

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 13, 2003**

**Present:**

Bruce Bentley  
James Fearn  
O. Yale Lewis  
Sarah Neilson  
Kate Pflaumer  
Kathleen Warren

**Excused:** Susan Golub

**Staff:**

Ken Bounds, Parks Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**Kathleen moved and Sarah seconded that the minutes from January 23, February 13, and February 24; the March 27 agenda; the acknowledgement of correspondence; and the revocable use permit for Kobe Terrace Park/Danny Woo Garden be approved.**

Sarah asked if correspondence to the Board regarding the naming of Sandpoint/Magnuson Park has received a response. Ken said this was referred to the Parks Department Naming Committee.

Sarah asked what, if anything, the Park Board should do regarding Initiative 80 (I-80). On January 23, Parks Department and Seattle Public Utilities staff briefed the Board on the Mayor's Alternative to I-80; on February 13, Initiative 80 proponents briefed the Board on I-80. Ken said that City Council has placed I-80 on a fall ballot. The Mayor's Alternative will not be on the ballot. Councilmembers Conlin and Wills have prepared an alternative, which currently has the support of two Councilmembers.

When an initiative is officially on a ballot, City staff cannot take a position; consequently, there is no need for the Park Board to make a recommendation to Ken.

**The motion for approval was voted on and unanimously approved.**

**Superintendent's Report:**

Superintendent Ken Bounds reported on the following:

***Northwest Flower and Garden Show:*** The Parks Department exhibit won a Gold Award for garden creation. Created in partnership with the Arboretum Foundation, the exhibit was a beautiful Olmsted-inspired garden, located on the bridge over Pine St to the Convention and Trade Center.

***Olmsted Centennial:*** On March 20, we will celebrate the opening of the entry garden at Volunteer Park, which will replicate the original Olmsted Plan. The Olmsted Centennial celebration continues to raise local and regional attention to the Olmsted Legacy in Seattle, including awareness of our extensive Olmsted system of parks, and how the Pro Parks Levy, the Seattle Parks Foundation, and other current efforts are extending the Olmsted plan into the 21st century. The first two Olmsted walking tours attracted nearly 300 participants. Planning is now gearing up for the national conference here this spring. Mayor Nickels has been invited to provide welcoming remarks on May 1. Ken also gave an interview on radio station KUOW on the Olmsted celebration.

***Amy Yee Tennis Center Named one of Seattle's Best:*** The Amy Yee Tennis Center was listed in Seattle Magazine's Best of 2002 as the best place to play tennis on a cold and rainy day, and the center got high marks for user-friendly programs.

***Sandpoint EIS Appeal:*** Parks Department received the results of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Appeal for the Drainage, Wetlands and Sports Fields Project. It was a split decision - the Department EIS was upheld on all points, except one. The Hearing Examiner decision requires Parks to do a Supplemental EIS (SEIS) addressing the impacts of sports field noise on habitat. Parks will be working with its consultants to complete this analysis and will bring it before the Park Board in early May for a discussion/recommendation.

***Senior Adult Walking Program:*** Six Parks and Recreation community centers will participate in a pilot project this summer called "Sound Steps - Walking for Wellness." Developed by Parks staff, Healthy Aging Partnership, and several other community partners, this program targets senior adults who have participated very little or not at all in organized walking programs or physical fitness activities. Each community center will have one or two trained leaders who will conduct one organized walk per week.

***Japanese Garden Opens:*** The Garden opened for the season on March 1. The opening was commemorated with a Shinto blessing sponsored by the Japanese Garden Advisory Council, and included music and chanting. Fifty new volunteers are being trained to guide tours in the Japanese Garden this season. These new guides will be added to the approximately 40 existing guides, doubling our resources for guided tours.

***Gas Works:*** The dog off-leash supporters have posted laminated signs, have an article in the P-I, and notice on a web site encouraging supporters of a dog off-leash area at Gas Works to be at the community meeting March 12 at Hamilton Middle School to pressure Parks to have a dog off-leash area at Gas Works. There have been 50 people in attendance at each of the past two public meetings on the project. There is no funding in

the project as part of the Pro Parks Levy, or as it is now designed, to fund a dog off-leash area.

***Deputy State Fire Marshall Requests Action:*** During a recent DSHS inspection at several community centers, Deputy State Fire Marshall ordered all doorstops to be removed from doors leading to the hallway. This may possibly be in response to recent nightclub tragedies in Chicago and Rhode Island. The only type of doorstop allowed is magnetic stops that are built into the alarm system. According to Parks staff, it will cost approximately \$15,000 to retrofit a community center. Community center staff keep doors open to visually monitor activities in multiple rooms, and to monitor noise levels. We are pursuing interim options with the Fire Marshall but strict enforcement could require an immediate need to retrofit 23 community centers (estimated cost \$400,000) or discontinue programs.

***Off-leash Area at Regrade Park:*** This park is located downtown at Third and Bell. We have interviewed with the Seattle Times, KING-5, and the Post-Intelligencer on this subject. The Times ran a story on February 18 and KING-5 aired its piece on February 19. We are undertaking a public process: we will hold a public meeting in March and schedule a Park Board hearing for April.

***New Park Board Member Nominated:*** Terry Holme has been nominated by Mayor Nickels as a new Park Board member and will most likely replace Kathleen Warren. Terry was in the audience and was introduced. A confirmation hearing with City Council is being scheduled.

### **Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:**

Bruce explained that the general public comment portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had or are not scheduled for a public hearing. Testimony is limited to three minutes per speaker. No one signed up to give testimony.

### **Northgate Library/Community Center/Park Discussion/Recommendation:**

Parks' staff members Erin Devoto, Director of Planning and Development, Tim Motzer, Senior Project Coordinator, and Maureen O'Neill, Northeast Sector Manager, came before the Board to give a briefing on the progress of the site plan for the Northgate Library/Community Center/Park.

(The Board heard a preliminary site plan briefing at its February 13 meeting. The first-ever joint Park Board of Commissioners/Board of Library Trustees meeting was held on February 24 at Olympic View Elementary School in the Northgate area to view the site plan options and hear comments from the community. Minutes from these meetings are posted on the Park Board web page at <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard>)

### ***Verbal Briefing***

Erin, Tim, and Maureen came before the Park Board tonight to ask for its

recommendation on a site plan. Site plan architects explored a number of options and presented two designs at the February 24 meeting. These two designs were further enhanced, using suggestions from the audience. New renditions were displayed at tonight's meeting for the Park Board's review.

Major differences between the two plans include:

- Plan A has surface parking, Plan B has underground parking and would provide more open space than Plan A
- There is adequate funding in the project's budget for Plan A; Plan B would require an additional \$1.6 million. Currently, there is no funding source for this additional cost.

Erin gave many details and comparisons of the two plans. She said that site plan architects could continue drawing/altering plans; however, this work costs money and uses funds designated for this new facility. Parks Department staff recommends Plan A, with the agreement that Parks staff will continue working with surface area alternatives. Parks staff are not completely happy with this plan; however, there are constraints from land size, budget, land slope, and the intended uses by the Library and Parks Department facilities.

### *Questions & Answers*

The Board asked a number of questions about the two designs and gave several more suggestions, especially related to parking options.

James moved that Parks proceed with Plan A, continue exploring possibilities, and bring the plan back before the Park Board at a later date. Kathleen made a friendly amendment that the Board endorse Plan A, with a focus on maximizing open space. The motion was seconded, voted on, and approved unanimously.

Four consultants were reviewed for this project: ARC Architects (who did the site plan work), Hewitt Architects, Miller Hall, and Zimmer. Parks Department has recommended Miller Hall Architects to do the design for the buildings and the firm's landscape architects to design the grounds.

Sarah asked if the next steps are public involvement. Erin answered not yet. This is the first time the Library and Parks Department have worked together on a project. The public involvement policy for each is very different and is still being worked out.

The Board thanked Erin, Tim, and Maureen for the presentation.

### **Hitts Hill Park Briefing:**

Parks Department Project Manager Cathy Tuttle, Landscape Architect Karen Galt, and Southeast Open Space Manager Cheryl Frazer came before the Board to give a briefing on Hitt's Hill Open Space Reclamation conceptual design and draft Vegetative

Management Plan. A copy of the written briefing which was presented to the Board is included in these minutes and follows:

### ***Written Briefing***

#### *Action Requested*

At the meeting on March 13, there will be a briefing on the Hitt's Hill Open Space Reclamation conceptual design and draft Vegetative Management Plan. Planning and Development is requesting review and comment on the conceptual design. This memo summarizes the improvements to be made on the property funded by the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund.

#### *Project intent*

The intent of the project is to create a vegetation management plan to guide site improvements, and create entries and trails to make the recently acquired property safe and accessible to all.

#### *Project Background*

Hitt's Hill is a 3.2-acre heavily wooded site, atop a steep hill on the southwest end of Columbia City, located between Renton and Rainier Ave S at the northwest corner of S Brandon St and 39th Ave S. Thomas Gabriel Hitt founded the Hitt Brothers Firework Company on the hill in about 1905. From the top of the hill, it is possible to view Lake Washington, downtown Seattle, and the Rainier Valley. The family-run fireworks company is credited with creating pyrotechnics for the movie "Gone With the Wind," as well as providing fireworks for shows at Green Lake and Ivar's Fourth of July celebrations through the 1970s.

In 1999, neighbors around the Hitt's Hill open space began meeting to discuss how to preserve the open space as a natural area and turn it into a safe neighborhood park. The Friends of Hitt's Hill lobbied the City and the open space was purchased by the Seattle Parks Department in September 2001. The areas that contained materials left over from the old Hitt's Fireworks factory site were remediated in 2001-2002, shortly after the property was acquired by the Parks Department. In 2002, the Friends of Hitt's Hill applied for and received \$100,000 from the Opportunity Fund to develop the open space. Community members who nominated Hitt's Hill for the Opportunity Fund have made and expect to make an ongoing commitment to the restoration of the site

When acquired in 2001 by Parks, the site had grown into a difficult-to-access, densely vegetated area with early successional trees and a good dose of invasive plant species. Hitt's Hill is located in a residential neighborhood, a few blocks from a historic urban center. It serves important functions as valuable breathing space for neighborhood residents, wildlife habitat for urban and migrating wildlife, and protection of sensitive areas. Hitt's Hill is a place of unexpected urban respite, a place to breathe fresh air and enjoy a piece of nature. Hitt's Hill is intended to provide passive recreation activities such as walking, enjoying near and distant views, and observing plants and urban wildlife, especially birds. The overall site will be developed to allow access for these kinds of

activities. The open and airy canopy of the mostly deciduous forest is unusual for the region, and is highly valued by park users who enjoy the seasonal contrast it brings.

### *Conceptual Design*

Plans were developed by Parks staff landscape architect Karen Galt, based on community input, Parks review, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) ideas. The intent of the designed improvements is to facilitate access to passive recreation in the natural area and further, to provide infrastructure and initial steps toward vegetative restoration. The following plan elements are highlighted for review:

### *Trails*

Trails were placed using strategies developed in conjunction with Seattle Police Department's CPTED goals and Parks' design standards that require new parks to be universally accessible. The park entrance on 37th Ave S will access the park with stairs. The park entrance on S Brandon St will provide an accessible parking and a path to the park's interior.

### *Vegetation Management Plan*

The purpose of the Vegetation Management Plan is to provide a document that guides future vegetative management decisions. The plan seeks to identify, integrate, prioritize, and provide projects that will direct the long-term vegetation composition, and contribute to the return and rejuvenation of this site to a healthy ecology.

### *Boundaries*

Boundaries are needed to define parks property line but allow natural community surveillance. The property owners surrounding Hitt's Hill have consistently requested some type of fencing between most of the park boundaries and private yards. In situations where a park borders private property, Parks has generally relied on individuals to privately develop their own barriers. This park is unusual in that some of its borders are at-grade with private property. Encroachment has also occurred in several locations. Parks is considering a variety of solutions including vegetative buffers and four-foot black chain link fencing, property boundary markers, etc.

### *Public Process*

The goal of the first public meeting in November 2002 was to inform the community about planned park improvements and come to a community consensus on desired park activities and vegetative character. Because maintaining a "natural" area was clearly an important community goal in the development of this site, Parks staff felt it was important for the community to discuss their landscape preferences and what they would characterize as "natural." A strong desire for open winter territorial views was expressed and the general community consensus was to support a deciduous forest, with limited coniferous plantings. Parks supports this goal and has an overall goal of making the Hitt's Hill open space natural, safe, and accessible.

A final community meeting in March 2003 will provide the opportunity for community comment on the park design and the draft Vegetative Management Report, as well as discuss possible names for this new park.

Parks also attended additional meetings with the Friends of Hitt's Hill to discuss ideas for the future park's use and development. The ideas that came out of these meetings include: passive recreation, walking, enjoying views, habitat preservation, observing nature, learning about plants, plant stewardship, sitting, and safe access into and through the site. Other ideas include acknowledging the park's history, and providing opportunities for school children, youth groups, and stewardship groups to explore the natural world.

#### *Project Schedule*

Construction documents will be completed by April 2003. The project will be built in late summer 2003.

#### *Project Budget*

The Pro Parks Opportunity Fund granted \$100,000. An additional \$25,000 from King County Natural Resource Stewardship will provide funds for reforestation. The Friends of Hitt's Hill has requested \$50,000 from the Neighborhood Matching Fund in 2003.

#### *Additional Information*

Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks Planner, 684-7033; or [cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov](mailto:cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov)

#### *Verbal Briefing*

Cathy said this is a new park, currently referred to as "Hitt's Hill Park." There is a naming process underway.

Ken said this is the first time in a long time that the Department is acquiring land and planning for new parks. Hitt's is one of the first. At a future meeting, Parks will be asking for formal approval from the Board for these developing parks.

The community is very interested in this park's development and is doing fundraising. Current photos of the location were displayed, as well as a site map of the proposed park. The topography of the site was pointed out, as well as the vegetation management plan. Located in Columbia City, it is the site of the highest elevation in that area. It consists of two acres, with vegetation 90% big leaf maple and some conifers. Neighbors want to preserve it as a natural, passive area and have made no requests for a playground or off-leash area. Viewpoints were pointed out on the site map. Parks staff have worked with local Crime Prevention Officers regarding possible safety issues.

#### *Questions & Answers*

Kathleen asked what is the elevation gain and Karen answered 80 feet. Kathleen asked if any of the big leaf maples would be removed. Karen answered that some sick ones would be removed in the short term and a few others would be removed in the long term.

Sarah asked how many people currently use the park. Cathy answered that the property hasn't been a park, just green space. The community is working hard to remove blackberries and other invasive vegetation. 40 people attended the community meeting. Sarah asked if there is concern that there will be illegal activity in the future park. Karen said high school kids currently use the area; however, the Community Policing Officer did not observe many signs of illegal activity.

The Board asked if there are any objections to the park. Cathy said some neighbors are concerned that there be buffers between the park and their property. Ken asked if any of the neighbors have fences on their property boundary and has fencing for the park been investigated. Karen said there is a mixture of fence types on various properties; Parks staff are looking at boundaries of thick vegetative material and she pointed out possible sites for this.

James asked about costs. Cathy and Karen said the work would require \$100,000, which includes installing pathways and paving. Bruce asked if community labor would be involved. Karen said yes, the community has already been volunteering labor and will help with the plantings.

The Board thanked Cathy and Karen for the presentation.

### **Bergen Place Park Briefing:**

Parks Department Project Manager Cathy Tuttle came before the Board to give a briefing on the preferred design alternative for Bergen Place Park in Ballard. A copy of the written briefing which was presented to the Board is included in these minutes and follows:

#### ***Written Briefing***

##### *Action Requested*

Planning and Development is requesting review and comment on the preferred design alternative for Bergen Place Park to be discussed by the Board of Park Commissioners on March 13.

##### *Project intent*

The intent of the project is to improve the Bergen Place Park. The park was identified in the Crown Hill/Ballard Neighborhood Plan as an area to "establish a place of civic pride." The Ballard Neighborhood planning group accepted the City's designation as a Hub Urban Village and emphasized the importance of Bergen Place Park as a link between Historic Ballard and the Ballard shopping district. Bergen Place Park is located in the triangle formed by the intersection of Leary Ave NW, NW Market St, and 22nd Ave NW, and is distinguished by the large blue awning covering the eastern edge of the park.

##### *Project Background*

Bergen Place Park was developed utilizing Forward Thrust funds and dedicated by King Olaf of Norway in 1975. The Crown Hill/Ballard Neighborhood Planning Association



specifically proposed the redesign of Bergen Place Park in the 1998 Neighborhood Plan. The neighborhood plan called Bergen Place Park "underutilized, uninviting, and out of character in the thriving shopping Ballard shopping district. Its central location is ideal for redevelopment and will bring a new, visually appealing image and pedestrian amenity to downtown Ballard."

The project is the result of a community-driven effort to improve Bergen Place Park. Pro Parks provided \$276,000 in funding for improvements.

### *Design*

The urban design firm of Hewitt Architects was selected in a competitive process to guide the redevelopment of Bergen Place Park. The consultants, Parks staff, Seattle Police Crime Prevention staff, and the community met several times to discuss what elements of the park were important to keep and how to enliven this park in the heart of the Ballard business district.

While it is centrally located, Bergen Place Park is rarely used by the community except during several major Ballard festivals. The blue awning provides shelter during the day for transient users. In numerous attempts to improve the park over the past 25 years, the community has added a plethora of built elements including planter boxes, flags, a mural, and a kiosk. Still, the park presents an unwelcoming face to Ballard. The park's triangular shape presented another design challenge.

The urban context of Bergen Place Park is significant. It is the nexus between Historic Ballard and the Ballard business district on Market St. More than 400 units of multifamily housing are planned within two blocks of Bergen Place Park and another 200 units currently exist. Bergen Place Park is also half a block from another small Park property, Marvin's Garden, which is another magnet of transient users. A major new Pro Parks funded park is currently being planned on the site of the existing Safeway at NW 57th St and 22nd Ave NW, just two blocks north of Bergen Place Park. Parks staff agreed that a successful design for Bergen Place Park would relate to the presence of these other parks in the area - the design should open visual connection to Marvin's Garden and establish some link to Ballard Civic Center Park through the choice of materials and park orientation. A successful design would also activate space with visual connection to adjacent residential and commercial uses.

The design alternatives were positively reviewed by the Design Commission and the Ballard Landmarks Board as well as by Parks staff. The Design Commission reviewed the plans a second time and gave the schematic alternative unanimous praise and approval.

### *Public Process*

At two meetings in 2002, the community, Parks staff and designers worked together to describe and develop park elements and characteristics that make Bergen Place Park significant to Ballard. About 40 community members attended each of these meetings.

An additional workshop will be held in March 2003 to review the preferred alternative and public art project.

Parks staff met several times with the Friends of Bergen Place Park to discuss the park design and fundraising plans for future development.

#### *Project Schedule*

Construction documents will be completed June 2003 and improvements done by the end of 2003.

#### *Project Budget*

Pro Parks funded this project for \$276,000 for planning, design, and construction. The Friends of Bergen Place Park have requested \$100,000 from the Neighborhood Matching Fund in 2003.

#### *Artwork*

The Pro Parks Art Plan called for an artist to be selected from the new Emerging Artist's Roster for Bergen Place Park. Artist Jenn Lee Dixon was selected and approximately \$25,000 is allocated for art.

#### *Additional Information*

Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks Planner, 684-7033; or [cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov](mailto:cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov)

#### ***Verbal Briefing***

This briefing is for the Park Board's information only; Parks Department is not requesting a recommendation from the Board.

Cathy displayed a model of the proposed re-design of Bergen Place. The current Bergen Place Park in Ballard was built in 1975. Cathy pointed out the location of the park in relation to major streets and the new skating rink park being built a few blocks away. 450 new townhouses and apartments are being built nearby.

A primary part of the park is a blue awning, designed to represent the sail and sail flags on a ship. Four-five times yearly community celebrations make use of the park; however, it is not very vibrant. Due to the shelter of the awning, some illegal activities take place in the park.

The community doesn't like the current design, and \$276,000 in Pro Parks funds is designated for the re-design. Hewitt Architects, who designed Harbor Steppes in downtown Seattle, have been hired. Three community meetings have been held to determine the re-design. The Scandinavian mural will remain, as it is very important to the community. A portion of the poles that currently hold the awning will be used in the new design. 1% for Arts will use the poles as "witness trees."

Some maples will be removed to open the park and give it a lighter, more airy feel. The two existing columnar trees and other deciduous trees will remain. A "cut-through" is planned, which doesn't currently exist.

***Questions & Answers***

Ken asked if the funds are sufficient for the proposed work. Cathy said, yes for most of the project. The Friends of Bergen Place are applying for Neighborhood Matching Funds to assist with the project. Ken asked if the kiosk would remain and Cathy answered yes.

Sarah asked where the people who currently use the park for illegal activities would go. Cathy said this is a legitimate concern that Parks Department Operations staff will work on. Ken said that increased use at the park would help deter illegal activities.

The Board thanked Cathy for the presentation.

**Park Board Business:**

Sarah, Park Board representative to the Arboretum and Botanic Garden Committee (ABGC), gave information on two subjects that may come before the Board in the future:

- A proposed commemorative site at the Japanese Garden to honor the designers of the Garden, with an installation timeline of August 2004. The ABGC likes the idea, in spirit, although they believe it would be a large project
- The Greater Madison Valley Community Council is applying for Neighborhood Matching Funds to renovate the shelter house at Washington Park for use as a community-meeting site

A brief discussion followed.

Sarah asked about the status of the lighthouse in Discovery Park. Ken said Parks Department has applied with Historic Seattle to own and operate the lighthouse.

**New Business/Old Business:**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Bentley, Chair