



Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle 98109

Thursday, January 9, 2020

6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Commissioners:

Andréa Akita, Vice Chair

Dennis Cook

Marlon Herrera

William Lowe, Chair

Eliza Ramsey

Tom Byers

Jessica Farmer

Evan Hundley

Kelly McCaffrey

Welcome and Introductions

Andrea calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The board introduces themselves. Commissioner Akita asks for a motion to approve the consent items: January 9 Agenda, December 12 and November 9 meeting minutes. Commissioner McCaffrey corrects the December 12 minutes stating she was not in attendance. Commissioner Hundley moves, Commissioner McCaffrey seconds and the consent items are approved as amended.

Public Comment

Phil Hoffman – Mr. Hoffman lives 200 feet from Alki Beach; he recommends the Superintendent explore appropriate sites for the stone cottage. There are serious environmental issues that close to the shore – shoreline management, conservation zone, and a soil liquification zone at the proposed location. It is a flood prone area due to tidal action. The sea levels are rising and this is only going to continue. View preservation – He and others appreciate the conscious effort by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) to remove buildings and facilities from the view. The seawall's useful life is coming to an end and beginning to deteriorate. No one is prepared to deal with environmental and seawall issues.

Mike Shaughnessy – Alki Beach Stone Cottage Association; Mr. Shaughnessy provides background information regarding this project. The property was sold to a developer, SW Seattle Historical Society is working with the developer to save, relocate and restore the structure for donation to SPR. Mr. Shaughnessy attended a Board of Park Commissioners meeting six months ago to pitch this project to the Board. The group lobbied heavily, met with City and County Councilmembers, neighborhood associations, and community groups.

John Bennett – SW Seattle Historical Society; Mr. Bennett has been involved with restoring historic buildings for 45 years. He hopes to save this classic, wonderful, historic building.

Kathy Blackwell – President of SW Seattle Historical Society; this group is an integral part of West Seattle and works to promote local heritage through advocacy and collaboration with local community leaders. Examples of noteworthy projects of historic value: Alki Homestead; Campbell and Ham buildings. Their

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

experience will serve this project well. Preserve this piece of Alki history and make it useful to Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Tasia Williams - Curator of SW Seattle Historical Society – Eva Falk built this home in 1931 with her mother. Ms Williams provides a history of Eva Falk; her home is a symbol of the Admiral community during the Great Depression. Ms Falk and her family relied on their own resourcefulness to create their home.

Ken Workman – Duwamish tribal member; he is the great, great, grandson of Chief Seattle. 169 years ago, his ancestor welcomed the newcomers to the land. Hills, valleys and rocks resonate with the memory of his people. Preserve the cottage as well as possible because it is the living memory of the Duwamish people.

Bill Reid – save some of Seattle’s history so the younger generation can experience it.

Eugenia Woo – Historic Seattle; fostering lively community since 1974; Historic Seattle works with local groups to achieve positive outcomes. Historic Seattle supports their efforts.

Bill Pickard – Be’er Sheva Park Renovation Project; Mr. Pickard had a great series of meetings with Andy Sheffer, Director of Planning and Development Division. They have accomplished much. His group is approved as an official SPR partner to apply for Recreation and Conservation Office funding. They are advocating to include this project in the next Park District funding cycle. SPR is about equity and people, and this project aligns with the department’s values.

Superintendent’s Update

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

City councilmembers were sworn in on Monday; Councilmember Juarez will continue to chair Public Assets and Native Communities Committee. Alex Pederson, Kshama Sawant and Theresa Mosqueda will also be on the committee. They will meet only once a month which means ensuring good attendance at committee meetings. Superintendent Aguirre has met with Councilmember Pederson and continues weekly meetings with Councilmember Juarez.

The Strategic Plan is done. SPR is putting together a brief 2-pager for accessibility.

Financial plan will be informed by the Strategic Plan and all the outreach and input received from the public.

Zoo Nocturnal House insurance settlement – the Woodland Park Zoo will be reimbursed \$15.5 million for the fire that destroyed the Nocturnal House. SPR is working with the Zoo to discuss rebuilding.

Licton Springs – The spring and adjacent park were designated as a landmark. SPR staff are working with indigenous communities to determine appropriate interpretive signage.

Forecasts of snow – SPR is continuing to prepare for winter storms; snow could start as soon as Sunday night and the department feels ready.

The Mayor signed an Executive Order for the Green New Deal. It mandates that any new/modified buildings need to be carbon neutral. SPR is looking into electrifying leaf blowers and continuing to install charging stations at SPR facilities.

New Deputy Mayor – Deputy Mayor Moseley is retiring and SPR has really appreciated his support. The Mayor hired Casey Sixkiller, the former Chief Operating Officer for King County.

Briefing: Stone Cottage Concept at Alki Beach

Presented by Max Jacobs, Property and Acquisition Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

SW Seattle Historical Society proposes to move, manage, and maintain the Stone Cottage. It is currently located across the street from Don Armeni Park.

SPR is not clear about what kind of work will be required to upgrade the building to make it accessible and usable.

Operations and maintenance endowment has been offered by the Historical Society.

The SW Seattle Historical Society propose to locate it adjacent to the bathhouse.

SPR will need to go through a public process for this project to ask the community how they currently use that space. SPR staff are doing alternatives analysis to see if there are other suitable locations.

Max reviews the issues to consider, found in the briefing paper [here](#). He asks the Board for their input regarding the scope of outreach.

Next steps:

Are there implications with the Shoreline Management Act?

If a fair amount of money will be spent on this project, they should be considering sea level rise. The commissioners suggest Max speak with environmental scientists who may know.

This is a regional park; the Board suggest outreach to the broader community.

This is a neat opportunity to save this property. The commissioners suggest taking guidance from the Strategic Plan to assist in figuring out the needs this building could fulfil.

The Commissioners ask if there are other public landowners to talk with about the property. Are there intention to landmark this building?

Commissioner McCaffrey asks how SPR presents new park amenities? SPR tries to make the outreach more inclusive. Superintendent Aguirre adds that when SPR develops a park, they do a robust outreach with open ended options. The challenge for SPR is to ask if this project furthers the mission; Superintendent Aguirre says he tries to be firm with projects that will take openspace because people want to put things on park land all the time and it is important to really look at it from all angles.

Commissioner Ramsey asks if there is a documented need for a visitors center in Alki? She suggests staff think creatively about connections and services that could serve the regional community; a node to other services and ideas.

The Board commends the group for working on this project. The Commissioners appreciate the efforts toward preservation and for sharing their vision with the Board.

Presentation: Kubota Garden Master Plan

Joy Okazaki, Board President, Kubota Garden Foundation; Duane Dietz, Jones & Jones; Bob Hoshide, Hoshide-Wanzer Architects

Joy Okazaki, Chair of the Kubota Garden Foundation introduces the presenters and Kubota Garden Master Plan creators.

Bob Hoshide, Architect, has helped with many design elements of the garden.

Duane Dietz started in February 2018; he started by pulling together the collective knowledge of the community, SPR, and the history of the garden.

During the open houses, he realized Kubota Garden draws a global community and people use the gardens for many different reasons.

The three things that repeatedly came up in people's comments were wayfinding, improved security in the parking lots, and better restrooms.

The team first created a mission and guiding principles. Mr. Dietz says his biggest obligation was to honor the Kubota family intention.

The Plan

Don Brooks has taken care of the garden for 10 years with two other full-time gardeners.

The garden will continue to tell the Kubota family story.

They will create decision-making points to help people with wayfinding.

They hope to renovate the Japanese Garden to what it was in 1973. The Master Plan has design ideas for a new parking area, a visitors' center and restrooms; hoping to double the parking spaces. There may be a nursery area.

The park will need more staff once it is finished.

Bob Hoshide, the Architect on the project, started thinking about the visitors' center 18 years ago. At the time, Tom Kubota emphasized to Mr. Hoshide that the buildings do not matter as much as the gardens. Mr. Hoshide let this influence the way he designed the visitors' center and restroom buildings.

He reviews the plans which show small scale buildings with green roofs and wood beams hopefully salvaged from the garden. The buildings will be off to the side of the main path into the garden.

The Master Plan discusses ideal staffing – as renovations happen, increased staffing will need to happen at the same time. Currently there are 3 gardeners working on 11 acres which is not sufficient to maintain a garden of its size.

Next steps:

During the Terrace Overlook Project, the Kubota Garden Committee was formed. The committee is made up of SPR staff, gardeners, and community representatives. The Master Plan identifies project lists, deficiencies, and restoration which will require funding and gardeners.

Joy states they are starting to prioritize projects. There need to be changes to the current operating agreement. There are questions prompted by the process and documented increased visitorship. The Kubota Garden Foundation has kept stats for the last five years and surveyed visitors to find out who they were. They will conduct an operating study for the garden.

Over the past 30 years, the Kubota Garden Foundation has run most of the events and programs. The Foundation has received grant funding for projects; looking at sources for funding prior to master plan.

Programs – During busy weekends garden greeters are posted at the entrance to help people with questions. The Kubota Garden Foundation has expanded the tour programs for specialized populations. They offer classes in soap stone carving for youth and they have a new weeknight event - Jazz in the Garden.

“Fujitaro and His Garden” is a film about the garden and the screenings have been wildly popular. There is a book coming out and there will be events related to the book coming soon.

Kubota Gardens has a volunteer archivist who has collected much information, which can be found at densho.org (keyword: Kubota gardens). Giles Moorish and Don Brooks are the gardeners and they do a fantastic job.

The commissioners are looking forward to diving into the Master Plan and commend their work on the plan. They are impressed. The Board thank the presenters for coming.

Where are the assumptions? This is an update to the 1990 Master Plan so they did not need any.

The Kubota Garden Committee will address the fee for the garden during the operating study; the grant writers are all volunteers and have amassed \$1.7 million in active grants. There is also an exhibit at Gould Hall on the University of Washington Campus about the Garden.

She shares a list of the events for the book and movie, which can be found [here](#).

ConsultEcon out of Cambridge, Massachusetts will be doing the operating study for Kubota, they did the operating study for the Japanese Garden at the Washington Park Arboretum.

Commissioner Cook asks if there are any partnerships between Kubota and Rainier Beach Community Center. Joy responds they have an elementary education packet that goes to local schools; private schools have come and volunteered to do restoration; and, they had a session of garden greeters with Rainier Beach Action Coalition. They do not have the staff to do more partnership but are thinking about this for the future.

Old/New Business

Elections:

Commissioner Akita mentions it is time to elect a new chair and vice chair. The Board thank William for being chair for the last two years. Commissioners Akita and Farmer would like to serve as co-chairs for 2020. McCaffrey makes a motion to have Commissioners Akita and Farmer serve as co-chairs; and Commissioner Herrera seconds it. The Chairs are excited to work together.

Commissioner Hundley says he was co-chairing for a while and it worked well. Co-chairs allow for communication and deliberation about ideas. The Board votes unanimously to approve Commissioners Akita and Farmer as co-chairs. The motion carries.

Commissioner Akita says the Board will thank William for his leadership when they see him next.

The Commissioners ask what responsibility the Park Board members have for the joint meetings and whether they must attend the joint meetings. Rachel understands the Boards' confusion over

the roles for each Board and advises them that SPR staff are working to clarify very soon. SPR staff are working on the schedule for 2020 and hopes to distribute it to the commissioners in the next few days.

Paula Hoff, SPR Strategic Advisor, is working on a briefing paper with different options for the Board of Park Commissioners and Park District Oversight Committee.

Commissioner Herrera acknowledges that the Board plays and recreates on the ancestral land of the Duwamish people.

There being no other business, the Board of Park Commissioners adjourns.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Andréa Akita/Jessica Farmer, Co-Chairs
Board of Park Commissioners