

# Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

## Seattle Board of Park Commissioners Meeting Minutes May 26, 2011

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>  
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

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<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

### ***Board of Park Commissioners***

Present:

Antoinette Angulo  
John Barber  
Terry Holme, Chair  
Jourdan Keith  
Diana Kincaid, Vice-chair  
Donna Kostka  
Jackie Ramels

### ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent  
Jeanette Geiger, Acting Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Park Board Chair Terry Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and reviewed the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Kincaid moved approval of the April 14 minutes, May 26 agenda, and Acknowledgment of Correspondence. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barber. The vote was taken and the motion approved.**

### **Superintendent's Report**

Acting Superintendent Williams reported on the following topics. To listen to the report, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591146> and move cursor to position 0.50.

Update on Building 11 Lease Amendment: Superintendent Williams gave an overview of the significant developments since his last update to the Board:

Mayor McGinn has transmitted the Building 11 Lease Amendment to City Council. The legislation had been held in the Mayor's office for more than two months, as part of the City's process to do due diligence. A part of the due diligence rests with the Parks Department. Parks asked the developer, Building 11 LLC, to show proof of financing, letters of intent for 50% space rentals, and for other information. As of last Friday, the LLC has provided all the requested information. Last week, Superintendent Williams met with several City Council members and staff from the Law Department also attended the meeting. The meeting's purpose was to advise the Council of the significant legal risk of breach of contract if the City does not go forward with the lease amendment. In the spirit of working in good faith, Parks is moving forward with the amendment. There have been a number of news articles on the amendment and information in several local blogs.

The next steps will involve a notice to the tenants to vacate the premises in 14 days. Concurrent with that Parks will issue a notice to the developer of its intent to hand over the building. On May 27, the Superintendent will meet with some community members to hear concerns and listen to new information they believe will mitigate Parks' decision or actions. The Department will continue on its current direction, unless it receives new compelling information to do otherwise. [For more on Building 11 LLC, see [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/magnuson/docs/Building11\\_2.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/magnuson/docs/Building11_2.pdf).]

Responding to a question from Commissioner Holmes whether City Council must adopt an ordinance to grant the lease amendment, Superintendent Williams responded that it does. However, Seattle Parks has a current lease agreement with Building 11 LLC, approved by Council in 2008, and is assuming that lease remains in force, whether or not Council approves the amendment. The Department has a contractual obligation with Building 11 LLC to make the agreement work.

Commissioner Barber asked if the lease amendment requirements include any variations from the original lease agreement. Superintendent Williams responded the amendment includes a variation that the lender is requiring of the lendee as a condition to the loan/conditions requested by potential tenants. Examples are (1) allowing exclusive use of a play area outside the daycare during hours of operation, with the area being available for public use during non-daycare hours; (2) providing Ivar's Restaurant access to a loading dock and outdoor seating area; (3) added wording to safeguard the tenants' "continuity of business" should Building 11 LLC go belly-up; and (4) an added benefit to the City in the form of tax credits of \$1 million dollars over the life of the loan. Building 11 LLC is receiving Historical Status tax credits that will allow the City to receive those credits over the 45 years of the amended lease. Changes were made to the lease agreement in the amendment to benefit Parks.

Commissioner Ramels questioned why the Department is moving ahead with the amendment despite the overwhelming opposition by community councils and advisory councils. Superintendent Williams responded there is a legal term of "course of conduct" which requires Parks to continue working in good faith with Building 11 LLC. The Department does not have the legal right to break the original lease. The City's Law Department has determined that not honoring the contract would be a breach of contract and could cost the City several million dollars. If Parks is held liable for \$2-4 million, it would result in the Department's budget being cut.

Commissioner Kincaid asked about artist space in the building. If Building 11 LLC is unable to rent out all of the space planned for artists, could the space then be used for water sports? Superintendent Williams confirmed that it could be redeployed to water recreation. The negotiations are between the artists, Sail Sandpoint, and Building 11 LLC and the Parks Department has no role in the negotiations. Commissioner Kincaid referred to the "letters of intent" and wanted clarification that Building 11 LLC does not have actual leases at this time. Superintendent Williams responded that the letter of the law at this stage of funding and the contract requires the LLC to only have "letters of intent" to lease at this time. Commissioner Kincaid asked if, in the future, the Department will require leases rather than letters of intent. Superintendent Williams commented that there are lessons learned from this process that will be used for future agreements.

Update on Building 30 at Magnuson Park: Parks has completed extensive work to develop funding proposals for Building 30. In 2010, Seattle Fire Department and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) determined that, since Parks has not made life saving improvements – sprinkler control systems, fire alarm systems, egress changes, ADA improvements, and seismic improvements, the number of annual events allowed in Building 30 is limited.

In addition, the future of Building 30 is linked to Building 11, as Parks had planned for Building 30's west wing to be renovated for artist space and had budgeted \$2.5 million for this purpose. However, DPD would not permit Parks to do a partial building renovation. It instead determined the level of work

constituted a significant alternation and would require Parks to bring the entire building up to code, at a cost of \$8.5 million.

Parks has now proposed to the Executive a number of Building 30 funding options that rely on debt financing. Staff are working with Councilmember Bagshaw and members of the Magnuson Park community. Councilmember Bagshaw is facilitating discussions on the challenges and how to move forward. Superintendent Williams will keep the Board updated. Commissioner Kincaid stated there is a tremendous amount of excitement over Building 30's possibilities.

Update on Cascade People's Center: This facility is located in the South Lake Union Neighborhood. Recently, Parks held a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to look for an operator, with Metro-center YMCA the successful respondent. Parks awarded the proposal to the YMCA which led the Cascade Neighborhood Council, which is the building's current tenant, to file a letter of appeal. The appeal panel was Superintendent Williams, Bernie Matsuno, Director of Department of Neighborhoods, and Kathy Nyland from Councilmember Bagshaw's office. After review, they upheld the decision to award the contract to the YMCA. Parks has since had discussions with the Cascade Neighborhood Council and the Y has expressed a willingness and desire to work with the local neighborhood.

The Y operates a program called BOLD, which is an outdoor program for youth; storage is needed for that program's tents, sleeping bags, tarps, and other outdoor gear. The Cascade Building has limited storage space and Parks negotiated with Vulcan Enterprises to store the equipment on their property. Parks is also committed to moving several Parks staff from the Cascade Building to another location. Moving the gear and staff will increase the programmable space by 33%, to be used for partnership collaboration between the Y and the local neighborhood. During the three months of summer, the YMCA plans to run its BOLD program out of the facility. During the other nine months they will run programs requested by the community. Even during the summer months, the Y has agreed to work with the neighborhood to provide space and a calendar of programs.

The Y would like to move into the building by June 2, which necessitated a notice to vacate to the current tenant. Superintendent Williams met with the Cascade Neighborhood Council last week and gave them the notice. KOMO News reported on the story.

Update on Community Center Advisory Team (CCAT): The past two CCAT meetings have focused on the options matrix which lays out nine options for reducing general fund support for community center operations. Superintendent Williams noted that reducing the cost of operating a community center always results in cutting staff. The options include geographic grouping of centers, sorting centers into tiers with varied operating hours, changes to fees, and increased partnerships. CCAT will hold two public meetings to review the options: June 15 at Bitter Lake Community Center and June 16 at Jefferson Community Center. The report to City Council is to be delivered July 1. Next week Parks will brief the Mayor on the Department's budget recommendations and on this issue.

During Old/New Business, Commissioner Ramels invited everyone present to the two public meetings. Commissioner Kostka asked if the CCAT recommendations will come before the Park Board before being presented to City Council July 1; Parks staff will brief the Board at the June 23 meeting.

Update on Belltown Community Center: The Requests for Statement of Qualifications are due on June 10 and the Department plans to select an operator for the new community center by the end of June or early July. Parks has signed a letter of intent for leasing the community center space and is currently negotiating tenant improvements. Staff will attend the June 14 Best of Belltown Event to update the community on the status of the new community center and Bell Street Park development.

Update on the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP): Parks is working with the Cascade Land Conservancy on the Green Seattle Partnership, the City's premier project to restore 3,500 acres of greenbelt across the city. The Levy included significant funding to support the Green Seattle Initiative; however the Levy expires at the end of 2014 and the partners are now trying to determine how to continue the commitment. Staff proposed a citywide meeting of all those working on GSP. The format would be that of a shareholder's meeting and include acknowledgement of achievements, an outline of current budget issues, and gathering input on the direction and future of the Partnership. GSP has become one of the largest efforts of its kind in the state, if not the country, primarily because of the tireless investment of citizens, community leaders, agencies, non-profits, companies, the City, and Parks. For more information on the Green Seattle Partnership, see <http://greenseattle.org/>. For more information, contact Mark Mead, Seattle Parks Senior Urban Forester at [mark.mead@seattle.gov](mailto:mark.mead@seattle.gov).

Update on the Levy Oversight Committee: At the May 23 meeting of the Levy Oversight Committee, the Committee recommended spending \$10 million of Levy inflation funds for high priority major maintenance projects. The Levy includes a total of \$14 million for inflation in the Neighborhood Parks category; because there has not been inflation in construction costs, the Committee recommended spending the \$10 million for major maintenance and keeping \$4 million in reserve for projects not yet completed.

The list of major maintenance projects includes new roofs at community centers, replacing a leaky waterline at Seward Park, and comfort station renovations. The Committee will hold a public hearing on the recommendation at its June 27 meeting. The Department has a backlog of \$300 million in major maintenance needs. For more information on the upcoming meetings see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/levy/oversight.asp>.

During Old/New Business, Commissioner Holme announced the Levy Oversight Committee will hold a public hearing at its June 27 meeting to discuss using the \$10 million for critical major maintenance needs. These funds are earmarked as park funds and are not to be used for other City programs. He believes the City Council and Mayor McGinn will listen closely to the Oversight Committee's recommendation.

### ***Good News Stories***

GLSEN Award: On May 22, Seattle Parks and Recreation received the "Community Organization of the Year" Award by the Washington State chapter of GLSEN (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network) at the annual awards banquet, hosted by Lily Jang of Q 13 Fox News and featuring Mukilteo Representative Marcos Lias as keynote speaker for his work on anti-bullying legislation.

Heart Association Awards: The American Heart Association has recognized Seattle Parks and Recreation as a Platinum Level Recipient of the American Heart Association's *Start! Fit-Friendly Company* Recognition program and the Community Innovation Award. The Platinum Level is the highest level of recognition from the American Heart Association's *Start!* initiative. Parks also won a second award, the Community Innovation Award, for engaging in efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and more livable communities for children, youth, and adults of all ages. Parks has developed activities and enhanced existing programming to encourage and support physical activity, use of outdoor spaces for active recreation, and healthy eating habits.

### **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 Old/New Business. No one testified.

## **Discussion/Recommendation: Summit Slope Park Skatedot**

At its May 12 meeting, the Board heard a staff briefing, immediately followed by a public hearing, on the Summit Slope Park Skatedot. To view the tape of that meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>. At tonight's meeting, Linda Hubert, Seattle Parks Major Maintenance Manager, led a discussion on the future of the Summit Slope Park skatedot element, with the Board requested to vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent.

The Board received the following testimony: 17 testified that they oppose the skatedot and 41 support keeping it in the park. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners also received a copy of Parks Citywide Skate Park Policy [to learn more about the policy, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark.htm>.] To hear tonight's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591146> and move cursor to position 30.0.

Ms. Hubert stated she believes skateboarders use the skatedot site sporadically. Commissioner Ramels visited the park on six occasions and did not see any skateboarders. Commissioner Barber visited today, on his way to this meeting, and saw a few. Neighbors have told Ms. Hubert the skateboard use occurs primarily in the evenings.

Ms. Hubert was not involved during the design phase of the park and is unsure if skatedots were envisioned when the policy was written. Skatedots are different than skateparks, with one person at a time using a skatedot and up to 30 at a time using skateparks.

Ms. Hubert next addressed a number of questions submitted this afternoon by Commissioner Barber as to how the Skate Park Policy was applied at Summit Slope skatedot. Responses shown in *italics*.

- Was Section 6.1 (Costs, Funding Resources and Priorities) considered in the design phase?
- What is the code of conduct for the Summit Slope skatedot? *Skaters skate at their own risk and must wear helmets, be courteous and mindful of other park users, and recognize that pedestrians always have the right of way. There are also signs that warn pedestrians of skaters.*
- Did the design of the skatedot meet Department design standards, especially in regard to its proximity to residences? *There are no design standards for skatedots in regard to distances; however, there is a Seattle Municipal Code that states a rule of 30 feet in regards to "Single Family Dwelling" for play areas. Superintendent Williams added that when design standards are considered it is sometimes a judgment call on location. Seattle Parks has a number of design standards, but doesn't have a rule for everything.*
- Section 7.2. Section 7.5: There has been some discussion of anticipating mitigation, but perhaps a wrap-up is due. *The project is complete, mitigation is wrapped up, and did not address the noise issue.*
- Commissioner Barber did not see any signs about the skatedot at today's visit. *Ms. Hubert has not received any reports that the signs have been removed at Summit Slope Park. Commissioner Angulo was there the night before and signs were in place.*
- Which buildings are most affected by the noise, as best known from the complaints? *Scandia rental apartments, the Pignataro law offices, and Park Summit condominiums. After the exact location of these buildings were determined, Commissioner Barber then asked if any complaints are coming from the south side of the park. Ms. Hubert is not aware of any.*
- One of the skateboarders told Commissioner Barber that the noisiest part is dropping from the ledge to the concrete surface — the slap that several people mentioned in their testimony. The person testifying suggested the installation of a rubber surface to replace concrete, solving two

problems at once: loud noise and prevention of injury. Has that idea been considered? One of the P-Patchers suggested a trial placement of colorful carpeting over the metal chain fence that backs the skatedot. *These suggestions would need to be evaluated, as there would be installation costs and maintenance issues, and it is unknown if this would solve the problem. One person who testified stated that the most obnoxious noise is when skaters stand around and practice kick flips – and not when they are skating or grinding. Both the landing area and the practice kick flip area are two problematic areas.*

- Why was this location considered over others in the area that have restroom facilities, drinking fountain, (e.g., Miller Playfield and Cal Anderson Park)? *The skatedot was added at Summit Slope Park as it was a brand new park; it is more difficult to incorporate a skatedot into an existing park, especially those with an existing master plan.* Were other locations for this skatedot considered, especially by active areas that are set back from residences like there are at Miller Playfield or Cal Anderson Park next to the alley? Was it the case that locating the skatedot was not considered seriously until the fourth public design session, long after the major features should have reached agreement, or the impression given to the attendees at the first three meetings that the major decisions had been made? *Ms. Hubert was not involved with the project during the public meetings, but has reviewed the sign in sheets and meeting notes. The original project manager is no longer employed by the Department; however, she understands that the skatedot was proposed at the third public when skatedot proponents were in attendance. The final design of the park was not shown until the fourth public meeting.*
- Are there any skateboard facilities in planning, design, or construction stage that have similar proximity to residences like Summit Slope's?

Commissioner Holmes, as chair, directed that the discussion and recommendation follow these steps: a review of the staff briefing, a motion on the skatedot, and Board discussion of the motion.

Commissioner Holme represents the Board on the Levy Oversight Committee and knows that an expansion of Summit Park has been approved; thus there will be future opportunity to make changes there. Michael Shiosaki, Deputy Director of Seattle Parks Planning and Development Division, then spoke briefly on the park's future. Planned improvements include taking one street lane, converting the street to one way traffic, adding stormwater swales and plantings, and removing street parking. John Street is a Seattle Department of Transportation right-of-way project. The planning and design are scheduled for 2012 and construction in 2013.

Commissioner Kostka stated she had visited the park on Tuesday this week and there were three skateboarders there. She read the letter submitted by Pignataro law firm today. She asked if it would work, as his letter suggested, to enclose the skatedot and designate it for children only for two-three hours daily, under adult supervision. Ms. Hubert has spoken with Mr. Pignataro several times and there are several problems with this suggestion: Seattle Parks doesn't try to cage people into locations; there would be installation and maintenance costs, as well as graffiti issues, with an enclosure; and limiting certain hours to particular age groups is not practical. This would be a difficult proposal to facilitate.

Commissioner Keith asked about pedestrian safety from the skaters – which City department owns the sidewalk, is it legal to skateboard on the sidewalk, and are there multi-language signs to caution pedestrians about the skaters? Ms. Hubert responded that Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) owns the sidewalk and has assured Seattle Parks it is legal for skaters to use the sidewalk; however, pedestrians have the right of way. There are multiple approaches to enter the park and installing signs at all in various language would inundate the small park with signs. Responding to Commissioner Keith's

question whether Seattle Parks is liable for skateboard accidents, Acting Superintendent Williams answered that the City is given immunity against injury as long as the accident resulted from the user's action. The City is self insured and the risk management section evaluates injuries and claims on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Kincaid doesn't believe the noise complaints were adequately addressed in the mitigation. Ms. Hubert responded that the Department is not aware of a proven noise reducer. The park is surrounded by buildings and there is a slope. In skateboard spaces with wooden surfaces, insulation and other materials are added to control noise; however, this is a concrete surface and noise-control materials aren't generally added to concrete. Indoor concrete skate surfaces can have special treatment to help control noise. However, the effectiveness is dependent on curing the concrete, which is a more difficult endeavor if the concrete is located outdoors in the rainy climate of the Northwest. Noise-reducing walls may be impractical due to costs and Seattle Parks does not install these as the noise could go up and over or bounce off the buildings behind the wall. Commissioner Kincaid asked if Parks staff have commissioned any additional studies on noise and decibel level to determine if they are within a normal range at this park. Ms. Hubert responded that she forwarded the ambient sound study performed at the Ballard Skatebowl and noted that all sounds are subject to interpretation. The intermittent noise of skateboarding is different from a steady noise, such as jack hammering.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber whether the Department has considered, as one skateboarder suggested, draping color carpet over the fencing at the skatedot, Ms. Hubert answered that the Department has not. Commissioner Angulo suggested planting short shrubs along the edge of the skatedot to deter the skaters' "running start." Ms. Hubert believes the skaters would just avoid the shrubs and continue their running start. Commissioners asked about limited park hours and Ms. Hubert answered that there isn't staff to lock up the park at night. Commissioner Angulo suggested local park stewards to help with this.

Commissioner Ramels visited the park six times — twice during really nice weather and once at midnight — and talked to ten people. No one complained about the noise; those she talked to said they hear the skaters but aren't bothered by the noise. When she visited at midnight, there was a refrigerated truck in the Starbucks parking lot with its motor running and a party going on at a rooftop across the street. She found the neighborhood to be noisy, but it had nothing to do with the skateboarders.

**Commissioner Ramels moved that the Board of Park Commissioners recommend to the Superintendent to not dismantle the skatedot feature at Summit Slope Park. Commissioner Keith seconded the motion. Discussion followed.**

Commissioner Barber thinks skaters got the word out to avoid the area while the Board reviews the element and that accounts for the low number of skaters present when the commissioners visited the site. He suggested holding off on the motion to evaluate the park over the summer when neighbors will have their windows open and the noise may become more of a nuisance. He believes a more nuanced motion is needed. Commissioner Kincaid stated that the Board must consider the daily lives of the neighbors and the impact to their sleep. She believes those who testified that the noise is as bad as they say it is. She doesn't take their testimony lightly. There is a threshold of what people can tolerate and Seattle Parks needs to be a good neighbor and follow the guideline of "do no harm." The Department should be aware of what elements of a project might "cross the line" and impact the neighborhood too much. She believes there should be noise mitigation for the skatedot. There are positives in having a skatedot, but in this case she believes the harm overrides the benefit. The skatedot feature was added late in the design and she requested that a new skatedot be built in a different park so it is in a place that it doesn't do the harm that it does at this location.

Commissioner Kostka shared that when she visited the site, she was using her walking stick and the three skateboarders she encountered were polite. However, a young mother with a baby carriage might have had difficulty maneuvering around the skateboarders. She suggested in the future the skatedot features need to be designed so that pedestrian activities and skaters are in separate areas of parks and that the Department find funds to mitigate the noise and monitor the results for the next year.

Commissioner Ramels thinks, if the skatedot is removed from Summit Slope, the skaters will just move across the street to the empty parking lot, where there will be no noise mitigation. She referred to the small number of people (17) who testified against the skatedot. She isn't discounting their testimony; however, 41 people testified in support of keeping the skatedot element at the park. She believes the young people who spoke aren't usually acknowledged and she supports these young people. Commissioner Keith agreed that when you're younger, you often have less of a voice in decisions and she finds people can be annoyed by young people.

**The vote was taken with Commissioners Angulo, Keith, and Ramels in favor; Commissioners Barber, Kincaid, and Kostka opposed. The Chair generally votes only to make or break a tie. Commissioner Holme voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

Discussion continued on additional elements some commissioners wanted the Department to agree to do. Acting Superintendent Williams cautioned the Board that it is unusual for the Department to ask commissioners to consider removing elements of a park and this has the potential to set a precedent. The Department regularly receives complaints from people who live adjacent to ballfield lights and noise, parking lots, and noisy playgrounds, and cannot remove every element that has opposition. He asked the Board to keep these considerations in mind as it makes additional recommendations on the Summit Slope Park skatedot element.

**Commissioner Barber moved that the Board also recommend to the Superintendent the following:**

- 1) Provide a period of monitoring and reviewing of noise at the skatedot during a pilot period to be determined by the Superintendent;**
- 2) Establish a working committee to help resolve noise issues there;**
- 3) Seek funding for an engineering study of skateboard noise at Summit Slope Park, with an emphasis on suggesting means for noise reduction;**
- 4) Request the citizen's Levy Oversight Committee to provide funds for noise mitigation for the Park; and**
- 5) Encourage responsibility by skateboards by adhering to the hours of closure.**

Discussion and refinement of this motion continued for some time. Commissioner Holme asked that all commissioners carefully review the wording of this motion before voting approval of the meeting minutes.

**The vote was taken, with the following results: Commissioners Kincaid, Barber, Kostka, and Angulo voted in favor; Commissioners Keith and Ramels abstained as they believed the motion was confusing. Motion carried.**

Commissioners thanked Ms. Hubert for the briefing.

### **Update Briefing: Washington Park Arboretum**

Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks Deputy Director of Planning and Development Division, presented an update briefing on the Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan Implementation and the SR 520 Mitigation Plan. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing, which is included below and was posted on the Board's web page. To hear Mr. Shiosaki's presentation and the Board's discussion, see



<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5885> and move cursor to 18.30.

## *Written Briefing*

### **Requested Board Action**

Staff will provide an informational briefing on the status of implementing the Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan as related to the SR 520-related Mitigation Plan. The primary Arboretum Master Plan projects to be discussed at the briefing are the North Entry and Multi-use Trail projects. No formal Board action is requested at this time.

### **Historical Background**

See Appendix 'A'

### **Other Background**

- **Roles in Ownership and Management of the Washington Park Arboretum**

The Washington Park Arboretum receives primary support from the City of Seattle, the University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation, all of whom are represented on the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC), along with a committee member appointed by the governor. The roles and responsibilities of each group are outlined below.

*The City of Seattle* owns the land upon which the Arboretum is situated, including the buildings, with the exception of portions of Foster Island submerged under Lake Washington prior to lowering of the lake. The City is responsible for routine maintenance within the park. In addition, the Japanese Garden within the park is owned, operated, and managed by the City.

The *University of Washington* owns the plant collections and is responsible for developing and displaying the collections and running educational programs within the Arboretum. University staff members provide maintenance of the collections, document and display the plants, and provide educational programming. In addition, the University owns the portions of Foster Island that were submerged in Lake Washington prior to the lowering of the lake.

The *Arboretum Foundation*, founded in 1935, is a nonprofit organization that supports the Arboretum. The Foundation is the major fund-raising organization for the Arboretum, and provides volunteers and supports Arboretum programs.

The *Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)* was established in the 1930s to assist the City and the University in the planning for development, use, and maintenance of the Arboretum. The committee, as originally established, included three members representing the City, three members from the University, and one designated by the governor. The Arboretum Foundation was added to the committee in 1992 by Seattle ordinance 116337. This advisory committee provides the primary forum for discussion and resolution of issues related to the Arboretum.

### **Project Description**

- **SR520 – Arboretum Mitigation Plan developed**

Throughout much of 2010, the ABGC worked with representatives from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop the Washington Park Arboretum Mitigation Plan. The Mitigation Plan was finalized in December 2010 and forwarded to the State Legislature. See **Appendix 'B'** for the final Arboretum Mitigation Plan.

- **ABGC/WSDOT Memorandum of Understanding**

Following the completion of the Arboretum Mitigation Plan, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the ABGC/Arboretum partners (City, University, and Arboretum Foundation) and WSDOT to memorialize the intent of the parties regarding future actions and respective roles and responsibilities

that will assure implementation of the projects identified in the Arboretum Mitigation Plan for the SR 520 project. Based on the MOU, the next step in the mitigation process will be to complete a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The more detailed MOA will include specifics on mitigation projects including more detailed project scopes, responsibilities, and estimated project costs.

- **North Entry and Multi-use Trail**

The first projects at the Arboretum to move forward as part of the mitigation-related work include the North Entry and Multi-use Trail projects and traffic calming along Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB).

The public involvement and schematic design for the North Entry and Multi-use Trail projects will move forward immediately to establish a more detailed scope for each of the projects as well as cost estimates. The SR 520 project has the potential to drastically change the North Entry of the Arboretum from the way it appears today and how envisioned as part of the Arboretum Master Plan approved in 2001. The SR 520 project proposes to remove the on and off ramp structures from the Arboretum and dramatically change views into and across the North Entry. The Master Plan envisions a new North Entry experience equivalent to the tree-lined south entry of the Arboretum.

As called out in the Master Plan, the Multi-use Trail will extend along the east side of Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB) from East Madison St. on the south and link to the pedestrian and bicycle improvements proposed as part of SR 520. The trail will traverse the side slope just north of Madison St, reaching Arboretum Drive by passing above and behind the Stone Cottage. From Arboretum Drive the trail will follow existing road grades where possible, paralleling LWB to the North Entry and onward to the SR 520 corridor.

- **Traffic calming**

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is leading the traffic-calming efforts along Lake Washington Boulevard through the Arboretum. The Arboretum Master Plan calls out for traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, additional speed signs, a slower speed limit, pedestrian-activated crosswalks or additional crosswalks.

As traffic volumes have increased along the boulevard and new gardens have been added to the Arboretum, additional efforts must be implemented to ensure pedestrian safety. Improved crossings of LWB are needed for pedestrian safety including improved access from parking areas to the plant collections. As currently proposed, a marked crosswalk with accompanying signage and pedestrian landings will be added at the intersection of Arboretum Drive and LWB. A raised crosswalk with accompanying signage will be added along LWB between Interlaken Blvd and Boyer St. Two crosswalks are identified in the Arboretum Master Plan – one at Arboretum Drive and one at Boyer St. (just north of the currently proposed crossing north of Interlaken Blvd.). Lastly, speed cushions (a speed bump) will be added at a location along LWB approximately mid-point between the two crosswalks. SDOT plans to install these traffic-calming measures during 2011.

### **Public Involvement Process**

- The combined public involvement for the North Entry and Multi-use Trail projects will begin with a public meeting on June 8, 2011. Three public meetings will be held for the schematic design efforts. The public involvement policy will be followed to notify community groups, interest groups, and nearby property owners.

### **Issues**

The public involvement for the planning of the North Entry and Multi-use Trail will begin in June. No issues have been identified at this time.

- **Citizen Concerns/Opposition**

Concerns have been raised about the visual impacts of signs along the Olmsted-designed boulevard. Standard warning and identification signs are required for the crosswalks and speed bump. Staff will meet with concerned citizens.

### **Budget**

- The planning work for the North Entry and Multi-use Trail projects will be funded from the Washington Park Arboretum improvement project as part of the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy program. Parks is currently working with WSDOT to finalize an agreement to reimburse Parks for all design and staff costs related to this work. At this point funding for the next phases of design and construction have not been allocated for these projects.
- The traffic-calming measures will be managed by SDOT, but funded by the SR 520 project.

### **Schedule**

- Public Involvement will begin in June and continue through November 2011 for the schematic design phase for the North Entry and Multi-use Trail projects.
- SDOT will install the traffic calming measures in 2011.

### **Additional Information**

- For additional information please contact:  
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- Project webpage: <http://seattle.gov/parks/projects/arboretum/>

## **APPENDIX 'A'**

### **Historical Background**

In 1934, the University of Washington and the City of Seattle established the Washington Park Arboretum. The history of its development is presented below.

When the University of Washington was sited at its present-day location, it was determined that an offsite location for an arboretum would be needed. Land at the Washington Park site was acquired in 1904, when the Puget Mill Company gave 62 acres to the city in exchange for water main work. After the addition of more land, Lake Washington Boulevard East was designed and constructed in Washington Park in 1904. The City owns most of the Foster Island and Marsh Island area, except for approximately 6 acres at the periphery of Foster Island that emerged as land when Lake Washington was lowered in 1917, creating new University-owned shore lands within the park. By 1924, Washington Park consisted of 175 acres and at that time the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners declared their intent to establish the park as a "botanical garden and arboretum".

While there was much support for an arboretum at this time, funding was difficult to find during the Depression era. Development of the Washington Park Arboretum finally began in 1934 through an agreement between the University of Washington and the City of Seattle. The City agreed to provide infrastructure for arboretum and botanical garden accessibility, and the University agreed to prepare plans for the arboretum and to establish a plant collection. The University retained full control of the area devoted to the Washington Park Arboretum with the understanding that the area must be made available to the public.

During this time, the Seattle Garden Club donated money to hire the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects to create a master plan for the Washington Park Arboretum. Completed in 1936, the *General Plan for the University of Washington Arboretum* described many of its most popular features today, including Azalea Way, Arboretum Drive East, and the lagoons. One of the elements of the Olmsted Brothers plan was the taxonomic organization of the plant collections.

The Works Progress Administration began construction of the Washington Park Arboretum during the late 1930s. The Arboretum Foundation was founded in 1935 and provided additional funding and donated plants to begin the collections. The Works Progress Administration continued work into the early 1940s and completed several features of the park including Azalea Way, the rock garden, the stone bridge at the pinetum (conifer forest) located west of Lake Washington Boulevard, most of the trail system, and the stone cottage at the south entrance.

After World War II, most of the plantings were completed. Most of the woody plant collections were developed between 1947 and 1972, under the direction of Brian O. Mulligan, the director of the Washington Park Arboretum; his curator, Joseph Witt; and other park staff. Mulligan and Witt made extensive modifications to the Olmsted Brothers plan, siting collections based on ecological needs of the species and arranging displays to match the conditions of the site.

During the 1960s the Japanese Garden was built under the direction of Japanese landscape architect Juki Iida. After construction, the University and subsequently the City assumed responsibility for maintenance and operation of the Japanese Garden. In 1963, the State appropriated approximately 47 acres of land from the park for State Route (SR) 520. A capital improvement trust fund was created using the money received for condemnation of the land. The funds were to be managed by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee and used solely for capital improvement projects within the Arboretum.

During this period, the western edge of the park was proposed for construction of the R. H. Thompson Expressway. Sasaki/Walker Associates was hired to adapt the Olmsted Brothers plan to accommodate the new expressway plans. Public opposition to the expressway led to its defeat. The sole feature of the Sasaki/Walker plan to be implemented was the waterfront trail. Some of the trust fund moneys were used to incorporate into the park several properties along its western boundary that had been cleared for the expressway.

In 1974, amid controversy over the role and rights of the University with regard to the Washington Park Arboretum, the City passed ordinance 103667, based on a citizens initiative, establishing provisions which:

- Established the principle of open public access to the Arboretum in perpetuity;
- Specified that no fencing or other barriers would be allowed that would restrict public access;
- Mandated that no fees or entry charge would be assessed; and
- Prohibited leasing of the property for non-park uses.

In 1975, the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee was reactivated. By 1977 it was widely recognized that a long period of budget cuts and disagreements had led to the deterioration of the park and its facilities. As a result, the committee hired Jones & Jones Landscape Architects to lead the planning and design of an update to the Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan.

Key measures proposed in the 1978 plan included a visitor center, parking improvements, trail enhancements, maintenance facilities, and circulation improvements. Following the adoption of the Jones & Jones master plan update in 1979, the University of Washington, in an effort to reaffirm its managerial role, created the Center for Urban Horticulture. Located about 1.5 miles from the Arboretum at Union Bay, the center became the University's management office for the Arboretum, providing physical facilities, programs, and staff that could not be accommodated within the park grounds. The Donald G. Graham Visitors Center, a gift to the City of Seattle from the Arboretum Foundation, was completed in 1985 and provides an information lobby, a gift shop, a large public meeting room, administrative offices, and space for volunteer activities.

In 1994, Seattle Parks and Recreation prepared a study to determine the scope for a new Washington Park Arboretum Master Plan. The study determined that a new Master Plan was necessary in order to

address changing conditions, continuing conflicts, stagnant resources and concern for maintaining the quality of collections and increasing community education functions.

In 1996, the Master Plan update process was undertaken with the goal of developing a strategic, long-term vision for the Arboretum and generating greater public understanding of its role in the community. After an extensive public outreach effort, key issues were identified, including the health and security of the plant collections, programming and visitor facilities, visitor security, accessibility, and circulation. After the draft plan was completed, and a significant controversy ensued, the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners held a number of workshops to address particular issues in the plan. Using the public comments received during this effort, a revised plan was developed.

Following this lengthy public process, in May 2001 the Master Plan, "Renewing the Washington Park Arboretum," was unanimously approved by the City Council and the University of Washington Board of Regents. In 2004, an Implementation Plan to guide development of the Master Plan was adopted. The Master Plan may be viewed at <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/masterplan.htm>.

### *Questions and Answers*

Following Mr. Shiosaki's verbal briefing on the information above, commissioners asked a number of questions. Commissioner Keith asked for clarification on the new multi-use path. Mr. Shiosaki explained the new path will be a less direct route through the Arboretum, constructed for walkers and bikers who want an Arboretum experience and not for commuting bicyclists. Those who commute by bike will most likely want to use existing surface streets. The path is part of the 2001 Master Plan.

Commissioner Kincaid referred to the SR 520 project and mitigation and asked if the traffic calming features will be enough to slow traffic down; Mr. Shiosaki believes so. Commissioner Barber referred to page 10 that refers to the minimum effects or damage to wildlife. Comparing federal 4f and State 6f regulations gives a lot of leeway to noise effects on wildlife. He asked whether land underneath the ramps, to be removed during the project, will revert to parkland. He doesn't believe Seattle should have to buy the land back from the State. Mr. Shiosaki responded there is strong interest in using the land for park and wetland and that is part of the mitigation negotiations.

Commissioner Angulo asked about the Department's public notification policy. Mr. Shiosaki explained the Department has an extensive list of "Friends of.....", partner organizations, e-mail lists, and also sends information via press releases. Staff are in the process of updating and expanding its notification lists to include Facebook, Twitter, and other social media.

Commissioner Kostka had a question regarding a reference on page 18 to 4-ft. noise barriers and asked how WSDOT determined this height would be effective. Mr. Shiosaki responded that this height refers to the elevated bridge part and that there are no residences close by. The closest neighborhoods are Laurelhurst and Madison and they are a good distance away. Raising the noise barrier height on the elevated bridge would interfere with the bridge's visual effects.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Holmes on how much the mitigation process is costing the Department in staff time, Mr. Shiosaki stated the Department will charge the SR 520-related staff time and consultant fees to WSDOT. Superintendent Williams added that the Department recently received agreement from WSDOT for this.

Commissioner Holme next referred to the 2011 traffic calming measures. He believes the only safe time to cross Lake Washington Boulevard when major events are being held is when there is a police officer directing traffic. He suggested installing a speed bump before drivers reach the intersection with Arboretum Drive as a way to slow their speeds. He asked if SDOT is holding a public process on the traffic calming measures. Acting Superintendent Williams answered that Mayor McGinn has directed SDOT

Director Peter Hahn to conduct a traffic study. Commissioner Holme asked to review the plan before it is implemented. He doesn't believe the current signs are effective in slowing drivers as they approach the crosswalks. He noted that Appendices E and F were not included in the briefing materials and asked they be made available to him.

Commissioner Kostka commented that the Mitigation Plan has come a long way. Chair Holmes agreed and asked Mr. Shiosaki to convey to the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) the Park Board's gratitude for all their work. Mr. Shiosaki will do so. He noted that former ABGC Chair and Arboretum Foundation President Barbara Wright did an incredible job to complete the Mitigation Plan before the end of 2010.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Shiosaki for the briefing.

## **Old/New Business**

To hear this segment of the meeting, see

<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5885> and move cursor to 46.45.

Get Engaged Program: Susan Golub, Seattle Parks and Recreation Strategic Advisor, introduced a staff recommendation to change the Seventh member selection process, increase the Board membership from seven to nine members, and change the date each term ends. She gave background for the proposal:

At the Board's October 2010 annual retreat, City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw suggested the seventh position be filled by a YMCA Get Engaged member, instead of an interview and appointment process being held by the other six commissioners. These young people are university students and submit a resume and application for positions on the City's Boards and Commissions and are screened by the YMCA Get Engaged staff. (For more information on the Get Engaged program, see <http://getengaged.wordpress.com/>.) Commissioners and Parks staff have discussed an alternate way to fill the seventh position, which currently requires the other six Commissioners to interview and select that position. The seventh member may only serve one four-year term, while the other six may serve unlimited three-year terms. Commissioner Kostka currently holds the seventh position and her term is set to expire on December 31, 2011.

While reviewing other City Boards and Commissions for Get Engaged membership and whether the Departments have been pleased with the Get Engaged Commissioners, Ms. Golub determined that most other commissions have more members than the Park Board's seven. Her proposal recommends increasing the members from seven to nine, with four appointed by City Council, four by the Mayor, and one a Get Engaged position.

Commissioners expressed several concerns with this proposal:

- The Get Engaged members serve one or two years, while regular Park Board members serve a three-year term. This could be disruptive to the Board.
- Having a young, inexperienced member could dilute the Board's effectiveness. (It was noted by staff that a number of the City's other Boards and Commissions include a Get Engaged member and feedback on those positions was very positive.)
- With the new membership of nine, four commissioners would be appointed by the Mayor and four by City Council, and the ninth position would come from the Get Engaged program.
- Having two additional members would limit the amount of time each commissioner has to discuss issues before the Board.

The second part of the proposal concerns term expiration dates. Currently, all Park Board terms expire on December 31 and the Board and Parks staff are interested in changing the term expiration to March 31. All positions must be confirmed by City Council and trying to schedule the confirmation hearings in the

fall, when Council is focused on the City budget, can be challenging. Changing the expiration date would avoid this.

With this second proposal, Commissioner Kostka (the current seventh position member) would remain on the Board until March 31, 2012. Ms. Golub will draft legislation for this portion of the proposal. The discussion on the seventh member position, Get Engaged proposal, and expansion of the Board membership will come back to the Board for a recommendation in about a month. Commissioners spent a few more minutes discussing the membership proposal.

Waterfront Project: Commissioner Keith has been receiving questions from the public on the future use of the waterfront. Superintendent Williams stated there was a second public meeting last week [with approximately 900 people in attendance. To view a tape of the meeting or to see a .pdf version, see <http://waterfrontseattle.org/Calendar/Detail/50/>.] The Park Board will hear a staff briefing at its June 9 meeting from Nathan Torgelson and David Graves. Commissioner Barber requested the briefing materials be sent to the Board several days prior to the verbal briefing.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Terry Holme, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_