

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
April 28, 2008

Committee Members Present: Doug Dunham, Chair, Neal Adams, Alan Alabastro, Cindi Barker, Lisa Chen, Gwen Colwell, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Cheryl Klinker, Sharon Lee, Joyce Moty, Alec Stephens

Staff: Timothy Gallagher, Superintendent; Kevin Stoops; Colleen Browne, Patti Petesch, Susan Golub

Committee Business: The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes from the March 24th meeting.

Public Comment: There was none.

City Council Levy Renewal Committee

Joyce Moty and Neal Adams, members of the City Council's Levy Renewal Committee, reported on the activities of the Committee. There are 29 citizens on the Committee, chaired by former Parks and Recreation staff member Beth Purcell. Tom Byers of the Cedar River Consulting Group is the lead staff for the Committee. Six meetings are planned and three public hearings (May 12, 14 and 15).

The Committee is charged with looking at the possibility of a new parks levy. They will be making a recommendation regarding the type of package to present to voters and the funding source. The Committee's recommendations are due to the City Council on June 30. Because the timeframe is short, they will be drawing on existing neighborhood plans and other adopted plans. There is a focus on environmentally smart and sustainable projects. Superintendent Gallagher noted that the Mayor is supportive of Levy renewal, but wants the renewal to occur in 2009 or 2010

Ms. Moty asked the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee to send a letter to the City Council's Levy Committee expressing support for levy renewal. She stated this would be an important public statement of support. Ms. Lee stated it was important to keep the issue of the end of the Pro Parks Levy separate from the creation of a new levy. She expressed support for Ms. Moty's request for a Committee letter.

Mr. Harper expressed concern about giving support to the City Council's levy renewal process. He cited the short timeframe as one concern because it is hard to get citizen input. He fears the work will be driven by the City Council, the Council's Committee and not by neighborhood community councils.

Mr. Stephens stated he was OK with a support letter from the Oversight Committee, stating that the letter would be of general support for the basic work of the Council Committee; it would not be specifically supporting any projects.

Ms. Moty read the following letter:

"As members of the Pro Parks Citizens Oversight Committee, we support the mission of the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Citizens' Advisory Committee to the City Council to ensure citizen participation in the development of a potential ballot package of parks, open space, boulevards, trails, green infrastructure, and recreation projects and a proposed set of options to fund the package.

Over the life of the current Pro Parks Levy, we have seen an increased demand for park acquisitions, developments and improvements especially as we reviewed and selected from many deserving acquisition and development projects through the Opportunity Fund. The urgency of such a ballot package is apparent as dense housing developments across the city have put more pressure on finding and creating open green space to serve the needs of these future residents. Parks contribute to the livability of a city and are essential to its well being."

Mr. Adams expressed support for the letter, noting that he liked the tone and the fact that it encourages the Council Committee to continue its work, rather than explicitly supporting levy renewal.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to send the letter as presented by Ms. Moty to the City Council's Parks Levy Committee. The motion was approved 11-0, with one abstention.

Programming Update – Youth Programming

Patti Petesch, Parks manager of environmental learning centers and outdoor programming, and former manager of Parks and Recreations youth programming, briefed the Committee on Levy sponsored youth programming. At the mid point of the Levy Parks and Recreation hired Dr. Paul Heckman to evaluate our youth programming. Based on his recommendations, the programming system was reorganized to feature signature programs with five staff leaders working across the city in a particular discipline.

Examples of the signature programs were shown via videos made by the Seattle Channel. The first showcased the Arts and Cultural Program and a teen Martin Luther King, Jr. event. Eight years ago 37 teens participated; in 2008 there were over 250. The "We Have a Dream" video displayed the commitment of youth and leaders to diversity and social progress.

The Outdoor Opportunities Program (O²) was featured in the second video. Throughout its life this program has successfully leveraged the \$180,000 Levy Youth Development Fund with significant grant awards, among them a \$20,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service in 2007, and \$93,000 from Washington State Parks in 2006. Over 60,000 volunteer hours from adults has contributed to the O² Program's success. In 2007

cultural organizations, including an African technical group and a Vietnamese tutoring and mentorship program, worked with immigrants and refugees to bring additional teens to the program. A push for 2008 is to include disabled teens in the Program.

Committee member Doug Dunham asked whether there was funding to continue the program in 2009. Superintendent Gallagher stated that funding for 2009 and 2010 will be considered as part of the Department's biennial budget review. He noted that there were going to be tough budget decisions in this next budget.

Neighborhood Park Development Program

The Neighborhood Park Development Program (NPDP) is a \$5 million fund for park projects. At previous Oversight Committee meetings the Committee has discussed limiting the allocation of the fund to incomplete Pro Parks projects versus having a process open to all neighborhood park project proponents.

Superintendent Gallagher stated that the Mayor's direction is that the Committee hold an open public process, using the four criteria that the Committee previously discussed. (See Attachment A) Because we do not know if there are better ideas/projects in the community, it is better to leave the door open. The Mayor is interested in capturing good ideas that are ready to go. The Committee will be reviewing all projects that are proposed by the community.

Neal Adams stated that the four criteria that have been proposed look more like funding criteria, and questioned what would happen if all of the funds were expended on projects in the highest priority. Kevin Stoops responded that the first couple of criteria are narrowly defined, with only a handful of projects fitting the first criterion: Denny Triangle, International District, Ballard acquisition. The second criterion is similar; only a handful of projects, such as Jefferson Park, would qualify for funding.

Don Harper noted that the Denny Triangle and International District projects were not ready for funding, but that there are other projects, in addition to the ones that staff have mentioned, that gave up aspects of their park design because of funding limits. Superintendent Gallagher stated that most projects had some cuts in their scope of work and that these would qualify under the third criterion. These would come forward if there is citizen support and they are nominated by a community for consideration.

Regarding the project schedule (Attachment B), Kevin Stoops stated that if the Committee approves of the proposed approach at this meeting, staff will go into high gear to initiate the nomination process. The plan is to advertise the process in early May and hold four public workshops in June. The workshops would be designed to help community members prepare funding applications. During August staff would analyze the applications and present the analysis to the Committee in September. The Committee would review all applications, hold a public hearing and make recommendations to the Superintendent in the fall. The goal is for the Superintendent's proposal to go to the Mayor by the end of the year.

Alec Stephens asked what the staff review process, scheduled to occur in August, would entail. Would it be building a database of information about the nominated projects; or would it be an evaluation of those projects and how they fit the criteria? Doug Dunham noted that in the earlier rounds of the Opportunity Fund staff provided the Committee with ranked recommendations. Kevin Stoops responded that the intention is for staff to analyze the projects and include comments in the material that is presented to the Committee. Superintendent Gallagher stated that the material could include comments and no rankings, if that was the Committee's preference. He believes it could help the Committee to have a starting point for their review; for example, staff could provide information regarding projected operations and maintenance costs for the projects.

Cindi Barker asked what communication would there be with project proponents if staff changes cost estimates. She stated it would be important to share this information with the community. Mr. Stoops stated this would be part of the staff work that occurs in August.

Terry Holme noted that the timeline was lacking information regarding the Committee's meetings and review. The Committee needs to be involved all along the way. Cheryl Klinker stated that, if necessary, the Committee could meet twice a month to keep the process moving quickly forward. Chairperson Dunham agreed that this might be necessary in the fall, noting it was important to give citizens the opportunity to "sell" their projects to the Committee.

Mr. Dunham stated the Committee has concerns about the fourth criterion and has voted against including this category of projects. The concern is that the process not seem like a bait and switch, with the community thinking they are eligible for funding but actually are not because all of the money will be spent on projects that qualify in the higher priority categories.

Sharon Lee stated that the staff recommendation to the Committee should be loose, a general ranking indicating whether a project is in or out, rather than a specific allocation for each project. Superintendent Gallagher commented that this would be possible.

Mr. Adams stated he would feel better about moving forward with this process if the staff evaluation criteria were more clear. He wants the staff recommendations to include information regarding cost, feasibility, potential impacts, operations and maintenance requirements. Mr. Stephens and Ms. Barker commented that it was important to let the public know in advance what the evaluation elements will be. Ms. Moty suggested using a "buyer beware" approach: be clear about the evaluation criteria and priorities and allow people to apply.

Ms. Lee stated that one outcome from an open process would be the identification of projects that could be included in a 2009 or 2010 levy. She stated it is good to be open to new ideas. Mr. Stephens agreed, stating part of the attraction of the fourth category for

the public might be the possible inclusion in a future levy, especially as this fund is a relatively small amount of money.

Superintendent Gallagher stated that a bi-product of a good process will be momentum within the community; a list of unfunded projects will be created that will raise awareness of the need for capital funding, if not necessarily for a new levy.

Ms. Barker stated that previous staff work showed a need for \$6.7 million for projects in categories 1-3. She questioned whether there would be money left for category 4. Mr. Stoops responded that it was up to communities to organize, develop project support and apply, and that some projects may not come forward.

Gwen Colwell asked whether the Committee was required to accept the fourth criterion. Superintendent Gallagher responded yes, it is the Mayor's direction to have an open process including category 4 projects. Ms. Colwell then encouraged the Committee to accept this and move forward.

Mr. Stephens expressed support for a one page application which should include language that the gates are not rigid, that the Committee makes recommendations based on the criteria and merits of the projects. He indicated support for a minimum award of \$250,000 so that tangible projects are created.

Mr. Harper wants the ability to match Neighborhood Matching Fund projects and have awards be as low as \$100,000, as long as money is available from other sources to make the total project budget \$250,000 or greater. The Superintendent agreed with this approach – the important factor is that the total project is worth \$250,000, with some funding potentially coming from other sources.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to require total project value to be \$250,000 for projects approved for funding from the Neighborhood Park Development Program. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: A motion was made and seconded to approve the timeline (Attachment B) proposed by Kevin Stoops, with the addition of the Committee's review, including a public hearing. The motion passed unanimously.

Attachment A
Proposed Neighborhood Park Development Program Criteria

1. Highest priority shall be given to projects that were purchased in previous rounds of the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund, but which did not receive funding for development.
2. Second priority will be given to existing (currently under construction or in the design process) Pro Parks projects that received limited funding and additional money is necessary to adequately complete the project.
3. Third priority consideration will be given to completed Pro Parks projects, for additional improvements of a significant scale - at least \$250,000 in overall project value - that were not realized during earlier design and construction processes. (The request for funding from the Neighborhood Park Development Program may be for less than \$250,000, but the total project cost must be \$250,000 or above, with other funding sources making up the difference.)
4. Fourth priority consideration will be given to projects (beyond those that are/were associated with the Pro Parks Levy) that provide tangible recreational benefits. Emphasis shall be given to projects that provide benefits to underserved communities, and those that do not result in significant operational or maintenance cost increases.

Attachment B
Proposed Neighborhood Park Development Fund Timeline

DATE: April 24, 2008
TO: Timothy Gallagher
FROM: Kevin B. Stoops
SUBJECT: Neighborhood Parks Development Program
Process and Timeline

The following is a proposed process and timeline for the advertisement, nomination, selection, and public review process for projects to be funded from the new Neighborhood Parks Development Program. Susanne Friedman will staff this effort.

Date/Timeframe	Action
April 28	PPL Oversight Committee approval of timeline
May 2	Develop announcement, flyers, set meetings, post web page
May 5	Mail/e-mail announcements, post flyers
June 9-21	Hold four public workshops
June-July	Conduct outreach and provide technical assistance
July 31	Applications due
August 29	Staff evaluations complete
September 3	Forward staff recommendations to PPL Oversight Committee
September- October	PPL Oversight Committee hearings and recommendations
November	Department recommendations to Mayor and Council
December	Council approval
January 2009-on	Design and construction

Please call me at 684-7053 should you need further information.

KBS: Opp Fund Process Timeline 4 24 08