle public inquiries.

The Memorandum of Agreement will include terms and conditions that protect the trail improvements, provide for adequate restoration and detail Department involvement to assure that after the construction is completed and the detour has ended the trail is left in a condition as good or better prior to SeaTran's work.

P-Patch Policy Public Hearing [Return to the Top](#)

A Park Board briefing was held on December 14, 2000. Karen Galt, Parks Planner, presented an overview on the background of the P-Patches as well as the staff recommendation of P-Patch Gardens on Parks Policy.

The Department's mission is to "work with all citizens to be good stewards of our environment, and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate and build community." Parks and Recreation recognizes gardening as a desirable recreation and leisure activity for many Seattle residents. The P-Patch program started in 1973 at Picardo Farm. One quarter of P-Patch

community gardens are situated on city property managed by Parks. Voter approved measures have meant the Department has steadily acquired new park property over the past 12 years. Neighborhood plans called for more parks -P-Patches throughout the city. The Neighborhood Matching fund has recently tripled. It provides seed money for planning, design and development of community projects. Both the parks and P-Patch program have benefited from this increase in funding. P-Patches may also be placed on City Light surplus property.

The draft policy was developed after many discussions with Parks staff and the Department of Neighborhoods that demonstrated confusion about the development of P-Patch Gardens on property managed by parks. The Department of Neighborhoods and Friends of P-Patch have prepared a five year strategic plan which was adopted by the City Council in June 2000 calling for co-location of P-Patches on city owned property as one way to increase the number of community gardens. A variety of reasons, including the success of the 1989 Open Space Program and neighborhood planning, indicated that an official Department policy regarding P-Patches would help guide staff and interested citizens as proposals for new P-Patches in parks arose.

The proposed policy is consistent with current Department public involvement policies and procedures and affirms the Department's role as property manager of park lands on behalf of the citizens. The proposed policy recognizes some sites that may come into the park system are of a size, topography, or location that make a site not appropriate for shared park and P-Patch garden use and it establishes processes in public involvement and decision-making for these specific cases.

Once the Superintendent approves the policy, staff from Parks and Neighborhoods will move forward to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU will address issues such as construction standards and define the general maintenance responsibilities of each department and volunteers. Then as new P-Patches are development on Parks managed property, specific site agreements will govern any issues unique to the site. The policy aims to guide the development of P-Patch community such that existing recreational uses are not displaced, gardens are developed in a manner consistent with the character of the park, and public features such as educational gardens or gathering spaces are provided.

Sean Phelan, Friends of P-Patch read a letter to the Board outlining the Friends' concerns regarding the Memorandum of Agreement, design standards and cost issues and P-Patch program staff involvement from the beginning. The Friends believe the policy is a positive step in the long-term relationship between P-Patches and Parks. P-Patches are a recreational use, gardeners are good environmental stewards and developing P-Patches helps build a stronger community. The Memorandum of Agreement needs to be completed and this

should be a top priority before the policy becomes effective. Design standards need to be affordable and maintainable. The Friends are concerned about the costs that are being forced on neighborhood groups that have to raise funds to meet their match of matching fund grants. They are concerned about designs that require outside firms to do the construction rather than residents having the option of doing this work and being part of the match. In all joint projects of P-Patches on park lands, it only makes sense to have P-Patch Program staff involved from the very beginning. Both Parks and P-Patch staff should be equals in the design and implementation of gardens throughout the community planning process and the actual construction. The Friends commend the work that has gone into the development of the proposed policy. The Friends urge the adoption of this policy with the inclusion of their suggestions.

Greg Edeen, Friends of P-Patch and Groundswell member, is currently working to acquire and develop Thyme Patch Park (Sunset Community Gardens) in Ballard. One half of the park will be devoted to P-Patch and one half having passive park-like features. Plans were circulated to the Board members. He cited an automatic irrigation price of \$20,000 for the small proposed park in Ballard and questioned if automatic irrigation is needed for that small site. Mr. Edeen spoke about his previous contacts with Department staff and his experience with the design review process. There are different people making decisions without a basic policy. He would like the opportunity for a policy where everyone in Parks understands the unique character of the small P-Patch sites. [Return to the Top](#)

Maud Sterling, Fremont/Wallingford, P-Patch gardener, encourages the Department to prepare the Memorandum of Agreement as the policy is based on something that does not yet exist. She suggests the Department of Parks and Recreation get together with the Department of Neighborhoods to craft a Memorandum of Agreement. When there is a need to determine what the best use is for a piece of land the Memorandum will let people know what will happen. Ms. Sterling stated the Memorandum of Understanding should precede the policy.

Helen St. John, gardener at Evanston P-Patch for 25 years. The P-Patch has 45 plots. In the center is a public area with 4 chairs, table and a small children's play area with sandbox. Ms. St. John visits with people as they walk through the area. The P-Patch is shared cooperatively and it is not a private use of public property.

The Park Board will be discussing the proposed P-Patch Policy and making a recommendation to the Superintendent at it's March 8th meeting.

Central Waterfront Aquarium South Option Analysis Briefing

Bill Arntz, Acting Director of the Seattle Aquarium, briefed the Board on the operation of the Citizens Advisory Committee. To insure that the planning for a potential "South Option" had the broadest perspective and included input from

diverse interest groups, the Department, with suggestions from the City Council, appointed a 25 member Central Waterfront Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide review and advice throughout the planning process. The committee was representative of people who had deep and abiding interests. The committee operated on a consensus rather than parliamentary basis. The CAC's role was defined as advising the department in the development of an additional alternative to the City's adopted Master Plan for the Central Waterfront for redevelopment of an aquarium and public park to be evaluated in a subsequent Environmental Impact Statement.

John Braden, Senior Planning & Development Specialist, summarized the background of the Master Plan. The Plan was adopted in 1997 setting the direction for future development of a one quarter mile segment of the downtown waterfront, including Pier 62/63, the current Aquarium (Piers 59 and 60) and Waterfront Park. The adopted Master Plan calls for a new aquarium facility to be built on the north portion of the site and a new park/open space facility on the south portion. Based on this Master Plan, the City and Seattle Aquarium Society (SEAS) proceeded with conceptual design of the new Aquarium on the northern portion of the site and in April of 2000 reached agreement on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the development of that facility and its future operation by SEAS. In response to citizen concerns regarding views and open space, the City appropriated funds in July of 2000 to examine the feasibility of reversing the location of the Aquarium and park facilities from the configuration in the adopted Master Plan. This would result in development of a "South Option" to build the new park/open space on the north portion of the site and Aquarium on the south portion. The "South Option" could then be evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement and a final configuration for development of the site determined.

The Superintendent acknowledged Jim Clark, President of SEAS, in the audience and introduced him to the Board members. Also, Geri Beardsley of the City Council staff was introduced to the Board. [Return to the Top](#)

Conceptual drawings of the South Option alternatives were displayed. Alternative 1 provides for the redevelopment of Pier 59 at its current site on the existing wooden pilings. The new portion of the Aquarium would be built to the south in the area currently occupied by Waterfront Park. Alternative 2 provides for the complete removal of Pier 59 and construction of an entirely new facility immediately to the south of the current location of Pier 59. Alternative 3 provides for the relocation of the pier shed on Pier 59 to the former site of Pier 58 and development of the new Aquarium on the current site of Pier 59.

A Landmarks Preservation nomination application was prepared and considered on February 21. The nomination was accepted and the Landmarks Preservation Board will be taking public testimony and dealing with a designation of Pier 59 on April 4. The nomination includes the pier shed, exterior, and some structural elements of the interior and the pier. Designation, negotiation of a Controls and

Incentives Agreement and adoption of an ordinance by the Seattle City Councilmembers will follow. Some of the CAC mentioned from a historic sense there were advantages to moving the pier. The pier shell can be picked up and moved onto new concrete pilings. If you were to impose a new structure in the area between Pier 59 and Pier 57 the historic character would be disrupted.

The CAC generally favored Alternative 3 as the option that would allow the most economically viable development of the aquarium while respecting the historic character of the area. Those favoring Alternative 3 argued that it could preserve and reinforce the existing historic area, while providing flexibility for designing the new Aquarium and maximizing open space and views.

Some members of the CAC were concerned that it would be preferable to redevelop Pier 59 at its present site and thus favored Alternative 1. They argued that it is preferable to restore a building at this original location where possible and were concerned that relocation of Pier 59 would inevitably alter its character.

All of the Alternatives include a 50-foot corridor off the seawall as part of the Endangered Species Act. The CAC did not deal with the parking issue. The Strategic Planning Office will be reviewing the parking issue along the full central waterfront. The CAC also urged that the design of the park move forward in conjunction with the design of the Aquarium, even though it was recognized that they might not be developed simultaneously. The CAC also provided comments concerning the important elements to be considered in the design of the park, including connections to the overall waterfront, the urban context, connections to Elliott Bay, views of the Bay and the city skyline, connections to the new aquarium and the need to accommodate large events/gatherings.

During the Aquarium three-year construction period there will be operational costs estimated at several million dollars. There will be reduced attendance resulting in reduced revenue. Temporary space will be required for office, educational facility and restrooms. Waterfront Park will not longer be in existence. The open space at Pier 62/63.

A Park Board public hearing of the Central Waterfront Master Plan "South Option" is scheduled on March 8, 2001. The Park Board will discuss the south option and make a recommendation to the Superintendent at its March 22 meeting.

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair