



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2008

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams
John Barber
Donna Kostka
Christine Larsen
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Terry Holme
Jackie Ramels

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Tim Gallagher, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Prior to the meeting, Parks staff led Commissioners on a tour that included the grounds of South Park Community Center, Cesar Chavez Park, Marra Farms Park, and a potential park site at 12th and Trenton. Following the tour, Commissioners were given an operations tour of the Community Center and visited several of the in-session programs. The Board has been holding more of its meetings in the community and tonight's meeting was held at South Park Community Center.

Commissioner Ranade called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Commissioner Barber moved approval of the agenda; Commissioner Kostka seconded. Commissioner Kostka moved approval of the April 10 minutes as corrected and Commissioner Barber seconded. Commissioner Adams moved approval of the April 24 minutes as corrected and Commissioner Kostka seconded. All three motions were approved.

Superintendent's Report

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

Road Closures: The Board will be briefed on this proposal and hold a public hearing at its June 12 meeting. Parks staff are recommending seven park locations for interior weekend road closures to vehicles to encourage residents to walk, exercise, bike, and meet their neighbors.

Beach Fires: The Park Board is also asked to hold a public hearing on eliminating beach fires. The fires require intensive staff labor to clean up after, and affect the environment. Some fire pits may be allowed under controlled circumstances.

New Directors Selected: The Department currently has three vacant director positions. Kevin Stoops, who has been working as the Interim Director since last year, will lead the Project and Development Division. Sue Goodwin, currently with the City of Ontario, California, has accepted the position in Recreation and will begin work in early July. A final selection has not yet been made for the Parks Division Director.

Victor Steinbrueck Park Re-design: The first public meeting to re-design and activate this downtown park, located next to Pike Place Market, was held on May 1, with approximately 75 people attending. Many voiced anger and concern over the park at the start of the meeting. Staff asked five questions, similar to how the public Strategic Action Plan meetings were held, to engage those present. By the end of the meeting, most attendees were discussing the opportunities this project presents. There are two additional public meetings scheduled on May 22 and June 12. For more information on this project, see http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=338.

Park Rangers: The seven Park Rangers have now joined the Department and will begin work in downtown parks later this month. A press release will be sent out in June to introduce them to the public. Two types of uniforms have been approved, both a work and dress type.

Downtown Park Activation: Summer concerts in the downtown parks will be expanded from August to include July.

West Seattle Stadium: The Department is considering whether it is cost effective for Seattle Parks to continue operating this stadium, and is studying who currently rents the facility and how much the Department is using the stadium. Staff are meeting with a consortium of private schools and will brief the Board on this later this summer.

ING Northwest Donation: ING Northwest is a home loan institution and will donate \$90,000 to the Department, for use in the South Park area.

Northgate Community Center Wins LEED Gold Rating: This community center was recently certified a LEED gold rating and is the first Seattle Parks project to be awarded this highest LEED rating. [LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building project meets the highest green building and performance measures. All certified projects receive a LEED plaque, which is the nationally recognized symbol demonstrating that a building is environmentally responsible, profitable and a healthy place to live and work.]

2009 Budget Update: Superintendent Gallagher stated that the City expects an increased demand on its general fund and decreased revenues for 2009. Thus, City Departments are being asked to decrease their

2009 budgets. He does not expect staff layoffs; however, some facility hours and programs will be cut, resulting in reduced service. The cuts will not be as severe as after September 11, but will be significant.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams, the Superintendent stated that the Department may recommend some fee increases, but it is unknown whether the Mayor would support that option.

Washington Recreation and Parks Association (WRPA) Awards

The Washington Recreation and Park Association held its awards ceremony during its annual conference in Kennewick on April 24, where Seattle Parks won four awards (descriptions below.) Adrienne Caver-Hall, Seattle Parks' Programs Coordinator, described the awards, presented the plaques, and thanked the Board of Park Commissioners for its advocacy and support of Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Northgate Community Center – Best Facility Class 1

The 20,000-square-foot Northgate Community Center opened in July 2006 on a plot of land shared with a new library and park. The center provides the diverse neighborhood with a gym, kitchen, computer room, fitness center, arts and crafts space, and multipurpose room. In 1999, Seattle voters approved the community centers levy, which included money for a new community center in Northgate. The \$8.85 million community center offers activities such as teen camps, basketball leagues, classes, after-school programs, community meetings, and programs for seniors. Shared facilities among the two buildings made it possible to stretch resources further and to maximize the open space, and proximity to Thornton Creek allows for environmental education opportunities. The two buildings garnered LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Celebrate Center City Brochure – Best Poster

Parks developed the Center City brochure to promote the schedule of programs and activities designed to revitalize downtown parks. It listed all of the 2007 summer City Center events, provided park locations and listed Parks' website and partners. The brochure was designed to unfold into a mini-poster for display on bulletin boards or refrigerators. More than 52,000 homes and businesses in the greater downtown area received the brochure in the mail.

Dahl Playfield – Best Park (Class 1)

Several years ago, facilities at Dahl Playfield, a 15-acre park in Northeast Seattle, desperately needed upgrades. In April 2004, neighborhood activist Christine Larsen and local citizens formed a community-based organization – Friends of Dahl Playfield – for the purpose of renovating the park. An effort that started out as a plan to buy new children's play equipment blossomed into a park improvement and stewardship plan for the entire site that included a new playground and basketball court, wetlands restoration, an improved walking trail, ballfield fencing and dugout renovations, and public artwork. The Friends of Dahl Playfield garnered City funding, Neighborhood Matching Funds and small grants and private donations to complete the project. To ensure that the project reflected community needs, the group held several public meetings. Since completion in 2007, the Playfield has filled an important community need.

Mike "Mickey" Merriam – Distinguished Service Award

The late Mickey Merriam worked for Seattle Parks and Recreation for 22 years, serving most recently as Senior Athletic Field Coordinator. Merriam enthusiastically advocated for youth athletics. He helped to raise more than \$1 million for sportsfields, including the Mariners All-Star field at Lower Woodland Park, and he helped to develop Friends of Athletic Fields, a grassroots sports field advocacy group representing 10,000 active citizens. Merriam's brother, Patrick, also a Seattle Parks and Recreation employee, accepted the award on his brother's behalf.

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. Three people testified:

Daniel Johnson: Mr. Johnson spoke in support of clothing-optional recreation opportunities in Seattle's parks system and asked the Board to consider allowing clothing optional beaches. He distributed a large handout to all the Commissioners and read his 4-page written testimony. He asked that clothing-optional models in other cities be studied and gave Hamlin Beach in British Columbia as a model to emulate.

Steve Mayo: Mr. Mayo also spoke in support of clothing optional-opportunities at both indoor swimming pools and at Colman outdoor pool in West Seattle. He described Colman as the most beautiful outdoor pool in the country, as it is located next to Puget Sound with beautiful sunsets, etc. Anyone can rent the pool, but it is banned from clothing-optional use. There are ways to shield the pool from passersby when clothing-optional events are in progress. Before tonight's meeting he read the online biographies of the Commissioners and was pleased to note that both Commissioners Adams and Larsen express concern for equal access to all in the park system. He thanked the Commissioners for serving the public.

Gary Gaffner: Mr. Gaffner attended the ceremony at South Lake Union last week and commented that it was a wonderful event. He also talked about the history of South Park and recalled when he coached little league baseball there in the 1950's. He began working with the Mayor's office to get more coaches for the area and also worked for several years in the 1960's on re-zoning the area. He thinks the South Park Action Plan is wonderful for the community. He urged the Commissioners and audience members to visit the new library and other public amenities in the neighborhood.

Briefing: South Park Initiative

Ron Davis, Seattle Parks Recreation Program Coordinator, and other Parks staff presented a briefing on the South Park Initiative. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Action

This is a briefing for information purposes only, with the goal of providing Board members with background information on the South Park Action Agenda and information about Parks activities responding to the Action Agenda strategies.

South Park Neighborhood Background

South Park is one of Seattle's most diverse and historically interesting neighborhoods. Today, with some 3,000 residents, South Park's demographics are unlike those found in any other neighborhood in the city: approximately 37 percent of the residents are of Hispanic origin, compared to 5.3 percent citywide. There are also residents who are Caucasian (roughly 50 percent), as well as small percentages of African-Americans and Asian Pacific Islanders, among other nationalities. Eleven percent of the neighborhood lives in poverty, and 89 percent of the students at the local elementary school qualify for free or reduced-fare lunches. Unlike the citywide average of nearly 90 percent of people over age 25 having completed high school, in South Park that figure is approximately 33 percent. Moreover, services must be sought outside of the neighborhood: there is no post office, full-service grocery store, bank, or neighborhood service center in South Park, and there are inadequate public transportation options connecting South Park with other neighborhoods where services can be found. Violence and crime has also plagued the neighborhood, with an increase in gang-related activity and gun violence in recent years.

At the same time, the past few years have seen people of South Park band together to address critical community issues, such as violence and crime prevention, public health and the environment, community and economic development, and youth education and participation. The South Park Action Agenda built on this positive climate of inclusion and participation by engaging in an extensive process that provided valuable insights from community members who had never before been involved in developing community strategies.

The development of the South Park Action Agenda involved the community review of old planning documents, identified new and emerging community challenges and opportunities, and identified neighborhood priorities. The South Park Action Agenda is the result of an intensive community-driven neighborhood assessment and strategy effort that aims to bring the South Park neighborhood vision to fruition. The strategies are organized by committee into short-term (two to three years), mid-term (three to five years), and long-term (more than five years) recommendations. The recommendations require the participation of multiple parties for implementation, including the city, county, state, federal government, and most importantly, the community itself.

The Action Agenda is broken down into five main issue areas: Youth Development, Environment and Physical Improvements, Community Engagement, Business and Transportation, and Public Safety. Teams of neighborhood residents, business representatives, community leaders and service providers formed committees for each issue area and over a six-month period worked with the City of Seattle to develop a series of strategies and recommendations that are collectively called the South Park Action Agenda.

The Action Agenda represents the best of South Park, a spirit of determination, cooperation, and optimism about the possibilities that this community has to offer, and the opportunity to become a destination neighborhood that can balance growth and economic development while existing residents of all incomes and colors can remain and prosper. The strategies and recommendations are founded on a neighborhood vision that prioritizes strong and healthy families, a thriving business district, a safe, environmentally friendly and visually attractive community, a strong sense of community identity, and genuine appreciation of the neighborhood's diversity.

Summary of South Park Community Goals:

1. **Youth Development:** Create and maintain a vibrant South Park community that provides unlimited opportunities for youth and families to thrive.
2. **Environment & Physical Improvements:** Seek a variety of improvements designed to improve the quality of life in South Park, promote economic development, and protect health and safety.
3. **Community Engagement:** Create and maintain a neighborhood where all community members feel welcome, are informed and educated about the decisions impacting the neighborhood, and have a voice and vote in the decision making process. Educate and train community members and providers so they are able to outreach to residents in a language appropriate and culturally competent manner. Create and maintain an environment where the great diversity, culture, history and traditions of South Park residents are valued and appreciated.
4. **Business and Transportation:** Create and maintain a neighborhood where frequently purchased items are available in the neighborhood; where there is robust access to mass transit or an alternative to driving into and out of South Park; and where there is successful industrial sector.
5. **Public Safety:** Ensure a neighborhood in which the community can safely live, do business, and interact with others, now and for generations to come. Must be founded on a cohesive community that is engaged, empowered, and focused on common goals and priorities.

Issues

1. Implementation of the South Park Action Agenda will require staff continuity and consistency at South Park Community Center and continued Parks Recreation Division administrative support.

2. Expanding / remodeling the South Park Community Center - need funding source for project and very constrained site for single story expansion.
3. Lighting the South Park playfield and River City Skate Park – lighting a natural grass field in a neighborhood area - does this meet criteria identified in the Joint Athletic Field Development Plan?

Specific Parks and Recreation Action Agenda Items

South Park Community Center and Park is one of the very few public spaces in the South Park Neighborhood, it serves as the “heart of the community” and is a vital connection for residents to find out information about community services and to participate in recreational opportunities.

Budget - Specific Parks and Recreation funding in 2007 & 2008:

The South Park public planning process focused on Parks doing the following in support of the Action Agenda:

- **Recreation Program Specialist:** In 2007 & 2008, the South Park neighborhood has received various grants and funding to expand programming for youth and teens. The Recreation Specialist position is responsible for Late Night teen programming, teen staff supervision, administering grants, supervising staff funded through the grants, ensuring program outcomes, building strong community partnerships, coordinating with community agencies to leverage resources and collaboratively provide services (\$72,061).
- **Late Night Teen Program:** In 2007 & 2008, the Late Night Program was added to provide more recreational opportunities for South Park teens. Late Night teen programming is offered from 7pm to midnight on Friday night (\$65,600). The Late Night program averages over 50 participants weekly and had a recent all time attendance high of 86 teens.
- **STEP:** In 2007 & 2008, South Park team for Student Training and Employment Program (STEP) serving 20 teens for 6 weeks each summer (\$31,817).
- **Expanded Community Center Hours of Operation:** In 2007, to support the community, the Center hours were increased to 9am – 9pm Monday through Friday (from 1-9pm prior to 2007), to 10am to 5pm on Saturday (from noon to 5pm prior to 2007) and to noon to 5pm Sunday (closed prior to 2007) (\$32,567).
- **Weekday morning activities for Lifelong Recreation (Sr. Adults), special populations and pre-school population:** With the extended South Park Community Center operating hours, SPCC is able to offer morning toddler indoor gym playtime, special population recreation opportunities, weekend family programs and lifelong recreation program for senior adults. The toddler gym program which meets Monday through Friday from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. is averaging 25 kids per week. The special populations program which meets on Thursdays and focuses on cooking, arts and crafts, games and social interaction averages 20 participants per week. The family weekend programs have included family skating, parent/tot playgroups and drop-in basketball with the drop-in basketball drawing the largest crowd averaging 30 people on Sundays. Lastly, the senior adult program which offers classes in cooking, arts and crafts, book club, exercise, Tai Chi, computer lab and field trips averages about 25 participants per week.
- **New Neighborhood Park (12th and Trenton View Park):** In 2007, Parks and Recreation proposed \$50,000 for a design and development plan of a public park located in South Park. The project provides for a public design process to develop a street end park plan for an area that provides a unique opportunity for a South Park area view park. The area located at 12th Ave. S. and S. Trenton St. is an unimproved “street right of way” that frequently has been the location for criminal activity. This area has been described by residents and Seattle Police as a location often used for prostitution, drug use and homeless encampments. By creating a park Seattle Police can more effectively enforce criminal trespass for crime related offenses. The area is adjacent to Sea Mar property and has great potential to be designed as a larger park area through the development of a joint use development maintenance partnership with the City and Sea Mar. Both the South Park Neighborhood Plan and the

South Park Action Agenda have identified open space available for public use and reduction in criminal activity as very high priorities (\$50,000). In 2008, Seattle Parks and Recreation held three public meetings and 5 steering committee meetings, led by Pomegranate Center, to engage the public in visioning and ultimately preparing a conceptual design for a future park. The conceptual design is complete and a final report was presented to the steering committee. The final report will be used in the next phase of the project: Creating a "Friends of" group and fundraising. The Seattle Parks Foundation is interested in working with the community to realize their vision for the area.

- **Expanded South Park CC Parking Lot:** The community has raised the concerns that the existing parking spaces in South Park are not sufficient for the Community Center and Play Field facilities. In anticipation of the future expansion of South Park Community Center and to solve the current parking lot shortage problem, Parks has studied potential ways to expand existing parking lot. In 2008 the Project is currently under design development. There will be some department review to ensure scope elements align with budget, and Parks Department and City of Seattle standards are adhered to. A preliminary SEPA checklist was prepared, reviewed and presented for public comment in November 2007. A determination of non-significance based on current site condition, was entered into public record following the public comment period. The current project design addresses some additional parking stalls, minor landscaping and expanded entrance width. The groundbreaking is scheduled for early September (est. \$160,000).
- **Cesar Chavez Park:** On April 17th, 2008, Seattle Parks and Recreation celebrated the grand opening of the Cesar Chavez Park. This park includes an amphitheatre and musical stone artwork that can be played by visiting park users.
- **Marra-Desimone Park:** Seattle Parks and Recreation is in the process of updating the final report and Long Range Plan Site Plan for Marra-Desimone Park to include the recently designed SPU improvements. The Long Range Plan for the park was approved by Parks Board in November 2006 and revised by Interim Parks Superintendent in May of 2007. In the meantime Seattle Public Utility proposed drainage improvements in the neighborhood including the construction of drainage swales on Marra-Desimone Park site in accordance with the approved Long Range Plan. The updated document will show the fully designed swales and grading instead of a proposed schematic design.

Schedule of Implementation:

2007 was the first year of the South Park Action Agenda Implementation. The South Park Action Agenda recommendations are organized into Short-Term (2-3 years), Mid-Term (3-5 years) and Long-Term (5 or more years). See full South Park Action Agenda document for details on short term, mid-term and long-term recommendations for all city departments.

Additional Information:

The Mayor's Office web site has the complete South Park Action Agenda document identifying all recommendations – <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/southparkactionagenda>.

Parks Representative to South Park Action Agenda Committee – Ronald Davis II - 206-615-0407
Ronald.Davis@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Mr. Davis introduced himself and other staff to the Board. He gave a brief review of information the Commissioners received in the written briefing. He and other staff then reviewed components of the Action Plan that focus on neighborhood parks.

12th & Trenton Project: This site is owned by SeaMar Community Health and has been the site of drug use and prostitution. David Graves, Seattle Parks' project planner, will continue discussions with SeaMar on efforts to clean up the area and develop it into a neighborhood park. Pomegranate Center, [a nonprofit community design and development organization bringing people together to build better

communities and an international leader in creating community gathering places], has been engaged as a consultant. Seattle Parks Foundation is also very interested in helping develop the project.

Cesar Chavez Park: Lynn Sullivan, Seattle Parks' Project Manager, next gave an update on nearby Cesar Chavez Park. Several of the Commissioners toured the park earlier in the day. She distributed photos of the park before it was renovated and briefly described the current components. This park is located on King County Property. The neighborhood, Neighborhood Matching Funds, and Seattle Parks partnered in the renovation, with a grand opening held in April. The Superintendent noted that this was the most heavily-attended grand opening he has witnessed at a Seattle park.

Commissioner Adams asked about the steel columns in the park and admired the park design. Ms. Sullivan answered that the columns are musical stones and were installed prior to the renovation. She recommended that the Commissioners try playing the stones on their next visit. Originally, the park design was for an all-concrete finish, but funding prohibited this. The resulting grassy area in the middle of the park serves as a water detention area.

Marra Desimone Farms: Virginia Hassinger, Seattle Parks' Project Planner, stated that this site is half farm land and half fill site. Seattle Parks is working with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to install swales around the property on the east side. This exciting project will begin in two weeks and will help deter flooding and improve water quality in the area. As part of the project, SPU will pave the parking lot and pathway and add a pedestrian bridge. In addition to this project, there is \$30,000 remaining in long-range planning funds for the park and some other aspects of the park's development are being completed, including hazard tree replacement this fall.

Commissioner Adams referred to the healthy citizen's initiative and believes that Marra Farms is a good representative of healthy living and educational opportunities for the community. He will contact Ms. Hassinger to discuss this program further. Ms. Hassinger stated that the community has grand plans for this site, including an environmental learning center, posted information about the gardens, and community events.

Commissioner Larsen noted that her daughter's school volunteered at a community garden as a school outing and wondered if this occurs at Marra Farms. Ms. Hassinger answered that it does. Mr. Davis added that summer day camp kids have plots in the Farm that they tend to and Concord Elementary students tend plots — and the kids enjoy eating their harvest. In addition to the students, there is a P-Patch, the Mien community garden, and Lettuce Link. Lettuce Link is comprised of an astonishing number of volunteers who donated 13,000 tons of food from the garden to South Park Food Bank. The only downside to the site is the vandalism that sometimes occurs. Commissioner Adams noted that Lettuce Link is one of the sites where retired corporate volunteers donate their expertise to assist non-profit groups in their goals.

Seattle Conservation Corp: Kathie Anderson, Seattle Parks' Manager for the Seattle Conservation Corp, briefly described the Corp's role in expanding the limited parking lot at South Park Playfield. The Corp has helped with quite a bit of work in the South Park area. She distributed a schematic of the \$80,000 project, to be started in September after the busy summer programs. Completion is expected by the end of this year.

Commissioner Larsen commented that she thinks the Conservation Corp is fabulous and a real benefit to help staff with projects. However, she used them two times on a community project at Dahl Playfield, but didn't hire them for a third time. Her reasons were that the crew's motivation dropped drastically when their supervisor wasn't present and the final cost for the project was double the estimate. Ms. Anderson

will contact Commissioner Larsen to further discuss these issues. [To learn more about the Seattle Conservation Corp training program, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/scc/>]

Commissioners thanked Parks staff for the briefing on the South Park Initiative and for the tour of the area.

Briefing: Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan

Mark Mead, Seattle Parks Senior Urban Forester, and Marcia Fischer, Restoration Ecologist/Landscape Architect for Natural Systems Design provided a preliminary briefing to Commissioners on the Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is a preliminary briefing to provide information to the Board on the second Draft Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan. There will be a Park Board briefing and public hearing on the Plan in August.

Project Description and Background

In January 2006, Seattle Parks and Recreation began development of a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) for Lake Washington Boulevard. The purpose of a VMP is to provide guidelines for future forest restoration projects, as well as maintenance and operations standards.

The VMP process is not a design process and relies heavily on the design intent originally created for a park property. For formal developed park settings the design intent is often straightforward. For a 7-mile linear stretch of property such as Lake Washington Boulevard, which includes both developed and undeveloped parkland, the design intent leaves some room for interpretation. Developed parklands include the formal landscapes along the Boulevard with mowed grass and ornamental shrub and flower beds. Undeveloped parklands include patches of native and non-native shrub and tree communities that have *naturalized*, i.e. seeded and grown without human intervention. The lakeside is a mix of developed and undeveloped parklands, while the western slopes of the Boulevard are largely undeveloped.

The design intent for the Lake Washington Boulevard VMP was derived from several sources, but primarily the Olmsted Brothers "Emerald Necklace" plans for a city-wide park and boulevard system recommended to the City of Seattle in 1903. Other source documents include long-range guidelines for the Boulevard commissioned to the EDAW firm by the City in 1986, and a 2006 University of Washington's Landscape Architecture program study. Additional design intent information for undeveloped areas of the park were derived from Seattle's Draft Urban Forest Management Plan (2006) and the Green Seattle Partnership 20 Year Strategic Plan (2005)

Goals for the VMP that reflect the design intent include:

- Create a sense of regional identity in a multi-mile lakefront pleasure drive;
- Create an aesthetic and ecological link between the Arboretum and Seward Park;
- Take advantage of the abundance of views of water, wooded hills, and mountains;
- Identify and define Boulevard property lines;
- Promote native character in natural areas;
- Restore natural forest processes;
- Conserve soil and water quality;
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat;
- Buffer land uses; and
- Ensure public safety.

Public Involvement Process

A series of eight public process meetings were held between June 2006 and January of 2007 to review the draft VMP. Issues raised during the public process include slope stability, tree species selections, views from adjacent residential areas, wildlife habitat, maintenance needs, and recreation area access.

In July 2007 a Project Advisory Team (PAT) was formed to discuss several issues that Seattle citizens appeared to be divided over regarding the Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan. The PAT was composed of:

- 6 Local Residents Nominated by 4 community clubs
 - 2 Mt Baker Community Club
 - 2 Lakewood Seward Park Community Club
 - 1 Leschi Community Council
 - 1 Madrona Community Council
- 2 Friends of "Pro-Vegetation" community leaders nominated by Parks Open Space Advocates (POSA)
- Organizational Representatives:
 - 1 Cherry Blossom Festival
 - 1 SeaFair
 - 1 Friends of Olmsted Parks
 - 1 University of Washington
 - 1 Audubon

The original intent of the Project Advisory Team was to review the entire draft VMP. Through the course of PAT meetings it became clear that there were a few fundamental rifts in constituencies regarding the values and functions Lake Washington Boulevard Park should provide to citizens and the environment. These divisions in constituent values mainly focused on more or less vegetation along the parkway. Reasons cited for less vegetation included views and recreation access; reasons cited for more vegetation included climate and wildlife habitat. The PAT has focused exclusively on refining the Goals and Objectives of the VMP document to reach a "reasonable agreement" as opposed to a "consensus" regarding the Goals and Objectives for vegetation management along the Boulevard.

Issues

Contentious issues in Project Advisory Team discussions included tree species selections, views from adjacent residential areas, wildlife habitat areas, maintenance needs, and recreation area access. The PAT convened for five meetings to deliberate the goals and objectives of the VMP. The outcome of the PAT was a revised set of Goals and Objects and the recommendation that staff revise the VMP draft to accommodate changes to the goals and objectives and clarify certain graphics and Best Management Practices descriptions.

Vegetation management issues that need to be addressed in the short term include:

- Invasive plant infestations including; blackberry, ivy, knotweeds, and reed canary grass;
- Remnants of Pacific madrone patches in serious decline;
- Street tree failures due to vehicular compaction, erosion, and poor drainage;
- Erosion and slope failure along the steep slopes;
- Permitted and illegal topping and removal of trees by adjacent property owners;
- Encroachment of neighboring landscapes; and
- Deterioration of habitat for salmon, migratory birds and other wildlife.

Environmental Sustainability

The intent of this plan is to assure the long-term sustainability of the vegetation along Lake Washington Boulevard, focusing on meeting existing use and design parameters as well as current policies.

Budget

The current budget is \$40,000 in 2008 for completion of the Plan. There is no funding for plan implementation; however, when opportunities arise during regular maintenance, the Plan will be followed.

Additional Information

Mark Mead: mark.mead@seattle.gov; 684-4113

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion

Mr. Mead and Ms. Fischer distributed several copies of the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to the Commissioners. Mr. Mead gave a history of the public meetings held to develop this Plan, which represents 12 years of vegetation management plan development. This VMP is the last one that Seattle Parks expects to develop, as the Plans for all the other large Seattle parks have been completed.

Mr. Mead next reviewed information in the written briefing. Several years ago the Olmsted National Convention was held in Seattle. Several of the specialists who attended were asked to review the VMP for Lake Washington Boulevard and give their recommendations. In addition, University of Washington's Landscape Architecture program also studied the Plan. Mr. Mead next listed the names of the Project Advisory Team (PAT), which included Commissioner Barber. Commissioner Larsen asked if Iain Robertson, a University of Washington professor of landscape and member of the PAT, was representing the Center for Urban Horticulture and Mr. Mead answered that he wasn't.

Ms. Fischer stated that the Plan will soon be available as a .PDF and staff will notify Commissioners when it is available. Ms. Fischer next reviewed the VMP document, which consists of a 100-page plan, 50 pages of maps, and 110 pages of appendices. She summarized the changes that have been made to the Plan since she joined the team: (1) developed maps; (2) designated lakeside unit; (3) adjusted boundaries of lakeside and boulevard areas (4) prioritized work to be done and best management practices and (5) included graphics.

Commissioner Kostka asked Mr. Mead to prioritize the components of the Plan. He listed the priorities as: (1) replace trees along the Boulevard; (2) clear up hazard trees; (3) lakeside basin; and (4) remove invasives from the slopes while maintaining the slope's integrity. There is a significant amount of work to be done. Commissioner Barber asked if there is a timeline to replace the large madrones and Mr. Mead answered the trees will be replaced as soon as the plan is approved.

Mr. Mead complimented the work of Katie Moller, Seattle Parks project planner, and Ms. Fischer on this Plan. Commissioners thanked Mr. Mead and Ms. Fischer for the briefing.

New/Old Business

City Council's Proposal for New Park Levy: Commissioner Adams was asked to serve on the Council-appointed citizen advisory committee that is helping determine the feasibility of a new park levy. Commissioner Barber is Commissioner Adam's alternate. Two meetings have been held, with each Commissioner attending one. The ground rules were developed at the first meeting. At the second meeting, discussion continued and a set of ground rules were adopted. The committee also adopted a set of preliminary criteria and adopted project solution criteria with amendments. Three public meetings are scheduled for : May 12 at City Council chambers, May 14 at Northgate Community Center, and May 15 at Rainier Community Center. Preliminary results from these meetings are expected on May 20. There is also a questionnaire on City Council's website. For more information, see <http://www.seattle.gov/council/default.htm>.

Commissioner Larsen commented that she is pleased that Cedar River consultants are staffing this effort. She has heard that public comments are being accepted at the end of the committee's meetings and Commissioner Adams agreed. She believes this doesn't give individuals or groups adequate time to give input to the committee. Commissioner Adams will take this back to the committee. He noted that the public can attend one or more of the public meetings and participate in that way or they can fill out the survey form and submit. He added that the process is moving really, really fast and there may not be time for the committee to re-consider the ground rules.

KUDOS

Seattle Parks Foundation Board Report: Commissioner Larsen is the Park Board's representative to the Seattle Park Foundation Board and gave a brief report. She attended the recent park opening at South Lake Union Park. More than 1,000 people were there and enjoyed a wonderful celebration. Superintendent Gallagher added that the United Indians of All Tribes sponsored the free salmon bake and served over 280 lbs of salmon.

Flo Ware Park Dedication: Commissioner Barber noted a very positive ceremony this past weekend at Flo Ware Park and thanked Parks staff for their role in an amazing experience – especially Parks' Programmer Randy Wiger. Mr. Wiger provided a covered stage and canopy for the event, as well as great entertainment and programming for the dedication. The community has worked for some time to revitalize this park and Commissioner Barber is very encouraged by the enthusiasm shown by Parks staff in coordinating this event. This helps Parks fulfill its purpose and it builds great community spirit.

Green Lake and Seward Parks Youth Fishing Events: Commissioner Larsen complimented staff for holding these two events, which her children attended. She stated that her family had a blast at the event and she noted that many young families participated in the fishing events.

Charles E. Odegaard Award: Commissioner Barber noted that Parks Resources Manager Royal Alley-Barnes is the winner of this year's Charles E. Odegaard Award for encouraging racial diversity. Mr. Odegaard was president of the University of Washington. [The Charles E. Odegaard Award was established in 1973 to honor the distinguished work of President Odegaard (1958-1973), who is most noted for his leadership in the community and his dedication to educational opportunity at the University of Washington.]

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Amit Ranade, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE: _____