



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 28, 2014

TO: Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission

FROM: Michael Shiosaki, Director, Planning and Development Division,
Seattle Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Seattle Parks and Recreation "Thank You Seattle" signs for land-banked sites funded by the Parks and Green Spaces Levy

Summary

Seattle Parks and Recreation seeks the guidance of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission on the specific wording being proposed for temporary Parks and Recreation signs to be posted at land-banked sites.

Background

Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) has purchased dozens of neighborhood park and green space sites across the City with acquisition funds from the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy. Parks purchased the sites in neighborhoods deficient of green space. To thank Seattle voters for their support, Parks traditionally posted a 'Thank You Seattle' sign after each acquisition is completed to inform voters that the acquisition is complete and to thank voters for their support of the Levy. Parks is about to produce signs for the next group of sites that have been acquired over the past year or so. These temporary signs are posted for approximately one year.

Due to the economic downturn, Parks made the decision that the neighborhood park sites that have been acquired over the past several years have been 'landbanked.' Landbanking means that the sites are being held as is, receive very basic maintenance (occasional litter pick up and weed cutting) and not developed until future development and maintenance and operations funds are available.

Parks receives many questions about the future of these landbanked sites, so providing some basic information on the thank you signs about the plans for these sites has been proposed. Please see the attached sign example.

The related issue to the wording on the temporary signs is the potential upcoming Parks funding initiative. Parks is currently working with a Citizens' Advisory Committee in

preparation for a Parks funding initiative of some kind going before Seattle voters in August 2014.

Parks seeks guidance on whether to include the following wording on the thank you signs:

“Development of this site is dependent on future funding.”

Does it potentially cross a line in advocating for future funding or is it simply factual?

Parks believes that this statement is basic information and should be included regardless of a future Parks funding initiative going before Seattle voters.

The wording is consistent with other information posted on the Seattle Parks and Recreation website. A Frequently Asked Questions document dated November 21, 2013 regarding land-bank sites includes the following statement:

“Where and when is development funding going to be found?”

The Department does not know exactly when or where the development funding will come from. The most likely source is a future Parks Levy, which is currently being planned for a summer/fall 2014 ballot.”

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.

Attachment