



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
April 23, 2009

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(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams, Vice-chair
John Barber
Terry Holme
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Timothy Gallagher, Superintendent
Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Kostka seconded, approval of the agenda and the record of correspondence. The vote was taken and the motion carried. The April 9 minutes will be approved at the May 14 meeting.

Superintendent's Report

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

Park Operating Hours: Seattle Parks and Recreation will host three open houses in April and May to propose to the community the possibility of standardizing park operating hours. The open houses will be held from 6:30 – 8 p.m. on Monday, April 27, at Green Lake Community Center, 7201 E Green Lake Drive N; on Monday, May 4, at Miller Community Center, 330 19th Ave. E; and on Thursday, May 7, at Jefferson Community Center, 3801 Beacon Ave. S. The Park Board will hold a public hearing on the operating hours at its May 14 meeting.

Olympic Sculpture Park: Chevron applied to the Department of Ecology to abandon a trench of wells that are no longer functioning, located on the west side of the railroad tracks at the Olympic Sculpture Park. The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) and Seattle Parks have serious concerns about this application, voiced these concerns to the Department of Ecology (DOE), and had a meeting this week with DOE and Chevron. DOE was very favorable to Parks' position and will require Chevron to stay on the site doing monitoring longer than originally required.

Chevron and their consultants will need to come back in 90 days with a monitoring plan and may even need to amend the Consent Decree. It may take up to 10 years, and maybe even longer, to determine the threat of the petroleum products to Elliott Bay and the rest of the site.

Commissioner Adams asked about Chevron's obligation to continue monitoring the site. Superintendent Gallagher responded that they have been monitoring for three-four years and the Department is asking for an additional 10 years. DOE may, or may not, extend the monitoring for that length of time. Commissioner Ramels noted that the property was vacant for a significant amount of time before the Sculpture Park was built and Commissioner Holme recalled the tanks being there in the mid-1970s.

West Seattle Stadium Request for Proposals: The Department received no proposals for the West Seattle Stadium. Parks staff are following up with the two groups that expressed interest prior to the downturn in the economy. Staff will keep the Park Board posted.

Ballard Park Exclusion: At the most recent Ballard community council meeting, Seattle Parks Department was presented a petition asking that a park exclusion zone be created in Ballard due to problems with illegal activity in the parks. Superintendent Gallagher noted that the City has held several major "sweeps" at Kinneer Park on Queen Anne and that has moved some of the criminal activity from there to the Belltown area and Ballard community.

Aquarium Management Transition: Seattle Parks and the Seattle Aquarium Society (SEAS) are moving ahead with plans for SEAS to manage the Aquarium. The negotiations are at a good point and the two groups are discussing the financial arrangements. The proposal will go to City Council in late June or early July. John Braden, Seattle Aquarium Director, will brief the Park Board in June.

Magnuson Park Springfest: Commissioners and the public are invited to the festivities at Magnuson Park this next weekend, beginning at 10:00 am. The Mickey Merriam Athletic Field Complex will be dedicated and the new Mountaineers Club will be open, as well as many other events.

Department Receives Low Bids: Nine contractors recently bid on the Hiawatha Playfield project, with the lowest one nearly \$.5 million under the estimate of \$1.6 million. The Miller project also came in significantly lower than estimates. Staff believe that contractors are bidding some jobs at little-to-no profit in order to keep their skilled workers busy.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber about the Hiawatha project, Superintendent Gallagher answered that it includes synthetic fields and other improvements.

Delridge Skatepark Update: The Department is planning to use the excess funds from the lower-than-anticipated bids to move ahead with the Delridge Skatepark. The construction documents are near completion.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber on the source of the funds for the Hiawatha and Miller Playfield renovations, the Superintendent responded that the source is Real Estate and Excise Taxes. Commissioner Barber asked if REET funds may be directed to a skatepark. The Superintendent answered that the proposal to do so will first go to City Council for approval.

Budget Cuts: Due to the downturn in the economy, the City must make a substantial budget cut in 2009 of \$13 million, with Seattle Park's portion \$2.5 million. The Superintendent thanked the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) Board for voting to transfer \$1.2 million to help make up the Department's budget deficit. ARC will transfer \$318,000 in 2009 and the remainder in 2010 to Parks. ARC's decision to do this resulted in a zero reduction in ARC-supported facilities. Superintendent Gallagher commented that this is a great partnership.

Seattle Parks will cut six positions; three of those positions will transfer to work for the Pro Parks Levy Fund projects. Two manager positions will be cut.

Levy Meetings: Seattle Parks and Recreation will host four informational meetings about the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy in various areas of the city. The community is encouraged to come and learn about the new six-year, \$146 million Levy. All meetings will be from 7–8:30 p.m. at the following location and dates:

- Monday, May 4, at Rainier Community Center located at 4600 38th Ave S.
- Wednesday, May 6, at West Seattle Golf Course located at 35th Ave SW and SW Snoqualmie St
- Tuesday May 12, at Green Lake Community Center located at 7201 E Green Lake Dr. N
- Wednesday, May 13, at Parks Administration Building located at 100 Dexter Ave. N.

Memorial Benches at Discovery Park: Commissioner Kostka questioned why several benches at Discovery Park have memorial plaques on them. Superintendent Gallagher responded that members of the public donate \$3,000 to Seattle Parks Foundation for each memorial bench that is installed, and each bench has a small memorial plaque. The Discovery Park 1972 Master Plan did not permit this; however, it was superseded by the 1986 Master Plan which does allow the memorial benches. The funds go to Seattle Parks Foundation, which is currently doing an inventory of all memorial benches. Karen Daubert, Seattle Parks Foundation Executive Director, is scheduled to brief the Park Board in early July and will be asked to review this donation policy.

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 two minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 10 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. Two people testified. A brief summary of the testimony follows:

Mark Bishop: Mr. Bishop is Assistant Manager of the Co-Rec Soccer League, which has 1,200 teams playing each year. He noted that the new Magnuson Park fields call for two adult games per night; however, the youth practices are allowed to continue until 7:00 pm at night and, in order for the adults to play two games, they must begin play at 6:30 pm. He requested additional hours for adult play and distributed a handout to the Board. Mr. Bishop noted that Co-Rec Soccer has gender equity, with half the league female teams and half male teams.

Briefing: Synthetic Turf Policy

Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks Policy and Business Analysis Manager, presented a briefing on the Department's proposed synthetic turf policy. The Board will hold a public hearing on this topic at its May 28 meeting, followed by a discussion and recommendation at the June 25 meeting. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing, which was also posted to the Board's web page for public access. The briefing paper is included in these minutes.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

No action is being requested at this time. This briefing will present the proposed Use of Synthetic Turf Policy (Attachment 1). The Board is hosting a public hearing on the proposed policy on May, 28 2009 and is scheduled to discuss and make recommendations on June 11, 2009.

Staff Recommendation

Pending the comments during the public hearing, staff expects to recommend approval of the Use of Synthetic Turf Policy which outlines elements the Department will consider when proposing the use of synthetic turf.

Policy Description and Background

The Department’s first use of synthetic surface for an athletic field was at Queen Anne Bowl in 1997. Since that time six additional synthetic turf fields have been installed. Table 1 shows the status of synthetic turf field development.

Table 1: Synthetic Field Development schedule

Completed:	
Queen Anne Bowl	1997 (replaced in 2008)
Genesee #2	2001
Lower Woodland #1	2002
Interbay	2003
Bobby Morris	2005
Loyal Heights	2007
Georgetown	2008
Under Construction:	
Magnuson Park #1 Soccer / Ultimate	2009
Magnuson Park #3 Soccer / Ultimate	2009
Magnuson Park#5 Rugby / Ultimate	2009
Magnuson Park #6 Baseball	2009
Magnuson Park #9 Softball / Little league	2009
Out For Bid:	
Hiawatha	2009/10
Miller	2009/10
In Design:	
Lower Woodland #2	2009/10
Lower Woodland #7	2009/10
Funded:	
Delridge	2010
Genesee #1	2010
Potential:	
Washington Park	TBD
Brighton	TBD
High Point	TBD

Over the past several years concerns have been expressed over the health and environmental effects of synthetic turf. Various research studies have responded to concerns with the potential of hazardous materials in the crumb rubber used in turf, lead used in older nylon fibers, a possible heat island effect associated with the turf surfaces, and injuries to athletes who use the fields. Parks staff has reviewed an extensive amount of literature that was summarized for the City Council in 2008 (Attachment 2).

More recent findings by health agencies and the Consumer Products Safety Commission (Attachment 3) indicate that the use of synthetic turf does not pose danger to health or the environment.

The Department’s proposed Use of Synthetic Turf Policy recognizes the concerns that have been expressed in the various studies and reinforces the comfort level with these products.

The proposed policy states that;

1. Parks will not purchase field products that contain hazardous levels of potentially toxic materials.
2. Parks will continue to review literature and new studies on synthetic fields’ health effects, injury data, and maintenance and design practices as they become available.

3. Parks will engage in a program of testing for selected environmental health impacts potentially associated with synthetic turf.
4. Athletic Field designers will work with the Parks Division Director and maintenance staff and field users to assist with site selection, including field selection criteria.
5. As appropriate, Parks will work with the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) to encourage turf manufacturers to initiate and implement end-of-product-life recycling programs and purchase those products with the best end-of-product-recycling option.
6. Parks will share information about health and safety guidelines with athletic field users.
7. Parks will periodically request feedback from user groups using new and existing products.
8. With all new synthetic turf projects, Parks will provide appropriate landscape and irrigation improvements to all impacted areas surrounding the field.
9. Parks will maintain synthetic turf fields consistent with the manufacturer's specifications and current best practices.
10. When considering the cost of synthetic turf fields, Parks will consider life-cycle cost, including replacement cost.

The Superintendent has the authority to set policies such as this for the Department and no further approvals are required.

Public Involvement Process

No public process has been held to specifically develop or review this proposed policy. The Board will be hosting a public hearing on May 28, 2009.

Schedule

Following the recommendation of the Board, the Superintendent may modify and adopt this policy.

For additional information

- Eric Friedli, Manager, Policy and Business Analysis, 684-8369, eric.friedli@seattle.gov

Attachment 1: Proposed Policy

Your City, Seattle

Department Policy & Procedure

Subject: Use of Synthetic Turf DRAFT -- DRAFT		Number
		Effective
		Supersedes
Approved:	Department: Parks & Recreation	Page 1 of

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Use of Synthetic Turf Policy is to outline for staff and the public certain elements to be considered as the future use of synthetic turf is contemplated by the Department.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS/INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED

2.1 Staff who design, construct, and maintain Seattle Parks and Recreation athletic fields.

2.2 Consultants, landscape architects and park designers hired by the Department to design park athletic fields.

2.3 Athletic field users.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Seattle Parks and Recreation aims to provide high quality facilities for a variety of athletic endeavors. Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes that synthetic turf is a reasonable alternative to natural grass surface on athletic fields. It is important to Seattle Parks and Recreation that the use of synthetic turf is done in such a way as to maintain the highest level of safety for our park users.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

5.1 Planning and Development Division staff are responsible for the planning and design of athletic fields and completing cost benefit analysis of synthetic versus natural grass fields.

5.2 Planning and Development staff is responsible for maintaining documentation, completing water and environmental quality analysis, and keeping up-to-date on the new synthetic turf materials and their safety considerations.

5.3 Park Maintenance Division staff is responsible for maintaining synthetic turf fields in a way that is consistent with manufacturer's specifications and industry standards.

5.4 City-wide athletics unit staff is responsible for communications with users and user groups about safety and health awareness related to play on athletic fields.

6.0

7.0

8.0

9.0 PROCEDURE

- 9.1 The Department will not purchase field products that contain hazardous levels of potentially toxic materials.
- 9.2 The Department will continue to review literature and new studies concerning synthetic fields' health effects, injury data, and maintenance and design practices as they become available.
- 9.3 Contingent on funding being available, the Department will include in its annual work plan an element for testing potential water and environmental quality impacts associated with the use of synthetic turf, including testing for the presence of hazardous levels of potentially toxic materials in the turf materials and the migration of hazardous materials from the field surface. Testing at Magnuson Park should align with the required 10-year Monitoring and Mitigation Plan for the fields and habitat improvements completed in 2009. Other testing should include initial tests and follow-up testing only if warranted.
- 9.4 Athletic Field designers will work with the Parks Division Director, Recreation Division Director, athletic field coordinator(s), maintenance staff and field users to assist with site selection.
- 9.5 As appropriate, the Department should work with Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) to encourage turf manufacturers to initiate and implement end-of-product-life recycling programs and purchase those products with the best end-of-product-recycling option.
- 9.6 The Department should share information about health and safety guidelines with athletic field users and park neighbors.
- 9.7 The Department should periodically request feedback from user groups using new and existing products.
- 9.8 With all new synthetic turf projects, the Department should provide appropriate landscape and irrigation improvements to all impacted areas surrounding the field.
- 9.9 Maintenance of synthetic turf fields should be done consistent with the manufacturer's specifications and current best practices.
- 9.10 When considering the cost of synthetic turf fields a life-cycle cost, including replacement cost will be considered.

10.0 APPENDICES

Attachment 2: June 2008 Memo to City Council



To: Councilmember Richard Conlin
CC: Jackie Kirn, Mayor's Office
From: Timothy Gallagher, Superintendent
Seattle Parks and Recreation
Re: Use of Artificial Turf on Play Fields

This memo is in response to concerns presented by Council Central Staff in a memo to you dated May 5, 2008. The Department recognizes the current public debate over the risks of artificial turf and is aware of studies concluding there are potential health and environmental hazards in the use of artificial turf. However, there is also a large body of national and international research that has been commissioned by government health agencies, universities, independent laboratories, health and safety study groups and environmental organizations. Overwhelmingly, the most current research on newer generation artificial turf systems, such as those in Parks, conclude that the installation and use of artificial turf and the use of crumb rubber have no known health or environmental risks.

Much of the alarm regarding artificial turf arises from testing done in laboratory circumstances that simply break down the components of rubber. These studies most often do not reflect real life conditions and do not take into account natural processes in the environment. For instance, critics have raised alarm around polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) found in synthetic turf. Laboratory tests have been conducted using organic solvents to extract the maximum amount of PAHs from rubber. However, PAHs are present in any carbon-based product and result from burning of fuels and cooking of foods. Studies have demonstrated that PAHs have an extremely low bioavailability and cannot enter the body without the use of a chemical solvent that is much stronger than water, sweat or digestive juices. "The human digestive system is unable to break down these compounds. In the same way, the rubber cannot be absorbed by the lungs or the skin."¹ "While PAHs can be extracted from rubber through a limited extent, their low concentration poses no health risk from either oral or dermal exposure."²

Lead is another compound found in older synthetic fields. Manufacturers utilized a nylon fiber material colored by a pigment that contained encapsulated lead chromate, a colorant commonly used in plastics. This was the case in the two New Jersey synthetic fields found to have high levels of lead in April 2008. Lead chromate is another highly insoluble compound with low bioavailability making it very difficult for the compound to be absorbed within the body. Newer synthetic turf does not contain any lead. In fact, after additional research, New Jersey elected to replace one of the old fields with a lead free nylon system.

In contrast to laboratory testing, several major research studies have been conducted by actually measuring chemicals at constructed synthetic turf fields. A joint study conducted by ALIAPUR

¹ Birkholz (2003) Toxicological evaluation for the hazard assessment of tire crumb for use in public playgrounds. University of Alberta.

² Dutch National Institute for Public Health (2006) Rubber granules as infill material in artificial turf fields.

(a French governmental agency responsible for regulating uses of used tires) and ADEME (the French Agency for Environment and Energy Management) installed a rain collection system that caught precipitation that had percolated through a synthetic turf field. The results of that study showed relatively low, but detectable concentrations of a number of organic compounds and metals. However, these concentrations were generally lower than the applicable drinking water standards.³ This was true for all types of infill materials. In another study conducted in Norway, measurements were made of volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) in the air at indoor facilities containing synthetic turf fields. Their study included an assessment of risks from inhalation, skin contact and ingestion of tire crumb particles on adults, juniors and older children. Their conclusion was that recycled rubber granulate contains many chemical substances which are potentially harmful to health. However, the concentrations of these substances are extremely low and are only leached in very small quantities therefore not causing any elevated health or environmental risks.⁴

Regarding concerns about synthetic turf creating heat islands, it is true that researchers have found that the surface temperatures of synthetic turf playing surfaces can be significantly higher than natural turfgrass surfaces when exposed to sunlight. However, irrigation of these fields dramatically reduces the surface temperature. Here in the Northwest, the concern about heat islands is a non issue. We do not irrigate our fields nor install irrigation systems. Synthetic turf fields are playable all year round in our moderate climate.

Research also indicates that synthetic field surfaces offer greater safety to users. As an example, a 5-year study of high school football teams conducted by *West Texas A & M University* published in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine* concluded that the types of injuries suffered on turf were less severe with quicker recovery time than those injuries suffered on grass.

Locally, a recent literature review conducted by D. Michael Johns, Ph.D. and sponsored by Bainbridge Island Metro Parks and Recreation District and the Bainbridge Island School District concluded that "...human health risks from playing on synthetic turf fields is minimal..."⁵ As a result of this study, the District's Fields Committee has recommended the use of artificial turf to the School Board.

Synthetic fields have gone through three generations of major research and improvements. Over the past four decades, professional sports teams have embraced early versions of artificial turf, then backed away from them, and then popularized them again as quality improved. All of Parks synthetic fields are the newest generation field systems.

With what we currently know, there are many advantages of using artificial turf. Thousands of tires are kept out of landfills and dumps. Artificial turf fields can stand up to heavy use, require much less costly maintenance, eliminate the need for herbicides and pesticides, conserve water and remain open for play even after a Seattle downpour.

At this time, given the research and the benefits, the Department supports the use of artificial turf. However, I can assure you, the Department will continue to monitor this issue and to carefully examine any new research that may indicate possible risks to public health or the environment.

³ Moretto, R. (2007) Environmental and Health Assessment of the Use of Elastomer Granulates as Filling in Third-generation Artificial Turf. Prepared for ALIAPUR and ADEME. 26 pages.

⁴ NIPH, (2006) Artificial Turf Pitches-An Assessment of the Health Risks for Football Players. 34 pages.

⁵ D. Michael Johns, Ph.D. (2007) Initial Evaluation of Potential Human Health Risks Associated with Playing on Synthetic Turf Fields on Bainbridge Island.

If you'd like to review the research, here are several links that may prove helpful:

Artificial Turf: Environmental and Occupational Disease and Epidemiology

www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/eode/eode-turf.shtml

Are the Benefits Worth the Environmental and Health Risks?

http://www.childenvironment.org/pdf/turf_presentation.pdf

Potential Health and Environmental Effects Linked to Artificial Turf Systems

<http://www.iss.de/conferences/Dresden%202006/Technical/NBI%20Engelsk.pdf>

A Survey of Microbial Populations in In filled Synthetic Turf Fields

<http://cropsoil.psu.edu/mcnitt/microbial/discussion.cfm>

Evaluation of Health Effects of Recycled Waste Tires in Playground and Track Products

<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Tires/Pubs.htm> (scroll to "Research Papers")

Initial Evaluation of Potential Human Health Risks Associated with Playing on Synthetic Turf Fields on Bainbridge Island

<http://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org>

Evaluation of Playing Surface Characteristics of Various In-Filled Systems

<http://cropsoil.psu.edu/mcnitt/infill8.cfm>

Attachment 3: Additional Research Findings

Consumer Products Safety Commission. The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) staff recently conducted an evaluation of various synthetic surfaced athletic fields. The evaluation, released in July 2008, concluded that young children are not at risk from exposure to lead in these fields. The CPSC staff evaluation showed that newer fields had no lead or generally had the lowest lead levels. Although small amounts of lead were detected on the surface of some older fields, none of these tested fields released amounts of lead that would be harmful to children. While there has been criticism of the study's methodology, the finding that fields with no or minimal levels of lead result in low risk to users is informative. You can find the study online at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml08/08348.html>.

New York Department of Health Fact Sheet. The State of New York Department of Health issued a Fact Sheet: "Crumb-Rubber Infilled Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields," (August 2008) that concluded in part, "Based on the available information, chemical exposures from crumb rubber in synthetic turf do not pose a public health hazard." This fact sheet also concluded that heat from synthetic surface fields needs to be monitored and users be made aware of dangers of heat stress; that there were no major differences in injuries between synthetic and grass fields; and that no definitive statements can be made about differences between grass and synthetic fields in the risk of infection from abrasions and scratches. This study is online at: http://www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/outdoors/synthetic_turf/crumb-rubber_infilled/fact_sheet.htm.

New Jersey Department of Health findings. In 2007, The New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) found high concentrations of lead dust on two athletic fields and determined that it was due to the deterioration of the lead containing synthetic fibers in the fields. The City of Newark closed the fields in October 2007. It was this finding and action that spurred much of the recent concern over this issue. Those field surfaces were removed and replaced with new synthetic surfaced fields. In September 2008, the New Jersey DOH issued a Letter of Health Consultation certifying that the elimination of the old fields and their replacement with new fields resulted in *no public health hazard*. www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/IronboundAthleticFieldB093008/IAFBLHC09222008.pdf.

San Francisco Synthetic Playfields Task Force. In March 2008, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD) established its Synthetic Playfields Task Force, which issued its findings and recommendations in August 2008. Following an extensive review of the recent research, the Task Force made a series of recommendations to the SFRPD that included not purchasing synthetic turf product with lead, using a criteria-driven site selection process, tracking ongoing health impact studies, and exploring alternatives to the use of certain types of rubber in-fill products. (http://www.sfgov.org/site/recpark_page.asp?id=77040)

Verbal Briefing/Discussion

Mr. Friedli reviewed information in the written briefing paper, including the findings of several other cities and agencies. He noted that this briefing and public hearing process is in response to health questions on the use of synthetic turf. Parks staff has completed extensive research on the use of synthetic turf. Seattle City Council staff also performed an analysis and concluded there is minimal risk with the synthetic fields. This past Monday, the Council voted to approve converting to synthetic the fields so named in the new Parks and Greenspaces Levy. Mr. Friedli next reviewed the synthetic turf policy.

Commissioner Ramels asked if the same policy will be used for all the fields and Mr. Friedli responded that it will. Commissioner Ramels asked if there are two fields named in the new Parks and Greenspaces Levy to be converted to synthetic and Mr. Friedli agreed. These new synthetic fields can contain no lead and the Department must do assessments.

Commissioner Ramels stated that the Board will hold a public hearing on the synthetic turf policy at its May 28 meeting, followed by a discussion and recommendation at the June 25 meeting.

Commissioner Kostka stated that, prior to the staff briefing, she had many questions; however, Mr. Friedli has now answered many of those. She asked if synthetic turf has any effect on fish and wildlife. Mr. Friedli answered that there hasn't been a great deal of research on this. Superintendent Gallagher stated that the water running from the synthetic turf will be regularly tested. Commissioner Kostka commented that the small rubber pellets that comprise the synthetic fields are the size of seeds that sparrow size birds eat and wondered if the birds might confuse the pellets with food. Superintendent Gallagher stated that staff will check with the Audubon Society on this and report back to the Board.

Commissioner Holme noted that the synthetic fields were previously considered impervious and now are considered pervious. Magnuson Park is built on the site of a former military base and he was concerned that toxins that are already in the park might be picked up by water running across/under the synthetic turf and skew the water sample tests. He wants transparency in the water quality testing. Superintendent Gallagher responded that tests will be run prior to where the water comes into the synthetic turf area and again where it runs off the turf.

Commissioner Barber believes that this policy is a good step. He disclosed that he was on a citizen committee that analyzed the synthetic turf information and submitted a 7-page report to City Council, with a different conclusion from the research completed by Seattle Parks and the City Council. The citizen's group has a list of questions that still haven't been addressed by the research and a dozen areas that should be considered in testing and evaluating synthetic turf. He stated that the citizen's group has not yet received a response from the City's administration. Both Superintendent Gallagher and Mr. Friedli responded that they have read the report. Commissioner Barber will forward the report for distribution to other Park Board members.

Commissioner Adams stated that this is a good and appropriate policy. However, he doesn't yet have a sense of how it will be implemented. Mr. Friedli responded that the bid package will include language that the field products used must contain no hazardous materials. Once installed, the fields will be regularly monitored. Oversight of this policy is now part of Mr. Friedli's annual work plan, as lead. Seattle Parks' Planning and Development Division (responsible for the bidding and installation of the synthetic fields) will work closely with Mr. Friedli and the Office of Sustainability and Environment's policy unit. Each step of the process requires diligence.

Commissioner Ramels commented that the policy does not identify any particular fields that will have synthetic fields installed. Mr. Friedli agreed; the policy describes the steps to be followed any time synthetic turf is installed but does not name any particular fields. Responding to a question from Commissioner Holme on where the soil from the fields goes when synthetic turf is being installed, Mr. Friedli answered that it goes to the landfill.

Commissioner Ramels thanked Mr. Friedli for the briefing. The Board will hold a public hearing on the policy at its May 28 meeting.

Discussion/Recommendation: Golf Master Plan

Susanne Friedman, Seattle Parks' project planner, reviewed the Golf Master Plan. Seattle Parks Commissioners have heard a number of briefings on this Plan beginning in November 2008. The Board held a public hearing at its March 26 meeting and tonight will discuss the Plan and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Ms. Friedman asked for the Board's recommendation of Alternate 4b, as presented at the March 26 public hearing. She next reviewed the correspondence sent to the Board as testimony. The Board received 110 e-mails and letters, with the majority in favor of the plan. All maintenance issues that were noted in the testimony have been forwarded to the appropriate staff. Commissioner Ramels noted that there were a number of comments on maintenance, which is not in the purview of this Master Plan. She thanked staff for forwarding the maintenance comments to appropriate staff.

Commissioner Adams referred to several comments about the West Seattle Golf perimeter walking trail, asking that the trail be at the sidewalk, rather than in the alley way near several homes. Ms. Friedman responded that staff have altered the Master Plan so the trail would be at the sidewalk.

Commissioner Barber is concerned that the Department keeps working to keep golf affordable. He has been exchanging ideas with Andy Soden, Seattle Parks Golf Manager, to make the courses available to more socio-economic groups. Commissioner Barber believes that a responsibility of the Master Plan should be to keep golf affordable. Ms. Friedman responded that adding the driving ranges helps with this, as playing on the driving ranges costs less than playing a round of golf. And the driving ranges will bring in revenue to support the courses. Commissioner Barber also would like to see more socio-economic uses of the courses when no one is playing. Mr. Soden responded that the driving ranges will give new capacity to the courses and he is happy to work on suggestions for the unused capacity of the golf courses, both for first time golfers and golfers who need financial relief. He also thanked the Commissioners for touring all four of the golf courses during this Master Plan process.

Commissioner Holme stated that there is clearly a lot of support for the driving ranges, especially at the West Seattle course. He asked if staff anticipate any delay in getting permits for the tall standards, especially if the poles impact views. He advised staff to look into this early in the process, to avoid any permitting delays. Ms. Friedman noted that the standards at West Seattle Stadium are taller than those that will be installed at West Seattle Golf.

Commissioner Holme stated that that the Golf Master Plan is impressive and staff have done a great job. Commissioner Kostka agreed with him. Her only concern is that the height of the perimeter fence be high enough to protect people walking on the perimeter trails. Superintendent Gallagher stated that the fence will have a top portion that angles outwards from the golf course [at about a 45 degree angle.] This top angle will protect the walkers.

Commissioner Ramels commented that it is time this Master Plan is formulated and she is pleased that the Department is moving ahead with this. She asked for clarification on the financial assumptions included in the Plan and the basis of the assumptions. Ms. Friedman and the Superintendent responded that the projections are very conservative, with the cost of the rounds staying the same and anticipating an increased number of golfers. Commissioner Ramels then voiced that she is comfortable if the assumptions are conservative.

Commissioner Holme move that the Board recommend to the Superintendent approval of the staff recommendation of Alternative 4B. Commissioner Kostka seconded.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Holme whether there are any changes to the Master Plan recommendation since the public hearing on March 26, Ms. Friedman answered that there have been no other changes.

Commissioner Ramels believes this is a great Master Plan. She noted that staff changed the recommendation to Alternative 4b several days before the public hearing. She did not think that the public was aware of this change before the public hearing. She recommended that the Department give better publicity to such changes in the future.

Commissioner Barber made a friendly amendment that Seattle Parks and Premier Golf look for ways to make golf more affordable. The Chair stated that this is not an appropriate direction for the Board to give the Master Plan, as the Master Plan is concerned with physical terrain and capital improvements, but that it would be appropriate to append a suggestion to the superintendent, and **Commissioner Barber withdrew the amendment. The vote was taken with all in favor of the motion as stated by Commissioner Holme.**

Commissioners thanked Ms. Friedman and staff for all their hard work on this huge project. Commissioner Adams noted that there is a lot of pent-up demand for golf in the community and he believes this is a great plan. The golf courses are a public asset and many people enjoy using them. He recommended that later the Department seriously look at ways to enhance the restrooms, as well as look for ways to make golf accessible to as many people as possible. Mr. Soden stated that he would get going on this suggestion and report back to the Board.

Briefing: Athletic Field Scheduling

Dennis Cook, Seattle Parks Citywide Athletics Manager, briefed the Board on the Department's athletic field scheduling policy. Prior to tonight's meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper and copy of the use and scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities policy and procedure, and the protocol for scheduling the new Mickey Merriam Athletic Complex at Magnuson Park. The briefing and policy were posted to the Board's web page for public access and are included below.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

No action is requested. This is an informational briefing, prepared in response to the Board's request for information regarding athletic field scheduling and fees

Project Description and Background

Priorities for scheduling athletic facilities are established in Park Policy 7-1-01, Use and Scheduling of outdoor Athletic Facilities (Attachment A). The Policy directs the department to schedule fields in a manner that provides priority access for youth and, to the extent possible, protects the fields from overuse. Historical use will be considered in establishing priorities amongst groups or organizations seeking the same location and/or field times.

Within the framework of historic use and giving youth the highest priority, the Policy directs Parks to:

- Achieve a reasonable level of gender equity;
- Make allowance for new field sports or organizations; and
- Give higher priority to local sports needs before fields are scheduled for needs that are more citywide.

Per the School Parks Joint Use Agreement (JUA), the Citywide Athletics Field Scheduling Office schedules Seattle School District athletic fields and school athletic complexes. Fees for field use are included by the Department as part of the annual budget process. Both the Mayor and City Council review and, by ordinance, authorize the Department to collect the fees.

Citywide field use continues to grow. 2008 marked a new high since we started reporting the numbers in 2004: 147,911 hours were scheduled, with 127,010 of these used by youth.

Magnuson Park Field Scheduling

The new fields at Magnuson Park, recently named the Mickey Merriam Athletic Field Complex, provide both new capacity and replacement capacity for fields that were previously in the Park. Because there is no historic use for the new capacity, the department developed a protocol for the initial scheduling of these fields. The protocol follows the priorities established in the general field scheduling policy. (Attachment B)

Issues

The following are issues that have been raised at various times regarding the scheduling policy.

- Youth having priority scheduling over adult athletic programs;
- Private schools questioning the JUA and the priority field assignments given to Seattle Public Schools; and

- The less desirable surface of the sand fields – teams are not scheduling the sand fields as they have in the past. We hear teams are scheduling fields outside the City, rather than playing on sand.

Other than continuing to convert the sand fields to synthetic, Park and Recreation is not anticipating policy changes to address these issues: we will continue to give priority scheduling to youth and to support the Seattle Public Schools.

Schedule

The current Joint Use Agreement expires in 2010. The renewal process starts in winter 2009. The current field fees are scheduled through 2010.

Additional Information:

Dennis Cook: dennis.cook@seattle.gov

Department Policy & Procedure

Subject: Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities		Number 060-P 7.1.1
		Effective July 1, 2002
		Supersedes August 20, 1982
Approved:	Department: Parks & Recreation	Page 1 of 7

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish guidelines for the use and scheduling of outdoor athletic fields which are scheduled by the Department of Parks and Recreation, excluding West Seattle Stadium, which is covered under separate policies.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Department of Parks and Recreation
- 2.2 Seattle School District
- 2.3 Private schools, community and sports organizations, teams, groups and individuals using outdoor athletic fields scheduled by the Department

3.0 REFERENCES

- 3.1 Department of Parks and Recreation Schedule of Fees and Charges (revised yearly).
- 3.2 Joint Use Operating Agreement between Seattle School District and the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (November, 2000).
- 3.3 Conditions of Closure of Athletic Fields - Department Policy and Procedures 060-P 7.1.5.
- 3.4 Sports Participation Policy and Procedures - Department Policy and Procedures 060-P 7.3.2.
- 3.5 Sports Code of Conduct for Youth, Community Center Adult Leagues, and Citywide Athletics Adult Leagues.

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 The Department will schedule fields in a manner that provides priority access for youth and, to the extent possible, protects the fields from overuse. Historical use will be considered in establishing priorities amongst groups or organizations seeking the same locations and/or field times. However, within the different age groups (youth and adults) and within different sport seasons, it is the Department's policy to provide a reasonable amount of equity for gender and some allowance for new field sports and/or field sports organizations. Also, local sports needs will be met before fields are scheduled for needs that are more citywide. The latter are to be fairly and equitably scheduled throughout the City. Therefore, while the Department will generally adhere to the scheduling priorities established in Section 4.2, the Citywide Athletics Office can grant exceptions if necessary to achieve reasonable equity and access. The Department may also establish scheduling priorities

specific to a particular site in return for major facility improvements or other considerations of benefit to the public. Finally, leagues are not guaranteed the same field(s) every year.

- 4.2 Practices and games are to be scheduled on appropriately sized fields in accordance with the following priorities:
 - 4.2.1 All Seattle School District physical education programs during normal school hours.
 - 4.2.2 All Seattle School District programs other than physical education programs including Metro league games and practices involving other than Seattle School District teams up to 5:00 p.m. except fast pitch softball games which are scheduled up to 5:30 p.m. and baseball games which are scheduled up to 6:00 p.m.
 - 4.2.3 Department-sponsored youth programs.
 - 4.2.4 Non-Department youth programs.
 - 4.2.5 Department-sponsored adult programs.
 - 4.2.6 Non-Department adult programs.
- 4.3 Fields will be scheduled to serve a reasonable level of demand while at the same time recognizing impacts on neighbors.
 - 4.3.1 It is the Department policy to schedule fields on a year-round basis, field conditions Permitting. However, no grass fields will be scheduled from Thanksgiving Day to March 1.
 - 4.3.2 Non-lighted field will be scheduled until dusk.
 - 4.3.3 The Department's practice is to turn off lights on lit fields at the completion of each evening's final scheduled games. Play will be scheduled until 10:45 PM except on fields where there are residences adjoining the length of the field on two or more sides unless arterials, significant topography, and/or other buffers are found between the field and adjacent residences on one of both sides. Fields that meet this criteria will be scheduled until 10:00 PM. The currently lighted fields that meet the criteria are Ballard Playfield, Bitter Lake Playfield, Loyal Heights Playfield, and Miller Playfield. Unless security lighting is available, lights at all fields will be turned off 15 minutes after the end of scheduled play to allow players to leave the site safely.
- 4.4 Given the Department priority for youth sports, Citywide Athletics may require adult leagues to modify their seasons. The following sports will normally be given priority during the respective seasons as follows:
 - 4.4.1 Baseball: First full week of March through the second weekend in August.
 - 4.4.2 Softball: The second Monday in March through the second weekend in August, except Lower Woodland, Cloverleaf, Meadowbrook #2 & 3, Rainier Beach #1 & 2, High Point #2 and Montlake may be scheduled up through Labor Day.
 - 4.4.3 Football: The third Monday in August through the third weekend in November.

- 4.4.4 Rugby: May be scheduled year-round on all-weather or synthetic fields. Grass multipurpose field may be scheduled from March 1 through Thanksgiving as available.
 - 4.4.5 Soccer: May be scheduled year-round on all weather soccer fields. Grass multipurpose fields may be scheduled from the second week in August through the third week in November.
 - 4.4.6 Ultimate Frisbee: May be scheduled year-round on all-weather or synthetic fields. Grass multipurpose fields may be scheduled from March - Thanksgiving as available.
- 4.5 All other sports will be scheduled as field availability allows.
- 4.6 It is the Department will regulate practices, games and tournaments as follows:

4.6.1 Practices

- 4.6.1.2 The number of practices scheduled will be on an equitable basis, contingent on the availability of fields.
- 4.6.1.3 Youth practices will be scheduled in advance prior to the start of the season.
- 4.6.1.4 Adult practices will be scheduled at the Citywide Athletic Office on a first-come first-served basis. Fees will be assessed according to reference 3.1.
- 4.6.1.5 Adult weeknight practices will be limited to one and one-half hours and weekend practices to four hours. All practices will end by 10 p.m.
- 4.6.1.6 No organized league or team practices will be scheduled during the off season.

4.6.2 Games:

- 4.6.2.1 The number of games scheduled for each league will be on an equitable basis, contingent upon field availability.
- 4.6.2.2 The amount of time scheduled and allowed for games shall be as follows:

- Youth Baseball (90 Feet) - 2 1/2 Hour
- Youth Baseball (60 Feet) - 2 Hours
- Slowpitch Softball and T-Ball - 1 1/2 Hours
- Fastpitch Softball - 2 Hours
- Adult Baseball - 3 Hours
- Youth Soccer - 1 1/2 Hours
- Adult Soccer - 1 1/2 - 2 Hours
- Rugby - 1 1/2 Hours
- Ultimate Frisbee - 1 1/2 Hour
- Adult Football - 1 1/2 Hour
- Youth Football - 2 Hours
- All Other Sports - 1 1/2 - 2 Hours

4.6.2.3 Game time limits will be strictly enforced by Department staff and game officials when another game is scheduled following.

4.6.3 Tournaments:

- 4.6.3.1 Requests to schedule tournaments will be accepted on November 1 for the following year and will be accommodated on the basis of field availability.
- 4.6.3.2 Final tournament brackets are due to Citywide Athletics no later than one week prior to the start of the tournament.
- 4.6.3.3 Full payment of the field user fee is due to Citywide Athletics no later than one week prior to the start of the tournament.

4.7 It shall be the responsibility of organizations, leagues, teams, groups or individuals scheduling athletic fields to utilize the scheduled times or notify the Department reasonably in advance when times are not used. Repeated non-use of scheduled time with no advance notice can lead to loss of scheduling privileges.

4.8 The Department's policies governing league participation and participant behavior are set forth in Department's Sports Participation Policy (Policy # 060-7.1.5)

5.0 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Superintendent: Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.
- 5.2 Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator: Supervisor of the Citywide Athletics.
- 5.3 Department: Department of Parks and Recreation.
- 5.4 Historical Users: Organizers who have scheduled fields through Citywide Athletics during the two most recent prior seasons for a particular sport.
- 5.5 Parks Duty Officer: Parks Department staff person assigned to respond to emergent issues after 4:00 PM on weekdays and on the weekends.
- 5.6 Double Booking: The scheduling of more than one practice or game on an athletic field at the same time.
- 5.7 Community Needs: Field demand whose program originates from within a local geographic area.
- 5.8 Citywide Needs: Field demand that due to the nature of league and participants is not oriented to a specific geographic area but reflects a more citywide or regional user group.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 6.1 With the concurrence of the Superintendent, the Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator shall be responsible for administering these policies and procedures.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator to ensure that the priorities established in Section 4 are administered on a reasonable, fair and equitable basis.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator to ensure all organizations (new or old) are scheduled fairly and equitably.

- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator to ensure a reasonable level of community sports organizations' needs are met before fields are scheduled for citywide needs.
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator to ensure that citywide play is fairly and equitably scheduled throughout the community fields.
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of the Sr. Athletics Program Coordinator to maintain an accurate schedule of games and practices and to coordinate these schedules with appropriate staff within the Department.
- 6.7 It is the responsibility of organizations, teams, or individuals using Department fields on a scheduled basis to notify Citywide Athletics 10 working days in advance of any scheduled field time they do not need.
- 6.8 It is the responsibility of organizations, teams, or individuals using Department fields on a scheduled basis to fully comply with the provisions of References 3.1 and 3.4
- 6.9 It is the responsibility of any and all programs organized, administered or sponsored by the Department of Parks and Recreation to fully comply with the provisions of Reference 3.5.

7.0 PROCEDURES

7.1 Submission of Schedules:

- 7.1.1 Field scheduling associated with the Seattle School District shall be conducted in accordance with Reference 3.2.
- 7.1.3 Citywide Athletics staff should submit to historical users, at least six weeks prior to the start of the season, a reprogramming of game schedules based on previous year's usage.
- 7.1.2 Historical users desiring expansion of game (and if youth) practice schedules shall submit a written request to the Scheduler no later than 12weeks prior to the first scheduled usage stating all necessary changes.
- 7.1.4 Historical users shall submit final game schedules to Citywide Athletics no later than two weeks prior the first scheduled game
- 7.1.5 New user organizations should submit a written request for game times (and if youth, practice times) to the Scheduler no later than 12 weeks prior to the first requested usage.
- 7.1.6 Citywide Athletics shall consider all scheduling requests and make decisions based upon the policies and guidelines contained herein.

7.2 Double Bookings:

- 7.2.1 If a double booking occurs at a field, the following guidelines should be used to determine who has priority:
 - A. Youth League Game - 1st Priority
 - B. Adult League Game - 2nd Priority
 - C. Youth Practice or Practice Game - 3rd Priority
 - D. Adult Practice or Practice Game - 4th Priority

- 7.2.2 If two activities of equal priority are scheduled simultaneously, a flip of the coin will determine priority usage.
- 7.2.3 If two adult practices scheduled on a reservation permit have been double booked, the lower permit number should be given priority. The priority is void if the permit is not on site. The permit number is located in the middle of the permit on the right side.
- 7.2.4 If the Parks Duty Officer is unable to resolve a conflict using the above guidelines, additional assistance can be obtained by calling a member of the Citywide Athletics scheduling staff. In any event, all field conflicts should be reported to Citywide Athletics staff by the end of the next working day.

8.0 WARNINGS/PENALTIES FOR SCHEDULING INFRACTIONS, AND DISREGARD FOR PARK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 8.0.1 The Citywide Athletics Scheduler shall give a copy of the Policy and Procedures to each organization's scheduler at the beginning of each season.
- 8.0.2 It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that each member team (through their managers or coaches) understands the policy and procedures regarding scheduling and scheduling conflict resolution. Organizations should work to ensure that scheduled time is utilized: that use does not extend beyond the scheduled time; and that member teams practice only during scheduled times in the appropriate seasons.
- 8.0.3 It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that their referee/umpires use understand the policy and procedures regarding scheduling conflict resolution.

8.1 INFRACTIONS

- 8.1.1 Failure to follow these policies and/or conflict resolution procedures:
 - A. First Occurrence- Will cause a letter specifically listing the Department's concerns to be mailed to the organization president.
 - B. Additional Occurrence - May result in the loss of scheduling privileges in increasing dimension based on the number and type of occurrences, including the refund of the unused portion of the participation (field use) fees and the cancellation of remaining season games.

9.0 APPENDIX

- 9.1 Facility Use Permit Form

Protocol for Scheduling Fields at the Mickey Merriam Athletic Field Complex at Magnuson Park – March 30, 2009

1. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to establish equitable guidelines for the initial use and scheduling of the Mickey Merriam Athletic Field Complex at Magnuson Park, a new sports facility comprised of the athletic fields located at Magnuson Park. The Merriam Complex is providing new capacity, above what was previously available at Magnuson Park. This protocol is necessary because Parks existing policy on scheduling athletic fields (Policy 7.1.1, Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities) relies primarily on historic use, and there are no historic users of the newly added capacity.

Some of the fields in the Mickey Merriam Sports Complex replace old fields that were in the Park, and some fields are added, new fields. The replacement fields will have more capacity than previously because they have a synthetic surface, are lit, and can be played on year-round. The added capacity on the replacement fields and the new fields do not have historic users. Therefore, historic use applies to part of the available scheduling time, but not to all.

2. Priorities

- A. The Department will schedule the Mickey Merriam Athletic Field Complex at Magnuson Park in a manner that provides priority access for youth, seeks to balance gender equity, and provides access for new field sports and/or field organizations. Local sports' needs will be met before fields are scheduled for needs that are more citywide.
- B. Historical use will establish the base level of use where applicable.
- C. Following the allocation of field times to historical field users, access to the remaining time will be determined according to the following priorities:
 1. Support youth sports;
 2. Achieve gender equity;
 3. Provide times for new field sports and new field sports organizations;
 4. Give priority to the needs of local sports organizations over needs that are more citywide.

3. Process

All field use requests are due to the Citywide Athletics Scheduling Office by November 1 each year, except for the 2009 spring/summer season. For the 2009 spring/summer season, all requests are due to the Citywide Athletics Scheduling Office by May 1, 2009.

4. Lights

The Department's practice is to turn off lights on lit fields at the completion of each evening's final scheduled games. Play will be scheduled until 9:45 p.m. Monday through Saturday. No lights will be permitted on Sunday. Non-lighted fields will be scheduled until dusk.

5. Responsibility

With the concurrence of the Superintendent, the Citywide Athletics Manager shall be responsible for administering this protocol.

6. Compatibility with Athletic Field Scheduling Policy

Parks Policy "Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities" will be followed except as indicated in this protocol.

Board Discussion

Mr. Cook introduced himself and reviewed the handouts and information in the written briefing. He noted that Parks staff do not set the fee schedule; this is determined by the field revenues and by City Council determination. He briefly addressed why youth get priority for the fields and why public schools get priority over private schools (the public schools and Seattle Parks Department have a joint use agreement.)

Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels on what designates a historic user; Mr. Cook responded that a group that schedules the same site for two years becomes a historic user. Commissioner Ramels suggested that if a historic user doesn't abide by the permit, they should no longer be allowed to be a historic user. Mr. Cook agreed and stated that is in the participation policy. If an incident occurs, the scheduling staff sends a letter to the permit holder, outlining what steps it must follow.

Commissioner Kostka asked about the lighting schedule at Magnuson Park. Mr. Cook explained that the hours at Magnuson were determined by City Council as mitigation when Council approved the fields.

Seattle School District (SSD) is considering whether to change the hours that high school classes begin to earlier in the morning. Commissioner Holme referred to testimony sent to the Board charging that the school hours would impact the availability of some of Seattle Park's recreational sites to the public [i.e., morning public swims at the pools.] Mr. Cook responded that SSD has not yet made a decision on this proposed change. Seattle Parks will negotiate the use of its facilities, if the change is made, when the Joint Use Agreement is re-negotiated, as the decision to start class earlier would have impacts Seattle Parks' facilities. The current Joint Use Agreement expires on August 10, 2010. Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that a letter is being drafted to SSD to propose both a timeline and negotiation schedule. Commissioner Holme asked if Seattle Parks would adjust its pool, etc., schedules in 2009. Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that it is not likely it would do so. Mr. Cook added that it would be helpful for SSD to announce its decision soon. Seattle Parks wants to accommodate the high schools – and also accommodate its other users.

Commissioner Barber stated that when he received the Mickey Merriam use policy from Mr. Cook, he took it to members of Co-Rec soccer. The Co-Rec Soccer Association was formed in 1982 as a non-violent soccer league that does not allow roughhouse play. It also makes soccer available to more players than traditional soccer. The Co-Rec members told Commissioner Barber that they were unaware of the policy and felt that they should have been involved in its formulation. He added that the neighborhoods should also be involved, to have a say as to when the field lights are turned off at night. Mr. Cook thanked him for the observations.

Commissioner Adams noted that his 7-year-old granddaughter loves soccer and asked about the Department's gender policy. Mr. Cook responded that Parks recently completed a study on gender equity and found that it has an even percentage for male and female team players. In addition, the State Legislature has pending legislation requiring that team scheduling must be equal for both genders. The Superintendent noted that this legislation is moving ahead through the Legislature. Seattle Parks does well in scheduling its facilities for equal gender use.

Commissioner Ramels referred to the Lower Riverview and Bar-S athletic fields in West Seattle and asked if the Department has contracts with teams for exclusive use of these fields. Mr. Cook answered yes and explained that the Department has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with West Seattle Little League for use of Bar-S, and with PeeWee Baseball for the use of Lower Riverview. Charles Ng, Contracts and Grants Manager, developed the MOU and it is reviewed annually to determine if any changes are required. Any profit that results from play at these fields goes for the upkeep of the two sites. Commissioner Barber commented that PeeWee and other teams are run by volunteers who do not do this to make money. Sometimes they just do a better job of managing.

Commissioner Holme referred to lacrosse as an emerging sport and asked if there are others besides dodge ball. Superintendent Gallagher responded that Samoan cricket is an emerging sport; Commissioner Ramels added that beach volleyball is becoming more and more popular. Mr. Cook noted that beach volleyball became a

recognized collegiate game earlier this week. His staff also schedules the beaches for volleyball. Commissioner Ramels stated that among beach volleyball purists, Alki Beach Park is the preferred venue.

Commissioner Barber referred to complaints that some teams have long commutes to reach fields for play. He asked if there have been technological developments that will help with this. Mr. Cook responded that there aren't yet technology developments to help with this; however, as more fields are developed, teams have more access to fields closer to home. Commissioner Ramels asked who decides which team gets a particular field and what happens in the case of a conflict. Mr. Cook responded that the primary source of conflict is when a team splinters into two groups and both want the same field as the historical user. If this develops into a major conflict, Mr. Cook meets with the two field schedulers, John Bates and Shelley Sachs, and they help determine a solution. He complimented both Mr. Bates and Ms. Sachs for their outstanding work.

Commissioner Ramels noted that the policy is clear when users must request to schedule a field; however, it isn't clear as to when staff must notify them of the results. Mr. Cook stated that requests must be submitted by November 1 and staff must send notification to the teams by January 1 of the following year. Commissioner Ramels noted that notifications do not always occur by the January 1 deadline. She suggested including the notification deadline in the policy to correspond to the request deadline.

Commissioner Adams asked whether there is an opportunity both before and after the Department drafts its athletic field scheduling policies and procedures to allow for public input. Mr. Cook answered that there is opportunity to do so when the policy is being revised. In addition, the Department has sports group members who sit on its Sports Advisory Council. Commissioner Holme asked if the policy is in good shape. Mr. Cook responded that it is; other cities model their athletic field scheduling policy after Seattle's and follow Seattle Park's lead. Staff will next look at lacrosse and other emerging sports, as part of the policy. Commissioner Holme responded that it is great that the policy is working so well.

Commissioner Holme noted that, according to Seattle Park's statistics, 147,911 team members played on Seattle's fields last year. Of those players, 127,000, or 90% of those, were youth. He doesn't feel that the public perceives this ratio. He believes many people resist the development of sports fields because they think they are primarily for the benefit of adult players and the businesses that support athletics, rather than benefitting youth.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Cook for the informative briefing.

Old/New Business

Correspondence - Fun Daze Seattle: Commissioners Adams and Ramels recently received correspondence from the organization, Fun Daze, which is interested in holding events in Seattle's parks. The correspondence was given to the Superintendent for consideration.

Park Board Annual Retreat: The Board's annual retreat is scheduled at Northgate Community Center on Tuesday, May 5.

Ballard Pocket Park: Commissioner Ramels recently visited Ballard and spotted a new pocket park on 17th Ave and 63rd Ave NW. She noticed what looked like living room furniture in the park (sofa and coffee tables.) When she stopped to investigate, she learned that the person who looked like he was living in the park was actually the artist. The design for the park includes concrete furniture to give the park the appearance of a living room.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Jackie Ramels, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____