

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES

July 11, 2002

Present:

Bruce Bentley
Kate Pflaumer
Susan Golub
Sarah Neilson
Kathleen Warren

Absent:

James Fearn, Jr.
O. Yale Lewis, Jr.

Staff:

Ken Bounds, Parks Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

The agenda consent items were approved, along with the corrected July 11 agenda (the version sent to the Board listed the meeting date as July 13), minutes of the June 27 meeting, and the acknowledgment of correspondence. The **motion to approve, as corrected, was made by Kate Pflaumer, seconded by Susan, and approved unanimously.**

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Ken Bounds gave the following report:

Golden Gardens Focus of June 28-29 "Clean Seattle": A week of intense work by Parks staff culminated on June 29 with 120 other volunteers helping to spruce up Golden Gardens Park and along Seaview Avenue, north of the Locks. Work parties spread mulch in the Off Leash Area, removed invasive plants and mulched near trails, and continued ongoing work in the wetland restoration area. The event featured crews of citizens and firefighters cleaning nails, broken glass, charcoal, and ash clumps from illegal fire pit locations on the beach and in the dunes.

Fires on the Beaches: Golden Gardens beach was inspected after the first night of "renewed" beach fire expectations. There were only five fires outside of the legal pits the night of July 10, instead of the average 60+ fires. And those were small, showed clean wood was burned, and were put out with water, not sand. This is a major change in behavior. Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency had sanctioned, but not fined, Parks for the illegal fires and gave a deadline of July 16 for Parks to be in compliance. With the

decrease in illegal fires, the deadline should be met.

Seattle Mariner's All-Star Legacy Field Groundbreaking: On July 1, the next milestone in the gift from the Mariner's All-Star Legacy was achieved with the official groundbreaking ceremony on Lower Woodland Field #1. This field is now officially known as the Seattle Mariner's All-Star Legacy Field, and will provide a full size field for children and adults' baseball play and for fans to enjoy.

Thornton Creek Acquisition: A jewel has been added to the 12-acre Thornton Creek Park #2 in the form of a .75-acre purchase containing over 200 linear feet of the South Fork of Thornton Creek. Located on NE 100th Street, west of Lake City Way, this property will eventually be the subject of a riparian habitat restoration.

Pioneer Square Pergola: The major pieces of the Pergola are now all in place. Work now shifts to installing the glass roofing and gutters, as well as completing the touch-up painting. Workers will install vent-stack light fixtures and repair other park elements damaged in the accident, including sidewalks and cobblestones. This work will continue throughout the next five weeks. The grand re-opening celebration is scheduled for Saturday, August 17, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the park.

Successful Fourth of July Events: The City's two major fireworks displays at Gas Works and Myrtle Edwards parks, with many thousands in attendance, went off without a hitch. Parks received no reports of damage or other incidents.

Seattle Teen Employment Program (S.T.E.P.): On July 8, this collaborative effort between Seattle Parks, the Downtown Rotary Club, and the Urban League of Seattle began to provide quality work experience to 23 teens, aged 15-17, from Central and Southeast Seattle. The employment opportunity runs for six weeks with the teens working 30 hours per week.

Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program: The proposal goes before City Council for a public hearing on August 17.

Upcoming Events: The Cirque de Flambe will be held at Sand Point Hanger 27 on July 26.

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:

Chair Bruce Bentley reminded the audience the general public comment portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had or are not scheduled for a public hearing. No one signed up to give general public comment.

Jefferson Park Site Plan Discussion/Recommendation:

Don Bullard, Parks project manager, and Dennis Meyer, The Portico Group landscape architect, briefed the Board on the Jefferson Park Site Plan, which was followed by a

public hearing. At its July 25 meeting, the Board will discuss the site plan and make its recommendation to the Superintendent. The Board will be asked to make a recommendation to the Superintendent to accept the site plan.

Purpose of the Plan

The Jefferson Park Site Plan addresses the western portion of Jefferson Park, on Seattle's Beacon Hill, excluding the golf facilities. The Park has a total of 184 acres; the current planning area encompasses 50 acres. The plan is intended to set a direction for long-term improvement of the park. Some improvements will be done fairly soon; others will not be done for many years, as funding and property become available.

Planning History

Development of the plan was done at the request of park neighbors who want to see the site improved. The effort to have a comprehensive plan for the park began more than 10 years ago.

Jefferson Park, which includes the Beacon Reservoirs operated by Seattle Public Utilities, has grown in a disjointed fashion. The 1912 Olmsted plan for the site was never implemented and during World War II major non-park modifications were made to the site. Still more unplanned changes occurred shortly after the war. Community interest in improving the site dates back to at least 1991 when work began on the "North Beacon Hill Action Plan". That plan and the 1999 "North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan" identified a thorough park plan as a highest priority of the neighborhood.

In recognizing the 1999 plan the City Council directed the Parks Department, in partnership with the community, to develop a plan for the park - building upon the park planning work done in the 1999 plan.

Passage of the 1999 Community Center Levy and the 2000 ProParks Levy allocated \$11 million for improvements to Jefferson Park and lent urgency to the need for a plan to ensure that projects will be carried out in the best possible manner.

Planning Process

The planning process has included:

- Formation of a 21-member project advisory team that met nine times over nine months
- Preparation of a detailed design program
Hiring of the Portico Group which undertook site inventory, site analysis, park visioning, and development of the consensus plan
- Three public meetings for review of the planning effort
- Review by the Seattle Design Commission on three occasions
- Review by Parks staff
- Consultations with Seattle Landmarks Board staff

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

An EIS has been prepared for the site plan. The final EIS was released on 6/28/02.

Consensus Site Plan

The site plan consists of a report and two drawings. One drawing shows how the park would be developed if a floating cover were placed over the south reservoir. The other drawing is identical except in the area of the south reservoir it shows how the park could be developed if a buried reservoir is built. The Mayor recently proposed construction of a buried reservoir at Jefferson Park, as well as at other reservoirs in Seattle. The plan, EIS, and much of the earlier materials can be viewed at:

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkspaces/jeffparksiteplan.htm>. About 1/3 of the funding for full implementation of the plan is currently secured.

Upon completion of work by SPU there will be only one reservoir. There has been some uncertainty about which reservoir to demolish and which to reconstruct. Don believes that the north reservoir will be demolished and the south one reconstructed. SPU agreed to this approach and the site plan is based on it.

Park Vision

The park vision is intended to be an organizing principle to give the park meaning and coherence: Jefferson Park will be a place of great beauty that welcomes members of the neighborhood and visitors with a mixture of quiet spaces and active facilities, where community interaction is encouraged. It will:

- Celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of the Beacon Hill neighborhood
- Respect and respond to the traditions of the Olmsted legacy
- Build upon the best physical characteristics of the site, especially the views

Dennis discussed four primary themes of the planning process. (1) Diversity: the community center is the social heart of the community and will be enhanced by the boulevard walk and promenade. Historical events important to the park will be commemorated along the promenade. (2) Water: there will be an interaction with water to include fountains and a water play area. (3) Views: the site has extraordinary territorial views. (4) Recreational opportunities: currently 85-90% of the land at Jefferson Park is dedicated to sports. A new major meadow area would be non-dedicated play area for picnics, etc. The Board asked about the current Samoan cricket field and whether it is a different version than British cricket. Samoan requires a concrete pitch, which makes it unusable for several other sports.

The Board asked if the driving range will remain. Dennis answered that it will, however, the dimensions will be slightly altered. Board members also asked if newly-planted trees, as they mature, might eventually block the views and whether the trees between the nearby school and playfield would block teachers' views of children playing. Dennis said that, to avoid this risk, lower height plantings, and taller trees that you can see under, will be kept in mind as planning continues.

Scheduled Improvements

East-West Path: construction, ongoing

Spokane Street Path: construction, 2002

Path around the 9-hole golf course: construction, 2002

Repaving portion of service drive: construction, 2002

Gymnasium addition to community center: construction, 2003

Jefferson Field (possible): 2003/04?

Demolition of north reservoir & reconstruction of south reservoir: 2005-07

Children's play area: 2007-08

Tennis courts: 2007-08

Great Meadow and park over south reservoir (possible): 2007-08

Additional Information

Don Bullard may be reached at (206) 684-7158 or via e-mail at don.bullard@seattle.gov.

Public Testimony

Two people signed up to testify regarding the Jefferson Park Site Plan.

Mike Carney: believes that many people were ignored in this process. He has coached soccer for 16 years on Beacon Hill and said soccer players, who need a place to play, were not included in the process. He said League Hispana was not invited to the public meetings and there were no translators at the meetings (he suggested that at a minimum, Chinese and Spanish interpreters should have been there.) He said Jefferson Park does not need to be an Olmsted award-winning park. He presented a petition with 346 signatures with the wording "We the undersigned ask for one full sized soccer field on the land made available by closing the North Reservoir on Beacon Hill. The field should have an all weather surface and lights that turn off at 9:30 PM." He had already presented the petition to City Council. He stated that local residents had been worn down by the process and that he had called nearby school principals and all said they had not been included.

Bruce commented that the hard lidding of the reservoir, which is a mayoral priority, will be the key to use of this area of the park. Ken and Parks' Planning and Development Director Erin Devoto said that Seattle Public Utilities is determining the funding for the lidding and related water rate increases and their proposal will go to City Council this fall.

Myra Latoszek:

Myra said she was delighted to be addressing the Board. She was a member of the Project Advisory Team, representing the North Beacon Hill Community Council and Jefferson Park Alliance. She said she has been involved with Jefferson Park since the beginning of the neighborhood planning process and feels strongly that the proposed improvements will bring great beauty to the park. She pointed out this park has had a history of single

use areas and will gain a lot for the money spent, especially multiple uses of space. The planned new areas around the community center are astounding.

Board Discussion

Susan asked Myra if both the North Beacon Hill Community Council and Jefferson Park Alliance endorsed the plan and was told that they have. Myra reported back to both groups and wrote newspaper articles and received good feedback. Information has been distributed at the Columbia City farmer's market and at community events.

Kate asked if a plastic lid goes over the reservoir, would soccer and baseball be the first to be sacrificed? Dennis answered that - in addition to the ballfields proposed for the reservoir lid - the plan includes reconstruction of Jefferson Field with synthetic turf and field lights. That field is not dependent on the reservoir project. The plan also includes multiuse fields at the north end of the park. These are intended to be capable of servicing a wide range of park uses including less formal (unscheduled) sports use.

Kathleen was impressed with the plan and, despite Mike Carney's concerns, believes the difference between community support five years ago and now is remarkable. She and Susan had toured Jefferson Park at the beginning of her Park Board term and it is obvious that it took lots of work in the community to get to this point of agreement.

Kate said she is uncomfortable coming in at the end of this long planning process and feels somewhat presumptuous to be making a recommendation.

Bruce thanked Don and Dennis for the presentation. At its July 25 meeting, the Board will discuss the proposal and make a recommendation.

Olmsted Centennial Celebration:

David Takami, Parks Strategic Advisor, briefed the Board on the Olmsted Centennial Celebration. In 1903, the Seattle City Council hired the Olmsted brothers' landscape architecture firm to develop a comprehensive plan for Seattle parks and boulevards. The Olmsted brothers' firm contributed to the development and planning of approximately 37 parks within the Seattle parks system. Now, 100 years later, a year-long celebration of this legacy is planned in a joint effort by the Parks Department, Friends of Olmsted Parks, and two dozen other community partners. As part of that celebration, Parks will also be involved in the 2003 annual conference of the National Association of Olmsted Parks, to be held in Portland and Seattle in late April and early May 2003.

Because the City is facing severe budget reductions, there is little dedicated funding available for special projects and programs; staff will highlight what Parks is already doing to preserve and improve Olmsted parks and boulevards, while adjusting some new and existing programs to assume an Olmsted focus or flavor. The list of nearly 30 proposed projects is organized under categories suggested by the Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks: Celebrating, Understanding, Enhancing, and Sustaining. Examples of

projects include a City 12-month calendar with Olmsted photos, a website with information and link, Flower and Garden Show display and information booth, urban forestry plans/projects, and Volunteer Park "showcase" with new benches, care of turf, plants, flowers, vegetation management plan, and tree inventory. The Board was impressed at the various no cost/low-cost ideas. There is good community involvement in the celebration.

David distributed a sample booklet with standards for park furniture and amenities in Olmsted parks, which will serve as a guide for park planners and designers as improvements are made to Olmsted Parks in the coming years.

Public Involvement Policy - Administrative Update:

Dewey Potter, Parks communications manager, gave an update on the "Public Involvement Policy for Proposals to Acquire Property, Initiate Funded Capital Projects, or Make Changes to a Park or Facility." Board members received a copy of the policy in their agenda packets, with all the revisions highlighted. City Council has expressed approval of the original policy.

Ken said Parks project managers are carrying out the policy and doing a great job. They are required to maintain an ever-expanding list of involved citizens for a particular project. When public meetings are held on the projects, the managers must notify everyone on their list, either by e-mail or U.S. mail.

Kathleen asked about the petition presented to the Board at tonight's meeting on the Jefferson Park Site Plan, which included 300+ signatures. Would project managers be required to contact all these people for future public meetings on the Jefferson Park Site Plan? Ken and Dewey answered that it would be a judgment call $\frac{3}{4}$ people who sign petitions aren't necessarily actively involved in the process. Michael Shiosaki, Pro Parks Manager, said that receiving petitions is more an exception than a rule. Kathleen believes that people who are actively engaged in a project are those who attend meetings, and send letters, e-mails, or give oral testimony on the projects. She suggested that the policy outline what gives the most weight in the process.

Sarah asked about the statement made earlier in the evening that translators were not hired for the Jefferson Park public meetings, and suggested that volunteers from the Refugee Women's Alliance may be a good resource. Kathleen said a state certification process is required for translators and Michael said that translating a project's technical terms could be problematic for someone who was not familiar with the project. It can also be difficult to determine who the audience will be for a particular meeting and, consequently, which language translators should be hired to attend.

Sarah asked if citizens are receiving adequate notice of the public hearings in order to attend or give testimony. Dewey answered that there are different mediums of testimony to the Park Board, and all carry the same weight. It is not necessary for a citizen to attend a public hearing in order to testify. Oral and written testimony carries the same weight

and people can e-mail/U.S. mail/hand deliver written testimony to the Board if they cannot, or prefer not to, attend a public meeting or Park Board meeting.

Park Board Business

Park Board members completed signatures on a letter of support to Mayor Greg Nickels in his efforts to lid all water reservoirs in Seattle parks. Kate wanted language added that the Board would like to be involved in this effort. Ken said additional Parks Department landscapers will be hired to assist with the work.

Kate asked about the current reorganization of the Park Department. The previous organization included a North, Central, South, and Citywide Division Directors. The new organization is changing from this district concept to a citywide, related services system. The reorganization includes Chris Williams as the new Operations Director, Herbye White as the new Recreation Support Programs Director, Fritz Hedges as the Policy Planning Director, Erin Devoto as Project Management Director, and Eric Friedli as Sand Point Director. Directors and their managers will now be grouped in the same location, with most located at 100 Dexter. Margaret Anthony, North Division Director, is retiring. Ken will continue giving the Board updates on the reorganization and will arrange for the new org chart to be e-mailed to the Board.

Ken said the upcoming agendas are very full, with many items coming before the Board for a public hearing and a discussion/recommendation. Sarah reminded members that she will be absent from the August 8 meeting.

Board members were reminded that the July 25 meeting is scheduled at South Lake Union Armory. The location was changed to accommodate an expected large turnout for the Sand Point/Magnuson Park Wetlands EIS briefing/public hearing. Board members were concerned with the acoustics in the Armory and asked if the meeting could be held at another location. Ken answered that the Department's public notification policy is for press releases to be sent out early enough for inclusion in both the daily and weekly papers. Dewey Potter had already sent out the press releases reflecting the South Lake Union meeting location. Board members suggested that other sites, such as public schools, be considered for future Board meetings not held at 100 Dexter Ave N.

New Business/Old Business:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair