

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 25, 2001

Present:

Bruce Bentley, Chair  
James Fearn  
Susan Golub  
Kathleen Warren

Absent:

Yale Lewis

Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent  
Michele Daly, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. The agenda consent items were approved as submitted including approval of the October 25 agenda, meeting minutes of October 11, 2001, correspondence from Kate Morgan, Mick Fish and Inge and Bruno Strauss regarding the illumination system at Sand Point Magnuson Park, letter to Ellen Taft, Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks letter regarding Olmsted Centennial Celebration 2003, Pro Parks Levy Open House schedule and brochure, news release announcing Ward Springs Park in Lower Queen Anne, and a copy of the New York Times article, The Parks We Deserve.

Sarah Neilson, a newly selected Park Board Commissioner, was introduced to the Board. Kate Pflaumer and Sarah were confirmed by the Council's Culture, Arts and Parks Committee on October 24. The confirmations go before the full City Council on Monday, October 29 for terms ending December 31, 2004.

**Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:** None

**Sand Point/Magnuson Park Vegetation Management Plan Briefing**

C. David Hughbanks, Sand Point Magnuson Park Director, informed the Board that a vegetation management plan for the park was launched in 2000. Plant inventories of selected park areas began in early 2001. A public involvement process began in June, which included neighborhood residents and park users to help shape the goals and strategies. Since 1974, a number of volunteer efforts for habitat and reforestation have taken place. The park faces a number of considerations such as the historic district status, designated adjacent planting areas, new program and activity uses of the grounds and structures, plus left over Navy horticultural plantings. The Plan will direct, manage and execute ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation and enhancement of the horticultural landscape of this developing park. Many groups and individuals already volunteer their time to restore the natural environment and keep things in good shape. This plan will help guide the volunteers as well as staff.

Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester, distributed a Project Summary of the Sand Point Magnuson Park Vegetation Management Plan and a copy of the draft Plan, prepared by Sheldon & Associates, Inc. and Arbutus Design to the Park Board members. The Plan reflects years of city-wide policies related to parks and open spaces with the City and also incorporates the intent of the legal documents that were the foundation of the transfer of lands of the Naval Station into public domain.

*Public Involvement Process:* Four public meetings were held between late June and mid-October. Public involvement also included meeting-related mailings to postal carrier routes adjacent to Sand Point (approximately 4,000-6,000 flyers) and a general mailing list, e-mails to neighborhood, citywide and regional organizations and announcements/articles in community and volunteer organization newsletters, notices posted at the Northeast Branch Library and Laurelhurst and Meadowbrook Community Centers, Project description and meeting times were also posted on the Sand Point/Magnuson Park website coordinated by Kevin Bergsrud.

All public meetings were jointly organized and led by Sand Point/Magnuson and Citywide Divisions, with consultant participation by Sheldon & Associates and Arbutus Design. Citizens have provided considerable comment at the meetings as well as by mail and e-mail. Public comment is summarized in Section 3.3 of the draft Plan. Core individuals have attended regularly, representing disparate perspectives. Citizens have provided considerable comment at meetings.

*Existing Vegetation Characterization:* This plan is intended to guide management of the park vegetation based on its current condition and configuration. Prescriptions for future landscape improvements are to be folded into this plan as they are completed. Plan development was based primarily on existing vegetation resource characterizations, supplemented by field documentation to fill specific gaps. Detailed scientific sampling of vegetation throughout the park was not attempted for this vegetation management plan, given the very large park acreage, budget and timeline constraints, and significant capital improvement-related changes anticipated in the landscape itself.

Magnuson Park habitat documentation is summarized in Section 3.2 of the draft plan. Additional documents contributing to the understanding of existing vegetation resources include an unadopted citizen generated reforestation plan for Promontory Point, archived historic planting plans for Sand Point, and the Sand Point Historic Properties Re-use and Protection (HPRP) Plan. Field documentation included a full inventory of all Historic District trees linked to the City GIS system, and qualitative characterizations of Historic District Zone understory and Forest Remnant Zone vegetation.

*Policy Research and Goalsetting:* Existing adopted plan and policy documents germane to park vegetation management were carefully reviewed and incorporated as underpinnings for the particular goals of the plan. Relevant policy is summarized in Section 2 of the draft. The stated goals are to 1) maintain, preserve and restore the historic integrity of the park, 2) regenerate the natural habitats of the park, 3) Promote stewardship and sustainability of the vegetation within the park, 4) provide for active and

passive recreation opportunities within the park and, 5) integrate the diversity of landscapes and uses within the park. Because of the park's complex history and heritage of committed public involvement, a deliberate effort was made to clearly establish policy linkages, both past-to-present and general-to-specific. Vegetation management recommendations in this plan reflect established development and resource stewardship policies of the park and the Department.

*Landscape Zone Delineation Goals and Treatment Recommendations:* The park was divided into ten Landscape Zones and distinct Management Areas within each zone. Delineation was based on vegetation types, patterns of use and geographic distinctions within the park. Section 4.1 of the draft plan identifies and describes these zones and areas.

Goals and objectives were established for each Landscape Zone and its component Management Areas, consistent with overarching policy and plan goals. These are laid out in Section 4.2

Zone by zone, detailed prescriptions for vegetation treatment is contained in Section 5. Each Landscape Zone's management area is discussed individually and a customized Management and Maintenance Annual Calendar provided. This section provides what, when, where and why guidance concerning recommended practices. Section 6 details the how of executing these practices, tailored to Sand Point/Magnuson Park. Together these sections constitute the "meat" of the plan in a format accessible to grounds staff, park management, University and tenants, and community volunteers. Practices fall into nine categories ranging from planting to mulching to weeding and invasive control.

*Implementation and Monitoring:* Plan implementation is discussed in Section 7 with recommendations divided between Ongoing Maintenance, Specific Projects (which go beyond routine maintenance) and management of Formal Landscapes, Maintenance and project priorities are given, with guidance concerning whom to appropriately involve in which management activities.

Monitoring needs and approaches are covered in Section 8, for the Department to measure both the effectiveness of routine park maintenance and the success of landscape restoration projects. Monitoring provides measurable means to determine if the goals and objectives the plan are being met.

*Major Issues Addressed:* Three major issues emerged early in the public involvement process and have persisted throughout development of the plan for this park. These represent the diverse interests of Sand Point/Magnuson's local and regional constituencies. The issues are:

## VIEWS

Issue: Residents of the Viewridge community have expressed concern for the loss of views over the park to the near shore of Lake Washington. Local neighbors and other

citizens have voiced concerns that private interests not be put ahead of the broad public benefits associated with park vegetation enhancements.

Response: The plan focuses on meeting the goals and objectives for the Park landscape consistent with adopted policies. The preservation of views within the park is mandated by the Sand Point HPRP Plan, and addressed in the Vegetation Management Plan. Private views over the park are not specifically addressed. The full implementation of the plan will potentially affect offsite views over the long run, however the change will be more favorable than if no vegetation management was planned. The issue is briefly discussed in Section 3.3.

There are approximately 900-1100 single-family homes in the area of NE 61st to NE 77th over to approximately 50th Avenue Northeast.

## HABITAT

Issue: Concern that diverse habitat types be maintained and restored within the park potentially conflicting with recreational use of park land, preservation of private views and removal of invasive plants which provide existing wildlife habitat.

Response: Habitat improvement is a key goal of this plan. The plan acknowledges conflicting perspectives concerning habitat, and offers recommendations that strive for a balance. For example, no invasive shrubbery is to be removed in Habitat and Shoreline Zones without simultaneous replacement with native species, using an incremental rather than a wholesale approach. Likewise, passive recreational use areas will be retained, not converted to habitat plantings. The goal is to preserve and enhance vegetation communities to benefit habitats, especially for birds.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Issue: Concern that Sand Point's historic landscape character be retained, respected and restored, that it is currently neglected and its importance ignored. Countervailing desire that all tall historic Deodar cedars be removed and replaced with short tree species.

Response: The plan follows legal dictates of the Sand Point HPRP Plan and its deed covenant, that all contributing historic landscape features be preserved and maintained, including most Deodar cedars within the district. Past topping will necessitate extensive future tree work and removals to abate hazards, with replacement in kind. A higher level of attention to the park's historic plantings is recommended.

The groundwork that was established for the Vegetation Management Plan will be a part of the EIS. The plan is an assessment of what is in place and how it will be managed. It identifies a seasonal schedule for each Management Area. Clear direction is provided as to what should be done, where it should be done, and when it should be done.

A Wetland Forum was held last spring and a wetland planning charette was held last June. The goal was to determine what type of wetlands should be developed on site, how they would contribute to drainage for the Community Campus, how they would fit into the biosystems around Lake Washington, and what long-term educational programs will

be developed. It provided information about the general value of wetlands and the specific drainage needs of Sand Point/Magnuson Park. There are 8 or 9 different types of wetlands. It has been proposed to place wetlands on different levels to help move the water. The existing natural drainage on the peninsula is inadequate to maintain usable sportsfields. Fifteen sportsfields are proposed with four natural turf fields in the Sports Meadow and eleven synthetic turf fields lit with the latest lighting technology which will limit impacts to the community. It is important that a drainage system be developed to enable the future development of the fields and other key components of the parks part of the park. Additional funding of \$3 million has been approved in the Pro Parks Levy to complete the design and begin development. A trail is proposed around the wetlands. Bicycle controls are being addressed in the Berger Plan. Landscaped walkways will connect the wetlands to the community campus, run through the sportsfields and also provide shade and rest areas for sports participants and game spectators.

The Magnuson Environmental Stewardship Alliance and the Seattle Audubon Society used a \$100,000 Neighborhood Matching Fund grant to begin the rehabilitation of Promontory Point with northwest native plants, shrubs and trees. An 18-month volunteer-driven effort has helped restore the Point to a more natural setting. Nearly 200 volunteers have worked to plant more than 3,000 native plants. They also worked to refurbish several critical trail sections, installed new signs, built a covered shelter and led the design and planting of a butterfly garden by Northwest Montessori grade school students. The stewardship of this area will continue under the watchful eye of MESA.

The Department is working with View Ridge Community Council at the NE 65th entrance and will be planting newly acquired vegetation on November 10 with the help of the Downtown Rotary. The plants will be planted in such a way that they will not be disturbed by bike trails, lighting and pedestrian walkways View Ridge received a \$25,000 grant and \$10,000 was received from Pro Parks.

Eddie Bauer Corporation participated in a Volunteer Day of Caring at Sand Point/Magnuson. There were approximately 550 people working in the park for six hours. They donated \$30,000. They enjoyed the activities and want to volunteer again next year.

The Park Board has scheduled a Draft Sand Point/Magnuson Park Vegetation Management Plan public hearing on November 8 at 100 Dexter Avenue North at 7:00 p.m. Attached to the Draft plan are eleven pages of public comment received to date.

## **2002 Budget Briefing**

Sarah Welch, Director of Finance, Budget & Administrative Services, distributed a copy of the City Budget Office "2002 Budget Revisions" letter to Department Heads dated October 16, 2001. Additional budget revisions are necessary because of the weakening economy, the uncertain impact of September 11, and the prospect of Initiative 747 passing. The Budget Office had already asked for city departments to help to remedy the sizable hold in 2001 through additional savings generated by the hiring freeze and lapsing the budgets at the end of the year. The City now faces the prospect of an additional \$12

million economy-related shortfall in 2001. This number could change as more information is gathered in the coming weeks.

The Parks and Recreation Department has been directed to take a \$1.4 million General Fund budget cut and provide a reduction plan to the City Budget Office by October 29. That gives the Budget Office one week to turn it into a plan that can be submitted to the City Council for its consideration on November 8. In developing the reduction plan, the actions will be ranked in preferred order of implementation and if the proposed actions will impact other departments. The Budget Office also requests any information about federal, state or county budget proposals that could affect the 2001 and 2001 spending plans. This information will help the Mayor to evaluate actual reduction levels that he will recommend to the City Council, providing him some flexibility to select among difficult choices.

Sarah referenced the Department's mission and goals and reviewed the programs, funding and staffing. A chart showing the 2002 General Fund distribution of cuts and 2002 mid-biennial budget balancing was included in the presentation. The Department's Finance Division has been speaking with Parks' partners. As an example, a meeting was recently held with the Associated Recreation Council Board (ARC) to get their input on possible budget reduction proposals. Community center hours are being reviewed. Sunday operation has low attendance and one proposal is to have one or two centers open in each geographical area, not seventeen centers open on Sundays. Another suggestion made at the meeting was to ask for ARC's help to rent out the centers on days that city staff cannot be provided.

The Superintendent noted the Department was looking at administrative costs as well as service cuts. James Fearn inquired about supplanting the Pro Parks Levy. It is an issue and any time a cut was proposed it was reviewed with the levy in mind. Kathleen Warren asked when the Department is discussing budget cut impacts if they are also reviewing which populations will be impacted. The Department is reviewing the population impacts and did discuss this issue with ARC. Advisory Councils may be able to step up and provide staffing at some of the centers. Kathleen would like to encourage the Pack it in – Pack it out program and ways we could use some of the garbage collection costs. The pilot study results of the Pack it in – Pack it out program will be presented to the Park Board at a future meeting.

Susan Golub inquired about day care subsidies. The advisory councils run most of the programs and the fees cover their direct costs but they do not cover all the costs such as the utilities at this time. The Superintendent recently attended park directors meetings and the issue of the value of parks in times of crisis was on everyone's agenda. Parks provide a service that the community wants, needs and supports and the various nationwide directors want any budget cuts fairly distributed. The Park Board will be kept apprised of the budget status.

### **Superintendent's Report**

- The Superintendent attended a local task force meeting in Vancouver, Washington today. The task force is comprised with several legislators and park officials from around the state. Chris Towne is the chair of the Task Force, which is reviewing potential ways for the state to support park maintenance and operations.
- The State has frozen capital funding which impacts the South Lake Union wharf project. In order to meet the fish window the wharf project needs to go to bid. The Department is working on an appeal and waiver for funding.
- The Council CAP Committee approved reconfiguration of the upland portion of the off-leash area at Sand Point/Magnuson Park.
- Pro Parks – Parks has finalized the purchase of two acres in the Thornton Creek neighborhood. This is the fourth Pro Parks acquisition bringing the total acreage of new parks and green space to 12 acres.
- Pro Parks Open Houses are being held. The first open house was held last Saturday at South Lake Union. Three additional open houses are planned over the next couple of weeks.
- Northgate Community Center – An offer is being made to Simons for the Bank property on 5th Avenue Northeast.
- High Point Community Center Addition – work on the design program is underway. A community meeting is scheduled for November 27 at High Point to present the design program.
- Lower Woodland Park Field #1 Lighting – work on this project is progressing as planned. DCLU has recommended to the City Council that relief from the height restrictions of the Land Use Code be granted. The height restriction exemption would allow the installation fixtures high enough to limit light trespass beyond the site.
- Week Without Violence – Approximately 650 teens were involved in activities.
- Rowing –The Green Lake youth rowing team competed at the Head of the Charles regatta in Boston last weekend. The junior boys finished 4th out of 35 crews. Michelle Bounds, daughter of the Superintendent, was the coxswain for the shell.
- Genesee Park Grand Opening – October 27th is the grand opening of the synthetic soccer field – the first Pro Parks funded field project.
- Baby Giraffe –a newborn giraffe died early this morning. A necropsy is being scheduled to determine the cause of death.
- Baby elephant “Hansa” will be celebrating her first birthday on November 3. A birthday party is being planned at the zoo and a \$2 off admission coupon is valid now through the end of the year.
- Robert Mejia-Trejo earned the USTA/Pacific NW Multicultural Participation Outstanding Volunteer Service Award. This award honors an individual who has made significant contributions in community outreach to multicultural populations.

### **Items of Interest to the Board**

- Susan Golub suggested a Park Board Retreat be scheduled. A retreat will be planned for the first of the year. Camp Long was suggested as a possible retreat site.
- A citizen recently complained to Kathleen Warren about the Alki Beach fire pits. Kathleen wondered if other complaints have been received. The Superintendent would like to have the fire pits designed and built to close and be locked so there is control and possibly require permits for the fires. The permits would help regulate what gets burned in the fires. The Department is working on the fire pit issue and searching to see if there is a pit prototype. Currently a backhoe is used to clean the fire pits. The question of how many fire pits is also being addressed.
- Olmsted Centennial Celebration 2003 – A motion was made by Kathleen Warren and seconded by James Fearn to partner with the Seattle Friends of Olmsted Parks to work on the celebration. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Bentley, Chair