

Loyal Heights Playfield – Field Replacement Project

**Illumination Management Plan**

November 30, 2006 Public Meeting Notes

The following is a summary of the discussion portion of the meeting. It is chronological through the meeting, rather than organized by topic.

**Abbreviation Key:** **S** = Statement, **Q** = Question, **A** = Answer, **P** = Post meeting info/answer, **TH** = Ted Holden, **DC** = Dennis Cook, **DPD** = Department of Planning & Development, **CC** = City Council, **IMP** = Illumination Management Plan

**S:** The field has never been lighted on Sundays.

**P:** Parks records indicate the field has historically, on occasion, been lighted on Sundays.

**Q:** What is the foot candle level of the security lighting?

**A:** Similar to a street light. **P:** Security lights will be mounted at 20-ft height on 5 of the poles. Fixtures are 400W high-pressure sodium.

**Q:** Does City Council (CC) have to give a second approval after this meeting, or does DPD simply issue the permit upon completion/receipt of meeting notes?

**A:** It is Parks understanding that DPD will issue the Master Use Permit upon completion of the meeting.

**S:** Webster's definition of "involve": "...to engage to meaningful effect." Parks has repeatedly come out and stated "here's what we're doing," without any real opportunity for input to affect the outcome. CC action required another public meeting, per CM Steinbrueck, another public hearing.

**A:** The recorded Action in Clerk File 307855, from the CC meeting to review modification to development standards, stated that Parks "shall, in addition, provide for meaningful public involvement and review of the proposed Illumination Management Plan prior to final adoption and before issuance of all required permits." Ted Holden read these words to the participants at the meeting.

**S:** Replacement of lights at this field is not mitigation to neighbors, nor done at the request of neighbors but at the request of sports leagues.

**S:** Request for one additional dark night per week.

**S:** This meeting is defiant of CC direction for meeting with meaningful public involvement, and is not honoring the input of neighbors.

**S:** This meeting is a charade.

**S:** There is a philosophical question that needs to be answered in Parks – the question of who is considered a park user. Feeling is that one is not considered a park user unless one is part of a paying sports team. Other people use the park on a daily basis. Parks should broaden its definition of park user.

**S:** Park neighbor has never seen the "good-neighbor, don't park in the driveway" type of notifications at the field.

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**A (DC):** Parks can look at ways to broaden sportfield-related notifications.

**S:** There are not enough fields in the City. We need athletic fields.

**Q:** Is there a way to shut off one bank of lights at a time to serve as a warning that lights will be going off? Concern is with the safety issue of temporary “blindness” caused by all the lights going off at once.

**A:** Parks will ask lighting designers about options on this. The security lights may be able to reduce some of this high contrast at the end of games.

**S:** Questions that Parks is following its mission statement, particularly “building community;” we are educating, but not building community. We are building athletics.

**Q:** Artificial turf: If tires are not OK in a landfill, why are ground tires safe in a park? German study (where burden of proof is on manufacturer for safety rather than on user for lack of safety) could not prove surfacing is safe so they are not using it.

**A (TH):** The crumb rubber is made through a cryogenic process that is reported to reduce or negate leaching of hazardous materials. There was a King County report that studied an infilled synthetic turf field adjacent to a wetland that indicated water discharge from the site surpassed potable water standards.

**Q:** How does synthetic surfacing fit in with global warming?

**A (TH):** It is true that this turf system is not a living system, but by increasing the durability at this facility, it allows other areas to exist in a healthier state.

**Q:** Focus of lighting impacts seems localized, with adjacent neighbor impacts; what about “nuisance” lighting – distant views of the lights and adverse affects on city views?

**S:** The City needs to consider these distant views as well. The City needs to consider the benefit to the 20 or so people playing on a field versus the number of people affected by “nuisance” lighting.

**P:** The City needs to balance multiple needs.

**S:** It’ll look awful.

**S:** Individual interested in multiple needs. Loyal Heights Manor is nearby senior facility that will experience glare from lights, Residents did not fully understand the impact of the lights from previous public meetings and information given.

**S:** This is a neighborhood park.

**S:** Parks performed incorrect SEPA review.

**S/Q:** The purpose of the hours restrictions is to minimize impact to neighbors; the 15 minute post-game timeframe had not been discussed, nor the lighting level of the security lights. Needs a better picture of what this looks like.

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**A/P:** The security lighting is similar to street lighting, somewhat brighter as there are fewer fixtures to cover more area, mounted at 20-ft high on 5 of the poles.

**S/Q:** How early are fields available to users to begin activity? Activity at start times and end times generate associated noise with set up and take down.

**P:** Nearby schools could use the field during the day, with use agreement with Parks. General scheduled field use starts typically at 4:30 p.m. on weekdays, and as early as 9 a.m. on weekends.

**Q:** Is the IMP just for LHPF, or used elsewhere, or a template that will be used for all fields?

**A:** This IMP is just for LHPF, however Parks is required to develop IMPs for future sites as they are renovated. One has been done for Lower Woodland #1. The “template” is that the all IMPs will include information on duration or hours of lighting, operational controls, and anticipated performance in terms of footcandles on and off the playfield. Specifics for these may differ for each park.

**Q:** Does Parks measure their performance/success rates of actually adhering to the field lighting schedule? What is your rate of success?

**A:** Parks performs remote control of lights based on scheduled uses. If a game is cancelled at the last minute, users call Parks, or neighbors call Parks and they can be remotely turned off (ie. via cell phone).

**S:** Personal experience has seen fields lit when not in use. Parks needs to look at this at a citywide level. The IMP should spell out how to address a failure to turn lights off, and spell out how to track and measure success rates for lighting being in operation only when fields are in use.

**A (DC):** We’re willing to look at this. Also, not all play fields in Seattle are controlled by Seattle Parks and Recreation. Seattle School District has multiple site throughout Seattle.

**Q:** Is the 10 p.m. time an extension from before? Had not always seen games go that late.

**A:** Prior to 2002 resolution, games could have gone to 11 p.m. Games are not always scheduled on all available days until the latest time; they may end earlier.

**S:** Correction on presentation handout – street that indicates 19<sup>th</sup> should be 20<sup>th</sup>.

**A:** This is an error. It should be 20<sup>th</sup>.

**S:** Soccer participant has not ever received the Sports Participation Policy.

**A (DC):** The Participation Policy was sent to Ballard Football players because that was the group which created the problems.

**P:** They will be posted on the web. **(DC):** If you give me your card, I can mail them out to you individually.

**Q:** Who are the decision makers that this information will go to?

**A:** Michael Shiosaki, Pro Parks Levy Program Manager; Erin Devoto, Planning and Development Director; Ken Bounds, Superintendent; City Council

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**S/Q:** Neighbor adjacent to field sound-tested off her porch during a football game recorded a 60 decibels rating. Should they still call to report noise or disruptive behavior?

**A (DC):** Yes.

**S:** Clarification on resolution – a resolution is a recommendation or guideline. The resolution says to schedule “no more than” or “no later than,” but Parks could decide to schedule less.

**Q:** How long will it take for these notes to go to the Superintendent?

**A (TH):** About one week.

**Q:** Is it possible he would say “OK” to one more dark night a week?

**A:** Parks intends to proceed with the implementation of the project and scheduling as described. If in one year, there are unique impacts that can’t be managed, Parks will reconsider its current practices and policies for Loyal Heights Playfield.

**Q:** With my background, lighting design is an imprecise field. Is there funding set aside to redesign if it’s not working out?

**A:** Part of the installation contract and consultant contract is to measure illumination at frequent intervals and adjust the lights as needed. This also holds for off-site locations.

**Q:** How do you adjust an 80-ft pole?

**A:** Cherry-picker, Genie-lift.

**S:** City Council set a “ceiling” with discretion left to Parks. Parks could schedule down, ie. have the lights-will-be-going-off warning at 9:45, so activity is closer to wrapped up by 10 p.m. versus actually ending at 10:15 p.m. (given the presence of the security lighting)

**S:** It is difficult to go back after expectations and use patterns have been set for six nights. We are at a unique time now to ease the impact to neighbors. Skeptical that after one year, there will be a real opportunity to change.

**S:** Friends of Athletic Fields are also neighbors and taxpayers too, thereby helping to pay for field upkeep and maintenance.

**S:** Not enough fields in the City currently, the lighting limits as presented are already a compromise.

**S:** The field lighting projects in the City are replacing existing ones, not adding lighting to the system.

**Q:** Are there other places in town where there will be an increase in lighting hours and are there meetings with those communities or are they aware of this intention? Is there an effort to share this information with those? Could this be done Citywide at the same time so people know what’s coming in the future?

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**A:** Lower Woodland #2 is the next site slated for lighting replacement. Parks receives funding on a project by project basis, and each project will have an associated public involvement process.

**S:** Loyal Heights PF is a unique site with houses immediately adjacent, so hour restrictions are not a compromise.

**S:** Coach should notify players when game is over and lights will be going out. Suggest it be done before 10 p.m. rather than at, or after.

**S:** Increasing the height of the poles and the number of lights at the top of the poles increases the effect of skyglow. Seattle is especially susceptible to effects of skyglow due to refraction of light through water vapor that is in the air.

**S:** Please address the effects of skyglow. Please actually measure the illumination at the Loyal Heights Manor before and after installation.

**S:** Community has been attempting to engage in dialogue with Parks; still not clear on process. Parks indicates it is following City Council direction, City Council says it is between Parks and the community to resolve/dialogue.

**S:** Tell us how we can get involved in a meaningful way.

**S:** If neighbors and athletic field users had really both been involved, a more satisfactory solution would have arisen.

**S:** If this IMP is a template for other sites, it is off to a wrong start since no other users are involved at this early stage of Parks general IMP development.

**S:** Process has not been truly involving.

**S:** Look at whose needs are being served. Ballard is deficient in open space by Parks standards, and this project has essentially removed open space.

**Q:** What are the rules for use when not in use by sports leagues?

**A:** As any other field, it is open for public use.

**S/Q:** Feels that exposure to tires used in synthetic turf field is like exposure to 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand smoke. Concern with known toxicity. What right does Parks, CC have to ask us to be exposed to that?

**S:** Excerpt/paraphrase from Community Council discussion prior to action on 9/25/06: “How do we feed the unending hunger for active use? We look at more mitigation to help balance it out.”

**S:** Having lights on until 10 p.m. is not about kids, it’s about adults.

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**S:** Adults don't play in the early hours, those hours go to youth. The evening hours alleviate overall pressure on the fields by providing times for adults when youth would not be playing.

**S:** Only \$12 million of the \$200 million Pro Parks Levy was directed at athletic facility improvements.

**S:** Gave example of a 15 yr. old youth game getting scheduled at later times so younger youth can have the earlier hours.

**S:** Weather previously hindered the use of the playfield.

**S:** Loyal Heights PF has always been a playfield.

**Q:** What is the budget and schedule for upkeep of the field?

**P:** Based on Bobby Morris PF, the synthetic surface is 'groomed' with a greens groomer every two months per the manufacturer's recommendation. It is brushed with a special brush as needed to both level the high areas and divots and remove debris like sunflower seeds. During the fall leaves are blown off. The equipment cost is approximately \$10K and can be shared between facilities. The personnel hours per year at Bobby Morris are 158 which equates to 0.076 FTE.

**S:** At prior meetings, employee of Safeco had indicated concern with turf at Lower Woodland. Parks has not addressed this concern.

**A (TH):** Have not heard of this, the concern was with probably the all-weather sand/silt of field #2, not the synthetic turf.

**P:** The question was clarified that the site was not Lower Woodland, but Interbay Playfield. The concern was related to maintenance, and the lack of which may present an unsafe playfield surface.

**A (TH):** When first installed, some people were under the impression that synthetic surfaces require no maintenance. Synthetic field surfaces do require grooming on a bi-monthly basis and periodic brushing to keep the infill surface smooth and debris and leaves off.

**Q:** What is the plan to deal with vandalism?

**P:** The City of Seattle is self-insured and will address minor or major acts of vandalism as appropriate if they occur.

**Q:** What are the costs/benefit figures for synthetic turf vs. natural turf fields?

**A:** Approx. 10-15 year replacement lifecycle and regular field maintenance pencil out as more cost effective than maintenance at regular turf fields. Seattle Parks did a cost benefit analysis of synthetic surfaces verses all-weather and natural turf several years ago. (TH) will provide to those who so wish.