



Dahl Playfield Skatepark
Public Meeting
Wednesday, July 1, 2009
6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Dahl Field

Attendees:

Kelly Davidson, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Karen O'Connor, Seattle Parks and Recreation
34 Community Members

Notes and summary

Kelly Davidson introduced the project and the current status.

Q. How did you decide to move forward and how did we get here today?

A. Parks explained that this was a Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant and that a public process was held in 2006. During the process there was community support for a skatespot at this location, and the project is listed in the Citywide Skate Park Plan published in January 2007. After the public process and design there was no funding for the project so it was put on hold until funding was available. A neighborhood group worked to get another Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant, but the match was not met.

Scott Shinn from Parent 4 Skateparks and the Skate Park Advisory Council (SPAC) provided additional information on the public process and let people know the steps SPAC had taken to keep this project moving forward. In 2008 Skatepark Implementation Funds became available and SPAC advocated to Parks and Councilmember Rasmussen to dedicate funds to Dahl Skatepark. Because there was already a public process initiated and a schematic design in place this spot was designated to move forward.

Parks explained that the design change based on information about the lack of safety of the previous design. All the features were kept in this park and it is a safer layout based on the direction of traffic and space between features. This design is an excellent design for beginners.

Comments and Questions

Comment: The community voiced a different opinion and said that there was a public process, however, it was for a smaller site in a different location. The neighborhood had agreed on the location after vetting it through the community. The Friends of Dahl Playfield agreed that this design would be good and supported the building of a skatepark. They wanted a beginner site and want parks to remember that “this is for the

kids.” The Friends of Dahl provided an endorsement for this site during the design process if it met their criteria:

1. Site was for beginners
 - a. Would not exceed three feet in height
2. The location
 - a. Did not encroach on open space
 - b. Was not near wading pool
 - c. Was a reasonable distance from homes
 - d. Location is visible from 25th for SPD
3. Size
 - a. Was expected to be the size of a full size basketball court – design does not include additional square footage of green space.

Q. The site is so much bigger?

A. Parks explained the original design was 3,948 sq. ft and the current design is 4,021 sp. ft. The new designer was instructed to design to 4,000 sq. ft. based on the original schematic. The original schematic for the skatespot was shown on the site plan at the previous public meetings at ½ scale in the site plan and it appears to be the size of the ½ basketball court, when it is actually twice as large. Parks explained this was an unfortunate error that did not properly represent the original intended size of the site.

Q. Have you lived next to a park? This park is active throughout the night. We are picking up broken beer bottles and teens will be here on the skatepark during off hours. They are currently in the play area and on the basketball court at 2 a.m.

Q. This new site does not help with its change of location, the neighbors agreed on the location because of the site lines. SPD will not come into the park. What are you doing about site lines?

Comment: Fundamental problem is that Parks failed to engage the community when they decided to move the project forward and changed the design and location. We were only aware of the project when the project sign went up.

Q. Where are we now with the plans and this project?

A. Right now the process is on hold. Design development and construction documents have been completed and the project has been bid. A low bidder has been identified and Parks is waiting to award the bid. The standard public process was already completed. This meeting was put together in response to the community’s concern with the project. Parks is here to collect comments and bring them back and review what the next steps will be.

Q. Why weren’t the people that were involved in the process before re-engaged when the design and the location was changed?

A. Parks realizes they should have done that and that is the reason construction is on hold and this meeting was arranged. We are conducting this meeting to hear your concerns and feedback.

Q. How are we as a group going to move forward?

A. Parks said they would prepare notes and send them to the attendees at the meeting for review. They could respond to notes or add additional comments that will be brought to Kevin Stoops the Director of Planning and Development and Tim Gallagher, Superintendent.

Q. What type of maintenance, supervision and graffiti response does Parks have for the skatepark?

A. The skatepark will not have a supervisor on hand, such as a lifeguard at a pool. The maintenance is the same as any other park. We have a responsive maintenance department and a special graffiti unit. The maintenance workers visit sites daily and will call in graffiti immediately. At the other two skateparks that are in the Seattle Park system the skaters are good stewards of the area. They clean up and have recently requested a lock box at the Woodland Park site for brooms.

Comment: The skatepark plan calls out that there will be visibility for SPD. This new site does not take that into consideration.

Comment: The lack of communication from Parks to the community is frustrating. Many people did not know about the original planning process. Again, the first time we have heard of a skateboard park was a sign that was put up two weeks ago.

Comment: Again, the site needs to be for kids. There is concern that the 5 ft level is more for advance levels. Also, the design looks like it is becoming a regional draw and not a neighborhood amenity for kids. Skatespot is misleading.

Parks explained the three categories of the skate areas. Skateparks, skatespots and skatedots. This location is on the smaller end of a skatespot (ranging under 10,000 sq. ft) at 4,000 sq. ft. and is considered a neighborhood amenity and not a regional skatepark.

Comment: We do not want people from outside the neighborhood to drive here.

Comment: In the original planning process this green space is important to Frisbee players, soccer players and others to keep the green space open in this park. This design, even though 4000 sq. ft., it encroaches on a larger square footage because of its layout.

Q. Explain the 5 ft. berms and how they will affect site lines and square footage?

A. The berms will be small grass hills that run up to the five foot edge. We asked the designers to include this to eliminate a hiding location and for ease of maintenance. It should not take up much more square footage.

Q. Is there a location that we could visit to see a comparable site in Seattle?

A. The Ballard Bowl is approx 2,800 sq. ft, however, these are bowls and intended for more advanced skaters. The City of Shoreline's skatepark is a comparable size.

Q. Where are we at in this process? What can you do?

A. Parks is here tonight to gather community input and listen to your concerns. They will be addressed with the Director of Planning and Development and the Superintendent and next steps will be identified. We will notify people on the sign in sheet and on the website. Please be sure that you have signed in.

Q. If there are more public meetings or changes to the project and/or design who will be notified and included?

A. If the project will be on the agenda at SPAC meeting or Parks Board meeting we will notify the attendees of this meeting. If another public meeting is held attendees at this meeting will be invited, a neighborhood mailing will be sent out with three week advanced notice and a press release will be sent to local press and blogs.

Q. Has a SEPA been done for the project? Do you understand that this is a bog and what are your plans if there is an earthquake?

A. A SEPA was completed for the skatepark. Parks engineers and landscape architects have reviewed the design details including drainage issues. All necessary reviews have been completed.

Q. At this stage is there a possibility to make changes to the design?

A. Parks needs to review the cost implications to re-design and/or relocate.

Comment: This has been in process for a while. That is why it was included in the Citywide Skatepark Plan. It is important to honor the time and effort that has already been put into this site by the neighborhood group that spearheaded the process.

Comment: This new site is too close to residential homes and noise is going to be an issue. It already is a problem and this will just enhance that problem.

Q. Is there a formal grievance process, what can we do legally?

A. Parks responded that citizens can contact the Superintendent's Office directly.

Comment: By putting the skatepark here you are displacing the games that take place in the open space. They will move closer to homes around the park.

Scott Shinn, who was on the Skatepark Task Force, is on the Skatepark Advisory Council and is the Director of Parents for Skateparks, noted the time of the SPAC meetings and invited everyone to attend. The next meeting is 7 p.m. at 100 Dexter on Monday, July 13, 2009.

Comment: We want to compromise and figure out how to move forward. We don't disagree with having a skatespot on this site, however, the safety, noise and site lines need to be addressed.

Comment from Donna Kostka from Parks Board: Parks Board is unaware of this, I came as a neighbor. I will be sure to bring these concerns back to Parks. There have been

changes in Parks personnel at all levels since the start of this process. There is obviously a disconnect due to a lack of history and continuity.

Comment: Community would like to figure out how to be involved in decision making and compromising to find a park that everyone can be happy with so we can move the project forward.

Comment: The designers need to receive the comments and information collected this evening.

Comment: Does Parks understand this is a bog? It floods every year and the drainage detention has had flooding issues.

Kelly wrapped up meeting and said she would send out meeting notes the next day for members in attendance to confirm that their primary concerns were noted.

Primary Concerns:

- Lack of communication and public input
 - On design and site change
 - General updates on project status
- New location
 - Too close to homes
 - Not visible from 25th
 - Encroaches on Green Space
- Size
 - Is not what was originally represented
 - Take up more space because of layout
- Generation of increased noise and crime