

DRAFT

Minutes

Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee

June 23, 2008

Committee Members Present: Doug Dunham, Chair, Neal Adams, Cindi Barker, Lisa Chen, Don Harper, Cheryl Klinker, Sharon Lee, Alec Stephens

Staff: Tim Gallagher, Kevin Stoops; Susan Golub

Committee Business: The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes from the April 28th meeting.

Public Comment: There was none.

City Council Parks Levy

At the March Oversight Committee meeting, the Committee approved a letter for the Committee to send to the City Council appointed citizen's committee making recommendations on a future park levy. Doug Dunham proposed sending a new letter to the Mayor and City Council expressing support for a future levy. Neal Adams reported that June 24 was the date that the citizen's committee would be finalizing their recommendations to send to the City Council. He supported sending a letter to the Council saying the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee supports the work of the Council's committee. He suggested including in the letter some history of the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee, noting the special insight the Committee has on this issue.

The Committee voted unanimously in favor of sending a letter to the Council. The letter will be circulated to the Committee for their review before a final version is sent to the Council.

Neighborhood Park Development Program

Superintendent Gallagher reported that there are likely to be significant budget reductions in the City's 2009-2010 budget. Less sales tax revenue has hit the General Fund, as has higher union settlements for some City staff. Parks is looking at significant operations reductions. In addition, there has been a dramatically lower Real Estate Investment Tax (REIT) collection, resulting in less than anticipated 2008 capital funds, and causing a halt to some 2008 REIT funded projects. New General Fund supported programs have been put on hold, as has the \$4.9 million Neighborhood Park Development Program (NPDP).

Mr. Dunham commented that the original amount of the NPDP was \$7 million, and asked why we were now talking about a \$4.9 million fund. Superintendent Gallagher responded that the City Council spent \$2 million of the money in the 2008 budget.

Regarding potential Parks and Recreation Department budget cuts for 2009 and 2010, the Superintendent commented that everything, across all Department programs, is being

analyzed. There may be some restructuring of some programs, some may be reduced and some may be eliminated. The specifics will be announced on September 29 when the Mayor releases his proposed budget.

Don Harper asked how much REIT money is in Parks budget. Kevin Stoops remarked that Parks generally has between \$10 and \$20 million per year for capital projects, including major maintenance work and some debt repayment for the purchase of Parks Westbridge facility and Pier 59 rehabilitation. Mr. Harper also noted that the creation of low maintenance parks has been a focus of the City Council's park levy citizen's committee. He stated the importance of recognizing the need for more parks as the City continues to grow.

Sharon Lee asked about the idea of the parks administration building (100 Dexter Avenue N) becoming a community center. Mr. Harper stated that there was an effort to include this idea in the City Council's levy, but it did not move forward. He stated there is nothing for downtown in the current package. Mr. Adams mentioned the high cost of downtown acquisitions. Superintendent Gallagher stated there are ways to provide park areas downtown without acquisition, such as making parkways in the street right-of-way.

Interest and Contingency Allocations

Kevin Stoops, Director of the Planning and Development Division, briefed the Committee on interest and contingency allocations. Within the Levy, the Neighborhood Park category of projects was allocated contingency and interest accounts. This was not the case for the Opportunity Fund. There is currently approximately \$800,000 in the fund balance, with the number constantly fluctuating.

Projects proposed to receive funding from the account were listed on a handout (attached to the minutes as Attachment A). Some of the projects were specifically discussed:

California Substation/Dakota Place: This project includes improvements to a building which will be operated as part of the Hiawatha Community Center. The building needs sheet rock, framing, a heater and finished meeting space. In response to a question from Mr. Stephens, Mr. Stoops stated that providing the additional funding while the project was in the design phase allows the architect to expand the project design to meet the new budget.

John and Summit: The original budget was for a 5,000 square foot site. The new site is twice as big and park development will require the expensive removal of concrete.

Capitol Hill – 16th and Howell: This project is located on a Group Health parking lot and will include open lawn space and a community garden.

Morgan Substation: This also is an existing parking lot which will be developed with a small lawn area and landscaping.

Arboretum – Japanese Garden: Pro Parks was able to leverage significant private donations for this project. The bids were substantially higher than estimated, partly due to the fact that this is a very complicated project with many types of construction. To keep faith with the private donors of over \$500,000, additional Levy funding is needed. This will allow the project to be built as anticipated in the bid documents.

First Hill: We made an offer on property, but the counter offer was very high. Our offer is currently on hold.

Sharon Lee asked about the status of the University Heights project. Mr. Stoops responded that the City is still working with the Seattle School District on the purchase of the property. The money allocated for this project is being held. Superintendent Gallagher noted the status is the same for the Crown Hill project.

Mr. Adams asked how staff chose the projects on the list, rather than others, as appropriate for receiving additional funds. Will the money move them to completion? Do the projects have community support? He also asked whether the balance of \$128,000 would be available for completion of future Levy projects.

Mr. Stoops responded that the balance was left to cover contingency needs in future projects.

Mr. Harper stated the Queen Anne Counterbalance Park project was about \$45,000 short on a major element, and that the community had raised \$1.2 million for the Park. Thomas Wales Park was also short funds for development because of the costs of the original artist's proposal that was abandoned.

Cheryl Klinker asked about the seven projects that Parks staff had originally recommended for funding from the Neighborhood Parks Development Program. Mr. Stoops responded that two of these projects are on the current list: the two Capitol Hill projects where asphalt removal is required.

Mr. Harper asked whether the two West Seattle projects on the list had good community support. Mr. Stoops responded that they did. Ms. Barker noted that the Morgan Substation project had a great public process. People liked the design and liked the current, bigger location better than the original substation site.

Ms. Klinker asked about allocating funding to Magnuson Park. Mr. Stoops responded that Magnuson is in a different Levy category and thus was not eligible for funding from the Neighborhood Parks contingency. Regarding Magnuson, Mr. Stoops stated that Parks is about 20-25% into development of the wetlands and construction of the ballfields. A lot of problems have come up, including bad soil, contaminated underground diesel tanks, and one foot of concrete beneath the asphalt that needs to be removed. A current estimate is these will add \$250,000 to the cost of the project. Also at Magnuson the power line to the restrooms failed a couple of years ago. It is more than a \$250,000 project to fix the line. Parks is exploring a "green" fix to this problem.

Mr. Stephens noted that of the projects on the list (Attachment A), three will bring projects to completion, while two still need Neighborhood Matching Fund money to be completed. He asked why these projects were included on the list. Mr. Stoops stated that yes, for the Japanese Garden project the additional funds will bring the project to completion as anticipated when the bid was released. For Dakota Substation, the funding makes the building usable. For others, the money increases the budget in the project design phase, increasing the project scope.

Mr. Harper noted that regarding Magnuson, Parks earlier added \$900,000 for a fifth athletic field. This funding came from the Playfield Levy category. Did we know about the bad electricity line at that time, and is the line part of the athletic field project? Mr. Stoops responded that the line is not part of the field project. We originally thought City Light would cover the cost of replacing the line. Just recently this changed, and we are working with City Light to find a green power alternative to standard line replacement.

Development Program Update

Kevin Stoops briefed the Committee on the status of Levy development programs. All projects are moving to completion, except those that are on hold (Crown Hill and University Heights). Projects specifically discussed include:

Green Lake Shade Garden: Ted Holden, a Parks landscape architect, is doing the design work for this project. We will be using some old features removed from Martha Washington Park to create an archway for the garden.

Cascade Peoples Center: This is an Opportunity Fund project what will include roof replacement and underlying structural roof repairs.

Jefferson Park: This is a very significant project that includes covering the Beacon Reservoir, play area and athletic field development.

Queen Anne Counterbalance Park: The project is 90% complete, with the dedication scheduled for July 19.

Mt Baker Ridge: Construction of the anchors for the platform has just begun.

Lake Washington Boulevard: This is a combined Pro Parks and major maintenance project that will make drainage improvements.

Burke Gilman – Peace Park: Money is being added to this project from the Lake Union Trail project.

Queen Anne Boulevard: Bids were recently opened and were good.

Ballard Commons Park: Bids were recently opened and were good.

Ercolini Park: Opportunity Fund purchase and development project entirely completed with in-house design, engineering and construction.

Georgetown Playfield: Dedication occurred June 13.

Mr. Adams asked if there were any particularly problematic projects. Mr. Stoops responded that Jefferson Park is a big project with bid challenges. The Pro Parks project is for the reservoir lid, and not for the western slopes of the Park. This could be a future project. There also is no funding for the old Jefferson Playfield, or for a skatepark that is included in the Park Master Plan, although we have received a private donation to fund design of the Jefferson skatepark.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Attachment A
Potential Interest and Contingency Allocations

Remaining Projects	Status	Budget	Adds	Notes
Bellevue Substation/John and Summit	design	\$273,257	\$60,000	Still need donation/NMF
BG Trail/Peace Park	bid	\$120,704	\$0	Bid 6-18 is OK
California Substation/Dakota Place	design	\$880,000	\$100,000	previously allocated \$300K
Capital Hill/16th and Howell	design	\$435,826	\$90,000	Still need donation/NMF
Crown Hill	hold	\$1,047,878	\$0	
Dexter Pit/Tom Wales Park	design	\$712,164	\$0	
First Hill	hold	\$133,881	\$0	
Green Lake Plaza	design	\$420,176	\$0	
Jefferson Tennis Courts	design	\$549,981	\$0	
Morgan Substation	design	\$367,428	\$90,000	Need to complete per design
Myrtle Reservoir	design	\$1,009,134	\$0	
QA Counterbalance	construction	\$303,926	\$0	Nearly complete
University Heights	hold	\$243,868	\$0	
Aboretum Japanese Garden	bidding	\$1,494,522	\$337,000	bids over budget
TOTALS		\$7,992,745	\$677,000	
Available			\$800,000	
Balance			\$123,000	