

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners Meeting Minutes December 13, 2012

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:

Antoinette Angulo
John Barber
Megan Heahlke
Jourdan Keith, Vice-chair
Diana Kincaid, Chair
Brice Maryman
Caitlin McKee
Yazmin Mehdi

Excused:

Barbara Wright

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Chair Diana Kincaid called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, welcomed members of the audience, and asked commissioners and Parks staff to introduce themselves. **Commissioner Barber moved approval of the consent items including the meeting agenda as revised, and the minutes from the November 8 meeting. Commissioner Mehdi seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous in favor. Motion carried.**

To hear and view the full meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591270>

Superintendent's Report

Acting Superintendent Williams reported on the following:

Parks Funding Strategy: Recently, Mayor McGinn, City Councilmembers, City Budget Office staff, and Parks staff held a joint meeting to discuss long-term park funding strategies. This is exciting and good news! There are still many issues to resolve, including how to make a dent in the Department's \$250 million deferred maintenance, and developing a "wish list" and whittling that list down. Acting Superintendent Williams has asked that the Park Board play a large role in the funding effort.

Denny Awards: The annual award ceremony to recognize Seattle Park's 35,000+ volunteers was held two weeks ago at the newly-remodeled Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center. Commissioner Barber, Kincaid, Maryman, and McKee attended. Volunteers provide an incredible 350,000 hours of service annually to Seattle's park and recreation system. The Department is very grateful!

Seattle Parks Staff Receive Seattle Management Award: Dawn Blanch manages Seattle Parks volunteer program and was recently awarded the Seattle Management Association's annual award for "management in the field." Congratulations to Ms. Blanch!

All-Staff Breakfast: On Tuesday, Seattle Parks' management team served breakfast to many of the Department's 900 staff at Rainier Community Center. All the food was paid for by the management team and staff appreciated the meal and fellowship. The Park Board's monthly Executive Team meeting was scheduled in conjunction with the breakfast, with Commissioners Keith, Kincaid, and Maryman attending.

Woodland Park Zoo Elephants: There has been a great deal of recent publicity about the elephants at Woodland Park Zoo, as well as the zoos in Portland and other cities which have elephants. What is Seattle Parks role at the Zoo? The City signed an agreement with the Zoo Society 12 years ago, transferring management of the Zoo to the Society. While the City still owns the land, the Zoo Society is responsible for the Zoo's animal husbandry and for the Zoo's accreditation. The City has a similar agreement with Seattle Aquarium Society, and entrusts the stewardship of the animals to their experts.

New Teen Program Manager: Charles Humphries, who has worked for Seattle Parks for 20 years and is an enthusiastic support of the teen programs, was recently selected for this position.

2012 Accomplishments: Seattle Parks accomplished a great deal this past year: 66 capital projects were completed; the 2013 budget process was far better than anticipated; new division directors Dan Johnson, Michael Shiosaki, and Kevin Stoops were hired; a new geographic model was developed for the 26 community centers (and new data collections show more people are enrolling in and attending programs, even though the centers are open fewer hours); the 2013 Opportunity Funds are now being awarded; the Parks Legacy Plan was launched; positive changes are being implemented at Magnuson Park; the seawall levy was approved by voters and Piers 57, 62 and 63 will be improved; and – major changes have begun with the Park Board! A full list of the accomplishments will be posted on the Department's web page.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained 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-to-three minutes each, will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. 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 Old/New Business. One person testified.

Gary Gaffner: Recognized and thanked the Board's coordinator, Sandy Brooks, who will retire from the City in mid-January after 25 years service. Ms. Brooks has staffed the Park Board since summer of 2002.

Carol Fischer: Also recognized Ms. Brooks' for her work on behalf of the Park Board and her responsiveness to the public's inquiries. Ms. Fischer also presented testimony in support of the Department's Lifelong Recreation Program and gave an overall view of the program to the new commissioners. She is also a member of the Citizens for Off-Leash Areas (COLA). She noted there are now more dogs living in Seattle than children and estimates show that in the next few years, 500,000 people will visit Seattle's off-leash areas (OLAs) annually. The newest OLA, Kinnear Park, will open later this month. Ms. Fischer reviewed the mission of COLA and hopes there is an increased interest by the City in off-leash area maintenance.

Park Board's 2013 Work Plan

Susan Golub, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, presented a briefing on both the Department's and the Park Board's 2013 Work Plans. Prior to the meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, included below. Ms. Golub reviewed the written information, which was followed by Board discussion.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for information only and no Board action is requested.

The Department's Work Plan

Each year Parks establishes a series of work plans to help guide our work. Each Division develops a work plan that outlines significant special projects or items that need special attention through the year. Each manager and strategic advisor develops a work plan demonstrating how they intend to support their Division and the Departments work plan.

The Departments work plan consists of a few high priority items that we believe are timely and warrant special attention. These items are identified by the management team as ones that we want to focus on to move the Department forward or in a different direction during the upcoming year. In addition, the Department identifies about 20 items for quarterly reporting to the Mayor. These Performance Expectations largely parallel the items identified by divisions for extra focus. We also direct special attention to work items requested by the City Council through Statements of Legislative Intent (SLI). Each fall during the budget deliberation, the City Council requests executive departments to do special work projects. The Council has adopted four SLI's for Parks for 2013:

- **Lake City Community Center Needs Assessment:** Identify program and service needs in the Lake City Urban Village;
- **Community Center Usage Reporting:** Report to the Council on community center attendance;
- **Athletic Field Fee Assessment:** Report on the annual cost to operate and maintain fields and any changes to fees anticipated for 2014-2015; and
- **DPR and ARC Fundraising:** Report on a combined Parks and ARC fundraising strategy.

In addition to the SLI's, the Department will be focusing on the following work plan items in 2013:

- **Parks Legacy Plan:** Our major focus throughout 2013 will be completion of Parks Legacy Plan; a draft report will be completed in late March, with public review to follow, with a third phase of the report outlining a sustainable path forward completed by year end;
- **Reorganization of Teen Programs:** The Recreation Division has reorganized management of teen programming and will follow up in 2013 to assess the implementation of the reorganization and the impact on programming;
- **New Work Order Management System:** The Parks Division is revamping how work orders are collected and processed, moving to a paperless system;
- **Parks and Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund:** The Planning and Development Division will continue implementing Levy projects and working with the Levy Oversight Committee to select and implement Opportunity Fund projects;
- **Waterfront Parks Management:** As part of the City's process to redevelop the central waterfront, there will be discussions about the possibility of a new management structure for the waterfront that would include the waterfront parks.

Park Board's Work Plan

The Committee structure established by the Board at the November meeting sets direction for much of the Board's work in 2013:

- **The Strategic Plan Committee** will be the liaison between Parks and the Board on Parks Legacy Plan;
- **The Funding Committee** will evaluate the pros and cons of long-term funding options;
- **The Partnerships Committee** will work to enhance the relationships with Parks two primary partners, the Associated Recreation Council and the Seattle Parks Foundation, and develop guidelines and criteria for quality Park Board partnerships; and

- **The Executive Committee** will work with Parks leadership to develop meeting agendas and work plan items for the Board.

In addition to the work of the Committees and full Board on the Legacy Plan, long-term funding, and partnership development, Parks anticipates asking the Board for a recommendation on the Waterfront Parks Management issue. In the fall, the Board will be briefed on the proposed budget, and depending on the issues, may take on the activist role of writing the Mayor and Council and lobbying in support of Parks, as was done this year for the 2013 budget. Also, as required by the Parks Code, the Board will be asked to make recommendations on land use changes, such as the upcoming change of use from Park to Viewpoint at MacLean Park. Other issues will arise, as always, as the year progresses and Board members and staff bring forward issues of importance (coal trains are an apt example); the Executive Committee will serve as the clearinghouse for sorting through the issues and setting the Board's agendas.

Board Discussion

The Board spent a good while discussing the work plans. Commissioners appreciate having a role in the long-term park funding strategy and are pleased the Mayor and City Council are working on this together, and not making it a political "hot potato." Acting Superintendent Williams will suggest that the Park Board Chair serve as co-chair of the park funding strategy steering committee. Commissioners will appreciate regular updates on the Department's statements of legislative intent, as well as the parks funding strategy.

Commissioners next reported on the work of their internal committees. Commissioner Heahlke reported on the Board's Strategic Planning Committee; Commissioner Mehdi for the Funding Committee; Commissioner Kincaid for the Partnership Committee; and Commissioner Kincaid for the Board's Executive Committee. The Funding Committee and Partnerships Committee distributed written reports; copy attached to the approved meeting minutes.

Commissioners next discussed a communication system for the Board to reach out to the public. Suggestions included: a quarterly newsletter; a blog; attending district council and community council meetings; attending NPR "listening sessions" to be held in both North and South Seattle; reaching out to the Department's partners, both large and small organizations; recognizing the Department's partners and allies and helping form a coalition of support; and using the communication plan template recently distributed by Commissioner Angulo to the Park Board.

Commissioners also asked to review other City Department's work plans which might mesh with the Park Board's interests. These include Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and a review of the City's new Comprehensive Plan.

By mid-June, the Park Board will be asked to make a recommendation on the new Central Waterfront Park.

Guest Speaker: Mayor Mike McGinn

Commissioners warmly welcomed the Mayor to the meeting. Topics of discussion were a park funding strategy to bring before Seattle's voters, the South Lake Union zoning proposal, and the new Central Waterfront parks' operations and management. To listen to the full discussion, see

<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591270> and move cursor to position 82.00.

Commissioners thanked the Mayor for the visit and discussion. Commissioner Kincaid will write a formal note of appreciation.

Old/New Business

Recognition of Park Board Coordinator: Acting Superintendent Williams and Park Board commissioners also recognized retiring coordinator Sandy Brooks. Ms. Brooks voiced her respect for the Park Board and the Department!

Park Board Letter re: Expansion of Coal Terminals and Trains in the Puget Sound Region: At the Board's November 8 meeting, Commissioners heard a briefing on the coal trains from Mayor McGinn's office and Puget Sound Air Quality. Following the briefing and the Board's discussion, Commissioner Maryman volunteered to draft a letter stating the Park Board's concerns. He brought an outline of various concerns, with Commissioners thanking him for his work on this issue, and agreeing the letter should focus on those elements the Board is particularly interested in – the affect the increased number of trains and the loads of coal they would carry would have on Seattle's parks. Commissioner Maryman will draft the letter for approval at the January 10 Park Board meeting.

Update on Meetings with NOAA re: Opening Access Road at Magnuson Park: Following the Park Board's October 2012 letter of concern to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) requesting NOAA re-open the access road at the north end of Magnuson Park, Mr. Ed Horton of NOAA Headquarters in Maryland arranged a meeting with Commissioner Kincaid and Parks staff. NOAA's facility is adjacent to Magnuson Park and the road was closed after the terrorist attacks in September 2001. The City has been working since to convince NOAA to re-open the road to public access. During the meeting, Mr. Horton suggested NOAA and the City develop a Memorandum of Agreement to re-open the road in June 2013. Commissioner Kincaid will send Mr. Horton a thank you letter from the Park Board.

Select Ad Hoc Committee for January 24, 2013, Public Hearing on New Viewpoint Designation: Commissioners Barber and Mehdi volunteered to attend this public hearing on designating MacLean Park as a viewpoint.

Park Board's External Committee Reports: These are committees such as the Park Naming Committee, Levy Oversight, Seattle Park Foundation, Central Waterfront Committee, and others that ask for Park Board representative. Due to time constraints, these reports were re-scheduled to the January 10, 2013, meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

APPROVED:



Diana Kincaid, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE

February 7 2013