



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2007

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme
Debbie Jackson
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Jackie Ramels
Amit Ranade

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commissioner Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Belbeck seconded, approval of the agenda and minutes as presented and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence. The vote was taken and motion passed.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bounds reported on the following items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Storm Response: Parks staff played an extraordinary role in the aftermath of the December 14 flood, wind storm, and power outage. Staff opened emergency shelters at four community centers (Bitter Lake, Delridge, Southwest, and Rainier). Up to 750 trees are down in the developed parks; the number of downed trees in greenbelts has not yet been tallied. The tree crew was out working at 3:00 am following the storm. Flooding occurred in several parks, including the Japanese Garden, and buildings, particularly Medgar Evers Pool.

Commissioner Holme asked if any park trees fell on private property and Superintendent Bounds answered that 28 did. The owners may file a claim against the Department. Unless the tree had previously been designated as a hazard and the Department negligent, the damage will be considered as an act of God.

Commissioner Holme referred to testimony about buildings at the Magnuson Park Campus Development. He recalled that the briefing stated the tennis center would have an air-supported roof. The recent wind storm damaged the air-supported roof of the arena at Vancouver, B.C. He recommended that any agreement at the tennis center specify who is responsible for repair of the roof. The Superintendent stated that Eric Friedli, Parks' Enterprise Director, will negotiate this.

Commissioner Collins commented that one out of ten trees in Stanley Park in Vancouver fell during the storm. There is a controversy there whether the trees will be sold with the proceeds going back to the Park Department or let the trees decay and help regenerate the park. He asked whether the fallen trees in Seattle's parks would be removed. The Superintendent answered that the trees in natural areas would be left where they fell, once any cleanup and safety precautions, such as leaning trees, are handled. In developed parks, the trees will be removed. If the tree is a hardwood and is saleable, it will go to the highest bidder and the proceeds will be used for parks. Commissioner Ramels asked if any trees fell in Schmitz Park, near her home, and the Superintendent answered yes, with some of them being large ones. Commissioner Ranade commented that trees at Ravenna Park hit utility lines when they fell.

The Superintendent stated that remaining trees are still vulnerable, as the ground is quite saturated.

Montlake Community Center Grand Opening: On Friday, January 5, Mayor Nickels and many community members joined Parks for the grand opening of the newly expanded and renovated Montlake Community Center. The \$3.4 million renovation was paid for by the Pro Parks Levy. A concurrent renovation of the historic Tudor Building was funded by a \$42,000 donation from the Montlake Community Center Advisory Council. A highlight was a children's choir, with 91 members, singing! It was a great community event.

South Lake Union: The contractor has begun work on site after State and shoreline permits were approved. A groundbreaking ceremony is tentatively scheduled for late February.

New Green Space Acquisition: On December 29, Parks completed the purchase of property from the Trust for Public Land on Lakeview Boulevard East. Acquisition of this property will improve the pedestrian connections, extend wildlife habitat, and enhance the wooded buffer along the East Blaine Street public stairway. The acquisition is funded by the Pro Parks Levy and King County Conservation Futures.

Brighton Playfield: Parks held the first public meeting for the Brighton Playfield Science Park improvements project in December. Citizen feedback included comments about locations for improvements in the park and the types of equipment to be constructed.

Bitter Lake Community Center Annex: There has been an increase in vandalism and theft at Bitter Lake Community Center in recent months. Most recently, on December 30 rocks were thrown through several windows at the Bitter Lake Annex which is used largely for the Bitter Lake before- and after-school programs, Late Night Recreation Program, Friday Skate Night, and basketball. There has also been recent vandalism at South Park Community Center.

Recent Grants: Staff received \$31,000 from Seattle Housing Authority to support the Yesler Community Center computer lab. Also, Rainier and Rainier Beach community center computer labs will benefit from the \$175,000 grant award from the Stuart Foundation to support technology programming for middle and high school students.

Langston Hughes Hosts Book-It Repertory Theatre production: The center will host Book-It Repertory Theatre's production of "Bud Not Buddy." Well known for its creative and theatrical adaptations of literary work, Book-It now brings an award-winning youth novel to the stage.

Madison Pool: Helene Madison Pool held a rededication event on January 8 to celebrate the pools' 35th anniversary and the 75th anniversary of Helene Madison's triple gold medal Olympic performance at the Los Angeles Summer games in 1932. Mayor Nickels attended and a new informational sign about Helene Madison was unveiled.

Basketball 2007: Basketball season began this past weekend. More than 280 teams are playing in our citywide league this season.

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.

Discussion/Recommendation: Citywide Skatepark Plan

Susanne Friedman, Seattle Park project planner, briefed the Park Board at its December 14 meeting. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. Minutes of that meeting are available at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/2006/12-14-06.pdf>. On January 5, Ms. Friedman sent the Board a draft decision agenda to assist in their discussion and recommendation. The decision agenda is included below, with the Board's discussion and vote, in italics and in blue, after each of the recommendation. Ms. Friedman answered several questions the Commissioners voiced at the December 14 meeting:

- (1) Demand for skateparks in Seattle. Ms. Friedman contacted the Interagency Commission (IAC). The IAC states that skateboarding is ranked 5th for overall sports and estimates that there are 28,000 skateboarders in Seattle.
- (2) Potential damage to wading pools if used for skateboarding. Ms. Friedman contacted the Parks Department's wading pool staff. Some wading pools are already used by skateboarders when they don't contain water. Pool staff haven't observed any damage to the pools from this use. They have discussed putting protective capping on the pools, but must go through the Health Department with the proposal. The Aquatics staff support multiple uses for the wading pools.
- (3) Potential skate facility at Elliott Bay area. Seattle Center is still considering 1st Avenue as a possible skatepark site, but the Elliott Bay area site is out. City Council has rejected the Elliott Bay area site and told Seattle Center to find a site. Seattle Center has a Master Plan and is finding it difficult to locate a skatepark on its premises.

The Board then began their discussion and recommendations on the six issues listed in the decision agenda. The Board's discussion and recommendation in italics follow each of the six issues.

Commissioner Ranade was unable to attend the December 14 meeting. He watched the tape of the meeting, available at <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/results.asp?Keyword=12%2F14%2F06&SearchType=true>. He also read the briefing paper and all the written testimony. The Board's discussion and recommendation in *italics* follow each one.

Decision Agenda

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION

The Board is scheduled to adopt the draft Citywide Skatepark Plan, including the proposed site locations, on January 11, 2007.

The Citywide Skatepark Plan outlines a hierarchy of skatepark facilities, criteria for their siting, and recommended locations for such. The plan also identifies priority actions for skatepark facility development. The identification of recommended parks by the Task Force is a siting recommendation only. Decisions on exact location within the recommended park, the exact size and shape, or the skill level of the facility would be developed during future site specific public planning processes.

RECAP OF PUBLIC HEARING

Testimony given at the public hearing was predominantly supportive of the plan and the planning process. Citizens emphasized the need for facilities and a desire to begin implementation as soon as possible. Neighborhood concerns were noted for Myrtle Reservoir and Genesee Playfield sites. There was a desire for filling in the gaps in the plan in the Downtown, Capitol Hill, and the University District.

After a considerable amount of discussion, the Park Board made the following recommendations to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation. The Board discussed and voted first on Issues #2-5 below, and discussed and voted on Issue #1 last.

ISSUE #1 – APPROVE THE DRAFT PLAN

- The Citywide System – Typology
- The Site Criteria & Framework of Assumptions
- The Site Recommendations
- Prioritized Projects for Funding
- Additional Recommendations

Commissioner Ranade moved to adopt the Citywide Skatepark Plan, with the Board's recommendations and changes [as shown below in Issues #2-5.] Commissioner Holme seconded.

The vote was taken and was unanimous in approval. Motion carried.

Discussion: Commissioners Ramels and Holme referred to a recent letter from Friends of Gas Works Park, opposing a skatedot at that park. Commissioner Holme asked if the Plan states that the skatedot cannot be too close to the playground. Ms. Friedman stated that the Plan does not state this. The same letter was mailed to her several months ago and she responded to the group then. The proposed site is already being used by skaters. Designating it as a skatedot would add some safety features. Several sites in the park are being proposed and she will look at these with the Friends of Gas Works Park.

The Citywide Skatepark Plan will go from Parks to the Mayor and City Council for approval and funding. Commissioners asked if the locations will come back before the Park Board and Ms. Friedman answered that the controversial ones will.

Commissioners urged that language be added to the Citywide Skatepark Plan that sites may be removed from the list in the future. Ms. Friedman stated that the language could be added. The Superintendent commented that the charter governs this and the Superintendent also has the authority to close down a skate site if it becomes a problem.

ISSUE #2 – GIVEN THE PUBLIC TESTIMONY, PARKS SHOULD PROCEED TO ATTEMPT TO FILL IN GAPS IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE.

- In keeping with the North Downtown Park Plan, continue to pursue collaborative options with Seattle City Light substation for possible park and skatepark siting in South Lake Union or Denny Triangle Neighborhoods
- Consider options for skate facilities if the Aurora corridor becomes lidded
- Find a replacement site for SeaSkate somewhere in the Downtown core, such as Seattle Center.
- Continue to pursue other opportunities as may arise.

Commissioner Collins was persuaded by testimony at the December 14 meeting, from a young man who skateboarded through the wind and rain storm to get to the meeting, and agrees that Parks should proceed to fill in gaps in the downtown core. The Superintendent stated that there can be acknowledgment in the plan that there is a gap, even if specific sites to fill the gaps are currently unknown. Commissioner Collins asked if temporary sites

could be located at private parking lots while the process continues. Ms. Friedman answered that finding a location is the issue and Parks is currently looking at Parks-owned property.

Commissioner Holme asked if the Downtown Parks Taskforce, which recently studied all the downtown parks, discussed the need for skateparks. Superintendent Bounds answered that they discussed the need during the City Hall planning process. Ms. Friedman commented that it isn't for lack of trying to find downtown sites — a number of sites in the downtown area were nominated but were not viable. Two locations, one under the viaduct and one on the waterfront, are still on the table. Many of the nominated park sites were already programmed for other uses, have Master Plans, or size limitations. The potential for skateparks will be included in the planning process for any new park developments.

Commissioner Collins moved approval of Issue #2 and Commissioner Belbeck seconded. Commissioner Jackson made a friendly amendment to clarify bullet #3 to add Seattle Center, which was accepted by Commissioner Collins.

The vote was unanimous in favor. Motion carried.

ISSUE #3 – GIVEN THE PUBLIC TESTIMONY, SHOULD PARKS EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS AND SIZES FOR A SKATE FACILITY AT GENESEE PARK?

Commissioner Pflaumer commented that this is the most controversial of the six issues, as the skatepark will take green space from the park. Ms. Friedman stated that this is a large 67-acre park and the community will select the skatepark site. Mr. Stoops commented that neighbors have been concerned with the site possibly being behind Rainier Community Center and with the size of the skatepark. Some neighbors thought a site near the off-leash area would be more suitable.

Commissioner Collins commented that Genesee Park has a 1976 Master Plan and he has heard from friends that a new Master Plan process is now in progress. Commissioner Jackson lives next to the park and has not heard of this effort. Ms. Friedman has made presentations to the Southeast District Council and to the community councils and has heard no mention of this. Commissioner Collins asked if the siting and size would be subject to new Master Plan considerations. Ms. Friedman clarified that staff are not asking the Park Board to pick the site within Genesee Park, only to approve the plan with Genesee as a site for a skatepark facility.

Commissioner Pflaumer stated that the concerns are whether to have a skatepark at Genesee; if there is one should it be a district or smaller; and where it would be sited within the park. Ms. Friedman stated that the Skatepark Advisory Taskforce only looked at areas within the park and did not pick a particular site.

Commissioner Jackson repeated the concern on whether there should be a skatepark in Genesee. There is a great deal of standing water in the park and she has concerns about adding a large amount of concrete in the park.

Commissioner Holme asked that there be clarification between Genesee Park and Genesee Playfield. The playfield consists of the playing fields, restroom, off-leash area, and parking lot. The Citywide Skatepark Plan refers to Genesee Park, not the playfield. Some testimony stated that the neighbors are agreeable to a skatepark, but do not want it near the Community Center.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked if there is flooding at the playfields. Commissioner Holme stated that an extensive drainage system was added under the soccer fields and there isn't flooding there. Commissioner Pflaumer commented that this gets back to an issue she is particularly interested in – stormwater drainage. Ms. Friedman stated that a skatepark would require extensive site analysis.

Commissioner Jackson commented that the Board heard extensive testimony opposed to locating the Lower Woodland skatepark too near neighboring homes. The facility at Genesee would be even closer to homes, as there is

only a two-lane street separating the park from homes. Ms. Friedman pointed out another area some community members preferred, which is south of Genesee Street and north of the soccer field.

Commissioner Ranade noted that all four district-size skateparks are proposed to be located in the south end and questioned if there needs to be a district size at Genesee. He recommended that there be flexibility on both the site and size. Ms. Friedman answered that this is one of two areas in Southeast Seattle that could accommodate a district-sized facility. The other site is Jefferson Park.

Commissioner Belbeck asked what process would be used to change the designation. Ms. Friedman stated that the Taskforce prefers to keep the designation as district sized. Commissioners Collins and Ranade disagreed and recommended that a process be included to allow the size of the site to be changed as the Plan progresses.

The Board made the following motion and requested that the “Whereas,.....” be reflected as part of the motion.

Whereas, members of the Board were concerned about unanswered questions about siting a skatepark at Genesee Park and have the following questions: 1. Is an area immediately adjacent to the soccer fields preferable to other proposed areas in the park for a skate facility? 2. How much green space would be lost? 3. How close will the skate facility be to neighbors? 4. Has there been sufficient input from the park’s neighbors? 5. Is there an overall plan for Genesee Park? 6. Are there drainage problems that would be exacerbated by adding an impervious skate park surface? Given these concerns, the Board wants to leave the Plan with more flexibility about locating a district skate facility at Genesee Park than it appears to now have,

Commissioner Ranade moved the Board recommend that the final Citywide Skatepark Plan identify Genesee Park as a possible location for a skate facility no larger than a district facility, subject to neighborhood input as to size, location, and whether to build one at all. Commissioner Collins seconded.

The vote was taken and was unanimous in approval. Motion carried.

ISSUE #4 – GIVEN THE PUBLIC TESTIMONY, SHOULD PARKS EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS AND SIZES FOR A SKATE FACILITY AT MYRTLE RESERVOIR?

- Potential facilities on the reservoir site, the size, amenities and skill level, would be determined at a later date during the planning and design processes if the community so desired.

Commissioner Collins referred to the testimony sent to the Board on this issue. He wasn’t as persuaded by the Myrtle Reservoir skatepark opponents as he was by the concerns voiced by Genesee Park neighbors.

Ms. Friedman stated that the reservoirs will all be lidded sometime in the future. The lids are proposed to become public park space. None of the reservoir sites have a size proposed for the skate facility. During the planning process, if the neighbors want a skatepark, then the size would be discussed.

Commissioner Ramels stated that the Board received some comments requesting that a skate site be located at High Point, rather than the Myrtle Reservoir. She wanted to clarify that the plan is not to locate one at each site. Ms. Friedman answered that the High Point site is designated as a very small district site. There would only be one site at either Myrtle Reservoir or High Point, but not both.

Commissioner Holmes thinks the Myrtle Reservoir is one of the best view spots in the city. What is the best way to use this new park space? His reaction is to put a skatepark at High Point and take Myrtle Reservoir off the list. Ms. Friedman answered that a skate facility could be put at the lower end of the site, nearer the street and houses.

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt the staff recommendation to the Superintendent regarding Myrtle Reservoir, including that there be no more than one skate facility to be located at Myrtle Reservoir or High Point Playfield. Commissioner Ranade seconded.

The vote was taken with 5 votes in favor and one abstention (Commissioner Holme.) Motion carried.

ISSUE #5 –SHOULD PARKS CONTINUE TO EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING NEAR-TERM FUTURE ACTIONS?

- Analysis and refinement of possible wading pools modifications
- Move forward with recommended priority projects, with refinement of planning level cost estimates for select project sites
 - **SKATEDOT POT**
 - **DAHL SKATESPOT**
 - **BRIGHTON PLAYFIELD SKATESPOT**
 - **JEFFERSON PARK DISTRICT FACILITY**

Commissioner Home moved for Parks to continue to explore the near-term future actions [listed above], with the bullet points and the staff recommendation. Commissioner Belbeck seconded.

The vote was taken and was unanimous in approval. Motion carried.

ISSUE #6 –SHOULD PARKS CONTINUE TO EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING LONG-TERM FUTURE ACTIONS?

- Move forward with recommended priority projects, with refinement of planning level cost estimates for select project sites
 - JUDKINS PARK/JUDGE CHARLES M. STOKES OVERLOOK SKATESPOT
 - ROXHILL PARK SKATESPOT
 - DELRIDGE PLAYFIELD SKATESPOT

Commissioner Holme moved for Parks to continue to explore the following long-term future actions and bullet points [listed above.] Commissioner Jackson seconded.

The vote was taken and was unanimous in approval. Motion carried.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact Susanne Friedman, Parks Project Planner, at: (206) 684-0902 or susanne.friedman@seattle.gov

Project information can be found at: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark.htm>

Commissioner Collins commented that this is a wonderful plan and is one of the most comprehensive issues to come before the Board during his tenure. Commissioners thanked Ms. Friedman and Mr. Stoops for their efforts on the Citywide Skatepark Plan.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Change Hours at Lavizzo and Pratt Parks and Create a New Park Exclusion Zone

Cheryl Fraser, Seattle Parks Resources Manager for the South and Central West areas, Larry Campbell, Seattle Parks Security Supervisor, and Lt. Hayes of Seattle Police Department presented a briefing on the proposal to Change Hours at Lavizzo and Pratt Parks and Create a New Park Exclusion Zone. Commissioners received a written, as well as verbal, briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

The Friends of Pratt and Lavizzo Parks and the Seattle Police Department are proposing to change the current 4 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. operating hours at Pratt and Blanche Lavizzo Park to operating hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

In addition, Seattle Police and neighboring citizens of Pratt and Lavizzo Parks are recommending the creation of a new City Park Exclusion Zone encompassing Pratt Park, Gerber Park, Powell Barnett Park, Peppi's Playground, Flo Ware Park, Lavizzo Park, Yesler Community Center grounds, Horiuchi Park, Judkins Park, and Fire House Park. A site map of the proposed Park Exclusion Zone is attached.

BACKGROUND

Community members who live near Pratt and Lavizzo Parks have requested a change in operating hours and the creation of an additional City Park Exclusion Zone. This request is based on several key factors. One, both citizens and Seattle Police have reported an ongoing pattern of incidents of illegal behavior within the parks after dark. Secondly, when parks hours have been modified in a park site, frequently the inappropriate behavior will move from one park to another park nearby. The creation of a Park Exclusion Zone helps reduce the potential of this occurring.

Community members, local businesses, and nearby schools have reported illegal behaviors occurring which include illegal drinking, drug use and sales, prostitution, and assaults.

In June 2006, Seattle Parks was contacted by concerned neighbors. Parks staff met with approximately 30 area residents, City Police and Community District Council representatives to begin addressing the serious crime occurring in and around Pratt and Lavizzo Parks. This proposal is one of the outcomes from this meeting. In addition, representatives from Pratt Fine Arts Studio reported two of their students were "attacked" while walking through Pratt Park on their way to attend an evening class at the Pratt Fine Arts facility.

Lt. Hayes of the Seattle Police Department's East Precinct reports that between June 1 and August 30, 2006, there were several issues that the East Precinct Officers, SWAT, and the Gang Unit have had to address in the area of the two Parks (Pratt and Lavizzo). There were:

Dispatched Calls:

- 25 noise complaints
- 3 disturbances
- 1 assault
- 1 suspicious circumstance
- 1 hazard

Officers Onviews:

- 16 suspicious circumstances
- 7 premise checks
- 1 narcotics arrest

At the East Precinct Crime Prevention Coalition Meeting (the third Thursday of the month) neighbors in the community report all kinds of crime taking place: narcotic deals, domestic violence, fights, intimidating behaviors, and constant noise. The common factor in this is that Pratt Park and Lavizzo Park are often used to hide, run through, and/or store weapons/narcotics. The latest report, from the Seattle Police Department Gang Unit, is that local gang members are attempting to establish themselves in the area. They are calling themselves "The Deuce O BGD's". They were formed off of the area of 20th and Yesler.

Seattle Police Department supports this request to change these parks' operating hours and the creation of a Park Exclusion Zone, citing it will provide them with an additional tool to curtail illegal behavior before activity develops into something larger.

Parks staff are working with City Light to install a security flood light, attached to a City light pole, to improve lighting in the east parking lot at Pratt park. The Parks Department tree crew has already pruned back trees, and the Installation Maintenance Crew has added new signage with current SMC code listed. Currently, Lavizzo Park's operating hours are temporarily set at 6:00am to 10:00pm, and this change is in effect for 90 days.

The beneficial impacts of this citizen proposal: Changing park operating hours would reduce noise and other disruptive activity within these parks. It would strengthen the public perception of the parks being safe places for park users. Police and Parks will continue to work with the neighbors through the change, creating a closer partnership.

The creation of a Pratt Park Zone will provide police with an additional tool to target 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 an exclusion zone is established.

The adverse impacts of this citizen proposal: The impacts of changing park operating hours include a loss of hours of public park usage after 10:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m. The primary user group impacted would be teenagers and young adults using the basketball facilities within the park.

Alternatives to Consider

No change. Do not create a new Park Exclusion Zone or modify park operating hours. If a new Park Exclusion zone is not implemented the police would continue to write Park Exclusion citations to offenders in each park within which they break a law or park rule.

Budget

There is little budget impact to the Seattle Parks Department if a new Park Exclusion Zone is created. The budget impact if we modified Park operating hours at Pratt and Lavizzo Parks is only a few hours of labor at \$50.00 per hour and an estimated \$200.00 of material costs to change the signage in these parks.

SUMMARY

Continuous communication and cooperation between Pratt and Lavizzo Parks users, neighbors, the police, and Parks staff is important and will continue. The general park operating hours (4 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.) were established to address illegal late night activities in all Seattle Parks and to create consistency for the convenience of park users. The "Park Operating Hours Exception" policy provides a means to modify park hours if there is a real threat to public health or safety. At this time, there appears to be a clear threat to public health or safety to support changing operating hours in these parks.

Staff recommends adopting the modified park operating hours of 6:00am to 10:00pm at Pratt and Lavizzo Parks, and we also recommend that a new Park Exclusion Zone be created to help control illegal activities at Pratt Park and other geographically located parks.

Additional information: Brief overview of the Park Exclusion ordinance:

The City of Seattle enacted an ordinance which was the result of 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.

The former park ordinance did not provide the enforcement tools needed to protect our park resources and the safety of park users, so the Park Exclusion ordinance was passed. This ordinance is intended to deter illegal behavior and immediately remove from our parks those who persist in breaking the law and park rules. This ordinance has enhanced the enjoyment of our parks for all law-abiding citizens and has protected our park resources since July 4, 1997.

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 others.

Verbal Briefing and Public Hearing

Ms. Fraser and Mr. Campbell briefly reviewed the information in the written briefing. The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that their testimony is limited to three minutes and will be timed. Speakers are called in the order in which they signed in. One citizen testified, with a very brief summary of his comments included.

Peter Blair: Mr. Blair lives next to the park and represented a small group of residents who were in the audience and who support this effort. He thanked Ms. Fraser, Mr. Campbell, Seattle Police, Ted Divina of the Department of Neighborhoods, and the Park Board for their work on this. He believes Seattle Police Department do an outstanding job, with the resources they have, but this park needs more help. He requested that both the breezeway and the lean-to be removed, as both obstruct SPD's line of vision into the park. Drug dealers go behind the wall to hide from police or do drug deals. The breezeway has support posts and 2x4s about half way up. Drug dealers put their drugs in the breezeway and then sit on the benches waiting to make sales. He also supports a partnership with Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center to have dances, theater, and other artistic events in the park. Having the public use the park more would help deter the drug dealers and other illegal behaviors.

The public hearing concluded at 7:45 p.m.

Board Questions & Answers

Commissioner Ranade asked where the basketball courts are located in the park. Ms. Fraser pointed out the location and Mr. Campbell commented that new condos are being built next to the area. Mr. Blair asked if the basketball courts could be used until 11:00 pm in summer months. That is a legitimate use of the park and he doesn't want to discourage legitimate uses. He would also welcome a skate site at the park as another legitimate use to draw the public into the park. Superintendent Bounds commented that it would need to be determined if using the courts until 11:00 pm is a problem to the neighborhood. Mr. Blair answered that it isn't a problem to him. Lt. Hayes commented that signage could be installed to include language specific to the basketball court.

Commissioner Jackson asked how an exclusion zone, once approved, can be undone if eventually the problems that required the zone to be established no longer exist. The Commissioners and staff spent some time discussing this. The Superintendent commented that 13 exclusion zones have been established and, while they have helped with controlling some of the illegal behaviors, none of the exclusion zones are at a point of being removed. Commissioner Jackson was concerned that someone who had a one-time mishap would be excluded. Staff and Lt. Hayes reviewed the process and described the initial exclusion as being only 1-7 days. There is an appeal process. If the person doesn't re-offend, they are allowed back in the parks. Commissioner Jackson thanked staff and Lt. Hayes for the clarification and commented that she is comfortable with the appeal process.

Commissioner Collins asked why not make this a citywide policy — if a person has illegal behavior in a park, then they are excluded from all parks. Superintendent Bounds recalled that initially there were some legal issues raised by the City's Law Department. Commissioner Holme asked if the exclusion impacts homeless people and the Superintendent stated that being homeless isn't breaking the law. However, homeless people do have to follow the park hours. Commissioner Collins asked staff to revisit with the City Attorney the idea of making this a citywide policy.

Commissioner Holme visited Pratt Park this last week and looked at the lean-to. He asked its purpose. Ms. Fraser answered that the original intent was to provide seating and shelter from the rain. Mr. Blair commented that it now is used by crack smokers and prostitutes. Lt. Hayes commented that the original intent of the seating was a good idea, but regular park users have been frightened away by the illegal activities going on in the park. Mr. Blair commented that the park is a scary place in the summer, with lots of kids having parties there who frequently have abrasive behavior. Commissioner Belbeck asked if neighbors had noted a difference during the temporary change of hours. Mr. Blair said the change happened at the time daylight savings hours changed. The change will be most telling in summer months when the park has much heavier use in the evening.

Lt. Hayes commented that Parks and SPD are working with City Light and other City departments to change the lighting, trim trees, remove abandoned cars, and remove the crack house across the street from the park.

Commissioner Pflaumer thanked all those who attended. The audience was reminded that written testimony will be accepted through Wednesday, January 24, and carries the same weight as testimony heard during the public hearing.

New/Old Business

Madison Park: Commissioners asked to read the Department’s response to several citizens who wrote the Board with their concerns on this project before the January 25 meeting.

Red Barn Ranch: Commissioners asked that the Board receive a future briefing to determine what to do with this building in the future.

Committee Reports: Commissioner Collins reported on the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee; Commissioner Ramels reported on the Seattle Parks Foundation; Commissioner Pflaumer reported on the Restore Our Waters Committee, Commissioner Jackson reported on the Parks Naming Committee and the Fort Lawton Advisory Committee.

City Council Amendment Changing Park Board: Commissioners discussed the City Council amendment, to be voted on at the full Council’s January 16 meeting. This amendment will change how members of the Board are appointed. Currently the Mayor appoints all seven Commissioners and City Council must confirm each appointment. The amendment would divide the appointing authority so that City Council would appoint four members. The Mayor would appoint four members, with Council confirmation required. The amendment would also add one new position to the Board and would set a required quorum of five members. The Commissioners spoke amongst themselves and decided to attend the meeting and testify before the Council.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
 Kate Pflaumer, Chair
 Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____