

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2013

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
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Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Antoinette Angulo
Bob Edmiston
Diana Kincaid, Chair
Barbara Wright

Excused:

Jourdan Keith, Vice-chair
Brice Maryman
Yazmin Mehdi
Tom Tierney

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Paula Hoff, Strategic Advisor

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Diana Kincaid called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. Commissioner Kincaid asks for approval of the Agenda; Commissioner Wright approves, seconded by Commissioner Edmiston.

To hear and view the full meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591331>

Partnership Models – Nathan Torgelson and Paula Hoff

Acting Deputy Superintendent introduces Parks Partnership models:

The idea of using different types of partnerships to help public agencies manage parks is widely used around the country. The most known example is the Central Park Conservancy in New York City. Looking at the future of Seattle parks and the new central waterfront development; Seattle Parks and Recreation feels now is a good time to think about different partnership models. Olmsted Parks Trust is a new organization in Seattle that is breaking the ground down this path of partnership models.

The current model for Seattle parks isn't working for every park in the city. Historically, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) has been nervous about delegating management of the parks. SPR is hoping to leverage additional resources, expertise and accountability for the future and is looking toward a hybrid partnership model. There is a new non-profit that has emerged from the Central Waterfront called Friends of Waterfront Seattle; many residents and business groups have offered to volunteer to help run the parks. Now is the right time to start this discussion.

Nathan and Paula highlight four models of partnerships and national/local examples:

- Community volunteer organizations – These groups help with maintenance, planting projects, and advocacy. They are not official non-profits but are organized volunteers. There are over 40 “Friends of” groups, 64 Green Seattle Partnership Stewards, and over 20 volunteer groups.
- Smaller non-profits – Smaller non-profits are involved in fundraising, programming and advocacy.
 - Friends of Waterfront Seattle have 2 paid staff – an Executive Director and a Development Director. They are focusing on fundraising and advocacy. One of the financing mechanisms for the maintenance and operations is a local improvement district for downtown.
 - Friends of Freeway Park who raises about \$60,000 per year; they pay dues based on income and have two paid staff. Primarily, they raise money for activation and programming.
 - Seattle Olmsted trust which incorporates The Magnolia Boulevard Trust and Volunteer Park Trust; Seattle Olmsted Trust is not technically a non-profit because the Park Foundation helps as their fiscal agent but have done great projects rejuvenating Magnolia Boulevard and Volunteer Park.
 - Friends of Westlake is relatively new and focuses on advocacy.
- Conservancy – These organizations work closely in partnership with the parks department; they jointly share or fund staff. Conservancies are involved in capital projects, maintenance, programming and operations. The city ensures that the agency is accountable to the public. There is a sophisticated Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the responsibilities of the city and the organization. Two well-known examples are;
 - Central park conservancy – \$27million budget comes from fundraising and concessions; they are involved in capital improvements, some maintenance and programming.
 - Friends of the highline – James Corner was the designer and he’s also the designer of the Central Waterfront; they have a Memorandum of Understanding and a license agreement; FOTH does all maintenance, operations, management, programming and fundraising – 21 person staff involved in outreach, education, administration, landscaping, programming. City remains in control of permits, concessions, events and security.
- Sole manager – The organization manages parks on their own and there is very little involvement from the public sector.
 - The best example we have is the Seattle Art Museum Sculpture Park – Seattle Parks and Recreation is under a 25-year agreement with SAM. They operate and maintain the property. The park needs to look, act and function like a park; the Sculpture Park has the same hours as Myrtle Edwards, SPR has ultimate control about what they do there but the Seattle Art Museum makes decisions about the art displayed and perform all maintenance and security.

There is a book called “Public Parks, Private Partners” published by the Project for Public Spaces, which offers dozens of examples of partnerships and is a treasure trove of information. Nathan would be happy to lend it to the commissioners.

David Dougherty – Olmsted Park trust – Friends of Olmsted Parks

The Friends of Olmsted Parks works to enhance the restoration and vitality of the parks. There is a stewardship program; training volunteers to run work parties. The Olmsted Park Trust has begun their work with the following projects:

- Magnolia Boulevard – Volunteers work with Parks to coordinate priorities. Olmsted Park Trust chose this project because they had the support of the Magnolia community.

- Volunteer Park – This park had no support and a lot of problems. The comments from the community were that the park appears unsafe, shabby, not enough activities. They pulled together a committee to address some of the issues. They put in a new garden and held some events. Their work has been well received.

The Olmsted Park Trust is slowly expanding and defining their role in the community and making plans for the next two years. They are moving on to capital projects; future priorities include fixing the irrigation system, the water tower and the reservoir. The Committee is not going to move on to any other parks until they have made some real progress with these parks.

Lessons David has learned through forming these partnership agencies:

- All parks are different and the needs are different.
- People care about parks near them, in their neighborhood; the money and volunteers are there.
- As one is organizing these partnerships, the mix of people is important to ensure all aspects of the park will be considered.
- In terms of having an organization, there are two ways to go: loose confederation of parks or an umbrella organization. The problem with the umbrella organization is that you have the smaller neighborhood groups who have already established a working relationship with the Parks department and may be resistant to going through an intermediary agency.

Questions/Comments from Park Board Commissioners:

Magnolia and Volunteer Park – Commissioner Kincaid did a site tour years ago and heard concerns about Volunteer Park and agrees it looked tired. The Commissioners really appreciate the work the Friends of Olmsted have done to restore Volunteer Park.

Commissioner Wright thanks Nathan and Paula for their presentation on partnerships. Deputy Superintendent Friedli adds that Parks cautiously embraces the next steps towards partnerships with outside organizations for management of parks; perhaps a pilot program with downtown parks.

Commissioner Kincaid asks about the partnership model between the city and the zoo and aquarium. Deputy Superintendent Friedli responds that the department owns the land and facilities; the zoo/aquarium handles the operations. Parks has financial commitments to them and in turn they have the maintenance and operations responsibilities. They charge fees so it isn't the same as a park; although, as a concept, it is the same.

The partnerships augment the city's efforts. Commissioner Angulo asks if there are examples of volunteers doing programming and activation. Mr. Dougherty responds that all of the partnership models are very different. Some of the groups have a membership, some are more hands-on. Friends of Freeway Park is volunteer run and they do a lot of programming, adds Paula Hoff.

There are concerns about Central Park getting more than their fair share of the funds from their parks department. Dougherty replies that Central Park is very clever about raising money. Nathan Torgelson, says the Parks department will support the central waterfront but that downtown businesses will play a major role in fundraising for the park. How does one ensure there is equity and that all communities have access to quality outdoor space? Nathan replies that equal access is a core value of SPR; Deputy Superintendent Friedli adds that the parks being equitably maintained and resources spread evenly are important.

New Park Board Commissioner – Bob Edmiston

Diana welcomes Bob Edmiston to the Board of Park Commissioners. Bob is a founding member of Seattle Greenways, an organization committed to connecting public spaces through bikeways and walkways. Bob has worked at NASA, Microsoft, Google and the University of Washington. The City Council confirmed him

at the end of June. Bob analyzes systems for particular roles and makes assessments on how well they work and how to make them better. The value of parks goes up when there is safe comfortable access for people, of all ages and abilities, to get to parks. Bob is excited to be a part of the Park Board.

Westlake/Occidental Parks Smoking and Dog Ban

Introduction by Deputy Superintendent Friedli

Parks has received over 2 dozen letters asking Parks to look at different mechanisms to manage behavior at downtown parks. Letters and emails from parents saying the tobacco and marijuana smoke are pervasive and they don't like their children playing so close to it. Charlie Royer is here to speak on this issue.

Charley Royer, former mayor of Seattle, thanks Parks for allowing him the opportunity to speak. He is co-chair of the Central Waterfront committee and part of the Friends of Waterfront Seattle. The strategic plan envisions the "Friends of" groups and others affiliated to raise between \$80 - \$100 million. Mr. Royer encourages the public and the Commissioners to look at the board biographies at friendsofwaterfrontseattle.org. It is a board quite capable of doing heavy lifting. Many of the members live and work downtown and are concerned about pathways from the waterfront to the rest of the city. James Corner's vision is all about connections; the LID boundary is from the waterfront to the freeway, from Myrtle Edwards down to the stadiums.

Charley is the co-chair of the Alliance for Pioneer Square, which is having a renaissance. For the first time in 30 years, Seattle is building market rate housing units, on king street; aimed at young people working in Pioneer Square. Occidental Park is a place neighbors share. Renters who don't have a balcony, the people who live in the missions and shelters, and people who work downtown use this park to enjoy the outdoors. There is a new demographic of people that come and hang out at the park who are behaving in a way that intimidates the other users of the parks. Mr. Royer is concerned the ban on dogs will prompt them to move to another venue and the neighbors who have dogs will be penalized. Mr. Royer wants the smoking ban because everyone is susceptible to second hand smoke and cancer. Many people are amenable to banning smoking in parks. Like David said, the downtown parks are different and require different rules.

Diana thanks him for all the work he has done in the central waterfront and for speaking at the Park Board regarding the Smoking/Dog Ban.

John Scholes with Downtown Services Association says he frequents Westlake Park with his kids. The City of Seattle is known for being on the leading edge of public policy; not so with the smoking ban as there are 850 other cities that have banned smoking in their parks. City of Portland banned smoking in their downtown parks only. The ban on smoking would create a better experience for everyone.

Bill Mackey, Friends of Westlake Park (FOWP), represents 24 resident homes and the business interests that face Westlake Park. FOWP would like a ban on dogs and smoking in the park. Westlake Parks has a terrible safety problem. There have been knife fights, there are guns in the park, and a concierge from a residential building was beaten up. The gangs are there all day and night with their aggressive pitbulls. The pitbulls fight and don't like other dogs. The parents and children are intimidated and do not want to go to the playground. The gang splits into two during parts of the day and they are situated on each side of the playground. It is only a matter of time until the drug sales and violence spills over into the playground. This will be bad publicity for the city. The Friends of Westlake Park and the residents and businesses they represent, want this ban.

Commissioner Wright questions Parks staff to see who would enforce these rules? What coordination is there with the police department now? What are the schools doing about the smoking and dogs?

Deputy Superintendent Friedli addresses the public safety issues. Parks hired 4 new park rangers to monitor the downtown parks and Cal Anderson. There is increased communication between park rangers and the SPD. The park rangers have coordinated their schedules with the SPD. The park rangers and SPD tag team surveillance in the parks. Parks added concierges in Westlake, Occidental and Cal Anderson parks. Seattle Parks and Recreation are hearing these concerns from the public and notice the difference in the types of issues occurring in these parks; staff are reporting more drug deals and violence. It is both a parks and policing and enforcement issue.

Deputy Superintendent Friedli reports there was a Code of Conduct proposal in 2008-2009 in which Parks reviewed a whole list of behaviors; at the time, the smoking ban came to a compromise to ban smoking if you are within 25 feet of another patron or a playground, athletic field or beach. Many of the letters Parks has received recently mentioned the amount of marijuana smoked; this is prohibited in the state law. In terms of enforcement, Park rangers can only ask someone to stop the activity and call SPD. The police are the enforcers. This is the first time banning dogs has come up in 15 years so Parks has not formally considered it.

Commissioner Wright asks if the police are ready to enforce these rules. Bill Mackey responds it was Captain Dermody who suggested these bans to help the parks. The park rangers do not seem to do anything nor are they capable of doing anything. The Friends of Westlake Park feel that a police presence needs to be in the park all the time in order to subvert the criminal activities. Commissioner Wright and Deputy Superintendent Friedli concur that it is largely an enforcement issue in parks; SPD is supportive of the smoking and dog ban at Westlake and Occidental parks. The Commissioners would like the SPD to discuss this at the next Park Board meeting.

Deputy Superintendent Friedli sees these as two separate but connected issues. The smoking ban may be worth revisiting in all parks. Commissioner Wright questions whether creating more rules on something unenforceable would be effective. Parks staff will research other cities who have banned smoking in parks; the pitfalls and successes. Commissioner Wright adds that big dogs are frightening to many people; scary to have unpredictable dogs and dog owners around kids in downtown parks where there is so much urban density.

Charles Ng - Lakewood and Leschi Moorage Request for Proposals (RFP)

Parks has 2 moorages on the west side of Lake Washington. Leschi has over 300 slips; Lakewood has 138 slips. Since the mid-70's Parks has had a contract with concessionaires to manage the moorages. The moorages are in disrepair. Parks has invested \$2million in the Leschi moorages but there is around \$8million in repairs. The request for proposal would be to find a manager to fix and manage the moorage.

The evaluation of RFP's will be completed by late August with a recommendation to Superintendent Williams by September. There will be a public meeting regarding the design concepts after that. The department has been responsive and intentional with the public. Parks issued a survey to all the tenants to understand their priorities. With all of the additional meetings, Parks is trying to address all of the tenants' concerns. Parks added tenant representation to the evaluation team that will pick the manager.

There is a long waitlist for moorage at these facilities; we want to honor the current tenants, things will change and moorage rates will have to go up. The current moorages are much less expensive than market rate. Parks is being intentional to mitigate the adverse impact to the tenants.

The moorages need to be more accessible than they were before; public access is important. There will be 3 public meetings after the operator is picked to look at design. Kevin Stoops, Finance Director, says the Shoreline Master Program will require public access and transient moorage and there are ratios

in the number of transient moorage space that will need to be provided. The Shoreline Master Program was written after the moorages were built.

Commissioner Edmiston asks about kayak landings; Charles responds that there will be an opportunity to look at that.

Commissioner Kincaid asks whether the clubs can continue their programs and if there is benefit to low-income people. Charles responds that Leschi tenants provide membership discounts to the public and there is a sailing program for people with disabilities that charges half-price.

Superintendent's report

Parks Legacy Plan –

The Parks Legacy Citizens Advisory Committee held its second meeting in July. They heard presentations from staff on 1) the concept of investment initiatives, 2) the process Parks staff followed to develop the goal statements in the Draft Legacy Plan, and 3) possible assessment criteria for the Committee to use in evaluating the investment initiatives. Investment initiatives are the mechanisms staff will use over the next three committee meetings to present and describe possible components for new funding in 2014. The Committee had a robust discussion about assessment criteria. At next weeks' Committee meeting they will continue their dialogue on the assessment criteria and start discussing investment initiatives.

Salmon Enchanted Evening – Tom Douglas hosts this event every summer for the past three years to raise money for Seattle Parks and Recreation. Each meal is \$20 and includes fresh salmon, side dishes, dessert and a drink. The first two summers of this event raised over \$30,000 which paid for a concierge at Victor Steinbrueck Park. The second Salmon Enchanted Evening will be held on August 17.

Octopus ban – Some may remember there was an unfortunate incident with an octopus in W. Seattle last spring; in reaction to this the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission banned Pacific Octopus hunting at popular scuba sites and these include Seattle Parks. This rule goes into effect this fall.

Parks good food program will be highlighted at the American Community Gardening Association Conference hosted in Seattle; our staff and community centers are passionate about exposing people to good food options. Parks staff will provide two workshops presenting successful practices for the establishment of municipal food-system education programs. There will also be a tour of the Community Learning Gardens for conference participants.

Bell Street Park between 1st and 2nd avenue is open; construction has started on the blocks from 3rd to 5th avenues of Bell Street. Commissioner Wright believes this project is a fantastic cooperative event between two agencies.

Coal trains – Army Corps, Department of Ecology and Whatcom County announced the scope of analysis for the Environmental Impact Statement on the Cherry Point terminal. While the Corps' scope is quite limited, Ecology will take on an analysis including statewide rail impacts, health impacts and global climate impacts. The Lummi Nation formally announced its opposition to the Cherry Point proposal stating that it has the potential to significantly impair their treaty rights.

Westlake Park –SPR is hosting Family Fun Week at Westlake Park from August 11 to August 17. There is a whole list of events including concerts, entertainment and activities for families.

Big Day of Play – August 24 is the Big Day of Play at Magnuson Park. This event highlights some of the great activities from our community centers; there will be boating activities also. The major sponsors are Coca-Cola, CBS radio, PCC and Taco Time.

MacLean Viewpoint – In April the Park Board recommended not making MacLean park a formal viewpoint but to work with the community to create a vegetation management plan to help preserve the views. Parks staff met with the area residents and will have follow-up with them in regards to next steps. The letter from the condominium board to the Park Board and SPR staff was accurate in terms of the discussion that has occurred but that was only a first step in the process.

Building 30 will have an opening gala in October. The renovation is delayed; the hangar space opened with its first event and was a huge scramble. The construction crews stepped up and made the hangar look great. There are 38 artist studios and half of them are rented. Building 11 is another renovation that is moving along. Parks is finding great tenants.

Oral Communication from the Public

Mirel Gutara – She supports the smoking ban whether Parks chooses to enforce or create a ban; asks Parks to please keep children in mind. Westlake and Occidental Park are not the same, Westlake has a playground that is very well used.

Mirel expresses interest in community partnerships; would like child-friendly areas in the new central waterfront park and wants to help keep the waterfront park safe.

Donna Hartmann-Miller – Friends for a Greater Maple Leaf Park –In regards to the smoking ban, Mrs. Hartmann-Miller feels the 25-foot rule doesn't work and no one enforces it. She believes in the smoking ban. In terms of the dog ban, she feels one's quality of life improves when people have pets. If banning dogs, then do it for a shorter time.

Bruce Bentley – Former Park Board Commissioner – Ban smoking completely so that people don't get confused about where they can or cannot smoke. ARC legacy plan – Parks and Recreation has inspired us to look forward. Bell Street, taking work with another agency can be very problematic. Thanks the Commissioners and Parks staff for all their hard work.

Park Board Business

ARC board meeting – The board made a motion to start working on a legacy plan and it will be presented September 18. ARC shares the same values with Parks: access, sustainability and opportunity. Charlie Zaragoza will head the efforts and his work on the Parks Legacy Plan will be beneficial.

Dewey Potter is retiring from Seattle Parks and Recreation after 36 years with the city of Seattle. There will be a retirement party for her on September 6, 2013 from 4 to 6pm.

Reviewing the proposed Agenda items -

The Friends of Gas Works Park were awarded levy money for some projects at Gas Works. Commissioner Angulo expresses interest in being on an Ad Hoc Committee when formed to help with the process. Deputy Superintendent Friedli will discuss with staff regarding next steps and get back to the Park Board.

Commissioner Edmiston says he would love to present on the Greenways. He is also interested in and involved with the SR 520 project.

The December Park Board meeting has been changed to December 5. The Park Board will hold a retreat in early 2014. The Trust for Public Land is holding an event on September 12; therefore, the September Park Board meeting has moved to September 26.

Commissioner Wright moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Angulo seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:36 pm.

APPROVED:

Diana Kincaid

DATE

October 10, 2013

Diana Kincaid, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners