

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2015

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Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Lydia Albert
Antoinette Angulo
Marty Bluewater
Tom Byers
Bob Edmiston
Diana Kincaid
William Lowe
Tom Tierney, Chair
Barbara Wright

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent
Susanne Rockwell, Strategic Advisor
Leah Tivoli, Strategic Advisor
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting is held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Tierney calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Commissioner Tierney changes the Agenda to have the public hearing first, the Aquarium presentation and remainder of the Agenda will follow. Commissioner Tierney asks for approval of the modified Agenda, the February 26, May 14, and May 28 meeting minutes. Commissioner Bluewater moves, Commissioner Wright seconds; the consent items are approved with unanimous vote.

Election of officers – Several weeks ago Susan Golub asked for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Tierney has been nominated for a 2nd term. She asks for approval of Chair and Vice Chair by acclimation. Commissioner Kincaid makes a motion, Commissioner Byers seconds and all agree.

Presentation and Discussion: Natural Areas and Greenbelts Supplemental Use Guidelines

Presented by Susanne Rockwell, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Written Briefing

MEMORANDUM

Date: 6/3/2015
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Susanne Rockwell
Subject: Natural Area and Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines

Requested Board Action

The Board will be asked to make a recommendation to adopt the Natural Area and Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines and the Project Impact Evaluation Checklist on July 23, 2015 after a briefing from staff and a public hearing at the June 25 Board meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the Natural Area and Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines.

Background:

In February, 2015, staff briefed the Park Board on existing City and Department goals and policies pertaining to Parks' natural areas and greenbelts, and outlined the public engagement process for developing the Supplemental Use Guidelines. Parks has adopted use guidelines for individual parks and for Center City Parks collectively; per Parks policy, these Use Guidelines will supplement the Park Code.

Seattle's population is expected to increase by 120,000 people over the next 20 years. Seattle Parks and Recreation needs to continue to provide recreation opportunities for our changing population while also providing opportunities to contemplate and build community, and to preserve and enhance forest habitat, tree canopy and water quality. Stronger access, equity and exposure to our environment are needed in order to build a sense of responsibility and promote stewardship of these lands with the next generation.

The purpose of the Supplemental Use Guidelines is to provide a transparent tool to evaluate use proposals in Parks' classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts. (See map, Appendix B of the Guidelines.) The impetus to develop use guidelines came from the difficult process Parks, the Board and the community have been through regarding locating a new use – a bicycle trail – in the Cheasty Greenspace, one of Parks classified Natural Areas. We need to ensure that as an agency, we are meeting the needs of all of our residents and that policies reflect the changing needs of residents and long-term goals for the city and Parks.

The Proposed Guidelines

The proposed Supplemental Use Guidelines were developed from input gathered through Parks public engagement process (described in a subsequent section), combined with research on best practices in other jurisdictions, including Shoreline, Bellevue, Kirkland, Tacoma, Pierce County, Bellingham, Mercer Island, King County, Denver Metro area, New York, Baltimore and Portland. The guidelines include a values-based checklist of criteria that will allow for low-intensity, passive and active recreation activities while minimizing adverse impacts on the environment.

Key elements of the Natural Area and Greenbelt Use Guidelines include:

- The Superintendent is responsible for the review and approval of activities to be considered.

- All new use proposals must submit a completed checklist in order to be considered; this includes Department of Neighborhoods' Matching Fund proposals, other community proposals, Parks projects and granting agencies.
- No use proposals will be considered for areas located in either Wildlife Sanctuary Designation areas or established Marine Preserve areas.
- The Use Guidelines are not meant to supersede the City's Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Code, SMC 24.09.

After a use proposal has submitted a completed the checklist, then the location for the approved use will be evaluated through Parks Planning and Development Division site analysis and public engagement process per Parks public involvement practices and policies, including review by the Board of Park Commissioners.

Public Engagement

During March and April, Parks launched a robust public engagement effort which consisted of several major components:

1. Media announcements and an Interactive Community Blog
2. Invitational Focus Group sessions
3. Mini-Summit - Panel Discussion and Open House

Seventy-six organizations, including 15 that work with historically underrepresented populations, were contacted via email and phone and invited to participate in one of three focus groups. Fifty-two groups/organizations participated in the focus groups in March, with 21 groups/organizations participating in the Open House portion of Parks' Mini-Summit in April, and over 100 individuals signed in to the event itself.

Everyone in attendance at the events cares about our natural areas and greenbelts. There was a lot of common ground and some key themes were expressed across the board; these include

- stewardship of the environment,
- access to wildlife and ecosystems, and
- creating opportunities for education and access.

Where individuals tended to differ was on the amount of activity that was appropriate. Some people felt that natural areas should be for quiet contemplation only (no loud voices) and a few wanted no access at all. The majority of those in attendance were supportive of access, education and recreational opportunities. Focus Group and the Mini-Summit summaries can be downloaded from the project website address provided at the end of this document.

Key Policy Issues

The central policy issue related to the Natural Area and Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines is how much, if any, recreation activity should be allowed in these areas. Some community members believe the natural areas and greenbelts should be completely set aside – off limits to all except wildlife. Other community members support walking trails only, while others view the natural areas as an opportunity for active recreation such as mountain bike trails and ropes challenge courses.

Recognizing the need to accommodate a rapidly increasing population within our limited parks and recreation land, combined with the educational value of allowing people an up-close look at nature, the proposed use guidelines strike a balance. Uses, including walking and biking trails and challenge courses, will be allowed while minimizing adverse environmental impacts. All proposals to add a new use in a Natural Area or Greenbelt will require a completed checklist (Appendix A to the Guidelines) which assesses the impacts to the environment of the proposal. Not all activities are suitable for all areas, and benefits of the activity should be greater than potential impacts to the site. As noted, no uses will be allowed in areas designated a Wildlife Sanctuary or in Marine Reserves.

The guidelines reference multigenerational activities and challenge course areas for recreation consideration. These are defined as:

- Multigenerational activity: activity that is conducive to, or relating to, several generations, as of a family, or society, and may include bicycling.
- Challenge course area: an area and/or activity that test one’s ability, require personal development and/or team building, and consist of a variety or progression of elements, and may include a bicycle skills course or ropes course.

Following the Superintendent’s approval of the Natural Area and Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines, Parks will revise the Bicycle Policy, with Park Board review, which does not allow bicycles in Natural Areas and Greenbelts.

Project timeline

- January 21 – June - Media announcements and email notices
- February 6 – April 8 – Interactive Community Blog/survey questions through MindMixer platform
- February – March - “In reach” events with Historically Underrepresented Communities
- March 19, 21, 26 – Invitational Focus Group sessions
- April 4 - Mini-Summit - Panel Discussion and Open House
- June - July - Public Hearing and recommendations by the Board of Park Commissioners

Additional Information

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Website

General project information and public engagement summary reports can be found at:
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/NaturalAreaGreenbeltUse/default.htm>

Supporting materials:

- Attachment 1: Information from Other Jurisdictions
- Attachment 2: Natural Area Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines
 - Appendix 1: Project Impact Evaluation Checklist
 - Appendix 2: Map of Parks Classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts

Attachment 1: Information from Other Jurisdictions

Parks staff conducted informational interviews via the phone with several of the jurisdictions listed below, in addition to online research. In comparing practices from other jurisdictions, one finds a range of approaches. Many cities make use of determinations for their natural areas and greenbelts internally, with no formal set of criteria, but rather based upon the professional assessment of their staff.

City of Lakewood: Lakewood Colorado manages its natural areas and greenbelts on a case by case basis. Bear Creek Lake Park occupies 6,000 acres and contains active restoration habitat sites, walking and biking trails as part of the urban corridor, public swimming and camping areas, park rangers, and an education center. Certain areas are cordoned off seasonally, depending on the mating season of various birds and mammals in the area.

New York City: New York City has a 'Forever Wild Program' which is an initiative to protect and preserve the most ecologically valuable lands and aims to expand awareness, encourage stewardship and provide site protections. The program includes 51 sites and over 8,700 acres. Many of these sites are accessible by New York's subway system. Designation of sites is made internally by park staff. Sites cannot be developed into athletic complexes, boating marinas, or ball courts. Allowable uses include extensive system of trails, and vehicular access on the edges.

City of Bellingham: The City of Bellingham allows for trail development in their greenway corridors that can accommodate walking, biking, running and horseback riding. Opportunities are to be provided for public benefit, for outdoor education and recreation, where public access is appropriate and is balanced with preservation goals.

King County: King County's Ecological Lands Handbook outlines management of ecological lands (natural areas) with the goals of conserving and enhancing ecological value, and accommodates appropriate public use that does not harm the ecological resources on site.

City of Mercer Island: Mercer Island manages Pioneer Park in an active manner, with different levels of activity occurring in the various quadrants of the park. Some areas contain steep slopes, invasive plants and stream corridors, while other areas have benefited from intentional habitat restoration efforts. Allowed uses include: walking, biking and horseback riding.

City of Tacoma: The City of Tacoma takes a variety of approaches in managing their natural areas and greenbelts, with management plans prepared individually for different park sites. Two examples include Puget Creek Natural Area and the Swan Creek Area.

At 52 acres, the Puget Creek Natural Area contains a creek with habitat for salmon and steep wooded hillsides. The management plan for this area protects the creek and the forests at the site and supports outdoor programs and activities such as environmental education and interpretation. This vision blends a desire for recreation and public access to nature with a need to steward and protect the wildlife habitat and resources found in the natural area.

Swan Creek Park is a 290 acre greenspace nestled on the boundary between East Tacoma and Pierce County (total acreage of 373) with a salmon bearing stream, wooded canyon, upland forest, paved and natural trails, a community garden, and mountain bike trails. The approach for this park plan was to dramatically reduce incidents of homeless encampments, to encourage positive use and users, to actively restore and protect habitat and identified rare species.

Attachment 2: Natural Area Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines

1.0 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the Supplemental Use Guidelines is to provide a transparent tool to evaluate use proposals in Parks' classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts. The guidelines include a checklist of criteria that will allow for low-intensity, passive and active recreation activities while minimizing adverse impacts on the environment.

As Seattle's population increases, Seattle Parks and Recreation needs to continue to:

- Provide opportunities to contemplate and build community,
- Preserve and enhance forest habitat, tree canopy and water quality,
- Provide recreation opportunities for our changing needs, and
- Ensure equitable access to all park land, including Natural Areas and Greenbelts.

Access and exposure to our urban natural environment is needed in order to build a sense of responsibility and promote stewardship of these lands with the next generation. The Supplemental Use Guidelines and attached checklist (see Appendix A) will:

- 1.1 Limit the adverse impacts of proposed uses in our urban Natural Areas and Greenbelts, and their surrounding environment.
- 1.2 Provide criteria for determining the compatibility of activities within these areas, their design character and level of use; while providing access, opportunity and sustainability.
- 1.3 Protect and enhance the value of Natural Areas and Greenbelts as a regionally significant educational and recreational resource.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- A. Seattle Parks and Recreation
- B. Seattle Public Utilities
- C. Seattle Department of Transportation

3.0 REFERENCES

- A. 1993 (Resolution #28653) Greenspaces Policy and Designated Greenspaces as part of the City's Open Space Policies
- B. 1991 (Resolution #28530) Urban Trails Policy Adopting the Urban Trails Policy as part of the Open Space Policies
- C. 1988 (Resolution #27852) Adopting Comprehensive Plan policies relating to open space throughout the City
- D. Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Code (SMC 24.09.020)
- E. Park Code (SMC 18-12)
- F. Park Policy and Procedure:
 - 3.F.1 060 P2.17 Viewpoint Designations
 - 3.F.2 060 P5.6.1 Tree Management, Maintenance, Pruning and/or Removal
 - 3.F.3 060 P5.9.1 Native Plant Policy
 - 3.F.4 060 P5.10.1 Wildlife Sanctuary Designation
 - 3.F.5 060 P5.11.1 Parks Classification System
 - 3.F.6 060 P7.11.1 Bicycle Use
 - 3.F.7 060 P7.12.2 Rule Establishing Marine Reserves within Certain City Parks

- 3.F.8 060 P7.13.1 Use Management Guidelines for Parks and Recreation Facilities
- 3.F.9 060 P8.13 Environmental Policy

4.0 POLICY

The use of Parks classified as Natural Areas and Greenbelts is guided by references listed in 3.0, however, in case of conflict, they will be superseded by the guidelines of this Policy and Procedure.

A. Exclusions

- 4.A.1 These Use Guidelines are not meant to supersede the City's Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Code, SMC 24.09.; including peat settlement-prone areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservations areas and wetlands, as defined by the State Department of Ecology.
- 4.A.2 No use proposals will be considered for areas located in either Wildlife Sanctuary Designation areas or established Marine Preserve areas.
- 4.A.3 Use proposals for educational signage and entry way improvements, do not need to complete the checklist, but do need to be approved through Parks Planning and Development Division.
- 4.A.4 Habitat, urban forest restoration and maintenance work being conducted through the Green Seattle Partnership program are allowed outright.

B. Habitat

Consider use proposals that:

- 4.B.1 Enhance forest and habitat restoration efforts to maintain and enhance regional biodiversity.
- 4.B.2 Provide for wildlife habitat and migration opportunities; these proposals may include seasonal closures of a trail or portions of a trail, an overlook or education program due to mating and/or nesting season(s) or migratory routes of key mammals, fish and fowl.
- 4.B.3 Improve water quality and aquatic habitat opportunities.
- 4.B.4 Repair damaged and fragmented natural systems through parcel acquisition and/or expansion.

C. Education, Access and Public Safety

Public safety increases through positive use. Where appropriate, consider use proposals that enhance the value of Natural Areas and Greenbelts as a significant educational resource and that increase opportunities for access.

- 4.C.1 Increase formal and informal educational programing and partnership opportunities.
- 4.C.2 Strive for access points in close proximity to schools and Community Centers.
- 4.C.3 Provide access connections to school 'safe routes' and the City of Seattle's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans.
- 4.C.4 Foster volunteer and stewardship opportunities.
- 4.C.5 Provide for ADA view areas and trail access as feasible given the terrain and existing conditions and fiscal realities.

D. Recreation

Recreation activities are to be considered on a case by case basis, not all activities are suitable for all areas, and benefits of the activity should be greater than potential impacts to the site.

- 4.D.1 Increase access through a variety of trails, such as: walking trails, multigenerational activity trails and neighborhood connector trails.
- 4.D.2 Strive for equitable distribution of recreational opportunities where feasible across all areas of Seattle.
- 4.D.3 Where appropriate, provide for the opportunity for challenge course area(s), orienteering type activities, and future activities that may evolve.

E. Acquisition

Acquisition of Natural Areas and Greenbelts should continue to be a high priority for the City.

- 4.E.1 Preserve and reclaim Parks' property for public use and benefit, and ensure continued access to parkland for a growing population.
- 4.E.2 Continue to leverage grant funding for acquisition to the maximum extent possible.
- 4.E.3 Prioritize natural area and greenbelt acquisitions of parcels that expand land holdings and increase habitat continuity.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided in the context of this document.

Classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts: are those parklands defined as such in Parks Classification policy – http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/policy/parks_classification_policy.pdf

Low-intensity: development which through its low negative environmental impact either enhances, or does not significantly diminish environmental quality.

Access: permission or the right and encouragement to enter, get near, or make use of something or to have contact with something or someone.

Multigenerational activity: activity that is conducive to, or relating to, several generations, as of a family, or society, and may include bicycling.

Challenge course area: an area and/or activity that test one's ability, require personal development and/or team building, and consist of a variety or progression of elements, and may include a bicycle skills course or ropes course.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation or his/her authorized designee shall be responsible for the review and approval of activities to be considered.

7.0 PROCEDURES

- A. All new use proposals must complete the checklist in Appendix A in order to be considered; this includes Department of Neighborhoods' Matching Fund proposals, along with other granting agencies. Exceptions are those uses allowed outright in section 4.1.
- B. Use proposals that meet Parks' values, as outlined in section 4.0, may be considered for development on a case by case basis.
- C. Best location(s) for approved uses will be determined through Parks Planning and Development Division site analysis and planning, such as environmentally critical areas analysis, forest and habitat analysis, parcel restriction data review, and public engagement per Parks practices and policies.
- D. New uses and changes of use are to be presented to the Board of Park Commissioners for their review and recommendation.

- E. Revisions to the Natural Area Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines may be requested. Requests should be made in writing to the Parks Superintendent.
- F. The Parks Superintendent may confer with the chair of the Board of Park Commissioners on the revisions and the preferred public review process for requested revisions. The Parks Superintendent shall have final authority on changes to the use guidelines.

8.0 APPENDIX

- A. Project Impact Evaluation Checklist
- B. Map of Parks Classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts

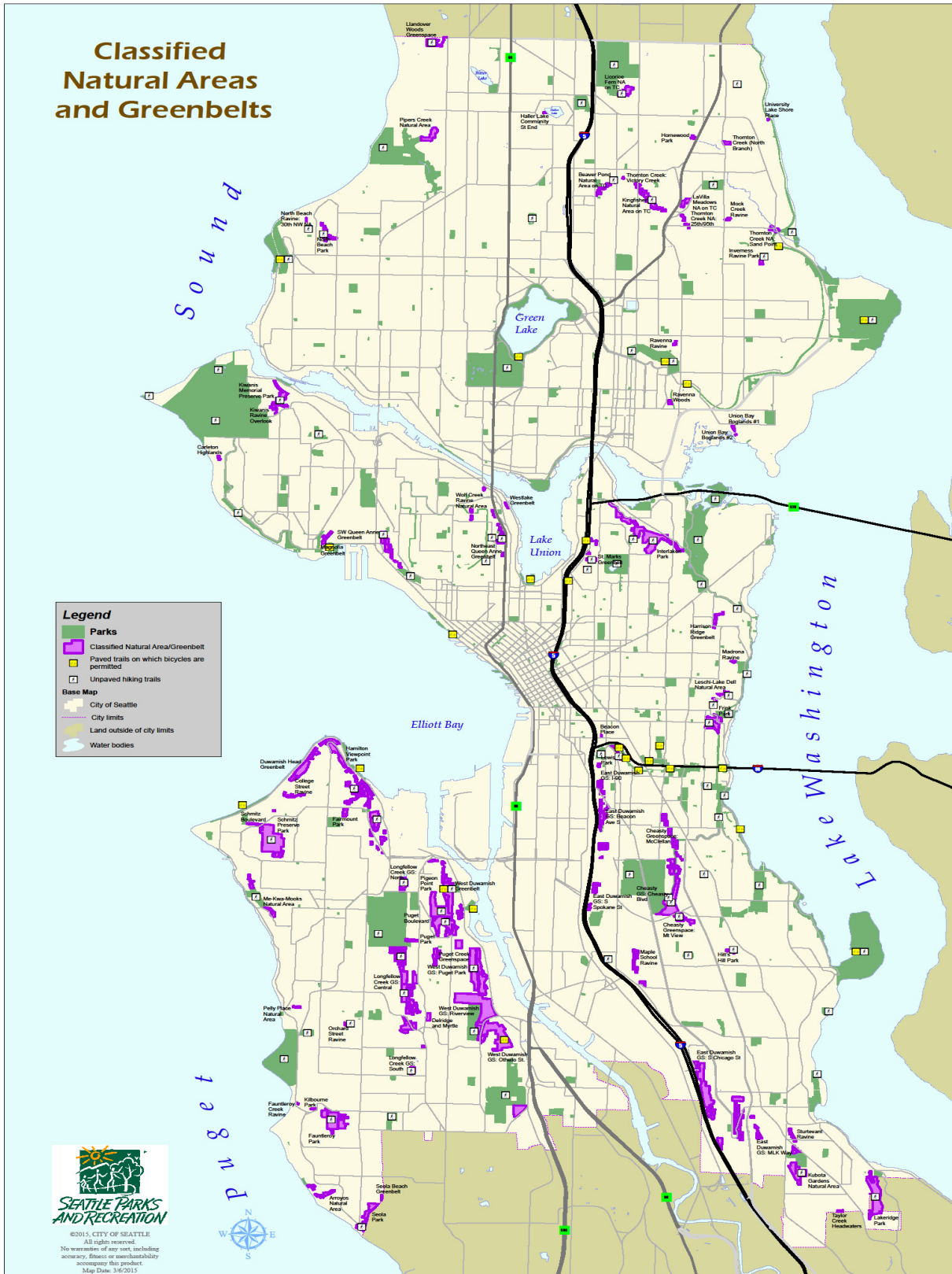
APPENDIX A
PROJECT IMPACT EVALUATION CHECKLIST

1. No use proposals will be considered for areas located in either Wildlife Sanctuary Designation areas or established Marine Preserve areas.
2. Not all activities are suitable for all areas; benefits of the activity should be greater than potential impacts to the site.
3. Best location(s) for approved uses will be determined by Parks Planning and Development Division site analysis and planning, such as environmentally critical areas analysis, forest and habitat analysis, parcel restriction data review, and public engagement per Parks practices and policies.
4. Uses proposals for educational signage and entry way improvements, do not need to complete the checklist, but do need to be approved through Parks Planning and Development Division.
5. Habitat, urban forest restoration and maintenance work being conducted through the Green Seattle Partnership program are allowed outright and do not need to complete the checklist.

Habitat		Yes	No	Not Sure
4.2.1	Does the use proposal enhance forest and/or habitat restoration efforts?			
	Does the use proposal maintain and/or enhance regional biodiversity?			
4.2.2	Does the use proposal provide for wildlife habitat and migration opportunities?			
	Does the use proposal include seasonal closures due to mating seasons or migratory routes of key mammals, fish and fowl?			
4.2.3	Does the use proposal improve water quality and/or aquatic habitat?			
4.2.4	Does the use proposal repair damaged and fragmented natural systems through the acquisition of parcels that expand existing landholdings?			
Education, Access and Public Safety		Yes	No	Not Sure
4.3.1	Does the use proposal increase formal and/or informal educational programming and partnership opportunities?			
4.3.2	Does the use proposal strive for access points in close proximity to schools and community centers?			
4.3.3	Does the use proposal intend to provide access connections to school 'safe routes' and the City of Seattle's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans?			
4.3.4	Does the use proposal foster volunteer and stewardship opportunities?			
4.3.5	Does the use proposal provide for ADA view areas and/or trail access?			
Recreation		Yes	No	Not Sure
4.4.1	Does the use proposal increase access through a variety of trails, such as walking trails?			

	Does the use proposal increase access through a variety of trails, such as multigenerational activity trails?			
	Does the use proposal increase access through a variety of trails, such as neighborhood connector trails?			
4.4.2	Does the use proposal strive for equitable distribution of recreational opportunities?			
4.4.3	Does the use proposal provide for the opportunity for challenge course area(s), orienteering type activities, and/or other similar type activity?			
Acquisition		Yes	No	Not Sure
4.5.1	Does the use proposal preserve and/or reclaim Parks' property for public use and benefit?			
4.5.2	Does the use proposal leverage grant funding for natural area or greenbelt acquisition?			
4.5.3	Does the use proposal prioritize natural area and greenbelt acquisitions of parcels that expand land holdings and increase habitat continuity?			
Summary				
	Please provide a brief description of the use proposal detailing those items that are checked as 'yes' above.			

APPENDIX B CLASSIFIED NATURAL AREAS AND GREENBELTS



Presentation

Acting Superintendent Williams says the Supplemental Use Guidelines are a result of lessons learned through the Cheasty process. SPR is committed to developing use guidelines. They currently use them for downtown parks. The intent of the Supplemental Use Guidelines is to help SPR filter and guide decision-making about the types of activities appropriate for natural areas and greenbelts in a transparent way. This is intended to be the first screen for consideration of other uses. Acting Superintendent Williams acknowledges that not all natural areas and greenbelts are suitable for recreation. This is not a revision of the 1993 Greenspaces policy; it does not seek to create opportunities for commercial activity. This will not open up a floodgate of active recreation in natural areas and greenbelts.

Susanne Rockwell, Strategic Advisor, addressed the Board of Park Commissioners in February regarding the outreach and public process. SPR staff embarked in lessons learned and a request from the public to analyze future use projects as they came forward. Cheasty has not been a pleasant process and SPR staff realized they needed to develop a mechanism to make the process more clear.

At this point, SPR staff have had a robust, values-based public process. This included a community blog on the Mindmixer site, invitational focus groups, a mini-summit, and an open house. Susanne invited over 72 different stakeholder groups and organizations to the mini-summit and listened to their feedback on what these Guidelines should contain. She was clear about the intent regarding considering recreational opportunities. Many perspectives were expressed throughout the outreach process. SPR held a panel discussion consisting of a range of perspectives and moderated by Charlie Zaragoza with questions written by members of the public.

Susanne researched other municipalities to find out how they govern the use of their greenspaces and natural areas. She found the majority of jurisdictions did not have system-wide criteria but were in-house case by case. Most cities researched balance uses with habitat needs. Forever Wild in NYC – no ballfields, no buildings, but there were roads and trails.

Susanne states it is evident that everyone involved is very passionate and cares deeply about natural areas. Public opinion diversifies regarding the amount of access and what it should look like.

Public Hearing

Connie Sidles – She is in the conservation arm of Seattle Audubon which is the largest in the state and celebrating its 100th birthday! Natural areas and greenbelts should be reserved for preservation of wildlife, provide a place for wild birds, nesting opportunities for resident birds, opportunities for people who respect the wild world. She opposes the proposed Supplemental Use Guidelines; active recreation has its place in areas that are already developed. Let wild places stay wild; keep wild habitat in our city and do not drive wildlife out.

John Barber – Former Board of Park Commissioner. The natural area designation was established to protect nature. He has been working in natural areas since 1985. He campaigned for the Pro Parks Levy in 1989 because it was about preserving nature. He feels the proposal is at odds with the City Council Resolution, which is about nature and providing quiet respectful enjoyment of nature. Studies

show people who live in urban areas need connection to nature when compressed and densified. 120,000 more people will need more exposure to nature. SPR is in the lowest 50 quadrile for natural areas and greenbelts in the U.S.A according to the Trust for Public Land. Mountain biking scars nature.

Linda Murtfeldt – feels blessed to live in a beautiful green city and grateful for steep unbuildable ravines for wildlife. She enjoys Carkeek Park and the birds. She values recreational opportunities for wild areas to be meditative and restored. As the population increases we will need more natural areas.

Sarah Welch – Performs forest restoration at Cheasty. She feels the Supplemental Use Guidelines are inconsistent with 1993 Greenspaces resolution 28653 adopted by the City Council. She feels the Board of Park Commissioners and SPR staff do not have sole discretion to make these changes and Greenspaces policy would need to be changed.

Denise Dahn – Seattle Nature Alliance, agree with previous speakers; nature is a community of living beings and humans are an inseparable part of that community. Wild creatures need us to provide their habitat. SPR calls them unused spaces until someone uses them. She feels disturbed by a screening process that replaces science-based guidelines for values-based guidelines and questions whose values. Without access to nature, communities become stressed out and fragmented; natural areas are the deepest-rooted part of Seattle's heritage and connect us to thousands of years of NW native plants, animals and people. Let's make sure we keep natural areas for future generations.

Patricia Naumann – 8.4% Seattle land is landslide prone; much of that is residential, right of way and greenspace. She is against this change. SPR screwed up with Cheasty. One way or another SPR is going to make this happen. She feels having parks do a pilot and this policy at the same time is an affront.

Mark Ahlness – Seattle Nature Alliance – He started a petition on Change.org opposing the Supplemental Use Guidelines. He is very alarmed. So far, the petition received over 500 signatures and there will be more.

Rebecca Watson – Seattle Nature Alliance – She states she would rather be in a park than discussing park policy. With development going on all around us, parks offers peace where community can come together as one. There is a very small amount of natural area and greenbelt and they provide biodiversity. She calls for only low impact and sustainable use allowing the most people to experience nature. Natural areas reduce tree canopy goals and combat climate change. These guidelines read more like a green light to active recreation. Preserving natural areas and greenbelts is a promise made and she hopes we can keep.

Darcy Thompson – Friends of Frink Park – GSP steward – plan is lacking information. She feels it does not demonstrate a need for recreation and removes access. It does not address Seattle Parks and Recreation's no bike policy, which was not to be evaluated until after the pilot. These guidelines do not address safety and liability; or, the Seattle Green Seattle Partnership's plan to increase canopy cover and help storm water runoff. She is dismayed that SPR would do this after she and other stewards worked tirelessly.

Ruth Williams – The purpose of the 1993 Greenspace plan was to develop a sustainable resource to increase natural environments. That policy will be supplemented with new values that conflict with existing ones and fracture communities. What is the rush? She asks for a requirement that they need to consider alternative locations; keep natural areas available to all ages and abilities. Future generations will be grateful.

Darrell Howe – In regards to the Classification policy that was recommended in January; there was a lack of transparency and clarity. Thousands of acres of natural area have disappeared because of reclassification. How do we define the space? Aren't there many more natural areas to look at? Many natural areas belong to other city departments.

Sandy Motzer– Lake City Neighborhood Association; she represents 27 community groups in Lake City. She is opposed to the implementation and adoption of the Supplemental Use Guidelines. She sees it as a first step on a slippery slope to open natural areas. Bicycles should not be allowed in greenspaces and natural areas. 3-year pilot project is a City Council Ordinance; reject these Supplemental Use Guidelines.

Tim Motzer – Former project manager at SPR for 20 years. He is retired and more involved in the North District Community Council. This encompasses 18 community groups and 6 natural areas. They have expressed concerns about this policy. The Cheasty pilot must be consistent with citywide greenbelt policies. He asks SPR to set aside the Supplemental Use Guidelines until the 3-year pilot is completed. He asks for a definition for low impacts – need to know what works in those areas and what does not work. Please establish a moratorium on other active recreation in greenspaces until Cheasty pilot is done and scientific data has been received. Establish new scientific criteria in checklist.

Linda Jensen- Friends of Cheasty – She says a democratic provision of access is pedestrian access; 78% of residents are walkers. Increasing population does not equate to intense active use; increase greater need for relaxing in natural areas. She states SPR is giving away a greenbelt to a small user group.

Cameron Justam – Friends of Cheasty – To say an increasing population means being more flexible with greenspaces is the opposite of what we need to be saying. Preserve and protect greenspaces for urban future. Walking by greenbelts provides psychological and physical relief. The Olmsteds understood this in the early 1900's. The world has been overtaken by stimulus and we cannot find our way back to inner calmness and peace in greenspaces. These characteristics are inherently valuable. Greenspaces and natural areas are not objects to use. Pope Francis spent 187 pages enjoining us to not consume the earth but respect it. Let us be more mindful of the precious pieces of nature that are still with us.

Josh Girack – President of a local bike race team – This proposal is spot on. Society has a huge obesity crises. Provide parks and places for kids to play, open up some of these parks, members of his bike club volunteers. He says SPR should open parks to the growing population to enjoy nature.

Jay Gairson – Refugees are not here because they do not trust government to respect their needs or desires. The Supplemental Use Guidelines may renew trust to ensure they have a voice even when they are told that their voice does not count. Encourage them to bring their voice to parks. Poor

neighborhoods have less access to open space than affluent neighborhoods. Please approve the Supplemental Use Guidelines, increase transparency, and then fund the evaluative process.

Joel DeJong – Cheasty forest steward – He is involved in the Cheasty project. This process has caused distrust. He is impressed with Seattle Parks and Recreation. The guidelines have balanced perspective and provide access and opportunity. He feels encouraged it will get more people involved in nature.

Deborah Neidermeyer – Supplemental Use Guidelines have a big flaw – animal control is not listed as one of the departments affected. Off-leash dogs drive people out of the parks. She volunteered in an after-school program and off-leash dogs would frighten the kids. Kids cannot use the park with off-leash dogs. People don't like to take their dogs to off-leash areas because of dog walkers who don't monitor their dogs carefully.

Al Smith – He has been disappointed for a number of months because SPR fired a plant ecologist. SPR misplaced \$2.2mil waterline project that was intruding the Magnificent Forest. SPR did not even know about it. Picnickers people using natural areas and parks now. The natural areas were being scavenged for wood for picnic stoves. People were hauling out woody debris to keep out forest fires. A cautionary tale to watch out for SPR because they do not manage Parks very well.

Steve Zemke – Friends of Seattle's Urban Forest- This policy is wrongheaded. These areas need to be protected because they are rare in an urban setting; these areas should be treasured. Greenspace policy 1993 establishes priority areas for preservation. Greenspaces with natural environmental character complement city's active parks. He feels changing this would require going back to the City Council. The plan introduces several different activities and then future activities that may evolve. SPR has authority to restore areas and build trails; this policy needs to be shelved.

Mark Holland – Lives on Beacon Hill. He states that steep slopes and landslides are all over Cheasty. Shows pictures of Colonnade Park which is a bike trail underneath the freeway and it has turned into a homeless encampment with garbage strewn everywhere. Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is the organization that pays for all these parklands. RCO says no bikes in natural areas. 27 acres of Cheasty is designated RCO land. If SPR puts bike parks on RCO property, the city would have to pay for that land. This is in perpetuity. The bicycle policy, the Greenspace policy represent longstanding values in this community.

Ed Newbold – Talk about nature as something to ride a bike through; nature will provide; talk about nature as biodiversity than it will not always provide. Do not give nature a demotion. The bird populations are threatened; western screech owl is not a listed species because the list has not been updated. These birds are present in Cheasty in nesting season 2015. These greenbelts are key in the struggle of many bird species facing extinction.

Erin Briggs – She loves the opportunity provided by safe close access to Cheasty; fully support any policy that streamlines safe access to greenspaces.

Greg Briggs – Biked in the forest often and it is low impact; this is a misconception of mountain biking. There is nowhere to do it in Seattle. His understanding of the Supplemental Use Guidelines is

that it adds a list of criteria when thinking of making changes to natural areas. He thinks it makes sense to have such a list.

Bob Downing – He states not many times he has disagreed with the Audubon until now. North Seattle has more amenities; the biomass in Cheasty is blackberries. Bike trails are thinner, they don't have dogs with them. Condemning of bicycles is more of a prejudice than scientific. He is excited that Park Board came up with guidelines. This has been a contentious process.

Jim Gibson – Volunteer forest steward at Thornton Creek – led volunteer groups for restoration. He works removing blackberries and planting thousands of native plants. He opposes these proposals. There are many non-natives that need to be removed; but these Supplemental Use Guidelines would be opening up the greenspaces to more intrusive uses.

Joyce Moty – Opening up natural areas to extreme sports for a few does nothing to protect and preserve greenbelts for another century. They are holding some of our largest trees. SPR should hire more plant ecologists to monitor plants and wildlife. SPR should hire more trained gardeners so they do not destroy or maim plants in areas where they are working. Frequent staff turnover results in lack of continuity in maintenance. SPR needs to work with their dedicated volunteers. Keep them natural.

Jerry Berger – He is a homeowner and lover of Thornton Creek area to the west of Kingfisher area. Let an area revert to nature. This area has been used by Native Americans for centuries and is open to anyone. He passionately opposes this policy. Keeping something wild does not cost a lot of money; volunteers are managing it. Seattle is not getting more nature, so should preserve what we have.

Dawn Chappelle – She is a homeowner in Thornton Creek area. She acknowledges the hard work of the volunteers working to improve trails. It is a beautiful place. The Knickerbocker area looks great and she looks forward to seeing restoration efforts continue. She asks Seattle Parks and Recreation to protect these special places.

Tom Kelley – Environmental Stewardship Alliance – Define the qualities your trying to protect. Tranquil uses – daily dose of nature; some uses conflict with that. Soil compaction, wildlife fight/stress are not in checklist. The Memo is not reflective on process.

Morgan Hougland – volunteers with Cheasty. He supports the Guidelines. He feels access to Cheasty Greenspace and connection with Rainier Vista and Beacon would be great. He has spent his life in forest and works in sustainable architecture. The proposed trails are very low impact. Based on consultants feedback, there could be an improvement if allowed to restore Cheasty.

Mary Fleck – Seattle Greenspaces Coalition – SPR are the stewards of public trust; their job to protect natural areas. She is concerned about slicing and dicing of natural areas. Volunteers work tirelessly to restore these natural areas. Why is there a conflict? Why are we talking about impact when we should be protecting these areas? Seattle needs more recreation spaces. Why not look at places other than greenbelts. Challenge course – repel from a tower, schoolyards. Increase recreation using creativity; why sacrifice natural areas, which are held in public trust for our children.

Sharon Baker – forest steward at Lincoln Park – Seattle Parks and Recreation discussed the idea of putting a zip line through Lincoln Park, the West Seattle community learned about it and did not support the project. Public meetings were held and the zip line company said they were going elsewhere.

Presentation: Aquarium Expansion Plan

Presented by Bob Davidson and Chris Rogers, Seattle Aquarium

Deputy Superintendent Williams thanks Bob Davidson and Chris Rogers from the Seattle Aquarium for coming. He says Bob Davidson has done a great job running the Aquarium. The Seattle Aquarium does not receive any general fund money except for capital in Park District funding. Seattle Parks and Recreation has an agreement with the Aquarium that specifies certain things need to occur as they plan expansion to activate adjacent areas, protect view corridors. The new development will further the mission of the Seattle Aquarium. SPR supports their direction.

Bob Davidson states the draft will be finalized by July 1st and he is very interested in receiving feedback from the Park Board.

The Master Plan is not a design, but a roadmap. The strategic plan was completed in 2011 and the Aquarium is now looking to expand its facilities better to serve the mission to create ocean awareness among a greater number of visitors. The Seattle Aquarium is the largest receiver of visitors in the downtown area. The level of interest will continue to grow as the waterfront is redeveloped and region grows. The concept program developed in 2014 established the adjacencies between usage, square footage goals and future design process.

The master plan looked at prior planning locations to the south and the north; there have many iterations of location expansion. Chris talks about changes in the design process and recognizes the challenges of building over the water and maintaining views. Through an integrated process they identified a central location. This can accommodate the Aquarium in the near term and looking into the future with further expansion on pier 62. Today the Seattle Aquarium occupies a key strategic position on the central waterfront and this will increase as the overhead walk is built and central waterfront develops. Integration between the Pike Place Market and the Aquarium plaza will allow for ease of access.

The focus will be on ecosystem exhibits – Puget Sound, outer coast Washington; the tropical pacific would be housed in the central location. Puget Sound and outer coast in pier 60. This will allow for the appropriate amount of space for good stewardship of wildlife and accommodate the scores of visitors while allowing numerous paths throughout.

The Aquarium and the city worked to renovate the eastern portion of Pier 59; they would like to open the pier so you could look out towards Elliott Bay. There would be a seamless expansion with Pier 60, open trapped area of water and focus on Restoration of near-shore habitat.

Tropical exhibit – important pedestrian functions would be maintained and enhanced; continue overlook walk on the roof of the building.

Aquarium plaza – Campus concept, which is more open and porous. There are operational challenges that still need to be addressed.

Increasing public access – opening up the piers to public access, this would allow for enhanced connection with Elliott Bay.

Porosity – These are not very welcoming examples of architecture; open up façade creating visibility into and out of Aquarium.

Improve nearshore habitat – waterfront park boardwalk would be removed; be able to see migratory salmon. Open triangle and create interpretation right at the front door.

Enhance view corridors – This new proposal would improve and enhance views for the public.

Honor Historic Structures – continue through restoration – changes to Waterfront Park would make pier 59 more visible.

Outreach – stakeholders meetings; presented draft master plan with a lot of support. The next meeting is July 13.

Next steps – City Council consideration allows them to continue with design process. They are hoping for approval by early 2016. Goal is to begin construction in 2019!!

Design for 62/63 has not been settled; the Aquarium would like to integrate those projects. Looking at how to phase rebuilding of piers; not more than memory holding it up. There will be glass blocks continuing up the waterfront above the seawall; which allows for a lot of light for the juvenile salmon.

Discussion

Commissioner Kincaid appreciates their maintaining the views and asks to be kept up to date. Bob adds he went to the Pike Place Market Groundbreaking. There was discussion of integrating the transition from the market to the waterfront and shift the walkway into Aquarium Plaza instead of a bottleneck. The roof level of the central building would be right at grade so you could go out on the roof at a spectacular fashion.

Commissioner Wright loves that they are paying attention to views and the pedestrian walkway around the building because it allows the public who are not going to the Aquarium experience the views.

Bob Davidson concludes as we think about this it is not our objective to be the biggest, but provide an authentic experience that follows the mission of the Aquarium.

Commissioner Tierney says they would like to stay engaged.

Presentation: Synthetic Field Subsurface - Alternative to Crumb Rubber

Presented by Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Written Briefing

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Park Commissioners
FROM: Andy Sheffer
DATE: June 12, 2014
SUBJECT: Infill Material for Synthetic Turf Replacement Project at Bobby Morris Playfield.

Requested Board Action

No formal action is requested. This is an opportunity for the Commissioners to be informed of the infill material selection for the Synthetic Turf Replacement Project at Bobby Morris Playfield.

Background

Synthetic turf fields require replacement approximately every ten years. In 2016, the field at Bobby Morris Playfield on Capitol Hill is scheduled for replacement. Seattle Parks and Recreation has selected to use TPE (Thermo plastic elastomer), a non-toxic and food grade plastic, as infill material to better assure the safety of users and decrease the tracking of material off the field. This direction is project specific and has not been approved as a standard to be used throughout the Department. Until a comprehensive study is conducted to assess the health risks of synthetic turf fields, the department has not made a decision on future synthetic turf field renovations or developments other than at Bobby Morris Playfield.

A recent health concern, highlighted by the media, asserts that crumb rubber pellets made from recycled tires, contain carcinogens that have potentially led to illness among athletes. There has been no clear investigation into the connection between cancer and crumb rubber infill. However, Seattle Parks and Recreation has elected to change infill materials on the Bobby Morris Playfield renovation project to reduce concerns that users are being harmed by materials used to make their fields.

The recently adopted Parks Legacy Plan highlights the Parks mission, values, outcomes and a basic services continuum. The decision to be pro-active and seek an alternative infill material on our only field to be renovated in 2016 stems from our Mission to provide safe opportunities to play and the Key Outcome of healthy people.

Other Considerations

- As one of the fastest growing cities in the country, our direction on this renovation will influence other cities and it will support the need for a thorough, science based, study of infill materials.
- Increasing density and increasing diversity change the demands for parks and recreation services thereby increasing the need for synthetic turf fields that offer year round scheduling and high performance standards equally distributed across the city.

Additional Information

Andy Sheffer

Email: Andy.sheffer@seattle.gov Phone: (206) 684-7041

Presentation

Andy is briefing the Park Board on the Bobby Morris Playfield and a new approach to the infill material. It is standard to replace the carpeting every 10 years.

The objective is to:

- provide a safe, high performance playing surface.
- seek an alternative infill material as a pilot project
- seek an overall design profile that supports an alternative infill material.
- replace entire synthetic surface of Bobby Morris Playfield to insure another 9 years of service.

Vicinity: South end of Cal Anderson park; it is widely used by sports groups and has turned into a patio for people cruising around in the summer.

There have been concerns associated with the correlation between crumb rubber infill and serious illnesses; there has not been a lot of research.

Parks wants to test out alternatives for playability and longevity and use healthier products out there; crumb rubber migrates, jumps, and degrades over the life of the project. The particles maintain their integrity.

Thermo Plastic Elastomer (TPE) is expensive material – take shock attenuation and put it in a layer underneath; this goes on top of gravel and aggregate and it is in great condition.

Crumb rubber is very static-y; it gets everywhere. From an environmental standpoint, the crumb rubber uses recycled tires, which is good.

Organic infill – very light and blows away; more successful but you have to water it; lots of maintenance.

TPE – food grade plastic – non-toxic; it is new material but it can be reused. TPE is expensive.

Nike grind is hard to obtain; has some of same levels of heavy metals as crumb rubber.

In the performance testing, the ball did not bounce as high and there is a different grip. To replace Bobby Morris Playfield will cost approximately \$250-270,000.

Discussion

Commissioner Bluewater asks how long TPE has been in use. Andy responds, for this specific application, perhaps 5 years. There have been big fields that have used it successfully, the infill is uniform in size and does not break down – which means it will not create compaction and will be an

easier surface. Another issue with crumb rubber was the size varied due to materials the manufacturers used to make their tires. Commissioner Kincaid feels it is a step forward.

Deputy Superintendent Williams thanks Andy for staying late; crumb rubber has been in the news a lot. The department feels like this is the right decision. He emphasizes this was a values based decision to allow for community peace of mind.

Superintendent's Report

Smoking ban – Became effective June 15; SPR staff have started to install public signs that say "Smell the Flowers, Not The Smoke." SPR requests a member of the Park Board to sit on the Smoking Ban Oversight Committee.

Park District Oversight Committee – SPR staff will be branding Park District projects to be clear with the public that SPR is doing the work. There will be sandwich boards that detail the scope of the project, the budget, and the specific investment initiative.

Performance Management – Division Directors submit draft dashboard reports for the performance management work happening; this will serve as the framework for all lines of business. Hope to be able to share the dashboard by July 15.

DSA Agreement – SPR signed an agreement with Downtown Services Association; a partnership that is an opportunity for fundraising, programming and activation. Seattle Parks and Recreation stipulated a \$60,000 match and DSA raised 650,000. The goal was not to displace people but make it more attractive to everyone. It took a long time to get there and Victoria and Cheryl did a great job.

Homeless – There will be 1st amendment demonstrations by homeless advocates in our parks - 25-50 campers in a park; these events have been permitted. The intention is to highlight the plight of homeless in the city. SPR is working with neighbors and SPD. They are exceedingly well behaved. There will be more of these.

Jackson golf course driving range grand opening on Saturday at 11am.

Big Day of Play – SPR throws this event every year and it is the marquis healthy lifestyle event at a Park; it provides a taste of everything the parks system has to offer. This takes place on Sunday at Mt Baker Rowing and Sailing Center.

Superintendent Aguirre should be getting off the plane any minute; he and his family have moved out. Be here officially July 5 or 6.

Old/New Business

Smoking Ban Oversight Committee – Lydia will sit on the Smoking Ban Oversight Committee.

Commissioner Albert moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Angulo seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 9:00 pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Tom Tierney, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners