

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2011

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(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:

John Barber
Terry Holme, Chair
Jourdan Keith
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels

Excused:

Diana Kincaid, Vice-chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Holme called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and reviewed the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Barber moved approval of the February 10 agenda, as revised, and record of correspondence received by the Board since the January 27 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kostka. The vote was taken and the motion approved.** There were no meeting minutes to approve.

Commissioner Holme announced the good news that the full City Council confirmed the re-appointment of Commissioner Keith for a three-year term ending December 31, 2013.

Superintendent's Report

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reported on the following topics. To listen to the report, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591117> and move cursor to position 5.00.

Golden Gardens Off-Leash Area/Trails: Yesterday, Commissioner Kostka and Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli met with the forest steward and several members of the public near the off-leash area in upper Golden Gardens Park. The steward and others have voiced concerns with social trails and dogs off leash on the trails, which are located along a steep ravine area, with the steward requesting the trails be closed because of damage to plantings. However, it is a serious matter to close park land to the public and must be carefully studied.

There are 19 houses along the ravine and several have drains that run across Seattle Parks' property. Some of these drains have failed and are seeping water, which can undermine park property. Parks is working with Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities to determine the type and extent of issues. A long-term plan is expected to take several weeks to develop.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Holme on Seattle Parks' policy for allowing private drains on park property, Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli answered that the Department is researching records to determine if there are any formal agreements on these drains. Commissioner Holme offered the Board's assistance on developing a policy for this and urged that the Department first deal with any drains that might have been "grandfathered in." The newer homes would have been issued a Revocable Use Permit by the Department and, if those are draining onto Park property, the permit could be revoked if not repaired. For more information on Golden Gardens Park, see http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=243.

Community Center Advisory Team Holds Public Meeting: The Community Center Advisory Team (CCAT) held its first meeting on January 26, with Park Board team members Ramels and Kincaid present. CCAT will meet nine more times during the next six months to advise Seattle Parks on its response to the City Council's Community Center Statement of Legislative Intent. On February 2, a public meeting was held at Miller Community Center regarding the future of Seattle's community centers. Approximately 70 people attended from throughout the city and answered five questions. Staff are now compiling the results. There is a great video that the Seattle Channel produced regarding the meeting that is only a few minutes and can be viewed at www.seattlechannel.org/TownSquare/.

Belltown Community Center: In 1999, Seattle residents approved a renewal of the 1991 Community Center Levy, which includes \$1.8 million for a Belltown community center. More than ten years has passed and Acting Superintendent Williams wants to move this forward. Parks staff are negotiating to lease property at 5th and Bell to house the new community center, with the main doors opening onto the new Bell Street Project (see http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/bell_street/boulevard_park.htm). This is an exciting prospect. The center is expected to open this summer, with Parks issuing a Request for Proposals for a partner to oversee operations.

Commissioner Holme asked if Community Center Levy funds are being spent on the lease arrangement. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli agreed they are and added this is as the Levy intended.

Jefferson Community Center Floor: It appears that during the last significant rainfall event, surface water runoff entered the northwest corner of the Jefferson Community Center gym. The north end of the floor rose and buckled. Parks staff are injecting air under the floor, have dehumidifiers in place and have removed all the standing water. Heat and weight have been added to the floor to cause it to dry and settle evenly. It will be a couple of weeks before the floor stabilizes adequately to allow for refinishing or to determine if it needs a more invasive repair. After thorough investigation, a source of the water intrusion has not been determined; staff are now focusing on potential redesign of the northwest gym exterior so future significant runoff is directed away from the gym. Programming for court games at the gym is currently limited to half court to avoid the damaged area.

Magnuson Park Sign Code Adoption: On February 3 the Council's Parks and Seattle Center committee voted 3-0 to approve the Sand Point Sign Overlay legislation, which will allow commercial tenant signage on buildings and on wayfinding signs. The full Council is scheduled to vote on the legislation on February 22. This has been an extensive process, as it involves a Historic District.

Magnuson Park Cliff Swallows: Arena Sports, located in Building 27 where Cliff Swallows have traditionally nested, will install nets in the next few weeks to prevent the Cliff Swallows from nesting there this spring. City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw has approved this approach and Parks staff will continue working with Audubon, Magnuson Environmental Stewardship Alliance (<http://www.mesaseattle.org/>), Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other tenants to discuss how to enhance bird habitat in the park. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), located adjacent and north of the park, will allow the birds to nest in its hangers 32 and 33, as in past years. Parks has agreed not to do anything this year and observe where the birds nest and is also exploring alternative nesting structures. Arena Sports has agreed to help fund any solutions resulting from the habitat enhancement discussions.

Families and Education Levy Proposal: There are three alternatives for the Families and Education Levy submitted to the City Council. The low-range proposal is \$139,746,475, the mid-range proposal is \$182,009,282, and the high-range is \$234,109,433 million over eight years. The high range is nearly double the current Levy amount. City Council will hold a public meeting prior to adoption of a Levy package, with the proposal on the ballot in November of 2011. The Parks Department is a partner in the Levy in the middle school investment area. For more information, see <http://www.seattle.gov/council/newsdetail.asp?id=11426&Dept=28>.

Commissioner Keith asked if there will be a connection to Seattle Park's environmental learning centers (ELC.) Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli answered that it is early in the Levy process and this isn't yet known. In addition, the ELC's may change focus as the Department strategizes operations affected by budget cuts.

Hempfest Promoters File Lawsuit: Hempfest promoters filed a lawsuit against the City of Seattle because it has not issued permits to allow Hempfest to be held on its traditional weekend in August. Seattle Department of Transportation will be working to build a pedestrian bridge from the Olympic Sculpture Park to Myrtle Edwards Park during August and a portion of the park will be closed to the public. For more information on Seattle Hempfest 2011, see <http://hempfest.org/drupal/node>.

West Seattle Driving Range Project: One of the first projects in the Master Golf Plan, the West Seattle Driving Range Project, has been cancelled due to technical and budget issues affecting the original site and golfers did not like the proposed alternate site. Work will move to the next project on the list, a driving range at Jefferson Golf Course. For more information on Seattle Parks' golf courses and the Golf Master Plan, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Athletics/golfrse.htm>.

Summit Slope Park: The official opening of this new park on Capitol Hill is scheduled for Sunday, May 1.

Encroachment Update: Parks staff are working to remove seven encroachments on park land adjacent to Burke-Gilman Trail near 65th Northeast. The encroachments were discovered when boundary lines were run for a park project and include fences, small buildings, and a paved area. The homeowners are being cooperative in removal of the encroachments.

Commissioner Ramels is pleased that Parks staff continue to remove these encroachments from public park land.

Neighborhood Matching Fund: A number of applications were received that will affect Seattle's parks. Park staff are currently reviewing the park-related applications.

Atlantic City Nursery Request for Proposal (RFP): The RFP has been advertised. Commissioner Keith, the Board's representative on the RFP oversight committee asked for a timeline on the committee's meeting schedule. For details on the RFP, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/partnerships/rfp.htm>.

Seattle Waterfront Public Meeting: A public meeting on Seattle's Waterfront Development will be held on Thursday, February 17, 6:30-8:30 pm at the Seattle Aquarium. For more information, see <http://crosscut.com/blog/crosscut/20104/Crosscut-Tout:-A-Waterfront-Park-design-o-rama/>.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained 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-to-three minutes each, will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. 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 Old/New Business. No one signed up to testify.

Public Hearing: Supplemental Park Use Guidelines for Downtown Parks

Victoria Schoenberg, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, presented a briefing on the Supplemental Park Use Guidelines for Downtown Parks at its January 27 meeting. The Board is holding a public hearing at this meeting, and plans to vote on a recommendation to the Parks Superintendent at the February 24 meeting. Prior to tonight's meeting, the Board received a written briefing and attachments, included below and available to the public on the Board's web page. To read the January 27 briefing papers, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2011/01-27-11.pdf>. To listen to the January 27 verbal briefing and the Board's questions and brief discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=4761> and move cursor to position 19.00. To listen to tonight's update, public hearing, and Board discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591117>.

Ms. Schoenberg reviewed the information previously presented to the Board. Five written testimonies have been received from the public and reflected concerns with amplified music and noise at Victor Steinbrueck Park, located at the north end of the Pike Place Public Market. Ms. Schoenberg referred to several Pike Place Historic District Guidelines for Victor Steinbrueck Park. 2.12.2 reads "*Use of the park for non-recurring special events of no more than three days in duration does not require a Certificate of Approval provided that the event does not include electronic amplification of sound, and that the property is restored to its former condition after the event ends.*" 2.12.3 reads "*Electronic amplification of sound requires approval from the Commission and is discouraged for more than three hours in duration and anytime outside the hours of noon to 6:00 p.m.*"

Ms. Schoenberg stated the Department wants to leave some opportunities open for special events, such as an evening dance. Any events with amplified music must receive a permit from both Historic Preservation and Seattle Parks Department.

Board Questions and Answers

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber on how the Department enforces the noise regulation, Ms. Schoenberg responded that the Department's Park Rangers are first called. The City has a noise ordinance; however, it can be difficult to get Seattle Police Department to enforce the regulation. Commissioner Barber noted the Department also has a park exclusion policy. He noted that neighbors of Victor Steinbrueck Park are concerned with amplified music being played beyond 6:00 pm. Ms. Schoenberg responded that the amplified music events must have a permit. If musicians abuse the 6:00 pm restriction, Parks staff can revoke the permit. Commissioner Barber concerned that the Department be a good neighbor to those who live close to the park and that the Department ensures it has leverage to control the noise.

Commissioner Ramels believes those who are writing are concerned that the current rules are changing and urged Ms. Schoenberg to make it very clear to the park neighbors that this is not the case. She asked if the public is aware that these Supplemental Guidelines are completed and in review. Ms. Schoenberg answered that the Park Board's public hearing is one way to do this. She notified all who had voiced interest in the issue of the public hearing.

Commissioner Ramels asked if any of the fears voiced in the testimony are legitimate. Ms. Schoenberg answered that having buskers in parks is a fairly new idea in Seattle and some buskers have displayed negative behaviors. However, creating a regulation against every possible negative behavior is very difficult. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli added that the Department is charged with activating the downtown parks and adding more programming.

Commissioners then asked about a couple of the guidelines. Ms. Schoenberg will prepare a revised version, in tracked changes mode, which will be posted on the Park Board's web page prior to its February 24 discussion and recommendation to the Superintendent.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. All who requested to speak were allotted three minutes each to testify, asked to speak at the podium, and timed. The Chair request anyone with additional comments to e-mail their testimony to the Board's coordinator. One person testified. A very brief summary follows and includes the speaker's name and whether or not they support the proposal.

Paul Dunn: Mr. Dunn is a member of the Friends of the Market and served two terms on the Market Historic Preservation Board. He also lives near Victor Steinbrueck Park. This is a unique park, built on a parking deck. It is owned by Seattle Parks Department, which has co-oversight with the Market's Historic Preservation Board. He believes the updated Supplemental Guidelines are a good idea and will send a letter of support. If Parks' is programming the park to bring more visitors, it is a good thing but not needed as the park is already very busy.

The public hearing closed. Commissioner Holmes reminded the audience that written testimony to the Board will be accepted through Friday, February 18.

Commissioner thanked Ms. Schoenberg for the update and Mr. Dunn for speaking during the public hearing. The Board plans to discuss the Guidelines at its February 24 meeting and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Briefing: Update on Parks Division Operations

Robb Courtney, Seattle Parks' Division Director, next briefed the Board on how budget cuts have impacted the work of his division. Prior to the meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, which was available to the public on the Board's web page and included below. To hear Mr. Courtney's presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591117> and move cursor to position 53.30.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is for informational purposes only, intended to update the Park Board on Park Division operations following implementation of 2011 budget cuts.

Project Description and Background

In 2011, the Parks Division received budget cuts and reductions as described below (refer to table and following bullets). Representatives from the Parks Division will brief the Park Board on how staff are managing work following budget reductions.

Parks Division Budget Impacts

Unit Impacts	Staffing Level		Capacity Reduction		Number of Positions		
	2010	2011	FTE	Percent	Lay-off	FTE Red	New
Environmental Learning BCL	33.94	31.44	(2.50)	-7%	3	0	0
Natural Resources Mgmt BCL	62.74	58.74	(4.00)	-6%	6	2	0
Facility & Structure Maint BCL	115.74	105.74	(10.00)	-9%	12	1	3
PkCleang, Landscpg & Restor BCL	230.67	203.84	(26.83)	-12%	32	61	15
Grand Total	445.6	397.26	(43.33)	-10%	53	64	18
Director/Managers/SA	8	7	(1.00)	-13%	1	0	0

Parks Division Budget Impact by Unit **Environmental Learning Centers**

- The 2011 budget retains school-based programs, Nature Day Camp and Nature pre-school, and other programs sponsored by the Associated Recreation Council, eliminates Parks sponsored programs related to environmental learning, and makes the Carkeek Environmental Center available only for rentals.

Natural Resources Unit

- Reductions taken to Arboretum gardening and litter pick-up, Kubota Gardens gardening and maintenance.
- Lost staff from Tree and Natural Area Crews, which reduces pruning cycles and caps forest restoration at 700-800 acres.

Park Resources

- Reductions to ballfield crews transfer responsibility of some maintenance of athletic fields to user groups.
- Reductions taken to year-round evening and second shift cleaning and peak season staff.

Shops

- Reductions to Paint Shop, Metal Fabrication, Drainage & Wastewater, and Fencing crews.
- Sunsets the Crafts apprentice program.

Additional Information

- Leah Tivoli: 615-0226; leah.tivoli@seattle.gov

Briefing: Overview of Limited Use Community Centers' Operations

Barb Wade, Senior Recreation Leader, Seattle Parks' Recreation Division, next briefed the Board on how budget cuts have resulted in the limited use of five of the Department's 26 community centers. Prior to the meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, which was available to the public on the Board's web page and included below. To hear Ms. Wade's presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591117> and move cursor to position 34.00.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

No action is requested from the Board. This briefing is for information purposes only.

Project Description

As a result of the recent budget reductions, five community centers (Alki, Ballard, Green Lake, Laurelhurst, and Queen Anne) were reduced to a limited use model for 2011. These centers all remain open to the public, offering limited programming and 30-35 public drop-in hours each. The hours for each center in 2010 and with the new 2011 limited use model are shown on Attachment A.

The limited use centers are operating with significantly reduced staffing levels, relying on Recreation Leaders and Recreation Attendants for some on-site building supervision and limited programming. The changes include:

- **Hours:** Fewer hours of operation;
- **Static programming:** Very little change in programming from quarter to quarter; for example, Green Lake will have the exact same 21 classes each quarter, with the same descriptions, same instructors, and limited promotion; there are no creative programming efforts as seen at other locations;
- **No Special events:** Large signature events will not be held unless there are non-City sponsors providing time for planning and implementation; this will potentially impact the Laurelhurst Salmon Bake, Green Lake Pathway of Lights, Alki Arts Fair and some others; and
- **Reduced Customer Service Hours:** Fewer hours to answer questions and enroll in programs and provide general customer services.

The limited use centers continue to have drop-in programs for selected program times. For example, at Ballard, the Toddler Playroom is open during public operating hours. Outside of public hours, there may also continue to be registered programs like childcare, exercise classes, and facility rentals.

There is no on-site supervisor at the limited use centers, but each site is paired with a nearby community center, which provides support for planning, financial review, brochure production, registration and more. The programming at each limited use center is being coordinated by the professional staff at the partner community center. All five locations are under the general oversight of Barb Wade, Senior Recreation Program Coordinator, who recruits staff, develops staff schedules, supervises staff, oversees operating budgets, and solves problems as they come up.

Facility rental management at these centers is in the process of transitioning to the Event Scheduling office. It is hoped that Event Scheduling can help maintain rental revenues through a "one stop shopping" approach for customers. They currently schedule six indoor rental locations and are adding these additional five community centers. This is taking some adjustment as their policies may be new to Recreation staff and not all procedures are defined.

Issues

The transition to limited use has been difficult. Some of the challenges the department addressed during the first month of limited use operations have been:

- Bringing public awareness to the change;
- Lack of staffing continuity; twenty-nine different people work at these five centers, most under 20 hours/week, leading to inconsistent staff assignments and customer service;
- Few staff with strong community connections at the site due to staff shifting between centers;
- Developing an operating plan for Evans Pool when Green Lake Community Center is closed;
- The continued operation of the free public showers at Green Lake on Saturday when the community center is closed;
- Frustration from customers expecting front desk service when the facility is not open; and
- Frustration from customers expecting drop-in programs, like basketball and playroom access, when the facility is not open.

Staff continue to work on solutions to these challenges.

More Information

Barb Wade: barb.wade@seattle.gov

Old/New Business

To hear the Board's discussion of Old/New Business, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=4781> and move cursor to position 3.20.

New Park Board Member: Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels about the vacant City Council-appointed position, Philip Roewe, Councilmember Bagshaw's legislative assistant, answered that an announcement is expected on Friday, February 11, with the new Commissioner joining the Board in March.

Board Committees

- Commissioner Keith is a member of the newly-formed Atlantic City Request for Proposal Committee and asked for an update the committee's meeting schedule. Parks staff will forward this information.
- Commissioner Kostka asked for follow up on whether members of City Boards and commissions are allowed to vote on the Central Waterfront Committee's sub-committees. Parks staff will follow up on this and report back.

Combined Sewer Overflow: The Board heard a presentation on the Atlantic City combined sewer overflow project which impacts park property. Commissioner Barber has since spoken to one of the engineers present at the January 27 meeting. After their conversation, he feels more supportive of using parking lots for the CSO's, as the neighbors feel it is better to have any fumes released in a park and not in the neighborhood where their homes are located.

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli noted that the CSO's are being sequenced over several years. Upcoming projects are at Smith Cover Park in the Magnolia/Interbay area and Martha Washington Park near the Arboretum.

The Board also requested a list designating whether Seattle Public Utilities or King County is the lead and when these should be scheduled to come before the Park Board for discussion. Commissioners requested the Board's early involvement in any sites that potentially affect Seattle's parks.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Terry Holme, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____