



## Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
May 28, 2009

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  
Jourdan Keith  
Diana Kincaid  
Donna Kostka  
Jackie Ramels, Chair

### ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Activity Resource Center at the Woodland Park Zoo, and reviewed the meeting agenda. **It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda, the record of correspondence, and the minutes from the April 23 meeting. The vote was taken and the motion carried.**

## **Superintendent's Report**

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

Westlake Park: Parks staff attended a meeting convened by business owners, residents and employees concerned about Westlake Park to address community concerns with nuisance behaviors in the park; the attendees cited problems arising from large groups of homeless teens hanging out in the park, taking over benches, loitering in the park all day and sleeping in the doorways of businesses.

Enhancing the partnership between Parks and Recreation and the Police Department will begin, starting with quarterly meetings at top Parks and Police Department levels to discuss illegal behavior in parks. In addition, Parks will periodically forward a list of issues related to illegal behavior in parks to Assistant Chief Metz. The list would be used as a communication tool and would be used to make decisions on the need to meet to have more

in-depth discussions on how to deal with problems. Parks and Recreation looks forward to strengthening our working relationship with SPD.

Ravenna Ravine Encroachment: The Law Department will take action on behalf of Parks against an encroachment and code violation at Ravenna Ravine. Private property owners who currently have a legal garage on Park property, which was permitted through a Revocable Use Permit (RUP), constructed a second story on the garage. The garage is in an Environmentally Critical Area and the second story was constructed without Department of Planning and Development permits, and in violation of the terms of the RUP. Parks' goal in the action is to have the non-park use entirely eliminated and the park property restored to a native habitat area.

Offer made on Me Kwa Mooks Natural Area Property: Parks and Recreation presented an offer to purchase a .73-acre property located within the southern portion of the Me Kwa Mooks Natural Area in West Seattle. The Department has been pursuing acquisition of this and surrounding property since the 1990's. If accepted, this will be the first Green Space purchase using 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy monies.

Garbage Cans in Parks: In the belief that we have too many trash cans system-wide (over 400 parks) and that there are cost savings to be had from reducing the number of trash cans, between March 2008 and May 2009, Parks removed 735 of the 2,813 trash cans in the system, leaving 2,078.

The objective is to continue the reduction very gradually until we reach the point where we have an adequate number of trash cans at each park, meaning that the trash cans available are not overflowing, yet are full when we pick them up, and that we do not have litter problems. This trial period will also assess seasonal needs. This will require a bit of trial and error, which our crews are working on now. We will keep working at it until we get it right.

We do not intend to let trash pile up in parks. We are responding to complaints about individual locations where that is an issue and replacing the cans as needed. We are acutely aware of the need for trash cans for dog droppings, and will make sure there are enough.

Concurrently, we are increasing recycling opportunities in parks. We are also trying other methods to reduce our trash collection costs, including new technologies. We have installed an experimental, solar-powered compactor trash can at Alki Beach. We have bought a single can; you can see it at Alki Beach. After a period of time, we will evaluate the cost savings vs. the purchase cost and life expectancy of the can, and decide whether it is a good investment on a larger scale.

## **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 10 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. Four people testified. A brief summary of the testimony follows:

Esther Bartfeld: Ms. Bartfeld is a neighbor of the Woodland Park Zoo and spoke about the Zoo's West Entry project. She is concerned about the need to eliminate 14 trees to create the new entry. Without the garage, isn't it possible to have a more modest proposal? The entry will have a 5,000 square foot building with a store and paving of one acre. Ms. Bartfeld expressed a concern that the Zoo was not able to provide maintenance on the facilities it has, so should not be building more. The new entry should be more modest, have less impact and should have a separate public hearing before the Board.

Bruce Bentley: Mr. Bentley is a member of the Board of the Woodland Park Zoo Society and serves on the Neighborhood Liaison Committee. He understands the feelings of Zoo neighbors. He believes the West Entry is a good idea; it will take the place of two existing entries (north and current west) and will create amenities for

Zoo visitors. It will be built to a LEED silver standard. The West Entry has been a part of the Zoo's Master Plan for a long time – now is the time to get it built.

Gary Gaffner: Mr. Gaffner informed the Board that when he was young he and some friends filmed a movie at the old natatorium (salt water swimming pool) that was located at Alki Beach. Board members expressed interest in seeing the movie.

Paul Fuesel: Mr. Fuesel, a Ballard resident, supports the proposal to transform Bell Street into a park boulevard. It is a great opportunity for a neighborhood lacking in open space.

## **Discussion with City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen**

City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, chair of the Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee, spoke to the Board during a regularly scheduled quarterly discussion.

2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy: Councilmember Rasmussen announced that a second round of early start Levy projects will be considered by the City Council on Friday, May 29. Some citizens have expressed a concern that the Council and Park Department are going too fast, that the Levy Oversight Committee should be more involved in selecting the early round projects. However, the economic situation requires that we move quickly. The goal is to keep people employed. The projects on the early lists are named in the Levy, and the Oversight Committee will be involved in selecting future projects.

Public Safety in Parks: Councilmember Rasmussen met with police in southeast Seattle and the police are committed to working in parks more. At Pritchard Beach, the gate will be closed when the park is closed.

Zoo Cherry Trees: There has been a difference of opinion between Zoo neighbors and Zoo staff regarding the health of cherry trees at the northwest corner of the Zoo property. The trees are scheduled to be cut down due to disease. The City and the Zoo will work cooperatively on this issue. The Zoo Society has the authority for the Zoo grounds and maintenance.

Tree Protection Ordinance: The City adopted a Tree Protection Ordinance recently. The question is open as to whether the Ordinance applies to the Zoo and to the cherry trees proposed for removal.

Trash Collection: Councilmember Rasmussen has heard complaints from citizens regarding the removal of some garbage cans from parks. The Department needs to monitor areas to see where removal makes sense. The Department and the City are looking at the potential for automatic cans. A solar battery in these cans alerts the Department when they are full, and they compact the trash. A trial automatic can is in place at Alki Beach.

Encroachment: Councilmember Rasmussen expressed his thanks to Parks for dealing with and facilitating the removal of the garage encroachment at Ravenna Park, a good example of the City protecting the public interest.

Smoking in Parks: Councilmember Rasmussen stated the City has the authority to ban smoking in parks, just as smoking is not permitted in buildings. Is this an issue the Park Board would like to take on – to look into the issue, hold a public hearing and make a recommendation? It would be valuable to Councilmember Rasmussen for the Board to take on this issue.

Commissioner Barber asked if Councilmember Rasmussen had received complaints about smoking in parks. Councilmember Rasmussen said he had not.

## **Question and Answer Session with Board**

Commissioner Ramels asked whether the Council was considering extending the jurisdiction of the Park Rangers to parks outside of downtown and Capitol Hill. Councilmember Rasmussen responded that this is an economic

issue. There are only seven rangers. If the City had the resources, yes, we would like to have more rangers and have them patrol additional parks.

Commissioner Holme responded to the issue expressed by Councilmember Rasmussen about the Levy Oversight Committee's involvement. He is a member of the Levy Oversight Committee and stated the Committee has been consulted on issues, and while the Levy has been on a fast track, the initial projects are all named in the Levy. There has been a genuine effort to present information.

Commissioner Adams asked Councilmember Rasmussen to speak more about the citizen complaints he heard about the lack of openness with the Levy Oversight Committee. Councilmember Rasmussen stated that transparency was the concern. Proposals should be brought before the Committee for discussion and recommendation. It is important to ensure good public input and accountability.

Commissioner Keith asked what the public safety issues are that prompted Councilmember Rasmussen's meeting with police in southeast Seattle. Councilmember Rasmussen responded that drinking, rowdiness, violence and loud music have been the concerns of park neighbors. Additional outreach to neighbors would be helpful.

### **Public Hearing: Use of Synthetic Turf Policy**

Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks Policy and Business Analysis Manager, briefly reviewed the Department's proposed Use of Synthetic Turf Policy. The decision to use synthetic turf on Parks and Recreation fields has been made. The Policy describes how we will use it in a safe, sensible way. At the April 23 Board meeting, Commissioners received a written and oral briefing, and the written paper was also posted to the Board's web page for public access. The Board's discussion and recommendation is scheduled for the June 25 meeting.

A summary of the public hearing comments follows.

Bill Farmer: Mr. Farmer is a Board member of Friends of Athletic Fields. He approves the policy in general. Regarding public outreach, signs at each field would be helpful to guide field users to parking and to display relevant Parks and Recreation phone numbers. Regarding technical research on synthetic fields, he cautions against putting too much emphasis on lab research; it is better to pay attention to studies of actual drainage and air impacts. Athletes love natural grass – they do not want all fields to be synthetic. There are currently eight synthetic fields and plans are for there to be 14; this would be 18% of the Department's inventory. Remember the "recreation" focus of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Ed D'Allesandro: Mr. D'Allesandro is the Executive Director of Seattle Youth Soccer Association, an organization that includes 13,000 kids. His organization is very interested in how synthetic surfaces affect children. The synthetic fields provide better places to play, there are very few complaints or injuries, and they enable the City to do more with less. Mr. D'Allesandro supports the proposed policy, with the following specific notes:

Section 5.3 Maintenance: Synthetic fields are a big investment. The Department needs to maintain them and keep up the warranties.

Section 5.4 Communication: Parks and Recreation should do a better job getting the word out about the safety of the synthetic fields.

Gail Devol: Ms. Devol is on the Board of the Mt. Baker Community Club. She is concerned about the condition of the synthetic turf at the Genesee fields. She also wonders what recycling old turf entails.

Kris Fuller: Ms. Fuller suggested several revisions to the proposed Use of Synthetic Turf Policy:

Section 2.4 Park Neighbors Add new Section 2.4 regarding park neighbors. They are more affected than athletes by the fields.

Section 5.0 What are the penalties for not adequately meeting the responsibilities listed in this section?

Section 5.1 Add "and associated lighting" to this section. There is a concern about cancer.

Section 5.2 Add health impacts of lights to neighborhoods and others.

Section 6.3 Remove the language about testing being contingent upon funding being available. If the City can't afford to test then it shouldn't be installing artificial turf.

Section 6.5 Add that no land filled disposal will be allowed. All materials used must be completely recyclable, as grass is.

Section 6.7 Require shower facilities at every location with artificial turf so that all field users can shower within one half hour of leaving the field, before getting into cars, onto public transportation, or into the neighborhood or other parks.

Ms. Fuller concluded her remarks by stating the artificial turf fields are very unpleasant to live near.

Richard Fuller: Mr. Fuller is a Lower Woodland neighbor. The area is a game arcade. The lighting is atrocious; there is more light than at an airport. Artificial turf is another nail in the coffin. Mr. Fuller was a baseball player and natural grass is best. Also, the athletic complex at Meadowdale is atrocious.

Donna Hartmann-Miller: Several communities looked at the heat that is generated on synthetic fields when the temperature is over 80 degrees. It was stated that this is not an issue in Seattle because it rarely gets that hot. However, it actually does – there were 25 days with over 80 degree temperatures last year. When the temperature is over 80 degrees play should stop as there is a safety issue on synthetic fields in the heat. Regarding Section 5.1 of the proposed policy, the cost-benefit analysis should be done now, before the policy is adopted. The cost-benefit analysis should include all costs, including disposal needs; and the users should pay for the benefits of the fields.

Elizabeth Waddell (presented by Kris Fuller): Run-off from artificial fields ends up in Puget Sound. We should not be spending tax dollars to clean up the Sound at the same time we are spending tax dollars to create additional pollution. Artificial turf will contribute to the urban flooding problem, a problem that is projected to worsen with climate change. There is a potential for burn injuries from artificial turf, a concern for children's health. Organized sports play a minor role, if any, in combating childhood obesity. Natural green areas and unstructured play have been shown to be critical to both the mental and physical health of children.

Myra Latoszek: In the proposed Use of Synthetic Turf Policy, the list of organizations and individuals affected should include neighborhoods and others. Crumb rubber used in the fields travels into houses and Puget Sound. In the Policy, testing is optional. It needs to be mandatory; it is not expensive to do testing. The City should also track the heat island effect – what is the impact on the environment from this.

Mark Holland: Mr. Holland is a Beacon Hill resident. He presented a log of a meeting of the Consumer Products Safety Commission in which synthetic turf was discussed with the turf industry. Artificial turf is not listed as a children's product. The extent of lead use in the product is an issue.

Kevin Long: Mr. Long is a Green Lake neighbor. He is thrilled about passage last November of the Parks and Green Spaces Levy. Four synthetic fields are included in the Levy. His children play soccer and ultimate Frisbe and love the synthetic fields. He is not advocating for synthetic to replace grass fields, but wants it to replace the sand fields, as is occurring at Lower Woodland. The sand and silt fields are like dust bowls in the summer and a mud quagmire in the winter. There is no evidence of anyone injured by the product.

## **Briefing: Park Boulevards – Bell Street Proposal**

Donald Harris, Parks Property and Acquisition Services Manager, briefed the Board on a new project to create a park boulevard on Bell Street.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

This is a briefing for informational purposes only.

#### **Introduction**

The Superintendent and departmental staff have recognized for some time that, given the high cost of land in the downtown area, more creative ways of providing park space need to be found, particularly taking advantage of already owned City infrastructure. Recent purchases, such as the acquisition of 2100 Westlake for the Pro Parks Denny Triangle project, and the two investigated First Hill acquisitions at 8<sup>th</sup> and Madison, and Cherry and Terry (Frye Museum site), have costs ranging from \$300 to \$350 per square foot. Additionally, Resolution 31073 addressing recommendations of the Parks and Green Spaces Levy citizens' committee, requests City departments:

...“better coordinate City efforts to create green infrastructure and green connections on City owned land.... including street rights-of-way.... In an increasingly dense urban environment, such projects present an opportunity for the City to improve the quality of life for its residents without having to incur the significant expense of property acquisition and major park development.” (City Council Resolution 31073, July 21, 2008)

#### **Project Description**

The City of Seattle, working with the community in Belltown, proposes to transform Bell Street from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue into a “Park Boulevard”, creating approximately 17,000 square feet of new park space to serve the Belltown community and others who are working, shopping and enjoying the vibrant and growing downtown neighborhoods. The space could be a prototype of sustainable design including environmentally sensitive solutions to the management of drainage through the use of bioswales and similar features. The park space will provide opportunities for children’s play areas, seating, and picnicking. Hopefully this is the first of several park boulevards downtown, providing linkages to the waterfront, downtown, and South Lake Union.

The development of park space would be done by converting a traffic lane and reconfiguring parking on Bell Street to create a wide linear open space with landscaping, lighting and pedestrian amenities. (See images on p. 4.) This would create a vital connection through Belltown from the Waterfront to Regrade Park and on to Denny Park. Existing sidewalks, utilities, driveways and alleys will be maintained in their current location and rebuilt to current standards at no cost to the adjacent property owner. Landscaping, lighting and other improvements will be provided and maintained at no cost to the adjacent property owner. SDOT has carefully reviewed the proposed design and approved the necessary traffic changes. The street would provide one travel lane and parking on the north side of the boulevard, which is adequate to meet traffic demand.

The project would be managed by Seattle’s Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), in coordination with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Funding for the project is from the 2008 voter-approved Parks and Green Spaces Levy. Parks is recommending a transfer of \$2.5 million from the Levy Acquisition Program to the Levy Development Program to cover the project budget. The Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee concurred with the Department’s recommendation that this transfer of funding occur. A three-fourths vote from the City Council is required; the Council will consider legislation to transfer the funds in June.

#### **Public Safety and Comfort**

Ensuring public safety is a top priority. Improvements will ensure open sightlines, and high-quality pedestrian lighting will discourage anti-social behavior and avoid glare to upper-story residents. Bell Street will be

designated a "Park Boulevard" which brings with it a staffed presence from the Park Department's Park Rangers and allows both the Rangers and the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to issue "Park Exclusions" for offensive behavior. SPD's West Precinct is expected to provide bicycle patrols once the project is open to set the right tone for safe community enjoyment.

### **Why Now?**

Seattle City Light (SCL) is currently replacing utilities in Bell Street from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues, which will require replacing the existing sidewalks on the south side. We have the opportunity to rebuild the street in a different way, consistent with the "Park Boulevard" concept. By "piggy backing" on SCL's work, significant cost savings can be realized.

### **Community and City Support**

The project addresses Belltown's long-standing need for open space. A park boulevard on Bell Street was proposed as part of the 1998 Denny Regrade/Belltown Neighborhood Plan. Building on that work, Belltown organizations have requested that the City take action to create a park boulevard on Bell Street to provide open space and improve connections to existing parks. The City's Comprehensive Plan calls for "green streets" to meet open space needs in built-out neighborhoods, and Bell is designated as a Green Street in the City's Right-of-Way Improvement Manual.

Briefings have been provided to the Belltown Housing and Land Use Committee of the Belltown Community Council, the Belltown Business Association and the Downtown Seattle Association. All have expressed their support. The project was discussed at the May 13, 2009 Levy informational public meeting held at Parks' headquarters which was mostly attended by Belltown residents. Meetings and an open house are being scheduled for individual property owners in late May and early June.

### **Issues**

In addition to the Bell Street Park Boulevard, there is interest among Belltown residents in seeing additional acquisition opportunities pursued in Belltown. Support has been expressed for adding property to the Belltown Cottages P-Patch, and some citizens have voiced concerns that the Bell Street project might preclude buying property to expand the P-Patch. However, there is no reason one project would preclude the other from occurring.

### **Budget**

The estimated budget is \$2.5 million of 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy funds. A specific budget will be developed subsequent to the public design process.

### **Schedule**

A public design process will take place in 2009. Construction will occur in 2010.

### **Additional Information**

Donald Harris: [donald.harris@seattle.gov](mailto:donald.harris@seattle.gov); 684-7046

### ***Verbal Briefing***

The City proposes to transform Bell Street from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues into a park boulevard to create open space for the Belltown neighborhood. The proposal includes the transfer of funds in the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy from the Acquisition Program to the Development Program. The street will transfer jurisdiction from the Seattle Department of Transportation to Parks and Recreation.

In the past, the City has relied on private developers to implement the green streets idea that is part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. However, this did not result in green streets development. One problem was the lack of an overall vision for streets. This proposal will provide open space in a dense neighborhood and will include opportunities for children's play areas, seating and picnicking.

The Levy Oversight Committee concurred with the Department's recommendation to transfer funds from Acquisition to Development for the Bell Street project.

Commissioner Kostka asked if there are other streets in line for this type of development, noting it would be good to have more of these. Mr. Harris responded that citizens are interested, but the process will move slowly to see how the project at Bell Street works out. The City will establish a track record with Bell Street first. The idea to develop green streets was explored in the Open Space 2100 effort. Sustainable design using existing infrastructure was a big goal in this effort, but nothing was specifically identified in the 2008 Parks Levy.

Commissioner Ramels asked if Bell Street boulevard was a named project in the Levy. Mr. Harris responded that Belltown is a named neighborhood identified to receive acquisition funds. Because the property is already City-owned, no acquisition is necessary. The proposal is to transfer funds from acquisition to development to cover the costs of creating park space.

### **Briefing: Woodland Park Zoo West Entry**

David Schaefer, Director of Public Affairs for the Woodland Park Zoo, briefed the Board on the Zoo's West Entry project.

#### *Written Briefing*

#### **Briefing on Woodland Park Zoo West Entry project**

Monica Lake, capital projects manager  
David Schaefer, director of public affairs

**This briefing is for informational purposes, and no board action is required.**

#### **Description and background:**

The Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ) has been a community institution in Seattle for more than 100 years, although for the first 75 years, it was more of an animal menagerie in a park setting than an actual zoo.

In 1976, the zoo's first Long Range Plan (LRP) was prepared by Jones and Jones, a Seattle landscape architecture firm. The plan reflected a revolutionary approach to zoo design - a plan based on ecological themes with plants and animals organized by bio-climate zone. The naturalistic exhibits in that plan brought WPZ into international prominence and resulted in numerous awards for educational achievement, innovative conservation, outstanding exhibits and organizational excellence.

In 1999, the zoo began a process to update the Long Range Plan. That led to an extensive, five year public process and unanimous adoption of the Long Range Physical Development Plan by the Seattle City Council in 2004.

The updated plan continues the zoo's primary focus on programs and facilities that support the goals of education, conservation, research and recreation. These goals help to keep the zoo fresh and interesting for new and returning guests. In the updated plan, new facilities offer interactive learning opportunities that expand the zoo's ability to educate, inform and inspire action to help save species and habitats.

The west entry is an integral part of the updated plan because of the need for additional guest amenities such as streamlined ticketing, restrooms, access and other guest services. It will consolidate the current but inadequate north and west entry locations into a single, fully supported gate that offers the same services currently available at the south entry.



The LRP allows us to thoughtfully implement facilities in an incremental manner, with each new project contributing towards the overall goal: clear and easy access to the zoo for all our guests.

The new gate will be just north of the current west entrance, accessible from bus stops, a signalized cross walk, and a new area for bicycles.

Landscaped, fully accessible paths, lead to the West Entry Plaza from both the north and west sides of the zoo's perimeter. There, all are welcome to enjoy a landscaped plaza, public restrooms, daily zoo program information, ticketing and membership services and a coffee cart. Importantly the new entry to the zoo will be sequenced to reduce the wait times – which now can be more than half an hour – to no more than five minutes. The plaza directly outside the entrance is intended to serve as a gracious gathering place where zoo guests and neighbors can pause before entering the zoo or continuing on a neighborhood walk. Additionally, this plaza provides adequate space for busy summer days and popular zoo events. Finally, it provides this gathering space safely away from busy streets. The landscaped path will also be available for neighborhood residents to walk from north of the zoo to the west side without entering the zoo gates. Restrooms will be available, outside the zoo gates, during zoo hours.

Once inside the new entrance, guests will be immediately rewarded with a stunning view of the Humboldt Penguin exhibit, which just opened May 2. Available from the interior plaza area will be daily program information, visitor assistance, wheelchair and stroller rental, restrooms, first aid and a zoo store.

### **Public Involvement Process**

Although the new west entry was part of the zoo's Long Range Physical Development Plan, which received extensive public involvement before its adoption by the City Council, there was an additional process to involve the public about this specific project. The steps in the process included:

- Discussion at Neighborhood Liaison Committee on July 12, 2007 and again on Jan. 10, 2008.
- Mailing sent to neighbors within four blocks, inviting them to attend Feb. 9, 2008 open houses.
- Open houses held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Feb. 9, 2008 at the zoo, and from 2 p.m. 4 p.m. at Marymoor Park.
- Article in February/March edition of "What's Happening at the Zoo," the neighborhood newsletter, mailed to the community within four blocks of the zoo.
- Information posted on zoo's website.
- E-mail sent to zoo's list of about 20,000 e-mail addresses on Feb, 2008.
- Article in spring (mid-February) of @thetoo, the zoo's membership magazine.
- Presentations to Design Commission on Sept. 6, 2007; Dec. 7, 2007; Feb. 7, 2008, and August 7, 2008.
- DPD master use permit process
- Concurrent with the permit application, the zoo made presentations at the Norse Home, Fremont Chamber of Commerce, Greenwood-Phinney Chamber of Commerce, Fremont Community Council, Wallingford Community Council, Greenlake Community Council and Lake Union District Council.

### **Project Budget and Schedule**

The new west entry was designed by the local architecture firm Weinstein AU and the landscape firm Site Workshop. The project was fully reviewed by the Seattle Design Commission and received unanimous approval in August 2008. A master use permit was issued by Seattle's Department of Planning and Development in March 2008. The project has been advertised, and the zoo expects to receive bids in late May 2009. Final approval by the Zoo Society board will be sought in June, and the project managers anticipate beginning construction in September, 2009 and completion in time for the zoo's 2010 summer season which begins May 1.

The project was funded as part of the zoo's \$14 million Humboldt Penguin-West Entry project. The budget for the west entry itself is about \$7.5 million and comes entirely from private contributions.

### **Environmental sustainability**

The entry has been designed to achieve Silver LEED status. Like the penguin exhibit, the new west entry will be built such that all stormwater will be infiltrated on site. This not only reduces load on Seattle's existing combined sewer infrastructure but helps protect water quality in Puget Sound. Additionally, energy and water conservation equipment are an important part of the facility. Finally, the project will be constructed using Forest Certified Council (FSC) certified wood products, utilize fritted glass to eliminate bird strikes and plant an additional 70 trees.

### ***Verbal Briefing***

David Schaefer provided background information to the Board on the West Entry project. In 1976, the architectural firm of Jones and Jones prepared a long-range plan for the Zoo that was revolutionary at the time. It was based on bio-climatic zones and placed animals in natural settings. A process to update the Jones and Jones plan began in 1999 and took about five years to complete. The new long-range plan was approved by the City Council in 2004. The main goals of the Zoo's long-range plan are education, conservation and research.

The new west entry will consolidate the inadequate existing north and west entries. The new entry will be similar to the existing south entry. The project goal is to create clean, easy access for all guests. The entry will include the following elements:

- landscape plaza;
- restrooms;
- ticketing;
- program information;
- coffee cart; and
- pathways.

One objective of the new entry is for reduced wait times for guests entering the Zoo; currently, the wait can be as long as 30 minutes.

Commissioner Barber asked what is the cost of the west entry project. Monica Lake, the Capital Projects Manager for the Zoo, responded that the west entry cost is \$7.5 million; the cost for the new penguin exhibit is \$6.5 million. All of the money for both projects has been raised by the Woodland Park Zoo Society – there are no public funds for either project.

Commissioner Holme asked how the new entry worked with the current parking situation, especially as a garage is no longer part of the Zoo's current plans. Ms. Lake responded that the entry is a stand-alone project. Currently the west and north entries receive half of all Zoo visitors per year, with the south entry receiving the other half. Existing parking at the north and west sides of the Zoo will serve the new entry. There will be a path to guide people from the parking to the new entry.

Commissioner Kostka noted that the Zoo reported a maintenance backlog in its annual report. Why is the Zoo moving ahead with a new project, instead of addressing the maintenance needs? Mr. Schaefer responded that

the maintenance backlog is a result of the cut in City funds for the Zoo. The west entry is a separate project, funded by private contributions from donors who gave specifically for the entry and penguin exhibit. The funds cannot be used for regular Zoo maintenance. The Zoo is seeking funding for maintenance.

Commissioner Adams noted that he hears the concerns from citizens and expressed an understanding of the challenge in keeping people informed. He asked what the Zoo's thinking is to better address neighborhood issues, so that the Zoo can get ahead of the curve on tough issues. Mr. Schaefer stated the Zoo has an obligation to operate transparently and to inform the public. The Zoo holds bi-monthly neighborhood meetings and publishes newsletters. The fact that the Zoo is a regional facility in a neighborhood creates issues. One example is Mother's Day which attracts 25,000 people to the Zoo, and there are 700 parking places on site.

Commissioner Keith asked how the new entry would improve the time people have to wait to get into the Zoo. Ms. Lake responded that the new design separates ticket selling from Zoo entry. Therefore, members with passes don't have to wait in the ticket selling line, as is currently the case. Dividing functions significantly reduces wait.

Commissioner Ramels asked why the west entry project had four reviews by the Seattle Design Commission. Ms. Lake responded that the usual Design Commission review occurs over three meetings; the added meeting for this project was a result of the elimination of the garage from the project which led to a change in the design.

Commissioner Kincaid asked why there is 5,000 square feet of retail in the project. Couldn't the retail be scaled back to result in the removal of fewer trees? Ms. Lake responded that the 5,000 square feet of retail is the same amount as the south entry and is solely for the Zoo Store. Zoo staff tried to design the entry to reduce tree removal. Fourteen trees will be removed; 70 trees will be planted, so the overall tree canopy will be increased. Ms. Lake also noted that on busy days guests spill out onto Phinney Avenue as they wait to enter the Zoo. The new entry will have a holding area, the landscaped plaza, which will increase visitor safety.

### **Old/New Business**

Commissioners briefly discussed the method for adding items to Park Board meeting agendas. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Jackie Ramels, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_