



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2009
Meeting Held at 100 Dexter Avenue North

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams, Vice-chair
John Barber
Terry Holme
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels, Chair
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Donna Kostka

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Tim Gallagher, Superintendent
Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Commissioner Ranade moved approval of the agenda, the December 11 minutes as presented, and the record of correspondence. Commissioner Barber seconded. The vote was taken and motion carried.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Gallagher reported on several park items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Winter Storms Update: Superintendent Gallagher reported minor damage in Seattle's parks, due to the recent snow and wind/rain storms, with 20 or so trees falling. About one-third of the Department's staff made it to work during the worst snow days. Some department vehicles were difficult to access and staff used their own

vehicles to get to other job sites. The community centers closed at 4:00 pm on the heaviest snow/ice days, unless people were sledding nearby and using the community center's restrooms. In those instances, the centers remained open. Staff at a couple of the centers stayed even later to handle childcare needs.

Seacrest Dock: King County is proposing that the West Seattle water taxi run year-round (it currently has a summer run schedule.) The County and City are now looking at Seacrest Dock and improvements/alterations it would need to accommodate this year-round use. A meeting is scheduled on January 15 to review the proposal and the Park Board will hold a public hearing in March.

Community Meetings

California Park Update: This small park is located in West Seattle. The Department of Neighborhoods has awarded a community group funds to improve the park; however, the plan has met some resistance in the neighborhood. Karen Keist, landscape architect, has been hired as the design consultant. The Superintendent and Mickey Fearn, Seattle Parks' manager of Community Connections, attended a recent public meeting to discuss the project. The meeting went well until near the end, when six very vocal people spoke out. Mickey Fearn did a good job of helping run the meeting. The Neighborhood Matching Fund staff will continue to work with the community on this project.

Wallingford and Loyal Heights Community Meetings Update: The Superintendent, Mickey Fearn, and Paula Hoff met last night with about 30 members of the Wallingford community. The Superintendent reported that it was a good meeting and well received, with several people voicing their approval that Parks staff came out to the community to meet with them. The Superintendent added that he and staff met with the Loyal Heights community about three months ago to re-build trust with that community group.

Commissioner Adams asked for more information on this community meeting effort. Commissioner Holme [who has been on the Board for six years and recalled the history of projects in these neighborhoods] commented that particular projects had not gone well and the Department is trying to rebuild relations with the community. The Superintendent added that he isn't saying that the community or Parks did anything wrong; his goal is to have better relations with the communities. Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams about the role of Mr. Fearn at these meetings, the Superintendent responded that he is the Department's Community Connections Director and is very skilled at public outreach.

Golf Management Plan: Superintendent Gallagher reported that staff are working to develop new Master Plan options for Jefferson, Jackson and West Seattle Golf courses, and are looking at the clubhouses, parking lots, etc. Parks staff are also working to develop walking trails around each of the courses. Initial estimates are that this will be a \$30 million project, which will be paid for with golf revenues.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels on why the Department wants to add trails around the golf courses, the Superintendent answered that it is a relatively small expenditure. Parks already owns the land and uses it for one purpose (golfing); adding the walking trails allows the land to be used for a second purpose. A brief discussion followed on protecting trail walkers from being hit by golf balls.

Magnuson Artists: Parks staff continue working with the artists who currently rent space at Magnuson Park's Building 11, to assist them to find other suitable space for their studios. Viewland Elementary School, currently vacant and located in the Broadview area of North Seattle, is still a promising site. Parks would upgrade the boiler and repair areas of vandalism. The repairs at the school would be much less costly than repairing Building 11.

Commissioner Barber asked Superintendent Gallagher about his vision for the future of Magnuson Park. He believes that the people who volunteered at this park in the early 1970's (when the Navy turned over the property to the City of Seattle) are now discouraged that the park does not look like a 21st century park.

Superintendent Gallagher responded that he believes things are improving at Magnuson Park and listed the following positive achievements:

- the new levy has earmarked \$.5 million for waterfront improvements;
- the athletic fields/wetland project is nearly complete;
- City Light is partnering with Seattle Parks to re-open the restrooms that have been closed for several years as "green" restrooms;
- Cascade Bicycle and Civic Light Opera have successful operations at the park;
- the Mountaineers Club has a fantastic new facility;
- the Department has funding to demolish Building 18; and
- work is being done on circulation, landscape, and parking aspects in particular sections of the park.

He and other Parks staff recently met with approximately 100 people at Magnuson Park and reviewed the current projects and asked what else the community would like to see/have at Magnuson. On February 3, the Superintendent will take some of his best staff to meet again with the community and participants will be asked to help select future projects by consensus. The Superintendent believes a great deal of progress is being made at this park and a lot more will happen over the next five years. Parks staff will brief the Board with the results of the February 3 meeting.

Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center: The Cultural Arts Center's advisory group made a presentation to the Superintendent this week, with several recommendations on the operations of the Center. The Superintendent will send the Park Board a copy of his response, once it is finalized.

Alternative Work Schedules Planned for Additional Parks Staff: The Department will add more crews to the alternative work schedule (4/10, staggered hours, etc.) as part of an April-October pilot. This will give the Department seven-day coverage during the summer months when parks are most heavily used.

Commissioner Holme thinks this is a great idea and asked if there are any downsides. The Superintendent answered that the unions are generally supportive and a survey of those already working an alternative work schedule shows that 90% of those are happy with the change in hours.

Federal Economic Stimulus: In anticipation of a possible federal economic stimulus package, Seattle Parks has been asked to recommend to the Mayor any projects that would be ready to begin quickly and that already have some money flow behind them. These include: \$30-40 million of projects included in the new parks levy; the golf course master plan that will be funded from golf revenues; possibly the Green Seattle Partnerships; and some buildings at Magnuson Park.

Seattle Park Foundation Pilot: The Foundation is launching a six-month pilot with park trees being "sold", similar to the "have a star named after you" program. For \$150, a park tree would be named after an individual who would get a framed photo of the tree, including its species, height, and age. At least two trees have already been sold.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to two minutes each and will be timed. The Board’s usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner’s business. One person testified.

Gary Gaffner: He believes that Seattle Park Foundation’s tree program is a good idea. He is also pleased with the formation of the Department’s new Natural Resources Unit. He noted that staff morale of the Discovery Park Naturalists dropped after an earlier reorganization and then increased greatly with the formation of this new unit.

Discussion/Recommendation: Park Naming Policy

After discussion of the Park Naming Policy at the Board’s December 11 meeting, Paula Hoff, Seattle Parks’ Strategic Planner, agreed to prepare a revised Policy based on that discussion and send it to the Board prior to the January 8 meeting. Tonight the Board plans to discuss the Board-proposed changes to the Naming Policy and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent. The revised policy follows:

Revised Policy

Department Policy & Procedure

Subject:		Number 060-P 1.4.1
Parks and Recreation Naming Committee		Effective January 21, 2003
		Supersedes October 1, 1985
Approved:	Department: Parks & Recreation	Page 4 of 19

1.0 **PREAMBLE:**

Seattle Parks and Recreation (“Parks”) has had a naming policy since 1969 to guide the naming of parks and recreation properties and facilities. This update re-emphasizes the criteria to be used in considering parks and recreation facility names and the permanence of a name once it is conferred.

2.0 **ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:**

- 2.1 Seattle Parks and Recreation
- 2.2 Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
- 2.3 Seattle City Council committee that considers parks and recreation issues

3.0 **REFERENCES:**

- 3.1 Seattle Municipal Code 18.08.010 and 18.08.020, Park Naming Procedures.

- 3.2 Seattle Parks and Recreation Naming Committee Policy adopted December 4, 1969, and amended February 4, 1971, May 16, 1974, October 30, 1974, June 6, 1985, and January 21, 2003.
- 3.3 Seattle Parks and Recreation Corporate Sponsorship Policy, #060-P 2.13.1 and P 1.4.2
- 3.4 Seattle Parks and Recreation Gift Acceptance and Donor Recognition Policy, #060-P 1.4.1

4.0 POLICY:

- 4.1 ~~Parks may only name newly acquired, newly developed, or unnamed parks and recreation facilities.~~ It is the policy of Seattle Parks and Recreation to name newly acquired or developed or as-yet unnamed parks and recreation facilities, after following the procedures outlined here. It is the policy of Seattle Parks and Recreation to name newly acquired or developed or as-yet unnamed parks and recreation facilities, after following the procedures outlined here.
- 4.2 Parks may name significant portions of an otherwise named park, such as a fountain, playfield, pavilion, skate area, or playground.
- 4.3 When naming any park or portion of a park, Parks will comply with the procedures set forth herein.

5.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 5.1 Seattle Parks and Recreation Naming Committee – created by Ordinance 99911, consists of the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, the Chair of the Board of Park Commissioners, and the Chair of the city Council committee that considers parks and recreation issues, or their designated representatives.
- 5.2 Board of Park Commissioners – a citizen board created by the city Charter to advise the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, the Mayor, City Council and other city departments with respect to park and recreation matters.
- 5.3 Parks and Recreation Facilities – all properties and facilities in the park and recreation system of the City under ownership, management and/or control of Seattle Parks and Recreation.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY:

- 6.1 The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, with the advice of the Board of Park Commissioners, is authorized to designate the names of parks and recreation facilities from names submitted for consideration to the Seattle Parks and Recreation Naming Committee, of which he, or his designee, is a member.
- 6.2 The Seattle Parks and Recreation Naming Committee is authorized to establish criteria and procedures to be followed in selecting names to be submitted to the Superintendent.

7.0 PROCEDURES:

- 7.1 The Seattle Parks and Recreation Naming Committee will meet as necessary and may elect its own Chair. The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation will provide staff support.
- 7.2 The Naming Committee will use the media, community groups, notification to those who have participated in community meetings, and appropriate signage to solicit suggestions for names from organizations and individuals. The Committee will acknowledge and record for consideration all suggestions, solicited or not.
- 7.3 After considering the names and applying the criteria set forth in 7.5 below, the Committee will recommend names to the Superintendent, and provide the historical or other supportive information as appropriate to justify the recommendations.
- 7.4 The Superintendent, with the advice of the Board of Park Commissioners, has final authority to designate names for parks and recreation facilities. Upon designating a name for a park or recreation facility, the Superintendent will, within ten days, notify the Mayor and the Chair of the city Council committee dealing with parks and recreation matters, and will file the name designation with the office of the City Clerk, at which time the name will become official.

~~Parks must follow a public involvement process consistent with "Parks Public Involvement Policy" for Parks Planning Processes and the Proposals to Acquire Property, Initiate Funded Capital Projects, or Make Changes to a Park or Facility Policy" & Procedure No. _____, when naming a park or portion of a park. Parks will strive to solicit community input at the reasonably earliest stages in the decision making process with respect to naming parks.~~

7.5 CRITERIA:

- 7.5.1. To avoid duplication, confusing similarity, or inappropriateness, the Committee, in considering name suggestions, will review existing park and facility names in the park system.
- 7.5.2. In naming a park or facility, the Committee will consider geographical location, historical or cultural significance, distinctive natural or geological features, and the wishes of the community in which it is located.
- 7.5.3. In naming community centers and other facilities, the committee will give considerable weight to the names that reflect the geographic location that gives identity to the community.
- 7.5.4. Parks and recreation facilities may be named for a person subject to the following conditions: the person must have been be .deceased for a minimum of *three* years, and the person must have made a significant positive contribution to parks, recreation, or culture in the community without which the park/facility may not exist, or in which the individual's contributions enhanced a program or facility in an extraordinary way. ~~where the facility is located.~~ The City will bear the cost of the

plaque or monument indicating the name of the individual for whom the facility is named.

- 7.5.5. The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation may accept or reject the Naming Committee's recommendation.
- 7.5.6. ~~As a general rule~~Except pursuant to Section 4.2 above, As a general rule, portions of a park or recreation facility will not have a name other than that of the entire facility. The Committee may consider exceptions in cases where, as a revenue or fundraising opportunity, a nomination is submitted to name a room within a community center after a corporate sponsor or in cases where an area within a park is distinctive enough, in the view of the Committee, to merit its own name.
- 7.5.7. Because temporary "working" designations tend to be retained, the Superintendent will carry out the naming process for a new park facility as early as possible after its acquisition or development. Facilities will bear number designations until the naming process results in adoption of a name.
- ~~7.5.8. A name, once bestowed, is permanent. Parks will avoid both the practice and appearance of allowing private interests to purchase naming rights.~~

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Ms. Hoff gave a brief review of the most recent changes and noted that language was added to 7.2 to strengthen the public involvement reference and Parks staff added back the language, at the Board's recommendation, that a person must be deceased for three years before a park can be named after them. Language was also added to 7.5.4 to strengthen the language, and a correction was made to 6.1, per Commissioner Holme's recommendation.

Commissioner Ranade asked for clarification on 7.2's reference to community groups. Ms. Hoff responded that each project manager maintains a contact list of everyone who voiced interest in or were involved in the park. Commissioner Ranade requested more language be added to better explain this reference and Commissioner Barber agreed.

Commissioner Holme requested that "site specific" language be added to 7.2, which reads that Parks staff "will meet with interested community members at the onset of the park naming." Commissioner Ranade noted that this notification process will not work as well when an existing park is being re-named. Ms. Hoff responded that it is very rare to re-name a park and added that the recently-named Thomas C. Wales Park was not a re-naming effort. Instead, it was first referred to by its unofficial name of Dexter Pit, then officially named Thomas C. Wales Park. She added that community newspapers are very interested in the naming of a neighborhood park and regularly give the naming processes good press.

Commissioner Holme noted that 6.1 and 7.4 both refer to the Board of Park Commissioner's involvement with park naming. Ms. Hoff responded that both these references were in the original language of the Naming Policy and that Commissioner Adams is currently the Board's representative to the Committee. Commissioner Adams referred to correspondence from a Ms. Williams and believes she has the incorrect impression that the Board makes the final decision on park names. Ms. Hoff noted that Ms. Williams has recently contacted City Council, community groups, Parks Superintendent and other staff, and the Park Board to lobby for a park to be named in honor of her grandmother and that this level of lobbying is very rare.

Commissioner Barber remarked that there are other ways to honor people besides naming a park after them, such as memorial benches or planting a tree, and the Seattle Parks Foundation handles these requests. He urged that these alternatives be routinely offered to people who request a park be named after a relative.

Commissioner Ramels summarized that the references to the Board of Park Commissioners will be left in the language and Commissioner Adams agreed, as the Board’s representative to the Naming Committee, to give regular updates to the Board on the work of the committee. Superintendent Gallagher stated that he would bring naming proposals to the Park Board before they go to City Council.

Commissioner Ranade moved to recommend adoption of the proposed Park Naming Policy, with the Board of Park Commissioner’s recommended changes to 6.1, 7.2, and 7.4. Commissioner Holme seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous in support.

Commissioner Holme thanked Ms. Hoff for the last information she sent the Board and stated that it was especially well written and easy to review. Commissioner Ramels added that many people, including some members of the press, mistakenly believe the Park Board makes decisions, when in fact the Board is only advisory to the Superintendent.

The new Naming Policy, reflecting the Board’s January 8 recommendations, follows:

New version sent out for review and agreement 1/13/09

Department Policy & Procedure *Draft Revised Version*

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Briefing: Natural Resources Unit

Melinda Nichols, Manager of Seattle Parks' Natural Resources Unit, briefed the Board on this new unit of Seattle Parks and Recreation. Prior to the meeting Commissioners received a written briefing paper, which was also posted on the Board's web page, and included below.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

- This briefing is primarily for informational purposes and does not require a vote.
- Suggestions for future action are welcome.

Staff Recommendation

- N/A

Project or Policy Description and Background

- What is being proposed?

Natural Resources Unit Structure and Program Overview

- What is the project/policy background?

The reorganization of the Parks and Recreation Department (Parks) to include a Natural Resource Unit (NRU) in the Parks Division marks an important step forward in Parks environmental stewardship and leadership. The creation of NRU addresses the need to more actively engage the public, particularly children, in environmental learning, to measure and analyze environmental performance, and to meet citywide goals related to programs such as Climate Action Now, Restore Our Waters, and the Green Seattle Partnership.

- Where did the project/policy originate (Levy, CIP, policy review)?

In September 2008, as part of the Department's re-organization, Parks staff members from five areas were merged including:

- Education: Environmental Learning Centers;
- Natural Areas: Forestry, Landscaping, Nature Trails, Restoration, Arboretum, Discovery and Carkeek Parks, and Camp Long;
- Specialty Gardens and Urban Landscapes: Japanese Garden, Kubota Garden, Volunteer Park Conservatory, Urban Forestry, and Showcase Landscapes;
- Environmental Stewardship: Utility Management, Environmental Health; and
- Volunteer Programs.

Melinda Nichols was selected to manage the program.

- What is the goal of the project/policy?

NRU strives to create landscapes that incorporate the Strategic Action Plan's environmental goals such as increasing native species, increasing the tree canopy, partnering with other City departments to achieve restoration goals, enhancing education efforts, and measuring utility inputs and carbon outputs, to name a few. Many of these actions are works in progress; however, bringing together NRU will be instrumental in accelerating and improving the quality of these efforts.

Previously, it was a challenge to manage natural resources using a consistent set of department standards or to educate the public on environmental issues with one unified voice. With the creation of the NRU, there will be more cohesion and direction for these multiple groups. Already there is progress underway and the following sections will highlight some upcoming changes in the way Parks will conduct environmental business.

Education

In 2009, Parks Forestry and Environmental Learning Centers will partner with several local non-profit organizations to develop the Green Seattle Partnership Environmental Education Committee. This committee will identify a core curriculum to engage K-12 students in urban forest education highlighting the value of trees and wildlife habitat in urban areas.

The joining of Forestry and Environmental Learning Centers (ELCs) facilitates both groups' ability to borrow from each others strengths. ELCs have the core curriculum elements, while Forestry has relationships with community groups and schools doing restoration work across the city. By joining forces, these groups will have more success providing quality environmental education to children in all neighborhoods.

Specialty Gardens and Urban Landscapes

Japanese and Kubota Gardens, as well as the Volunteer Park Conservatory, contain some of the most significant, beautiful, and culturally rich plantings in the city. These gardens have operated in isolation from one another and now with the Parks Horticulturist overseeing these groups, there will be more opportunity to collaborate, improve operations, and strive for higher standards.

In 2009, Parks will experiment with increasing the proportion of native species urban landscapes. As directed by the Strategic Action Plan, native species will be selected that are appropriate to the function of the park and have some environmental benefits such as low-water needs and/or could serve as native habitat.

Natural Areas

Forestry and Horticulture is also now in the same unit as the Arboretum, Discovery Park, Camp Long, and Carkeek Park. By directly connecting park professionals with the management of these facilities, NRU will be able to restore these lands with the most up-to-date scientific research and expertise, making the best use of limited resources.

Seattle's Jim Ellis Freeway Park was the nation's first freeway landscaping project. Now a 30-year old landscape, NRU groups will work together to renovate this overgrown park. Horticulturalists will create a more Pacific Northwest focus that displays a diversity of healthy plant communities with different ages and sizes. The plantings will strongly emphasize sensitive environmental practices and be an educational model for a long-term low maintenance park in an urban setting.

Environmental Stewardship

The coordination of environmental management practices will facilitate information sharing and visioning that will help set goals for Parks' environmental practices, and documenting positive performance. Examples of this include setting utility consumption reduction goals, identifying best practices for drainage infrastructure for projects, documenting the carbon footprint of our operations, and providing proactive management of environmental risks and hazards found in our parks and buildings.

As guided by the Strategic Action Plan, NRU will help define the components of an ideal green park. NRU staff will help identify the type of park and appropriate criteria for this goal, which will encompass a number of NRU areas such as energy and water consumption, pesticide use, and best environmental practices.

Volunteers

Combining the volunteer coordination with other NRU functions will help streamline communication between work units that previously were housed in different sections of the department. This is particularly true with mayoral priorities such as the Green Seattle Partnership effort, which currently make up approximately 20% of the volunteer hours and is managed by other work areas now within NRU. Across the department, total volunteer hours are expected to approach 300,000 for 2008. At \$15/hr, this provides an annual value to the department of over \$4.5 million.

Staff Development

In addition to the five service-oriented areas, NRU will also help provide staff development to encourage environmental leadership within Parks. NRU has created an innovative environmental action format called

Water, Energy and Biology Workshop (WEB). This program will introduce a new hands-on format to encourage staff to improve their environmental performance. The first workshop is scheduled for 2009 and will focus on departmental fuel, energy, and water reduction; Park Resources staff will learn about the science and all environmental impacts of fuel, energy, and water use and develop specific reduction actions for their work units that will be implemented this year.

Summary

Seattle Parks and Recreation is a visible entity that touches the lives of all Seattle residents. Parks strives to efficiently and holistically manage resources and to model appropriate environmental behaviors as well as engage city residents, particularly diverse populations, at-risk populations, and children in fun and educational environmental activities. By consolidating the environmental expertise and resources in the department there is a high chance that Parks will meet Mayoral environmental goals and raise environmental awareness and foster environmental values among Seattle citizens.

Public Involvement Process

- No public involvement as this was an internal reorganization

Issues

- No public meetings were held
- This was an internal reorganization that did not result in the loss of service, and there were no issues related to the public.

Environmental Sustainability

The primary reason for this change was to improve long-term departmental environmental sustainability in programs. The reorganization will help the department better accomplish tasks in the Strategic Action Plan related to managing Seattle's parks and open spaces for long-term sustainability, providing environmental education and leadership, engaging diverse populations in environmental activities, maintaining parks and recreation's land and facilities using an ethic of conservation and environmental values, and providing staff development opportunities to encourage environmental leadership. There will be increased communication and sharing of resources to help more efficiently conduct environmental business.

Budget

- No direct cost

Schedule

- Projects for the unit will roll out of the Strategic Action Plan schedule and division work plan

Additional Information

- Melinda Nichols, Natural Resources Unit, Manager, 684-4108, Melinda.Nichols@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Nichols introduced additional staff from the Natural Resources Unit: David Broustis, Utility Conservation Manager; Lisa Chen, Park Horticulturist; Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester; and Patti Petesch, Environmental Programming Manager. Ms. Nichols next gave an overview of the written briefing. The purpose of the NRU is to pull together the Department's resources to reach out, coordinate, and educate staff to develop and implement a united approach to its natural resources.

Board Discussion

Responding to a question from Commissioner Ranade on the focus of the NRU, Ms. Nichols referred to Mr. Mead's work with Green Seattle Partnerships, which is working on a 25-year effort to restore Seattle's forests.

She noted that Commissioner Barber was one of the driving forces behind this initiative, and later it became one of the Mayor's Climate Action Now (CAN) initiatives. There is also a federal earmark of \$1 million to help re-forest Seward Park. Commissioner Ramels asked if conservation is the unit's keyword and Ms. Nichols agreed.

Barb DeCaro next addressed the Board. She works as liaison between Parks staff and best land management techniques, including invasive plant removal. The Department has received a grant where the University of Washington and Parks staff will jointly educate the public on invasive plant removal. Both agencies had done this work intermittently before; the grant allows the two to combine their efforts. She also coordinates animal management programs, which are expanding, and she is working to finalize the wildlife sanctuary designation. She also works closely with Parks staff to educate them about these efforts, to help them understand the direction the Department is going towards, and to assist them to clearly articulate that direction to the public.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels regarding classes, Ms. DeCaro answered that the Department is now going to online classes and this is being integrated into the new employee orientation. Fuel-reduction methods are also part of the orientation, including presentations from Water/Energy/Biology (WEB) representatives from different maintenance districts. The WEB team gives training on ways to reduce fuel consumption, and determining the most cost effective routes to get from one work site to another. When staff are engaged in these efforts, the effort is more likely to succeed. That engagement, in turn, helps employees develop stronger skill sets. She added that the Department holds a resource fair every other year. Commissioner Ramels asked if this is an ongoing education effort and Ms. DeCaro agreed.

Commissioner Barber asked if the NRU staff will monitor the new wetlands at Magnuson Park. Superintendent Gallagher answered that the monitoring of the wetlands is required for several years and will be contracted by Parks Planning & Development Division to an outside contractor.

Commissioner Holme referred to page 1 of the briefing and asked why some parks are named specifically in the "Natural Areas" section (i.e., Arboretum, Discovery and Carkeek Parks, and Camp Long). Ms. Nichols gave some additional information on this categorization and the Superintendent added that during the next year NRU staff will continue to identify park names and park specifications. Commissioner Holmes then asked what is meant by a "showcased" landscape and Ms. Nichols and Ms. Wade gave examples of the flower beds in front of the Volunteer Park Conservatory and the entrances to Seward Park and Green Lake Community Center. Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels whether the Japanese Garden is a showcase garden, Ms. Nichols answered that it is a specialty garden. She added that the Volunteer Park Conservatory is a specialty indoor garden.

Ms. Petesch next reviewed the NRU's Environmental Programming work goals, which is to infuse, over the next five years, a broad environmental ethic in kids, families, and lifelong learners. The Department recently hired environmental coordinators and they will teach classes at the community centers on the environment and how best to preserve and restore it, and will work closely with the Associated Recreation Council. They will also work closely with Seattle's public schools to involve them in invasive removal and native plantings. High school kids will be trained and they, in turn, will train younger students. The Department has previously had great success with programs that get high school and middle school students out to forests and national parks.

Commissioner Barber stated that this was an excellent briefing and asked about Ms. Nichols work background and how it fits with the Natural Resources Unit. Ms. Nichols answered that she was a carpenter in 1972 and then became a vocation instructor and then the apprenticeship manager at City Light. One of her primary roles was to help people of color with the apprenticeship program. She came to work at Seattle Parks in 2002 and managed the shops (carpenters, electricians, etc.), and then became the Natural Resources Unit manager. She is also on the board of the Low-Income Housing Institute (<http://www.lihi.org/>.) The Superintendent added that Ms. Nichols was also the interim director of the Parks Division and she has a strong environmental leaning.

Ms. Nichols stated that managing the Natural Resources work of the Department is a huge and important task and she is very pleased with the opportunity. Commissioner Ramels commented that Ms. Nichols background is very impressive.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams on what types of work the NRU doesn't do, Ms. Nichols responded that it doesn't do finance, human resources, the work of the shops (carpentry, painting, HVAC, electrical, plumbing), or grounds maintenance – however, it will influence how grounds maintenance and the shops staff do their work. Commissioner Adams asked how NRU educates other Parks staff on its work. Ms. Nichols answered that they use training, education, working together on projects, and joint trainings with other Divisions. He suggested that the NRU develop a slogan, similar to President Obama's slogan of "change is coming."

Commissioner Ramels stated she wanted to put in a "plug" for darkness, which is also a natural resource. She added that this new and different way of looking at the Department's natural resources is very exciting. Superintendent Gallagher responded that this work is important and he believes it is both environmentally sensitive and environmentally right. It makes sense to give Department staff the message that it has a Natural Resources Unit and to bring those staff together. Ms. Nichols agreed and added that merging staff into the NRU has resulted in a very strong team.

Commissioner Holme recently walked from Colman Park, through Frink Park and the Madrona Woods, and was astonished and inspired to see the extent of the removal of invasive plants, restoration of trails, and new plantings. He encourages citizens to get out to these parks to see the progress, and appreciate what a benefit such improvements are to the parks system's greenbelts. He believes the Natural Resources Unit has already accomplished a great deal. Commissioners thanked Ms. Nichols and her staff for the briefing and the good work.

Briefing: Utility Conservation

David Broustis, Seattle Parks' Utility Conservation Manager, next briefed the Board on the Department's ongoing efforts to reduce utility costs. Prior to tonight's meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, below, that was also posted to the Board's web page.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is an informational briefing about Seattle Parks and Recreation's on-going efforts to reduce energy and water utility costs. The briefing will address how Seattle Parks is making significant progress reducing its energy and water bills and environmental impacts by scrutinizing utility bills, installing efficient equipment, taking low cost/no cost actions, and encouraging staff to conserve resources.

Background

For many years, Seattle Parks has been taking efforts to minimize resource use through actions such as installing efficient lights and reducing fill levels in wading pools. In 2006, Parks began a comprehensive conservation program that is capturing utility savings in a number of ways. The efforts are currently managed under the newly-established Natural Resources Unit (NRU) and have brought staff working on energy, water, and other resource conservation efforts under one roof. Methods and recent examples of achieved savings include:

- **Scrutinizing utility bills** for inaccurate billings and the most advantageous rates
 - Examples:*
 - \$111,800 one-time Seattle City Light credit from identifying long-standing improper billings at Westlake Park

- \$150,900 reduction by not paying wastewater charges on irrigation accounts where wastewater fees were previously assessed.
- **Installing resource saving equipment** with Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and Operations and Maintenance (O&M) dollars
 - Examples:*
 - \$23,882 annual savings from reduced utility bills at Queen Anne Pool, resulting from the installation of pool covers, high efficiency boilers, variable speed motors, and efficient plumbing fixtures (showerheads and toilets)
 - Queen Anne Pool conservation savings*
 - 16% reduction in natural gas use
 - 15% reduction in electricity use
 - 33% reduction in water use
 - High efficiency boiler installation at Rainier Beach Community Center/Pool
 - \$86,000 utility rebate
 - \$36,000 cost to Parks
 - 3 year payback (one year payback w/labor savings included)
- **Low/no cost actions** by staff to reduce consumption and costs
 - Estimated \$14,000 annual natural gas savings at Westbridge facility resulting from HVAC staff adjusting heating equipment hours
 - \$25,336 annual savings at Green Lake Community Center/Evans Pool for a one hour repair of a long-standing hidden water leak
- **Educating staff and the public** about utility costs, and recognizing positive practices
 - Examples:*
 - Senior Gardeners receiving education and one-on-one support to reduce irrigation water use
 - Utility conservation awards given to staff who have taken exceptional actions to contribute to the effort
 - Utility bills provided to custodial staff annually to compare use to past years
 - *Walking Our Talk* quarterly newsletter to share positive environmental practices with the department

Environmental Benefits

The environmental benefits of the program are numerous, including reduced water use and significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions resulting from electricity and natural gas conservation projects.

Quantified environmental benefits include:

- Resource Savings from completed projects
 - 9.3 million gallons/year (water)
 - 645,000 kilowatt hours/year (electricity)
 - 45,000 therms/year (natural gas)
- Carbon Dioxide Reductions
 - 625 metric tons – completed projects
 - 748 metric tons – projects in progress

Issues/Concerns

The success of the utility conservation effort falls on the entire department, not on a small group of individuals or on one work unit. Staff enthusiasm for reducing resource use will need to be sustained and expanded. Staff at all levels of the department has resource-saving ideas. It will be essential to support the interest of such individuals and to continue to reward those who contribute to the efforts. Parks can also become more of a

leader for the community by sharing the success of our efforts with the public and by helping to educate the public about the actions they can take to reduce their own utility use.

Utility conservation efforts are expanding to other areas. This includes scrutinizing the department's transportation fuel use and taking actions to minimizing drainage utility costs, which are increasing at double-digit rates.

Budget

Utility conservation projects are currently funded through CIP dollars (\$250K annual, after rebates) and O&M dollars (\$80K). These funds are proving to be adequate to capture savings at a sustainable rate, and are essential for ensuring the long-term health of the effort. Currently, most projects are coming in at paybacks of five years or less but in the future projects will be considered with financial paybacks of up to ten years. Over the next biennium, conservation projects will include:

- Lighting retrofits
- High efficiency boilers
- Weather-based irrigation controllers
- Mechanical system heat recovery
- High efficiency plumbing fixture installation

Additional Information

For more information, contact David Broustis, Utility Conservation Manager at (206) 733-9704, david.broustis@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing

Mr. Broustis gave a Powerpoint presentation, with page titles shown below, and additional information about each slide:

- Savings being generated from spreadsheet w/167 savings
- Bill Auditing
- Low & No Cost Actions
 - 3 ideas from staff this week save \$10,000
- Project savings
 - CIP
 - Operating and maintenance
- Case Study at Queen Anne Pool – on the way to a model efficiency
- Case Study: Rainier Beach Pool/CC
- Case Study: Evans Pool – found hidden water leak
- Information & Education
- What's Next?
 - CIP projects
 - Model Green parks and buildings

Board Questions and Answers

Commissioner Holme noted that sometimes the most competitively priced equipment is the most expensive over the long run and asked how the Department analyzes initial cost vs. long-term costs. Mr. Broustis answered that he looks at the 20-30 year life cycle of the equipment and then recommends that the Department purchase the most efficient. It can be difficult for government agencies to pay more upfront for equipment, but it can be a better use of the funds, in the long run. He gave an example of Magnuson Park. The City's utility Capital Improvement Project (CIP) fund helped pay for more efficient and costly windows to be installed. These windows will have a 5-10 year payback.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber on reducing building heating costs, Mr. Broustis stated that replacing single pane windows is generally a 15-year payback and not the most cost effective way to reduce heating costs. He looks at the fastest payback options first. Commissioner Barber asked if solar panels are considered as a way to replace overhead lights and Mr. Broustis answered yes and that solar lights are being installed at the Magnuson "green" restrooms.

Commissioner Ramels asked if it was a labor-intensive effort to review all the Department's utility bills and Mr. Broustis answered that he used a program manager that did the comparisons electronically.

Commissioner Adams appreciates that Mr. Broustis included the goals of the Department's 5-year Strategic Action Plan and how this work fits into those goals. Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams on whether staff members readily support the utility conservation efforts, Mr. Broustis answered that he worked in other government agencies before and has found the Parks Department and its staff very responsive to helping save on utility costs. He gave an example of Rod Hammerbeck of the Carpenter Shop, who investigated and installed a much less costly pilot light system for a gas range at one of the community centers. His research was so successful that his findings will become part of the Department's utility conservation policy. Ms. Nichols added that Mr. Broustis is very compelling and has done a good job in educating the shop staff and has formed a strong partnership with them.

Commissioner Ramels asked if all the City's departments have a Utility Manager. Mr. Broustis answered that the City's Fleets and Facilities Department also has a utility manager and that it is wonderful that Parks has the funding for this. Deputy Superintendent Williams added City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and Puget Sound Energy help fund the position. The Superintendent stated that Mr. Broustis has been doing an excellent job in coming up with solutions and empowering others.

Commissioner Ramels thanked Mr. Broustis and stated that his briefing and his work is inspiring!

Old/New Business

Naturists Action Committee: Commissioner Ramels referred to a letter from the Naturists Action Committee asking to meet with the Park Board. Commissioner Ranade requested that, before the Board meets with this group, that Parks staff first define where the Department foresees the clothing optional events going. Commissioners agreed to dedicate time at the annual retreat to discuss how the Board handles requests from groups/individuals who request to meet with the Board outside of the public meetings.

Commissioner Barber urged that Seattle Parks not issue use permits that exclude everyone else from a site/facility.

Olmsted Parks Conference: Commissioner Adams attended the December 12 Seattle/Spokane Olmsted Parks conference at South Lake Union Armory. He found the presentation very interesting and asked that Seattle's Friends of Olmsted Parks be invited to brief the Park Board. Parks staff will follow up with this request. Commissioners Barber and Kostka also attended the event.

Committee Reports:

Associated Recreation Council Board: Commissioner Ramels reported that ARC's childcare revenue is down 1.8% in Fiscal Year 2008 from Fiscal Year 2007; but class enrollments are up 30% in the last quarter of 2008 from previous quarters. However, expectations are that this figure will improve.

Park Foundation Board: Commissioner Ranade is the Board's representative to the Seattle Park Foundation Board, which sent a letter to the Mayor, County Executive, and Governor opposing an elevated replacement for the waterfront Viaduct. He asked if the Park Board should also make a statement. It was noted that the Board will hear a verbal briefing on the SR520 project and the Viaduct replacement project at its January 22 meeting.

The Superintendent stated that the Board could wait until after the briefing and then determine if it wants to write a letter. Commissioner Ranade will forward a copy of the Foundation's letter to the rest of the Commissioners.

Committee Assignments:

Commissioners volunteer to serve on several committees that require a member of the Park Board. Following is the list of committees, with current appointees or appointments-in-progress:

Associated Recreation Council Board: Commissioner Ramels is vacating this position. A new appointee will be determined in late January-February.

Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight: Commissioner Holme has been a member of this committee since 2003. The City Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee will meet on January 27 to discuss appointing interested current Pro Parks Levy Oversight members to the new Levy's oversight committee.

Park Naming Committee: Commissioner Adams is the current appointee.

Seattle Art Museum Board: Commissioner Ramels is the current appointee.

Seattle Park Foundation Board: Commissioner Ranade is the current appointee.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Jackie Ramels, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____