

Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
July 14, 2005

***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present: Kate Pflaumer, Chair  
Angela Belbeck  
Terry Holme  
Jack Collins  
Debbie Jackson  
Amit Ranade

Temporary

Leave: Joanna Grist

***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Ken Bounds, Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

This meeting was held at South Lake Union Armory to accommodate the larger-than-usual attendance. Commission Chair Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. **Commissioner Belbeck moved approval of the May 26 minutes and Commissioner Holme seconded. Vote was taken and passed unanimously. Commissioner Holme moved approval of the June 9 minutes and Commissioner Belbeck seconded. Vote was taken and passed unanimously. Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the June 23 minutes and consent items. Commissioner Collins seconded. Vote was taken and passed unanimously.**

## **Superintendent's Report**

Ken Bounds, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, reported on the following:

Meadowbrook Playfield Vandalized: Commissioners and the audience may hear news reports of vandalism committed at Meadowbrook Playfield, including turf and fence damage and trees pulled from the ground. This playfield underwent extensive renovation in 2004.

Seattle Supersonics to Fund Renovation of Van Asselt Basketball Court: The Sonics have agreed to sponsor and fund the renovation of the basketball courts at Van Asselt Community Center. The current tennis courts will be converted to basketball courts. This will make it possible to complete the major components of the project, including the addition of multi-purpose and activity spaces for the community center, landscaping, and playground improvements. The Sonics organization continues to be a supportive partner to Parks' improvements and programming.

Summer Swim Lessons: Almost 8,000 children signed up for group swimming lesson instruction at Parks' swimming pools this summer. In addition to the group lessons, about 2,000 private lessons are also scheduled. Summer beaches also offer swimming instruction as a free beginning level program which runs in two-week sessions. The first session is now underway with 35 children enrolled; 8 of these enrollments are at the newly-reopened Pritchard Beach.

Salmon Fishing Season: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have announced that there will not be a Sockeye fishing season on Lake Washington this year due to an unexpectedly low fish count. This greatly-reduced fish run is of concern for recreational and tribal fisheries. There is an expected revenue impact to Seattle Parks from reduced boat ramp use on Lake Washington. Elliott Bay is open for six weekends of salmon fishing and many boaters have shifted to this location.

Walking for Senior Adults: As part of the Department's Healthy Initiative, the senior adult coordinator for Central East District is building a strong walking program. Almost 75 walkers are registered in this program, including walkers from Horizon and Exeter House using the Freeway Park Loop Trail, members of the Vietnamese Senior Association walking to and from Garfield Community Center, and another group of seniors who walk in the Washington Park Arboretum.

Yee Tennis Center Selected: In a national competition, the U.S. Post Office has selected the Amy Yee Tennis Center as the launch site for the new Arthur Ashe postage stamp. Details will be available closer to the September 1 launch date.

Safeco Donation: Safeco has agreed to donate \$10,000 to Seattle Parks for the purchase of play equipment for Lakeridge Playground and will participate in the installation, planned for August or September.

Beach Naturalist Program a Whopping Success! The beach conservation program has reached more than 6,800 visitors on local beaches this summer. The popular program is co-sponsored by the Seattle Aquarium, King County Department of Natural Resources, and several other local institutions.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

North Teen Life Center Dedication: The North Teen Life Center will be officially dedicated on Friday, July 22, 7:00 p.m. The dedication festivities will include food, demos and music with a Teen Dance to follow at 7:30pm.

Happy Birthday Playland! This summer marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Playland, a 12-acre amusement park that operated for 31 years on the grounds where the Bitter Lake Community Center now sits. To celebrate, the community center has invited the Shoreline Historical Society to put on a presentation about the history of Playland. The event will take place on July 19 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. and will feature old film reels, photographs, and exhibits.

Special Events at Magnuson Park: On July 8, Circus Contraption resumed its run of The Great American Dime Museum; with show times at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through July 30 in the Magnuson Community Center Auditorium.

Meadowbrook Teen Life Center Dedication: On Friday, July 22, at 7:00 p.m., Parks will host a short ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly-completed and opened Meadowbrook Teen Life Center. This new community center, just for teens, was renovated with \$515,000 in Pro Parks Levy funds. The Meadowbrook Advisory Council gave a generous donation to fund a fully-equipped kitchen.

## **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. No one signed up to testify.

## **Briefing/Public Hearing: Loyal Heights Playfield**

Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks' project planner, presented a briefing on Loyal Heights Playfield improvements. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing; both are included in these minutes. In addition to the written briefing, the Board also received Loyal Heights Playfield Field Surface Conversion Approved Schematic Plan; Loyal Heights

Playfield Color Orthophoto; Loyal Heights Playfield Record from Parks Historic Sherwood Files; Loyal Heights Ball Field Parking Study Draft; Field Conversion Priorities from the Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program; Loyal Heights Playfield Current and Project Hours of Field Use After Synthetic; Project Advisory Team Meeting #1 Draft Summary; Project Advisory Team Meeting #2 Draft Summary; Draft Proposals Submitted to Project Advisory Team on 6/13 and 6/22; and community meeting summaries from March 1, April 26, and June 14.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Action Requested**

On July 14, Parks staff will provide a briefing and a public hearing will be held on the Loyal Heights Playfield Improvement project. On July 28, Parks staff will seek your recommendation on the project to the Parks Superintendent.

#### **Project Intent**

The Pro Parks Levy provides \$2.3 million to plan, design and construct improvements to the existing Loyal Heights Playfield. As currently proposed, the existing grass field will be resurfaced with synthetic material, fences will be replaced, and the existing bathrooms upgraded for Universal access. Existing field lights will be retained and new lights will not be added as part of this project. The Loyal Heights complex is located at 2101 NW 77<sup>th</sup> St. in the Crown Hill section of Ballard.

#### **Project Background**

In the late 1990s, representatives from Parks, the Seattle School District, and the community developed a Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program (JAFDP) that identified lighted athletic fields to be improved to meet the demand of dramatically increased field use Citywide.

The JAFDP was approved by City Council in 1999 and updated in 2002. The JAFDP states that “*the Pro Parks Levy provides funding to upgrade and improve play surfaces and field amenities. Proposed JAFDP improvements include convert field surface to synthetic, softball / little league and soccer / football / multi-use field sport fields, replace field lights, backstops and goals.*”

In accordance with the JAFDP, the 2000 Pro Parks Levy provided sufficient funds to replace the grass athletic field at Loyal Heights with a synthetic surface, allowing year-round, all-weather use and improved quality of play. The specific Levy language for this project is to “*Upgrade and improve play surfaces and field amenities.*”

#### **Design**

The Loyal Heights complex is 6.7 acres (about 300,000 square feet). A little less than half of the complex (125,000 square feet) is an athletic field and will continue in that use. The rest of complex includes a 16,000 square foot community center, 64,000 square feet of flat lawn and playground, and several sloped buffer areas, some of which are used for community sledding. The complex does not have any dedicated, on-site parking.

The design for Loyal Heights Playfield Improvements includes athletic field surface replacement, fence replacement to allow greater community access, and bathroom, pathway and entry improvements for Universal access. Funds for underground electrical upgrades that will allow for future field light replacement have been allocated.

#### **Public Process**

The project was discussed at community meetings on March 1, April 26 and June 14. In addition, a Project Advisory Team (PAT) met on June 1, June 13, and June 22 to discuss improvements to the athletic field that could benefit the community and parking and traffic analysis.

Some of the ideas PAT members discussed include furnishings, fences, entries, plantings and pathways that could make the project more “community-friendly.” Some PAT members suggested removing field lines so that the synthetic would not seem dedicated only to athletics. All PAT members strongly supported replacing field lights. PAT members also encouraged additional parking studies and analysis of ways to mitigate parking and traffic impacts. Two PAT members also brought designs for discussion that reduced the amount of synthetic surface.

The three community meetings were contentious, and divided between community members who preferred to leave the athletic field as grass and those who preferred a synthetic field replacement.

About 150 people in total attended at least one of the three community meetings and their comments were recorded at each meeting. Summaries of the community meetings and PAT materials are attached. An additional 200 emails, letters, and phone calls were also recorded expressing a variety of positions. Some community members were disappointed with the public process because the decision to replace the existing field with synthetic was made prior to the start of the project through the JAFDP without significant local neighborhood input. Most of the comments, however, were in support or opposition of upgrading the grass athletic field with synthetic material. The main arguments on each side of the issue are summarized below, followed by Parks responses:

### **In favor of project**

- 1. Synthetic will allow for safer play on undamaged fields without holes, bare spots, or other tripping hazards.** New synthetic surfaces such as FieldTurf are safer than grass when tested for impact. Impact numbers often increase on worn grass fields and hard-packed dirt. It is true that grass is favored for play by many athletes. Unfortunately, grass wears out very quickly unless well cared for and played on sparingly. In high use situations such as urban athletic fields, grass just doesn't hold up over time. Holes and bare spots are a problem. Studies based on old AstroTurf-type surfaces show increased injuries but studies do not show increased injuries for new synthetics.
- 2. Synthetic will allow for year-round play and play in light rain conditions that had caused game cancellations.** Currently the Loyal Heights field is closed from mid-November through early March so that the grass athletic field can be restored. Scheduled hours are anticipated to increase during winter months. The Loyal Heights Playfield was scheduled 1,507 hours in 2004. Parks anticipates an additional 1,066 hours will be scheduled from August through February after the field is upgraded.
- 3. Synthetic will allow for play by Ballard youth Challenge Leagues, which has been forced to travel for play outside of Seattle for ADA compatible surfaces.** Currently the Challenge League goes to Woodinville for their games.
- 4. Synthetic surfaces may discourage frequent illegal use of the field by off-leash dogs.** An athletic field is not a lawn or place for off-leash dogs. All dog use of athletic fields is currently illegal according to the Seattle Municipal Code.
- 5. Synthetic will allow for additional practice and play by the primary users of the fields – Ballard Youth Soccer, Ballard Junior Football, and Ballard Little League – by teams that often need to travel to fields outside of the City. Loyal Heights is the only 90' baseball field in Ballard that Ballard Little League can use.** The majority of practice and games currently scheduled on this field are Ballard teams. Ballard teams would continue to be the majority users as many local teams now must travel to other parts of the city and to different cities to find athletic fields for both practice and play.
- 6. Loyal Heights Playfield, since its development in 1945, has always been an athletic field.**

### **Opposed to project**

- 1. Loyal Heights is a neighborhood park and should not be changed to a synthetic field because it would lose its community feel.** Parks supports a variety of programs at the Loyal Heights complex and throughout the city. Loyal Heights has a play area, grass picnic lawn, and a community center that support many important community activities. The field has historically been an athletic field and will continue that use with a synthetic surface.
- 2. Loyal Heights Playfield is small, has little park buffer between the field and single family housing, is located away from arterials, and has no dedicated parking. Parking is insufficient with current field use and parking and traffic will increase with proposed changes.** A parking study (attached) by CTS Engineers was conducted on 4/23/05, on a Saturday morning when the Community Center was open and both baseball and softball fields were fully scheduled. Their conclusions were that existing parking is sufficient for this upgrade. No off-street parking is provided for the playfield or Community Center. While no additional parking is required, the

community perception of traffic congestion and limited parking may continue with this upgrade. Parks will work with SDOT to ameliorate nearby parking and traffic impacts.

3. **Grass athletic fields provide oxygen, wildlife habitat, and picnic and play opportunities that would be lost with surface replacement. Ballard has too few open spaces.** As a synthetic field, this space remains a valuable, usable open space for the Ballard community. There is no change to its current designation. The community will have access to the field, much as it does now. A synthetic field is also an environmental win to the community for many reasons: it doesn't need water and fertilizer; doesn't need cutting, so there is no noise and air pollution; reuses products that would go to waste; improves quality of runoff water; and it produces no dust or pollen in the air.
4. **Replace only the soccer goal areas and baseball infields with synthetic to save money and replace lights.** If only the soccer goal areas and baseball infields were replaced with synthetic, the field would still be unusable in the winter months. The wear pattern on the field also centers on the football/soccer area at the middle of the athletic field. Parks agrees that the field lights at Loyal Heights do not well-serve the local community or athletes. Wiring for new lights is budgeted as part of this project and Parks is looking at a variety of funding sources to upgrade lights as soon as possible.
5. **Not enough money will be available in the city budget to replace the field when it needs to be replaced in 10 years.** All Parks facilities need to be periodically upgraded or replaced including grass fields, playgrounds and community centers. Parks budgets reflect these major maintenance projects and are adjusted to meet existing needs. Reports have shown that an investment in a synthetic field, especially one that is lighted and can be used for play after dark, is a better investment than a grass field. A single synthetic field can offset the demand on many other grass fields, thereby freeing up resources. A synthetic field costs a fraction of what a grass field costs to maintain. Like synthetic fields, grass fields also have high capital costs as they need periodic resurfacing.
6. **Community concern about infection risks, toxicity of synthetic material, and effect of field runoff on salmon.** Health and safety issues associated with synthetic field materials were evaluated and found benign by Parks' Hazardous Materials Supervisor. A thorough evaluation of grass versus synthetic surfaces was done by the Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission for King County. Based on economics, safety and environmental concerns, this report recommends synthetic infill surfaces, like the one proposed for Loyal Heights, whenever possible instead of grass. King County conducted laboratory and field studies and determined in-fill synthetic surfaces are safer for the environment than grass. They were so convinced by the evidence, they granted a permit for Redmond to install a three-field synthetic surface within 100 yards of a Class II salmon stream.

### **Project Schedule**

Construction documents will be completed May 2006. Park construction will begin in August (to allow field use through the busy summer season) and completed by the end of the 2006.

### **Project Budget**

Project funding for planning, design and construction, is \$2,315,658 from Pro Parks Levy.

### **Additional Information**

Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks Planner, 684-7033; or [cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov](mailto:cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov)  
<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/loyalheightsplayfield.htm>

### ***Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers***

Michael Shiosaki, Manager of Seattle Parks Pro Parks Levy, gave a brief introduction of this Pro Parks Levy project. He described the budget as \$2.3 million and gave an overview of the public meetings and the role of the Project Advisory Team (PAT). Parks staff conveyed to the community that guidance for this project was taken from the Pro Parks Levy and the Joint Athletic Field Development Plan (JAFDP).

Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks' project manager, next described the project. Several large maps and drawings were displayed. The total Loyal Heights complex consists of 6-1/2 acres, or approximately 300,000 sq. ft. She described the project's main objective as replacing the existing grass athletic field with a synthetic surface, which is also the most costly portion of the project. The area proposed to be replaced with synthetic turf is 125,000 sq. ft. Other portions of the project include upgrading the existing restrooms, replacing or reconfiguring fences, and making minor landscape and furnishing improvements. Parks is looking for additional funding to improve the field lights.

Ms. Tuttle described the public involvement process and gave a verbal summary of the third PAT meeting, as a written summary is not yet available. Ms. Tuttle gave details on traffic impact concerns that were voiced at that meeting. PAT members asked for an additional and more extensive traffic study. Ms. Tuttle noted that the first traffic study was performed on a Saturday morning, during ball games and when the community center was also in use. The traffic consultant, CTS Engineers, concluded that parking was tight, but adequate. At the request of the PAT, a second traffic study was performed on Tuesday, July 5, a weekday evening. The traffic consultant concluded that area parking was heavily used, but adequate. Ms. Tuttle stated that with a synthetic surface, more games can be scheduled [due to better field condition.] However, more games cannot be scheduled for the same time. There is currently no on-site parking for the park, and none will be added in this project.

Ms. Tuttle briefly reviewed the briefing paper attachments the Commissioners previously received.

### ***Board Questions & Answers***

Commissioner Collins asked if there are plans to upgrade the lighting. Ms. Tuttle answered that plans are for \$350-400,000 to be spent on lighting in the next year or so.

Commissioner Holme asked, if the field becomes all synthetic, is the intent for the baselines to be synthetic. Ms. Tuttle answered yes, and that the baselines will also be a different color. Commissioner Holme asked about citizen correspondence that suggested re-alignment of the ballfield and the soccer fields to make better dual use of the athletic field. Ted Holden, Seattle Parks' landscape architect, answered that when the suggestion was made he took a quick look at it. It looks doable; however, the existing lights indicate where the corners of the football, and the much wider soccer field, must be. If it is possible to do this, staff will make this change. Commissioner Holme noted that the JAFDP spreadsheet included in the agenda packet referred to the original Genesee Playfield as a sand field, when it was actually a grass field. Parks staff noted this correction.

Commissioner Belbeck asked what kind of striping will be used on a synthetic field. Ms. Tuttle described the striping as a woven, carpet-like fiber that can be different colors. At the third PAT meeting, members asked if the synthetic field were installed, could it be unstriped so that the lines could be temporary. This has been done at other synthetic fields. Commissioner Belbeck asked that a sample of the striping be brought to the July 28 meeting and Ms. Tuttle agreed to do so.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarification that with a synthetic field, the infield would not be dirt. Ms. Tuttle answered yes, that it wouldn't be dirt. Commissioner Jackson asked for clarification on which softball people this is "okay" with and Ms. Tuttle answered the Little League representatives from Ballard, Loyal Heights, and Salmon Bay.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked about drainage qualities of synthetic fields and Ms. Tuttle answered that synthetic has excellent drainage. Commissioner Pflaumer asked for an explanation of the anticipated savings. Ms. Tuttle answered that the big savings is that synthetic fields need no mowing, striping, or routine maintenance. In addition, it requires no watering. Costs for maintaining the synthetic field is estimated at \$5,000 yearly, for the marking comber.

### ***Public Hearing***

The Public Hearing began. The Chair reminded the audience that each person has up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. A total of 24 citizens testified; a very brief summary of their comments follows.

**Jim Anderson:** He lives in Loyal Heights and is a member of Neighbors for Natural Spaces in Ballard, [www.noplasticgrass.com](http://www.noplasticgrass.com). He supports the proposal — with modifications of synthetic on infields only and new lights. He described the history of this jewel of a park and compared it to a courtyard for the neighborhood. It is a small park in a residential section and has no nearby arterials, as do most other athletic fields in the city. It has always had mixed use, with a balance of families and organized sports usage. This mix has worked for the 60-year history of the park. Synthetic turf cannot provide that balance and it will be a sad loss. An argument that will probably be heard is that to be pro-kids, a synthetic field must be supported. His group has kids and they completely reject that argument. They support synthetic on both infields, new lights, and he pointed to the maps to show a reconfiguration of the football field that could be done a couple of times yearly to lessen damage to the grass.

**Mark Ruebel:** He stated that Parks staff has done an admirable job at the public meetings, but he and other community members don't believe that nearby citizens have had adequate input. The synthetic field is an intrusion; however, his biggest concern is increased use of the field with inadequate parking and an antiquated lighting system. He voted for the Pro Parks Levy and wants to see continued athletic field development in the city, but Loyal Heights is located in a very residential neighborhood and there is inadequate parking to accommodate the increased usage from a synthetic field. When the Saturday parking study was done, it was during baseball games. Football season is the high use time. During football season, 4-5 teams may show up at one time, impacting the neighborhood. In the City's athletic field lighting study, Loyal Heights was #1 for having the lights replaced and he doesn't believe this need has been adequately addressed.

**Karen Rathe:** Her husband, Kevin Donnelly, recently received a letter from the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation regarding the Loyal Heights project. She read her husband's responses to each of the points made in the letter. Included in Mr. Donnelly's response: artificial turf is no safer than grass and more injuries may occur on hotter days on artificial turf; silica dust from artificial turf may be released into the atmosphere; the life expectancy of artificial turf is unknown and may be much less than the 15 years Field Turf claims; lower maintenance costs are not necessarily gained from artificial turf; Parks could construct a less costly system to water the grass field than the current Rainbird system; feces and gum removal from artificial turf will be problematic; expected gasoline savings from not mowing could be negated by the gasoline required by equipment to remove and haul the grass away and install the artificial turf; and claims of reduced herbicide use were inaccurate as Parks uses little herbicides at this park now.

**Lisa Bellefond:** She thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to voice her opinion. Ballard has little open space and this site is a big portion of what is there. She believes the plan to modify half the natural surface to synthetic is out of scale and will be a big detriment to the community. Loyal Heights is currently a park for everyone and has multiple uses. Plastic is not appealing for some of the current uses. Don't take this away from the community.

**John Floberg:** He wants the field to stay as grass and asked Parks to explore converting other fields to synthetic and to expand parks in Ballard.

**Bill Dunnell:** He is a Ballard resident and he and his family play soccer. He also coaches and manages teams. He does not support this synthetic athletic field, nor does everyone in athletic groups support the effort. He referred to the five elements listed in the JAFDP as elements for successful athletic fields and this site does not meet those elements. He asked that the project be delayed.

**Patricia Devine:** This is a small park with houses less than 100' away. She wants a new, well-maintained grass field. She read several sections aloud from the JAFDP and stated that it does not dictate that a synthetic field be installed. At the first public meeting, Parks staff stated that the synthetic field was a done deal and could not be changed.

**Mark Gedosch:** He has been a civil engineer for 20 years. Vendors such as Field Turf are slick and have ready answers. He compared infiltration vs. runoff and stated that grass allows water to infiltrate into the ground, while synthetic causes it to run off. He stated that he has researched this project and gave a number of statistics. His concern

is that this is money looking for a project. The field just needs maintenance. He asked what Parks will do when the synthetic field wears out. He recently flew in a plane over the Ballard area and was shocked that Ballard has so few parks. He urged that Parks consider the impact of this project and put the brakes on it.

**Louisa Peck:** She stated that if the Commissioners had held this meeting in Ballard, many more would have attended. She commented that it is a lovely plan, but please don't touch the grass. Everyone doesn't play sports. She lives four blocks away and wants grass and worms and bugs for her toddler to experience. She voted for the Pro Parks Levy, but not for this. She will not use the field any longer if synthetic field is installed

**Loren Hill:** He likes to play sports on the synthetic turf and believes they are safer. There are hardly any safe grass fields in the city. He plays ultimate Frisbee and asked for more accommodations for this sport.

**Kelly Jones:** She is the Board President of Ballard League, supports the design, and is thrilled with it. Ballard League members must use the fields regardless of condition. Loyal Heights has the only 90 ft. diamond available in the Ballard League. After heavy rains, the field is unusable. There are holes in the outfield. Both players and parents can be seen working on the fields, raking and shoveling, to prepare for play. There are various other open spaces in the Ballard area.

**Mike Niland:** He is the Ballard Little League chief umpire. He helps rake fields and must tell kids to go home when their games are rained out. He talked about the Pro Parks Levy process and his involvement in it. He believes that government process often happens where the public can see — citizens, however, have to go to meetings. He urged those present to stay involved, keep attending meetings, and work together.

**Emmett Niland:** He is a 14-year old little league player and believes he speaks for many kids in the Ballard little league who want a better place to play. He invited those present to visit the field on a rainy day and watch the kids rake out mud in order to play. Most activities that can be done on grass can also be done on synthetic turf.

**Marietta Foubert:** She lives a few blocks away and read a letter from the Seattle Community Council Federation, in support of the compromise solution offered by PAT members, including new lights, resodding, and synthetic only on goals and infield. The Commissioners received a copy of the letter.

**Chris Burke:** He is a Board member of DISC Northwest (ultimate Frisbee) and strongly supports a synthetic field. This spring, four of 12 weekends of play were rained out. Many of their 2,000 players live in North Seattle. They play all over and would like to play at Loyal Heights. Synthetic turf is not new to athletic fields. He referred to Husky Stadium and Safeco fields as examples. He listed other parks in the Ballard area: Golden Gardens, Carkeek, Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, and Salmon Bay. In reference to parking concerns, he stated that he has always biked to Loyal Heights.

**Michele Horwitz:** She asked if the public process was fair and legitimate and answered no. It was not fair to the community during 2002-2005 as most did not know of this project. However, the athletic community did know. The lighting is not being addressed and she believes that increased revenue is the real goal. The Project Advisory Team was corrupted and controlled by Parks — two members of the PAT were Parks staff, who tried to censor the process. This was a done deal and the community was disregarded. Consensus is imperative. Show regard to those who live nearby and to their quality of life.

**Steve Danis:** He is a Loyal Heights resident, his wife coaches soccer, and his kids participate in sports. He does not support ripping out the grass field and installing a synthetic field.

**Don Pederson:** He voiced support for the comments made by Kelly Jones and Emmett Niland. He is a coach and ¼ of the games were rained out this year. At a minimum, replace the infield with synthetic surface. The main thing is to preserve the field as a play space that can be used by all.



**Leo Muller:** He lives 10 houses from Loyal Heights and voted for the Pro Parks Levy. He is against synthetic turf at this park. He gave further parking impact estimates from more hours of field usage and stated that parking would be tight for nearly 7 hours daily, 365 days per year. He referred to Parks statement that a synthetic turf may discourage illegal off-leash dogs and asked if the Department has any evidence to support this. Once the total cost of installation, maintenance, and replacement of synthetic is calculated, will there be any savings? This project is beyond the capacity of this park. He asked that the project be delayed.

**Bill Bryant:** He lives on 18<sup>th</sup> Northwest, four blocks away from the park and is not affected by the traffic and parking. However, he opposes the synthetic turf because of the unhealthy public process. He doesn't recall an effort by Parks to involve the community. In the public meetings, Parks had already made up its mind. He works for King County, which does not go into community meetings with its mind already made up. The environmental claims made by Parks are disappointing. Don't discount the byproducts that come from the creation of synthetic turf. Loyal Heights is not within one block of an arterial street, while the other fields with synthetic turf are. He asked that Parks compromise on this.

**Phoebe Russell:** She is a scheduler for Seattle youth soccer and is already finding it difficult to schedule locations. She has to send Ballard kids as far as North Seattle Community College to play. Ballard Community Center's grass fields are so heavily used the fields are unsafe for play. The labor required to keep grass fields playable is extraordinary. She urged that Parks install a playable surface that does not need lots of daily maintenance. She supports the synthetic field.

**Bob Hamm:** He is a member of Ballard Little League and a general supporter of youth athletics. At the last Loyal Heights public meeting, John Wright, who oversees the Seattle Seahawks football fields, said it is a tough choice but he thinks synthetic turf is the way to go. Mr. Wright oversaw the installation of synthetic turf at Husky Stadium and Qwest Field. The University of Washington and Washington State University's baseball field just went to synthetic turf. The Parks Department has inadequate staff to maintain grass athletic fields.

**Peter Goodall:** He is a nearby resident of Loyal Heights and a PAT member. He believes hhe fairly represents many in the community. Neighbors want the park improved; however, there was a strong reaction against replacing the entire field with synthetics. Community members feel that it excludes other uses and is too formalized. They want a broad range of uses, including sports and other non-sport uses. He supports replacing the baseball infields with synthetic turf.

**Sharon Levine:** She is a community activist from the Queen Anne area and, since 1998, has attended over 100 meetings on ballfield lighting. There are four newer Park Board members and they should be aware that these are the same issues raised all over the city. Magnolia Playfield is next with an artificial surface being foisted on the community. She is all for children and athletics, but the lights and synthetic turf are a huge impact on neighborhoods. Currently, Loyal Heights gets a break from these impacts because it isn't a good field. Consider the parking impacts and that neighbors will lose their drop-in use of the park.

The public hearing concluded.

### ***Board Question & Answers***

Commissioner Holme asked about future lighting plans for Loyal Heights. His understanding is that the current lights were designed primarily for the benefit of baseball and softball games. He asked if, in the long-term plan of putting in infrastructure, would lighting be included that would be sufficient for those uses and also for football and soccer. Ms. Tuttle answered yes and the lighting would be brought to Parks standards level 4. Commissioner Holme referred to the compromise plan suggested by member(s) of the PAT and whether the PAT endorsed the compromise. Ms. Tuttle answered that one PAT member brought the compromise proposal to the PAT, but PAT has not endorsed it. Commissioner Holme referred to testimony that funds from this project be diverted to another project and asked Mr. Shiosaki if there are any limitations in the Pro Parks Levy to divert funds from a named project to another site. Mr. Shiosaki answered that it requires a 2/3 approval vote from City Council members to divert named Pro Parks Levy

funds to another project. It would require a significant amount of process, as this was voted on as a package by Seattle voters.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked what the levy wording is in regards to the Loyal Heights project. Mr. Shiosaki answered that the language in the levy reads “upgrade and improve play surfaces and field amenities.” From there, staff next went to the JAFDP, which also refers to Loyal Heights.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked, in regard to the compromise proposal, what is the experience with fields that are part grass and part synthetic surface. Mr. Holden answered that at Lower Woodland, a class A field, there is a grass outfield and synthetic infield. Base cutouts, pitchers mound, and home plate previously had the standard clay base mix. However, a dangerous situation is created when the dust, dirt, and clay gets into the synthetic surface. This creates a very hard buildup, which doesn’t drain, creates trip hazards, and the ball bounces incorrectly when it hits these buildups. Now the entire infield, except for the pitcher’s mound and home plate, are synthetic. This field is also a single use field — no soccer or football is allowed. This single use saves much wear and tear on the grass in the wintertime and has led to the success of this combination surface field.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked for further information on the suggested option of periodically rotating the football field each year. Mr. Holden answered that the football field can only fit one way if the design includes the permanent pitchers mound, which is a very important component to the community. The football field must also work with the existing light poles and include end zones and safety zones. The idea that rotating the soccer field so that it is in line with the football field might be doable and staff will work on this suggestion. Commissioner Pflaumer understands that little soccer is now being played on this field and staff agreed.

The Board thanked Ms. Tuttle and Mr. Shiosaki for the briefing and the public for attending the meeting and giving testimony. The Board will discuss this project at its July 28 meeting and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

### **Update Briefing: Pier 62/63**

Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks Manager of Major Projects and Planning, and John Owen of the urban design firm of MAKERS, presented a verbal update briefing on Pier 62/63. The Commissioners were briefed on this project at their June 9 (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/06-09-05.pdf>) and June 23 meetings (<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/06-23-05.pdf>).

#### ***Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers***

Commissioner Pflaumer referred to a letter to the Superintendent from City Councilmembers Conlin, Della, and Steinbrueck, dated July 13, voicing concerns on the speed with which Parks is moving ahead on the Pier 62/63 project. This letter was copied and forwarded to the Commissioners prior to this meeting. The letter requests a Department response by July 29 to address the three Councilmember’s comments with regard to schedule, process, and further development of the options.

The Superintendent responded that Parks is perplexed by this letter, as the project is in large part driven by the City Council’s Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI)’s schedule. The Department is taking the comments seriously, is formulating a response, and welcomes any input from the Commissioners. Staff will continue with the review process, to meet the SLI schedule.

The Chair then asked for the briefing to proceed as planned. Mr. Stoops stated that prior to receiving the Councilmembers’ letter and just a few days after the June 23 briefing to the Commissioners, Parks staff briefed the City Council Committee of the Whole, a special committee formed to review the Alaskan Way Viaduct project. Parks is proceeding at a pace to meet the original goal of going before the City Councils’ Parks, Neighborhoods and Education Committee on September 7.

He stated that tonight Parks is bringing a recap of the three alternatives which were presented to the Commissioners at the June 23 briefing and presenting the first draft of an evaluation matrix. The matrix will help weigh how aspects of the three alternatives work to satisfy some of the goals that were laid out when Seattle City Council adopted principles for the redevelopment of the Central Waterfront. Since the June 23 briefing, another meeting was held with the Waterfront Partners, which is a combination of various stakeholders, property owners, and citizens interested in the waterfront. Commissioner Belbeck is the Commissioners' representative to the Waterfront Partners. On July 22, Mr. Stoops and Mr. Owen will meet with a subcommittee of Waterfront Partners to review the draft matrix.

Mr. Stoops introduced Mr. Owen, who distributed copies of the draft evaluation matrix and briefly reviewed the three concepts — Belvedere, Market Street, and Eau Naturelle — previously presented to the Commissioners. He noted proposed changes to each concept since the last briefing.

The draft matrix listed a number of evaluation criterion: balance and integration; access and connection; authenticity and identity; destination and movement; diversity and flexibility; economic development; environmental sustainability, with both the uplands and waterfront listed. Commissioners were asked to review the matrix and give feedback to Mr. Owens and Mr. Stoops.

Mr. Owens next displayed a new drawing, showing proposed shoreline enhancement ideas. The drawing highlighted both the easy and difficult migration areas for salmon fry in the Waterfront area. Mr. Owen pointed out the current migratory routes and obstacles currently faced by the fry. The Commissioners and Mr. Owen spent some time discussing this drawing and how aspects of the three concepts might impact the migration.

The Superintendent commented that, from a parks point of view, there is benefit from a design that allows shoreline access and park usage, even if this type of design does not lead to salmon recovery.

The Commissioners spent some time discussing design elements of the three concept plans. Commissioner Collins asked Commissioner Belbeck for her perspective, as a member of the Waterfront Partners, and also asked if she favors one concept plan over another. She answered that Allied Arts would like a new look on the waterfront, while habitat restoration is important to some of the other members. She does not favor one, without knowing if the amphitheater will be a component.

Mr. Owen commented that estimates are that \$660,000 in annual parking revenue was lost to the Pike Place Market area parking lots when the Summer Nights at the Piers was moved to South Lake Union from Pier 62/63. This is based on an estimate of 18-20 concerts, with approximately 4,000 vehicles paying for parking at each concert.

Discussion continued on the amphitheater. Commissioner Ranade asked whether, if the design makes the waterfront more accessible, could that accessibility offset the loss of an amphitheater. Mr. Owen answered this is very difficult to determine and cannot yet be answered. The Superintendent asked if there is a way to design the amphitheater to accommodate the One Reel events (Summer Nights at the Piers) and also be used for many other events. Mr. Owen answered that the City's Special Events Coordinator, Virginia Swanson, has commented that if the amphitheater were covered, more events could be scheduled there.

Commissioner Pflaumer commented that she agreed with a portion of the City Council letter that opposes market vendors in the park. Mr. Owens agreed and stated, that after talking with Pike Place Market folks, this idea has been abandoned. The Superintendent commented that this type of feedback is very helpful with the concepts.

Commissioner Collins commented that it is problematic to him that this focuses on a small scale, while he is looking at the area in a more global manner. He believes the most value is in opening the waterfront to public access. This is a more important priority to him than having concerts and he favors the Eau Naturelle concept.

Commissioner Pflaumer stated she is drawn to the Eau Naturelle concept; however, the boardwalk obscures beach views and she believes there would be public safety concerns on the uplinks. The Superintendent agreed that “eyes on the park” is important. Mr. Stoops stated that elements of the three concepts can be interchanged and a brief discussion followed on removing the middle portion of the boardwalk from this concept.

Commissioner Ranade stated that the most appealing aspect of the project to him is creating rest stops for salmon fry. Mr. Owen stated that he has talked with a dozen resources agencies and all agree this is an important opportunity.

Commissioner Holme stated that extending the use of the amphitheater by covering it would be view restricting and would be unacceptable to him. He prefers the Belvedere concept, and asked a question about the dock elevation of Eau Naturelle.

The Board thanked Mr. Stoops and Mr. Owen for the update briefing.

### **Board of Park Commissioners’ Business**

- None

### **New/Old Business**

- Commissioner Holme referred to a July 8 letter from Traci Goodwin of the Queen Anne Park Stewards to both the Commissioners and the Superintendent in regards to the proposed State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determination of non-significance (DNS) for draft Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) guidelines for Seattle Parks Viewpoints. The Superintendent stated the Department will prepare a response and handle through the SEPA process. Mr. Stoops commented that Parks staff David Graves spoke with Ms. Goodwin earlier in the day and discussed her comments in detail. Most of her comments are project specific and are related to the Betty Bowen Viewpoint site. He does not believe Ms. Goodwin will appeal.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Pflaumer, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_