

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Debbie Jackson

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Holme moved approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the January 26 minutes, and the February 9 agenda. Commissioner Belbeck seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed.**

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent reported on the following:

Storm Damage: Crews spent the first part of the week cleaning up damage and debris from Friday's wind storm. The Green Lake Path was temporarily closed while the tree crew removed a large, fallen tree. Trees also came down at several other parks and light poles fell at both Loyal Heights and Woodland Park. The other poles at these parks are being tested.

Lincoln Park: Last Friday a sewer line break occurred north of Colman Pool at Lincoln Park. Metro cannot repair the broken line and has temporarily installed an above-surface pipe. Metro is paying for all repairs and any mitigation. For more information on Lincoln Park and Colman Pool, please see

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkspaces/Lincoln.htm>

Mt. Baker Funds Secured: Good news is that the Mt. Baker Boating Advisory Council has secured \$2.2 million for the building expansion project at that facility. Phase I construction will begin in May and be completed in January 2007. Phase II (the upstairs multi-purpose meeting room and elevator) will be completed following a \$300,000 fundraising effort. For more information on Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing, please see

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/boats/mtbaker.htm>

Nucor Steel Donates to Delridge Community Center: Nucor Steel, a good neighbor to Delridge Community Center, donated \$2,800 to support the Center's child care program. The donation will be used to purchase supplies, fund field trips, fund program enhancements, and provide staff training. For more information on Delridge Community Center, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Centers/Delridge.htm>

Amy Yee Tennis Center: For the second year, the tennis center has been awarded a \$5,000 Community Funding Grant from the United States Tennis Association. The grant will help fund the summer community center tennis programs and youth tennis. For more information on Amy Yee Tennis Center, please see

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/Athletics/Tennisct.htm>

Green Lake Electronic Readerboard: There is a new electronic reader board at the Green Lake Community Center, thanks to a partnership that Parks' Contracts staff established with Affect Imaging to advertise different activities in the community. This new revenue-generating partnership will be tested at Green Lake and could be expanded to other Park facilities.

Occidental Park: The lawsuit that has put this project on hold for the past six months appears to be over. After appealing the Hearing Examiner's decision to the Superior Court of King County, the petitioners were required by the judge to post a \$120,000 bond in order to move forward with the lawsuit. The City requested this money to offset additional project costs that will result from further delay. The petitioners were required to post this bond by close of business on Monday, February 6, and have not done so. Parks' attorney is verifying with the court that it is free to move forward with construction. Parks' agreement with the contractor requires award of the construction contract on or before February 15, after which the contract will expire and Parks will be forced to re-bid the project. For more information, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/pioneersquare.htm>

Critical Area Amendments: City Council is currently acting on updates to the environmentally critical areas (ECA.) This regulation affects golf courses and 81 parks. The Superintendent will keep the Commissioners posted, as the updates are known. For more information, please see

<http://www.seattle.gov/dclu/news/20050207a.asp>

Upcoming Events

Montlake Community Center Expansion: This \$3.4 million Pro Parks Levy project went out to bid on Thursday, February 2, and bids will be opened on Wednesday, Feb. 22. **A groundbreaking ceremony with Mayor Nickels as keynote speaker is scheduled for Saturday, March 4.** The project is scheduled for completion in fourth quarter 2006. For more information on this project, please see

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/montlake.htm>

Laurelhurst Community Center Expansion: This \$2.9 million Pro Parks Levy project went out to bid on Thursday, February 9, and bids will be opened on Wednesday, March 8. **A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for March 25.** This expansion project is scheduled for completion in fourth quarter 2006. For more information, please see <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/laurelhurst.htm>

Van Asselt Community Center Expansion: On Thursday, February 16, Parks will begin advertising for bids on this \$4.2 million project, which is funded by the Community Centers Levy, the Pro Parks Levy, and a grant from Starbuck's. Parks will open bids on Wednesday, March 15. **A groundbreaking ceremony for both the community center's expansion and the community-driven play area project is scheduled for April 1.** The

community center expansion and renovated play are scheduled to complete in late fall 2006. For more information, please see http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/centers/current/Van_Asselt_Community_Center.htm

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: Park Exclusion Policy and New Park Exclusion at Cal Anderson Park

Larry Campbell, Seattle Parks' Security Supervisor, gave an overview of the Department's Park Exclusion policy and introduced Royal Alley-Barnes, North/Central East District Resources Manager. Mr. Campbell and Ms. Barnes then reviewed the Department's proposal to create a new park exclusion zone at Cal Anderson Park. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

Staff is asking the Board to make a recommendation regarding the creation of a new City park exclusion zone that would encompass Cal Anderson and 12 other parks close to Cal Anderson. A map showing the parks included in the proposed exclusion zone is attached.

Project Description and Background

In July 1997 the City of Seattle enacted the Park Exclusion Ordinance. The intent of the ordinance is to deter illegal behavior and immediately remove from our parks those who persist in breaking the law and park rules. The ordinance was enacted after careful planning and cooperation among community groups, park users, and City agencies including Parks, Police, Animal Control, the City Attorney's Office, and the Mayor's Office; and only after it was concluded that existing regulations did not provide the enforcement tools needed to protect park resources and the safety of park users. (For background, attached with this paper are a pamphlet describing the Ordinance and a copy of the citation that the police issue. The back page of the citation lists the current park zones and the individual parks included within those zones.)

The Parks Exclusion Ordinance creates City park exclusion zones. A city park exclusion zone is a group of parks determined by the Superintendent to be so related to one another geographically or by function or both, that the Superintendent determines that exclusion from one park would be ineffective without exclusion from the other or others. A park that is not included in a City park exclusion zone is itself a city park zone; for example, currently Cal Anderson Park is itself a city park zone.

Parks security staff have been patrolling Cal Anderson and surrounding parks in the evening hours during their shifts, and noticed consistent littering, drug use, drinking, camping, and other illegal activities in the parks. The police have observed the same individuals traveling from one park to another in this area due to the proximity of the parks to each other. These individuals have been involved in narcotic activity, public drinking/inebriation, and camping. Numerous individuals have received a park exclusion citation from several of these parks during the course of one year.

Public Involvement Process

Seattle Parks and Recreation staff met with the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce on August 9, 2005, to review Parks' programming and maintenance plan for Cal Anderson Park. At that meeting, the members indicated that they were concerned about illegal behaviors in the Park. Individual citizens have echoed this same concern. Parks' staff members have received several complaint letters from citizens regarding the illegal activities occurring in First Hill Park. Also, during an August community meeting with Tashkent Park neighbors, citizens expressed concerns about the need to exclude persons from the park, as well as the impact to surrounding parks when Cal Anderson

“was cleaned up”. The citizens who attended these meetings supported the creation of a new Cal Anderson Park Exclusion Zone.

Potential Impacts from Creating a New City Park Exclusion Zone

The beneficial impacts of this proposal: Creating a new City park exclusion zone that would encompass Cal Anderson and 12 other geographically close parks would enhance the enjoyment of the parks in this new park exclusion zone for all law-abiding citizens and protect our park resources. This new park zone would give the police a more focused tool that would target behavior, and would assist them in deterring illegal behavior by immediately removing offenders who persistently break the law and park rules in this zone. Offenders who have been excluded from one park could no longer relocate to another neighboring park when this new City park exclusion zone is established.

The adverse impacts of this proposal: The adverse impact of adding a new City park exclusion zone is restricting movement of park users who have received a park exclusion citation. Those individuals would have to use City parks in other park zones during the duration of their exclusion from the Cal Anderson City Park Zone.

Alternative to Consider

No change, do not create a new Park Exclusion Zone: If a new park exclusion zone is not implemented, Seattle Police would continue to write park exclusion citations to offenders in each park in which they break a law or park rule.

Budget

There is no budget impact to the Seattle Parks Department if a new park exclusion zone is created. Seattle Police would have to create an informational flier for their officers listing the parks within the Cal Anderson zone. The informational fliers would slip into the park exclusion citation booklets.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that a new park exclusion zone be created to help control illegal activities at Cal Anderson and other geographically close parks, as shown on the attached map.

Additional information

For additional information about this project, please contact Larry Campbell, Park Security Supervisor, at 684-7088 or larry.campbell@seattle.gov.

Verbal Briefing

Mr. Campbell gave an overview of the proposal and stated that under the Park’s current policy, offenders can only be considered a trespasser and kept out of the park for 1-2 days (once they have been deemed a trespasser by Seattle Police.). Police must use an exclusion policy to enforce a longer exclusion of offenders from a particular City park or group of parks. Seattle currently has 12 park zones and the Cal Anderson one would be the 13th. If a park isn’t currently in one of the 12 zones, which all contain multiple parks, it is in a stand-alone zone. The 12 parks proposed to be in the Cal Anderson Park Exclusion Zone are all located near Cal Anderson Park.

He described the process used when an offender is excluded from a park or park zone. For the first offense the offender is excluded for 7 days, for the second offense they are excluded for 90 days, and for the third offense they are excluded for one year. If they commit a felony crime in the park, the first exclusion could be for one year. If a person is cited, they can request a hearing, which would be scheduled within 7 days and could request a Park Hearing, which would be scheduled in 14 days, and then the Parks Hearing Examiner would render a decision.

During 2005, over 1,600 citations were given citywide, with 2/3 of these occurring in the downtown core parks. Seven hearings have been scheduled since 1997.

Commissioner Collins asked how many people are excluded from the parks for the year-long timeframe. Mr. Campbell answered that approximately 1/3 are excluded for one year. Commissioner Pflaumer asked for examples of behavior for which a person could be excluded from a park or park zone. Superintendent Bounds and Mr. Campbell gave examples as: drinking alcohol in the park, being in the park when it is closed at night, having/using drugs in the park, or damaging the park.

The Superintendent stated that the policy is modeled after the City of Portland's exclusion policy and has been in effect in Seattle since 1997. Prior to then, a citation could be issued but there were no consequences if the offender came back to the park. Now, with the exclusion policy, if the person is excluded for illegal behavior and returns to the park/park zone, they can be arrested for criminal trespass.

Commissioner Belbeck asked if the new park under I-5 was considered as part of the zone and Ms. Barnes answered that it is too far away. Commissioner Holme asked why Volunteer Park wasn't included in the exclusion plan. Mr. Campbell answered that it is farther north and out of the general walking distance of Cal Anderson Park. Commissioner Holme suggested that Parks staff consider including Volunteer Park so that problems in the Cal Anderson Park zone don't migrate there. The Superintendent stated that there needs to be some adjacency to the core park (Cal Anderson) to be included in the zone and that the zone must be stopped at some point.

Commissioner Collins asked why offenders aren't banned permanently from the park and the Superintendent answered that the policy would be too egregious to ban them permanently from a park.

Ms. Barnes stated that Seattle Police Department East Precinct staff could not attend tonight's meeting; however, they have reviewed the Cal Anderson exclusion policy and are in support. The parks have a well-signed behavior policy, but the violators ignore the policy. However, when violators are cited and excluded from the parks, impacts of the policy travels by word of mouth to potential violators. The citations are issued by Seattle Police Department officers and not by Parks staff. East Precinct has had great follow through on the exclusion policy. Ms. Barnes stated that Parks staff will return to the Board with results of the exclusion policy.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. No one signed up to testify.

The Commissioners will accept written testimony through Wednesday, February 22, and plan to discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation at the February 23 meeting.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Orchard Ravine Project

The following Seattle Parks' staff briefed the Board on the Orchard Street Ravine project: Kevin Crouthamel, Pro Parks Levy Project Manager, Karen Galt, Landscape Architect, and Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing. The verbal briefing was followed by a public hearing.

Written Briefing

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION

A public hearing and Parks staff briefing on the *Orchard Street Ravine Improvements* project will be held on February 9, 2006. The Park Board is asked to make a recommendation on February 23 to the Park Superintendent on the schematic plan for this unimproved open space property.

BACKGROUND

Levy Description – This project is a named development project as part of the 2000 Pro Parks Levy. The levy project description is: “*develop trails to access ravine.*”

Location - Orchard Street Ravine is located in southwest Seattle at 7200 38th Ave SW. The 2.2 acre site joins two irregularly-shaped and separate parcels totaling 1.75 acres, with .75 acres of undeveloped street rights of way. Except for one power line crossing the top of the site, the property is in an undeveloped condition. See attached vicinity map.

Topography - Orchard Street Ravine lies just below the high north-south ridge of West Seattle cresting at the West Seattle Reservoir at 35th Ave SW, between SW Myrtle and SW Willow Street. To the west, the land falls away in a series of gullies formed by natural irregular drainage and erosion that eventually deepened to ravines over an area one-half mile square. The largest area of erosion is near the top of the ridge. Grade changes are steepest at northeast corner, rising from 440’ to 500’ in just 140 linear feet to the Orchard Street right-of-way – the high point of the site; and at the southwest corner where the grade falls sharply to the property line and then to improved SW Orchard St immediately below.

Plants & Animals - The vegetation in the Orchard Street Ravine provides nesting and food for 52 species of birds at the site, including the Pileated Woodpecker, small animals such as rodents, raccoons, and even a coyote. This undeveloped area seems to thrive partly due to the dense vegetation, minimal human impact, and an absence of any other such habitats in the surrounding residential neighborhood. Blackberries dominate the lower relatively flat and open third of the site. These non-native invasive plants, plus vines and ivy, also flourish beneath the upper canopies of large trees such as Pacific Madrone, Douglas-fir, and Big Leaf Maple which cover most of the steep portions of the ravine.

Acquisition - With funding from the Open Space and Trails Bond Program the property was purchased by the City in 1997 and designated as *green space*, for low-intensity recreation such as walking trails and nature study.

Neighborhood Plan – In addition to the efforts by surrounding neighbors to nominate and support acquisition, a Morgan Junction Neighborhood Plan was created, including a proposal for trail development. This would connect a series of open spaces, via trails and existing sidewalks, including nearby High Point/SW Myrtle Street Reservoir Park, Orchard Street Ravine, Lincoln Park Annex, Pelly Place, Lowman Beach Park, and Eddy Street Ravine, to Morgan Junction. These links would form a *Green Crescent* urban trail system. This plan also proposed restoration and preservation of these natural areas.¹

DESIGN

Process - From August to December 2005, Parks staff made multiple site visits to identify site conditions, examined past records and studies, and discussed options with interested neighbors. This information was used to prepare alternative concept plans, and to meet and discuss options with various on-staff experts, including landscape architects, urban foresters, trails specialists, and a geo-technical engineer. This iterative process involved multiple levels and perspectives of experience and expertise, and it is the methodology that concluded with the recommendation described at the end of this paper.

Schematic Plan - Parks staff recommends a flat loop trail system at the lower south end of Orchard Street Ravine as well as extensive vegetation management to restore and preserve a native habitat. See attached Schematic Plan illustration.

This trail system will provide access for work parties as well as wildlife interpretive opportunities. The steep slope portions of the upper ravine would also include some vegetative management, but with careful consideration of the steep slope and wildlife habitat.

¹ Morgan Junction Urban Village - Neighborhood Plan, pp. 44-47 1991

Geo-technical Information - In 1999-2000 a geo-technical engineering study performed by a private firm, Shannon Wilson, identifying the upper rim of the ravine as slide area or “slide head scarp”.² This information has also been noted on current United States Geological Survey (USGS) records.³ Additionally, the absence of any street drainage along upper 38th SW allows street and residential storm water to flow south down the street and dump into the ravine immediately below. Such conditions are convincing reasons to avoid construction on these slopes.

Comprehensive Approach - Working with citizens and being good stewards of our environment sometimes means making recommendations that are not preferred by all citizens, but seek to balance, to the extent possible, the interests of the community with the site conditions. For Orchard Street Ravine this means providing some trails access, protecting unstable slopes, and re-establishing a native forest habitat.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

First Public Meeting [November 1, 2005] - The goal of this meeting was to impart information and generate ideas and comments. Staff presented options for trail alignments and habitat restoration, recommending only the need for some trail system, per the Levy project description. Among the 36 citizens attending opinions were divided over the type of trail, although support for habitat restoration seemed unanimous.

Second Public Meeting [December 13, 2005] – In the second meeting staff described further the site conditions, as well as the alternatives that included a second through-trail option suggested by a neighbor. The audience of 40 was also informed of the extended project schedule, covering two years, 2006 and 2007, to accommodate phased habitat restoration. In addition, Parks staff also made their recommendation regarding the type of trail to be installed. As with the earlier meeting, community response was mixed. Some favored a through-trail from the upper to the lower portion of the ravine, while others preferred a flat loop trail system confined to lower area and avoiding the hillside. As for habitat restoration, support remained unanimous.

Ad hoc Neighborhood Meetings – Neighborhood-sponsored meetings were also held on November 29, 2005, and on January 17, 2006. Although lengthy discussions occurred, the outcome appeared to be much the same as the Park-sponsored meetings.

ISSUES

No Clear Consensus - The community continues to be divided to some degree over the type of trail that should be developed. Through-trail supporters assert that once the blackberries are cleared, *social trails* will be established from the upper north to lower south portion of the ravine along undeveloped 38th Ave SW, or from the upper and undeveloped SW Orchard Street, southwest to 38th Ave SW. Also, the consequence of these social trails, according to through-trail supporters, will establish a compelling need, both for a safer established trail, as well as a need to ease slope instability caused by foot trails.

Neighborhood Plan - While a flat trail does offer access in the ravine, it fails to provide a convenient through-site link, as part of a longer trail system extending beyond the park. This clearly was the vision of the *Crescent of Green* in the Neighborhood Plan. Nevertheless, this same Neighborhood Plan also cautions that: “Each element of the Green Crescent should be preceded by a feasibility study which would assess environmental impacts to sensitive ecosystems, slope stability, adjacent and surrounding property owner concerns, maintenance, safety, funding and legal implications, as applicable.”⁴

² Shannon Wilson Landslide Study 1999-2000, *W. Laprade*

³ USGS 2000 GIS Soil Mapping, *K. Troost*

⁴ *Ibid*, p.35

Constructability & Permanence - Following a site evaluation and geo-technical records search, Parks concluded that while a steep slope trail may be possible to construct, site conditions convinced the design staff to recommend against this direction. First, in the absence of existing trails, there are no trail-user safety issues suggesting a need to build a steep set of stairs into the hillside or a bridge to span the steepest part of the ravine. Second, most of the budget would be needed to construct, by hand, a trail with steps anchored into the hillside. Lacking the ability to deploy heavy-duty equipment on the hillside to place reinforced concrete pinned to a stable soil strata, such a project would have a short-term expected useful life of ten years or less. Third, the two alternative through-trail locations have storm water flow and known slide conditions at upper 38th Ave SW and upper Orchard Street respectively. With any new structure placed, uncertain risks will be created in the down-slope movement of soil and water. Fourth, the Seattle Land Use Code cautions against steep slope development, and three-quarters of the ravine is listed on City maps as an Environmental Critical Area, steep slope of 40% or more.⁵ And finally, though not as desirable to some as a trail link with through-access, a flat trail system does not ignore the Levy language for trail access to the ravine. Nor does a flat trail option exclude the public from enjoying the natural interpretive value of the site or using the site as part of a *Green Crescent* of green spaces.

BUDGET – Total project funding for planning, design, and construction is \$175,000.

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Planning | 3 rd Qtr. 2005 - 1 st Qtr. 2006 |
| • Design | 2 nd Qtr. 2006 |
| • Construction Phase I (Vegetative Management and trail) | 3 rd Qtr. 2006 - 4 th Qtr. 2006 |
| • Construction Phase II (Vegetative Management) | 3 rd Qtr. 2007 - 4 th Qtr. 2007 |

The project is here.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION – Parks staff recommends the Board of Park Commissioners approve the elements outlined above in the schematic plan. Parks staff will return on February 23, 2006, for a Park Board recommendation to the Superintendent.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Web page - www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/proparks/projects/orchardstravine.htm
- Park Staff contact - Kevin.crouthamel@seattle.gov , phone # (206) 684-7049

ATTACHMENTS

- Vicinity Map
- Schematic Plan

Verbal Briefing

Mr. Crouthamel gave a brief introduction to the project. Ms. Galt presented the first portion of a Powerpoint presentation including a map showing the location of the project; site opportunities and constraints; various photos of the site; general vegetation characteristics; steep ravine edges; topography and critical areas; exploring the trail options process; and the project recommendation. Mr. Mead presented the second portion of the Powerpoint presentation including assessing the forest condition; photo of the current tree canopy; photo of blackberries and other invasives; aerial photo and site of blackberries; 3-4 year restoration schedule; and opportunities for volunteers. Mr. Mead stated that contractors would complete the work in steep areas, due to safety concerns and the need for a “spider”, a specialized type of equipment used on steep terrain.

Board Questions and Answers

Commissioner Holme asked if the funding can be stretched out over 3-5 years and Mr. Mead answered that there is some flexibility in this; however, the timeline calls for the project to be completed by 2008. Community members are applying for grants and are applying to Greater Green Seattle. Commissioner Holme asked that a copy of the Tree-iage report be sent to the Board and Mr. Mark agreed to do so.

⁵ *Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.09.180* – Development shall be avoided on areas over 40% slope whenever possible.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. 15 people signed up to testify. A very brief summary of their testimony follows:

Jim Young: He is a member of Friends of Orchard Street Ravine (FOSTR), lives nearby, and supports the Parks' staff recommendation.

Paul Prentice: He lives near the ravine and supports Parks' staff recommendation.

Charles Redmond: He doesn't live at the ravine and wants a through trail for others to use. He asked that a decision on the trail be delayed until the site is cleaned of blackberries and other invasives.

Steve Dindiong: He is the President of Morgan Community Association (MoCA). MoCA is concerned with Parks staff recommendation as some in the community prefer a through trail.

Carol Schultz: She is a member of FOSTR, lives near the ravine, and supports the Parks' staff recommendation.

Cindi Barker: She is a member of MoCA and thinks Parks' process has moved too quickly and has had inadequate analysis.

Ann Martin: She lives at 3618 SW Orchard Street and supports the Parks' staff recommendation.

Jeff Mansing: He supports a through trail and is frustrated with the current process.

Vlad Oustimovitch: He is a member of ORCA and Southwest District Council president. He supports a through trail.

Mark Schultz: He is a member of FOSTR and supports the Parks' staff recommendation.

John Nuler: He lives at 36th and Othello and supports a through trail.

Bill Hibler: He lives at 3805 SW Orchard and supports the Parks' staff recommendation.

Kathryn Armstrong: She supports a through trail.

Brad Anawalt: He lives just above the ravine and supports a through trail.

Steve Sundquist: He lives at 7311 36th Ave at the top of the ravine and supports the Parks' staff recommendation.

The public hearing concluded.

Additional Board Questions and Answers

Commissioner Ranade asked if staff have done a cost assessment on the proposed through trail. Ms. Galt answered that it would require a bridge at a cost of \$120,000. Commissioner Pflaumer asked if geotechnical studies have been done at the site and Ms. Galt answered that Shannon Wilson geo-techs have performed a visual analysis but have not bored into the site. Commissioner Ranade asked about the grade of the slope and Mr. Mead answered that it is greater than 40%.

Commissioner Holme commented that Board members often visit project sites and will do so before making a recommendation on this proposal. He asked if there is potential for a view and recommended that if the project

cannot include a view trail that it include a view spot. Ms. Galt answered that there is a potentially great view spot and Mr. Mead stated that removing the blackberries will open up this view.

Commissioner Holme asked if the current design precludes a through trail. Ms. Galt and Mr. Mead answered no, it wouldn't. Commissioner Holme asked about a reference to stormwater during public testimony and asked if staff have approached Seattle Public Utilities about improving street drainage and Ms. Galt answered not yet. Commissioner Ranade asked if the street drainage contributes to the slide potential and Ms. Galt answered that she is unsure whether or not it does. Commissioner Ranade asked if staff picked a through street, which would they prefer. Ms. Galt answered that both are equally inappropriate. Commissioner Pflaumer commented that the project has timeline pressures and asked if the view and habitat restoration could be implemented without constructing a through trail at this time. Mr. Mead and Ms. Galt answered that the work could be accomplished in phases. Commissioner Holme asked if the Lydar (a private study on where slopes are located on public lands in City) was used during the design process. Mr. Mead stated that the Lydar study is the standard for topographical information in the City; however, it doesn't show how steep slopes are.

The Commissioners will accept written testimony through Wednesday, February 22, and plan to discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation at the February 23 meeting. In addition, Commissioners will make a site visit with staff to view the proposal on Wednesday, February 22.

Discussion/Recommendation: Draft Viewpoint Designation Policy

David Graves, Seattle Parks' project manager, briefed the Board on this draft policy at the January 26 meeting. The Commissioners asked Mr. Graves to make minor revisions to the draft policy and bring it back to the February 23 meeting. Mr. Graves sent the Commissioners a new version which incorporated their suggested language changes. The staff recommendation is that the Board should recommend the draft Decisional Criteria be adopted as an interim measure and directs staff to analyze one/all of the suggested pilot sites to determine if they should be designated as a viewpoint.

Commissioner Collins moved approval of this draft analytical tool and Commission Ranade seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous. Mr. Graves stated that he will brief the Board again in April on this draft policy.

Discussion/Recommendation: Golden Gardens and Alki Park Beach Fire Policy

Adam Cole, Environmental Stewardship Recreation Program Coordinator, briefed the Board at its January 26 meeting. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. Tonight the Board is asked to discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

[Background information: The Board held a public hearing on the continuation of beach fires at its October 14, 2004, meeting. http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2004/10-14-04_minutes.pdf. At its November 18, 2004, meeting the Board approved that fires at Alki Beach be allowed as they currently are — in appropriate fire pits, with use of fire pits enforced, with education, and with particular reliance on the community. The Board also approved to continue the current policy at Golden Gardens with added effort to increase enforcement, education, and signage. Beach fires will be placed on a one-year probation in this park, after which the Parks Department will present an assessment to the Park Board, and the Board will make a recommendation to the Superintendent.]

Board Discussion and Recommendation

The Chair asked if the Department believes the current beach fire policy is a worthwhile investment and the Superintendent answered yes. The Department must have a future time when it can decrease the time invested in enforcing the policy; however, that time isn't here yet. Commissioner Collins commented that the beach fires are important to community life and — even with the current policies in place — the fires are just barely manageable.

Commissioner Collins moved to accept the staff recommendation as follows: “Allow beach fire recreation to continue for 2006 at Golden Gardens and Alki Beach Parks as Parks will allocate resources away from other programs to the beach patrol resources for this year on par with 2005. Parks will continue monitoring and public

reporting in 2006. Parks will request a budget addition for 2007 and beyond if this program is to continue. As part of the continuation of beach fire recreation at both beaches, Parks will continue to evaluate additional management options such as seasonal prohibition of fires during non-peak use times, and piloting a fire ring reservation system. Parks may also consider adding one to three additional rings at each beach in conjunction with the 2007 budget request.” Commissioner Ranade seconded. Commissioner Holme asked that Parks staff bring the results back to the Board in another year and staff agreed to do so. Commissioner Holme asked that staff describe the need for this fund to the City Council’s Parks, Neighborhood, Labor and Libraries Committee and the Superintendent agreed and stated that it is budgeted as a line item. **The vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion/Recommendation: Lower Woodland Skatepark Site

At its January 26 meeting, Susan Golub, Seattle Parks' strategic analyst, briefed the Board on a proposed location for the Lower Woodland skatepark site. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. Tonight the Board is asked to discuss the site proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Board Discussion and Recommendation

Commissioner Ranade asked Ms. Golub to explain the process used in moving the skatepark from the Board-recommended chip site to the current site [200’ to the east.] Ms. Golub answered that when she and project manager Kim Baldwin looked at the chip site area, they realized the skatepark could be shifted 200’ to the east, which would alleviate some of the skate community’s safety and wetness concerns. Parks staff made the shift and held three design meeting. However, staff didn’t advertise that the shift had been made and that was a mistake. Neighbors became concerned with the skatepark being moved 200’ closer to their homes.

Commissioner Collins asked about mitigation of the chip site and the Department’s response to the skatepark community’s concerns about safety and wetness at that site. If the chip site is recommended, can these concerns be managed? Ms. Golub answered that Parks hasn’t recognized the chip site as a crime area; that is a concern of the skate community. She distributed a colored map of the area and stated that if the skatepark is moved back to the chip site the proposal is for the following: (1) move maintenance road to west side; (2) construct all weather trail; (3) improve area next to tennis court – drop off area parking better signed or striped; and (4) recognize that the skatepark will be partially shaded. This will not be greatly improved by installing the road on the west side and pushing the skatepark out. There are also ballfields and tennis courts located next to the same hills.

Commissioner Collins asked if the chip site can accommodate the entire skatepark. Ms. Golub answered that there is enough space for Phase I; Phase II would extend back towards neighbors. Commissioner Belbeck asked at what point this design increased to a 40,000 sq. ft. facility. Ms. Golub answered that this happened during the design process. Skaters wanted to maximize the site if they could get additional funding for Phase II.

Ms. Golub was asked if the location is moved back to the chip site, what the approximate additional cost would be. Ms. Golub answered that it would require a re-design and then the new design would go back to the public for a review process. This could add \$20-30,000 to the project. The Superintendent stated that these funds would not be taken from the project’s budget, but would come from other sources.

Commissioner Ranade moved that the location be moved back to the chip site, as previously recommended by the Board of Park Commissioners. Commissioner Collins seconded. Commissioner Belbeck made a friendly amendment that the service road be moved from the east side to the west side. Commissioner Ranade accepted the friendly amendment.

Discussion: Commissioner Holme commented that the Board has received a great deal of correspondence on the staff proposal to move the skatepark nearer to Greenlake Way. The Board previously went through a process and recommended the chip site to the Superintendent. Commissioners learned of the shift in location during the January 26 staff briefing. Commissioners did not participate in the process that changed the location. He urged that the Department stick with sites that are approved and have undergone a public process. Commissioner Collins

stated that he believes the chip site is the best location for the skatepark and his mind was not changed because of the volume of e-mails received by the Board.

The vote was taken and the motion, as amended, was unanimous.

Commissioner Holme commented that some in the skate community are very opposed to the chip site. He recommended that the Department reach agreement with them before proceeding with the design. If this site and the design aren't acceptable, then the Department should do a full site selection public process. The Board has approved the chip site on three different occasions. If it doesn't work this time, the process should start over.

Commissioner Collins commented that he believes the Board's role ends with its recommendation to the Superintendent. He is aware that some in the community won't agree with this recommendation. He commented that there was lots of interest in this proposal and the Board received a great deal of thoughtful correspondence. Commissioner Pflaumer commented that the Board recognizes that this is a controversial and heartfelt issue. Superintendent Bounds commented that the project is back where it was in June. If the skating community state they won't use the skatepark at the approved site, the Department won't go forward with the project. Commissioner Pflaumer urged interested citizens to attend the design meetings and asked that notices of the meetings go out to all interested parties. Several people signed up to receive the notices.

New/Old Business

- Park Board Retreat: The Chair asked members to hold the meeting date of April 13 as a possible retreat date. If this date is used for a retreat, information will be distributed that no regular meeting will be held that evening. The Coordinator will verify that this date works for all attendees. Commissioner Collins asked that an item be added to the retreat agenda to discuss how the Board communicates between members, with Park Department staff, and with the Mayor and City Councilmembers. He would also like to have a clarification on whether news agencies may record the Board's discussions, outside of a public hearing.
- Vacant Board Position: Interviews have been held and a recommendation is going to the Mayor on February 10.
- Council Meeting: Commissioners would like to attend a City Council Parks, Education, Labor & Libraries (PELL) committee meeting, rather than having their usual brown bag meeting.
- Stan Sayres Pits: Commissioner Holme commented on tree removal and planting at this site that occurred last summer during the dry spell. All but one of the young pines has now died. The Superintendent will discuss this with staff.
- SR520 Project: Commissioner Holme asked about a response from Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to the questions submitted by the Commissioners following their January 12 public hearing on this project. Parks staff will follow up with both WSDOT and SDOT. Once the agencies respond to the questions, time will be added to the Board's agenda for a discussion of the responses.
- Jefferson Park Expansion Project: Commissioner Holme attended the recent open house for this project. He recommends that the Board do a site visit for its February 27 public hearing.

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

APPROVED: _____

Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____