

# Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
August 9, 2012

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>  
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<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

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

Present:

Antoinette Angulo  
John Barber  
Megan Heahlke  
Jourdan Keith, Vice-chair  
Diana Kincaid, Chair  
Brice Maryman  
Yazmin Mehdi  
Barbara Wright

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

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Chair Diana Kincaid called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, welcomed members of the audience, and reviewed the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Barber moved approval of the meeting agenda, the June 28 meeting minutes as presented, and the acknowledgment of correspondence. Commissioner Mehdi seconded. The vote was taken and unanimous in favor. Motion carried.**

## **Superintendent's Report**

To allow more time for the Park Funding briefing and discussion, there was no Superintendent's report.

## **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 timed and 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. Four people signed up to testify for up to two minutes. To hear the full testimony, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591246> and move cursor to 5.15.

Donna Kostka: Ms. Kostka is a former Park Board commissioner. She asked the Park Board to keep long-term sustainability of Seattle's park system in the forefront as it considers the Parks Legacy Plan.

Ed Bronson: Mr. Bronson is the Executive Director of Outdoors for All, headquartered at Magnuson Park, with a mission "to enrich the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities through outdoor recreation." He is concerned with the number of wounded veterans returning home and this program offers them help. He

invited the Park Board to tour the Magnuson Park facility. For more information on Outdoors for All, see <http://www.outdoorsforall.org/>.

Donna Hartmann-Miller: Ms. Hartmann-Miller asked several questions about the Parks Legacy Plan. Parks staff presented a briefing on the Plan at the July 26 meeting.

Irene Wall: Ms. Wall lives in the Phinney Ridge area and voiced concerns with plans by Woodland Park Zoo's plans to add a holiday light display at the Zoo. This will go on for 40 consecutive nights, from Thanksgiving to Christmas. It is an excessive impact on street parking and pedestrian safety, as vehicles will circle the residential areas looking for parking. There will be no street parking for homeowners and their guests. The Phinney Neighborhood Council does not agree with this plan and has asked the City Council to intercede with the Zoo Society. She compared this to the proposal to add a ropes course in Lincoln Park – park lands are being exploited for dollars.

## **Briefing and Discussion: Long-term Funding Statement of Legislative Intent**

Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks Budget Director, prepared a briefing paper on Parks Long Term Funding Options Statement of Legislative Intent 83-1-A-1, which was sent to Commissioners prior to this meeting. The briefing paper included the following introduction:

*“The 2012 adopted budget included a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) that requested Seattle Parks work with the Board of Parks Commissioners and other interested partners to explore potential new sources of revenue to support parks operations. The request asked that the work involve written reports to include:*

- (1) Information on revenue sources used to fund park operations in other jurisdictions,*
- (2) The pros and cons of any potential new revenue sources,*
- (3) The amount and stability of those revenue sources, and*
- (4) Descriptions of any required changes to state or municipal law.*

*The request also asked that the reports include a “definition of parks service levels and the amount of revenue required to support those service levels” and that the reports “take into account the City’s larger financial picture and how the options fit with the City’s other fiscal priorities.”*

The Park Board is now gathering data on various funding sources which could provide a long-term, stable revenue source for Seattle Parks Department. To hear the full presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591246> and move cursor to position 14.00.

Commissioner Kincaid and Acting Superintendent Williams gave a brief background on the Department's need for a new funding source and the Board's interest in this effort. As part of its involvement with the Department's funding SLI and Strategic Plan, Park Board Commissioners asked for more information on long-term funding sources for Seattle's parks, including Metropolitan Park District (MPD) and other sources. Tonight three speakers will address options: Stacey Crawshaw-Lewis to explain the MPD, City Budget Office Deputy Director Hall Walker to explain a Levy Lid Lift option, and additional information from Councilmember Sally Bagshaw, Chair of the Council's Parks and Neighborhoods Committee. The Department isn't asking for a decision or recommendation from the Board; it is responding to the Board's information-gathering request.

Commissioner Kincaid agreed. The Board has been reading various reports, studies by the Trust for Public Land, and reviewing best practices for parks systems. The Board is concerned with cuts the Department has already sustained, has reviewed the Council's Statement of Legislative Intent, and is gathering information from a number of sources.

## **Councilmember Bagshaw**

Councilmember Bagshaw appreciates being asked to speak tonight. She is here in her role as Parks and Neighborhoods Committee Chair and is delighted to serve in this position for a second year. Both Seattle's parks and Acting Superintendent Williams bring a great deal of joy to her role as a City Councilmember.

The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy will end in 2014. [Note: This levy was a lifting of the lid on property taxes submitted to Seattle voters on November 4, 2008. Seattle residents passed it by a 59% yes vote. The levy brought in \$146 million for Seattle Parks, from 2009 through 2014.] Now, it is time to determine the next steps: should the levy be extended, let it expire, or develop an MPD? The Mayor doesn't want an MPD; City Council is open and listening to various ideas. Councilmembers want the public to know the parks are as good as they can be and that best practices are being incorporated in managing them. Seattle Parks Foundation and the Trust for Public Land have been very helpful.

To persuade the public to vote yes on a new funding mechanism, it is important that Seattle Parks tells its story – that it is the best run park system in the nation. The new Strategic Park Plan/Legacy Plan will help with this. She urged Parks staff to use Seattle Library as an example. To pass its levy, the Library worked closely with the community and asked what the community wanted from its library system. City Council's central staff also worked on the levy. This support is invaluable when levies are up for a vote. [Note: the 2012 Library Levy was a seven-year, \$123 million property tax measure and passed with the support of 61.79 percent of Seattle voters.]

The City hasn't yet decided on a funding mechanism for Seattle Parks Department, but should have a good idea by 2013. The Board of Park Commissioners can help with the decision. Acting Superintendent Williams leads a good team and City Council is very supportive of the park system.

## **Hall Walker, City Budget Office, Deputy Director**

Mr. Walker stated that, prior to 2002, Seattle's property tax was growing at a rate of 6%; now it is at 1% and the City must go back to voters on a regular basis asking them to approve additional funding in the way of levies. One way to increase funding for Seattle's parks is a Levy Lid Lift. [*The passage of Initiative 747 in 2001 limited taxing jurisdictions with a population of less than 10,000 to an increase of one percent in their levy, plus taxes on new construction and increases in state-assessed utility valuation. Levy increases for municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more are limited to the lesser of one percent or the increase in the July implicit price deflator for personal consumption expenditures as published in the September issue of the Survey of Current Business. One exception to the one percent rule is the levy lid lift. RCW 84.55.050. Taxing jurisdictions with a tax rate that is less than their statutory maximum rate may ask the voters to "lift" the levy lid by increasing the tax rate to some amount equal to or less than their statutory maximum rate. The proposed tax rate must be stated in the ballot title. RCW 84.55.050(1) and (2)(a). A simple majority vote is required.*]

He explained that a Levy Lid Lift differs from other levies. It provides the City the ability to go to voters and ask for more funding to lift the lid limit. A Levy Lid Lift can be structured like an MPD, but may be made permanent. Many of the abilities of a Levy Lid Lift are the same; but MPD has a different governance structure. Some challenges have been observed from that structure, as an MPD can have added administrative costs and sometimes cause confusion.

Mr. Walker next discussed debt capacity. The City now has \$800 million Councilmanic debt and additional voter-approved debt. Both the Levy Lid Lift and MPD have a 1% cap on growth.

Both options can fund parks. [For more information on Levy Lid Lifts from the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington State, see Levy Lid Lift: <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/finance/levylidlift.aspx>.]

## **Stacey Crawshaw-Lewis, Pacific Law Firm – Metropolitan Park District**

Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis next presented information on a Metropolitan Park District (MPD), which *“may be created for the management, control, improvement, maintenance, and acquisition of parks, parkways, boulevards, and recreational facilities.”* Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis explained how an MPD would work as a long-time funding source for Seattle’s parks and recreation facilities. [For more information on MPDs from the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington State, see <http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/parks/spd-mpd.aspx>.] She explained a series of Powerpoint slides (included due to complexity of topic):

### **Powerpoint: Met Park Districts: “101”**

#### **What is an MPD**

- Formed under Chapter 35.61 RCS
- Special limited purpose:
  - to acquire, manage and maintain parks, parkways, boulevards, and recreational facilities
- A municipal corporation

#### **MPD History – the Early Days**

- Chapter 98, Laws of 1907 authorized cities of the first class to create MPDs
  - Tacoma Met Parks
- MPD statutes were reenacted in 1943
  - Yakima MPD, which functioned until 1969

#### **2002 Legislative Changes**

- Legislative Task Force on Local Parks and Recreation Maintenance and Operations – Recommendations
  - Allow combinations of cities, counties
  - More flexibility re MPD governing structure
- Since 2002, a number of cities and counties have formed MPDs

#### **MPD Boundaries**

- Flexibility added in 2002
  - Single jurisdiction (for example, within one city)
  - Multi-jurisdictional
  - Portion of one or more jurisdictions

#### **How to form an MPD**

- By voter approval
- Simple majority
- Ballot requirements
  - Approve or disapprove formation of MPD
  - Choose and describe the composition of the initial board of commissioners
  - Choose a name for the district

#### **Key Peninsula Parks Ballot**

The Pierce County Council passed Resolution No. R2004-17, proposing formation of the Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District by election. If approved, Proposition No. 1 will create a new metropolitan park district with the statutory power, among others, to levy annually a general tax on all property in the District not to exceed seventy-five cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. The District’s boundaries will be identical to those of the existing Key Peninsula Park & Recreation District. A five-member board of commissioners, elected at large, will govern the district.

#### **City of Port Angeles Ballot**

City of Port Angeles Resolution No. 2-09 and Clallam County Resolution No. 08-2009 jointly propose the creation of a metropolitan park district with boundaries coterminous with the combined area of the City of Port Angeles and the Port Angeles School District No 121. If approved this proposition would create a metropolitan

park district to be named William Shore Memorial Pool District with all the powers provided in chapter 35.61 RCW. The District shall be governed by a board composed of the members of the city council and the county commissioners to collectively serve ex officio as the board of metropolitan park district through selection of one or more members.

### **City of Tukwila Ballot**

Tukwila Resolution No. 1738 proposes creation of the Tukwila Pool Metropolitan Park District coextensive with the City boundaries pursuant to 36.51 RCW including the authority to levy a general tax on property within the District each year not to exceed 15 cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for the purpose of acquiring and operating a pool facility. The Tukwila Pool Metropolitan park District is to be governed by the City Council of the City of Tukwila serving as the board of commissioners in an *ex officio* capacity.

### **The Board of an MPD**

- Elected commissioners
  - Initially selected at formation election
  - Five park commissioners
- An MPD entirely within one city can have a board composed of ex officio members of the “governing body” of the city
- A multijurisdictional MPD board can be composed of *ex officio* members of the city/county legislative authority

### **What can an MPD do?**

- Purchase, acquire and condemn lands
- Regulate and manage:
  - Parks
  - Parkways, boulevards, streets, avenues, aviation landings
  - Playgrounds
- Includes park-related activities
  - boats
  - amusement apparatus
  - bath houses
  - foodstuffs or other merchandise
  - concerts or other entertainment
- Provide for park police, have employees, establish civil service

Note that all parks, boulevards, parkways, aviation landings and playgrounds shall be subject to the police regulations of the city within whose limits they lie.

### **MPD Revenue Sources**

- Operating revenues
- Property taxes
  - Nonvoted (75 cents)
    - 50 cents/\$1,000 of AV
    - An additional 25 cents/\$1,000 of AV
  - Voted
    - capital levies
    - one year (“O&M”) levies
- Special benefit assessments (like an LID)

### **75 cents property tax levy**

- 2012 Assessed Value \$116,796,890,401
- Levy at \$0.75 per \$1,000 of AV
- \$87,597,667

## Limits on Nonvoted Property Taxes

- Constitutional limits
  - 1% aggregate limit (\$10/\$1,000 of AV)
  - Excess levies are exempt
- Statutory limits
  - Rate per thousand
  - \$5.90 aggregate limit on city, county, and junior taxing district levies
  - 101% limitation on dollar amount of tax increase

## How these caps apply to an MPD

- Constitutional limits
  - MPD levy could be reduced if necessary to meet 1% constitutional limit
- Statutory limits
  - Rate per thousand
    - MPD limited to 75 cents/\$1,000 of AV
  - \$5.90 aggregate limit
    - MPD is a junior taxing district
    - Levy can be reduced by prorationing
  - 101% limitation on dollar amount of tax increases
    - After first levy, applies to subsequent MPD levies

## \$5.90 Limit and MPDs

- \$5.90 limit affects junior taxing districts
- If the levies of city, county and junior taxing districts exceed \$5.90 limit
  - prorationing or “cram down”
    - Priority sequence
    - Certain MPDs can protect 25 Cents from prorationing
      - With voter approval

## PRORATIONING SEQUENCE (From DOR Manual)

First: Park & Recreation District Park & Recreation Service Area Cultural Arts Stadium & Convention Dist. City Transportation Authority
Second: Flood Control Zone (may protect up to \$0.25 from prorationing)
Third: Hospital (\$.25) Metropolitan Park (\$.25) (may protect) Cemetery All other junior taxing districts not otherwise mentioned
Fourth: Metropolitan Park (Created on/after 1/1/02) (\$.50)
Fifth: Fire District (\$.50) (may protect up to \$0.25) Fire Protection Service Authority
Sixth: Fire District (.50) Fire Protection Service Authority (\$.50) Library (\$.50) Hospital (\$.50) Metropolitan Park (Created before 1/1/02 – e.g. Tacoma) (\$.50)
Seventh: County Current Expense County Road City

**101% Limitation**

- Like other taxing districts, MPDs subject to 101% limitation
- Exception for first year
- After that, generally speaking, local dollar amount of levy can increase by 1% plus an adjustment for new construction
  - Voters can approve a "levy lid lift"
  - Don't use it, don't lose it ("banked capacity")

**MPD Debt Authority**

- Nonvoted debt
  - LTGO debt
    - ¼ of 1% of AV in the MPD
    - Up to 20 years
  - Revenue bonds
    - payable from MPD operating revenues
- Voted debt
  - 2-1/2% of AV in the MPD
  - 60% supermajority voter approval

**Dissolving an MPD**

- By vote of the board if:
  - Applicable city and/or county agrees to, and petitions for, dissolution and the assumption of MPD assets and liabilities, or
  - 10% percent of voters of such city and/or county petition for such a vote

**MPDs: Two Models**

- Operating entity
  - MPD owns, operates park facilities
- Purely financing entity
  - MPD enters into an interlocal agreement with city

MPD	City
Provides funding source	In return for MPD funding
Requires that funds be applied for park purposes	Agrees to provide park benefits
Consistent with other contractual requirements	Subject to contractual requirements

**MPD as Financing Entity**

- Relationship between City and MPD controlled by interlocal agreement
  - Roles
  - Funding
  - Staffing; shared staff support
  - Ownership of assets
  - Budget process

**MPDs (Per MRSC List)**

- Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District (2004)
- Formerly Bainbridge Island Park & Recreation District
- Des Moines Pool Metropolitan Park District (2009)
- Eastmont Metropolitan Park District (2004)



- Formerly Eastmont Park and Rec Service Area
- Six pools and 19 recreational programs
- Fall City Metropolitan park District (2009)

### More MPDs

- Greater Clark Parks District (2005)
  - In Vancouver unincorporated growth area
- Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (2004)
  - Formerly Key Peninsula Park & Recreation District
- Normandy Park Metropolitan Park District (2009)
- Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (2004)
- Pullman Metropolitan Park District (2003)
- Si View Metropolitan Park District (2003)
- Tacoma Metropolitan park District (1907)
  - Point Defiance Park, Seymour Conservatory, Tacoma Nature Center, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, Northwest Trek, Fort Nisqually, Boathouse and restaurant, Meadow Park Golf Course, many neighborhood parks
- Tukwila Pool Metropolitan Park District (2011)
  - Formed to save the Tukwila Pool
- Village Green Metropolitan Park District (2010)
- William H. Shore Memorial Pool District (2009)
  - Formed to keep pool open

### Commissioners' Questions/Presenters' Responses

- ✦ Responding to a question from Commissioner Maryman on oversight and accountability for an MPD, Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis responded it could be the City Council; City Council and Mayor; or City Council, Mayor, and Board of Park Commissioners. Commissioner Maryman asked whether the MPD structure prohibits special interests taking over the funding. Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis answered the statute reads that the values stated in the MPD cannot be changed.
- ✦ Commissioner Mehdi asked if there is a precedent in Seattle for a permanent Levy Lid Lift; Mr. Hall answered there isn't.
- ✦ Commissioner Kincaid wondered why, if there is a problem with the 1% limitation, the City doesn't change it. Councilmember Bagshaw responded that it has to do with Tim Eyman initiatives. The City cannot change the limitation; however, the State could do so.
- ✦ Commissioner Barber asked if the MPD would result in making the Park Department into two discrete entities — one part under the control of the Mayor, and the other part under the District Board that is to be comprised of the City Councilmembers. The panel answered yes. Commissioner Barber then asked about the implications of the Mayor not having authority over an MPD. Councilmember Bagshaw responded the Mayor isn't comfortable with the authority for an MPD not being in his authority. Mr. Hall stated it is an issue and the authority language must be very clear when an MPD is being set up.
- ✦ Commissioner Keith noted an MPD would have startup costs, as well as some ongoing costs. She asked whether MPD commissioners will be salaried or volunteers. Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis answered that it could be an elected commission and would need some administrative staff. Councilmember Bagshaw added that to pay or not pay an elected commission, or pay per diem, could be part of the discussion. Mr. Hall added that the cost of an election for a levy varies, but is usually several hundred thousand dollars.
- ✦ Commissioner Mehdi observed Seattle has no example of a permanent levy, and no MPD which would require a separate governing body. It doesn't make sense to her to add a new oversight body. She suggested the City instead restructure its tax system and make it progressive, and not regressive. Mr. Hall responded the options would allow Seattle's voters to make the decision on a permanent park funding source.
- ✦ Councilmember Bagshaw noted that an MPD doesn't guarantee the Department will have more funds. If the City budgeted \$120 million in general funds for Seattle Parks Department, and the MPD



generated more funds than anticipated, a City budget person could then take back part of the general fund monies. If that happens, then an MPD would not be a benefit.

- ✦ Commissioner Angulo asked why MPDs are the best source of funding, if they are replicated nationally, and if any have dissolved. Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis responded that MPDs are primarily used in Washington State and aren't replicated nationally. It was noted that Denver instituted an MPD for cultural arts.
- ✦ Commissioner Kincaid observed that an MPD is under State statute and not part of the City code. However, City code cannot supersede or be inconsistent with State law. Acting Superintendent Williams responded it is like a charter that gives the Parks Superintendent certain powers. Councilmember Bagshaw added the City's Law Department will be called on to answer this and other legal questions.
- ✦ Commissioner Wright asked how a funding mechanism would get onto a ballot. Councilmember Bagshaw answered that the options/proposal must be fully vetted with the public and receive City endorsement before going onto a levy ballot. Commissioner Wright asked if outgoing City Council members can include language that "ties" the hands of an incoming council on the levy rate. Mr. Hall responded that the outgoing council may not commit to a certain rate amount over a long time.
- ✦ Commissioner Heahlke asked how the Department and City will demonstrate to voters that Seattle Parks is efficiently run. Councilmember Bagshaw responded that the Strategic Action Plan will do this. It will include language that staff have looked at every contract carefully, demonstrate how it has leveraged resources and developed its partners, and will include both anecdotal and statistical information. Seattle Parks Department lost 10% of its staff in the past three years. Have we risen to the challenge? Are there enough off-leash areas, do parks need better lighting, are Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques being used to keep parks safe? This is all part of the story — that even with those losses, staff have stepped up to the challenge and Seattle still has a well-managed park system.
- ✦ Responding to a question from Commissioner Heahlke on what dollar figure is hoped for from an MPD, Councilmember Bagshaw answered \$0 would be the lowest and \$87 million the highest, but would advocate for anything.
- ✦ Commissioner Barber asked if both capital, and operation & maintenance (O&M), costs would be included. Mr. Hall answered that capital levies do not cover operating costs. The levy language would have to be very clear that, as new facilities come online, they must be sustained. Acting Superintendent Williams noted the 2000 Parks Levy included \$8 million for O&M — and the Department currently has \$200 million in deferred capital maintenance.
- ✦ Commissioner Barber asked what funding source the Mayor prefers. Mr. Hall responded the Mayor prefers a Levy Lift Lid and is focused on providing good levels of service. He wants to hear recommendations. Acting Superintendent Williams added that the Department must determine its core values and priorities and the Mayor and Council want to hear those.
- ✦ Mr. Hall stated the seawall levy is on the November battle; if that doesn't pass, the City will first have to deal with how to fund its replacement.
- ✦ Councilmember Bagshaw stated Parks provide programs and services that provide public safety. The programming at Seattle's downtown parks brings lots of people to the area. She would say to the Mayor, when he says safety comes first, that parks add to the quality of life and really make a difference. Seattle has a better city when it puts dollars into parks. Commissioner Kincaid added that parks' social and health benefits are inherent qualities that are difficult to articulate. The City must provide free and safe park space for its residents.
- ✦ Commissioner Wright asked how the levy funds could be protected so they aren't directed to one area, such as the new waterfront park. Commissioner Bagshaw responded the levy language would call out what would be included in each district of the city.
- ✦ Commissioner Maryman asked about the language voters would read when voting on an MPD. Would they see a list of what projects are funded, details of an oversight committee, etc. Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis responded that the MPD language is simple: "Shall we form....." A levy lists more specific language.
- ✦ Commissioner Maryman asked if MPDs have a time limit. Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis responded that it is perpetual until dissolved. He next asked if there is a premium for borrowing against an MPD for debt service. Mr. Hall answered this could be done, but it isn't advisable. Ms. Crawshaw-Lewis added that a Levy Lid Lift could not be used for debt service.

- ⊕ Commissioner Keith asked how an MPD would affect the Board of Park Commissioners. Acting Superintendent Williams stated that the Board would continue to advise the Department.
- ⊕ Commissioner Keith asked who will craft Parks' story for the public. Councilmember Bagshaw stated that Acting Superintendent Williams will be in charge of this. Discussion continued on Park's story it will share with the public. Councilmember Bagshaw added she would like to double or triple the Neighborhood Matching Fund and Park Levy Opportunity Fund – she wants more funding and opportunities such as these. A part of the story will be “here's what we received and look how we used it.”
- ⊕ Commissioner Angulo observed an MPD is complicated and asked what its story will be so that voters understand and support it with their vote. Councilmember Bagshaw answered that the City must get to the right funding decision and then tell the story. Acting Superintendent Williams added that a citizen oversight group would then work with the Mayor and City Council on the campaign.
- ⊕ Commissioner Wright requested a summary of what the City of Kirkland went through with its MPD (which was later removed.) Acting Superintendent Williams stated the governance between the City Council and Mayor could not be untangled. Commissioner Wright recommended any oversight group look at this issue early.
- ⊕ Commissioner Maryman asked what other funding proposals voters will be asked to vote on in 2014, when Parks' is expected to come before the voters. At this time, there aren't others, however, there are several funding proposals on the 2012 and 2013 ballots.
- ⊕ Commissioner Mehdi worked on the 1998 Library Levy; it was important to gather information early from library patrons, Friends of the Library, and other supporters. Seattle Parks has two major partners, Seattle Park Foundation and Associated Recreation Council. She wants to see the Department form an even better partnership and alignment with them. She noted Seattle Park Foundation favors an MPD and there is momentum there.
- ⊕ Commissioner Barber observed that “a house divided against itself cannot stand” and a department divided in two, as an MPD would do, is not a good idea.
- ⊕ Commissioner Barber believe an eloquent description of an MPD is needed to make it simple for voters to understand. Councilmember Bagshaw reminded commissioners that no determination has been made on a funding source. Commissioner Kincaid sees the current effort as a research stage to determine ways to help the Department's budget. All possibilities are being explored and decisions will be built from that.
- ⊕ Responding to a question from Commissioner Keith on next steps, Acting Superintendent Williams answered the Department will complete the Statement of Legislative Intent and the service levels information is due on December 31. There are 26 funding mechanisms; Parks staff will focus on several, provide exact figures of what Parks' services cost to provide, develop the Department's priorities, and include the findings in the Strategic Action Plan. The first draft of the Strategic Action Plan is due at end of first quarter 2013. There is a great deal of work to be done.

Commissioners thanked all the speakers for attending tonight's meeting to share information and answer questions.

## **Old/New Business**

**Park Board Meeting Time:** Acting Superintendent Williams noted the Park Board met for a number of years from 6:00-8:00 pm and asked if the Board would be agreeable to setting an earlier meeting time, such as 6:00 pm. **After discussion, Commissioner Keith moved to change the meeting time to 6:30-9:00 pm. Commissioner Maryman seconded. The vote was taken and motion carried.** The new time will become effective with the Board's next regular meeting.

**Park Board Committee Reports:** Commissioner Keith and Kincaid noted several Commissioners represent the Board on various boards and committees and have had little time in the past several months to report to the other commissioners. It was suggested that short written reports be sent to the Board's coordinator a week

before each meeting to be compiled into one report and distributed. Commissioners will flag any items they may need to also report on at the meeting.

Park Board Agenda and Role: Commissioner Wright asked that Commissioners and Parks staff review how the Board's agenda is established. Recent meetings have included a great deal of information presented to the Board, with little time left for the Board to discuss or act upon. She gave a recent briefing from Department of Planning and Development's (DPD) Brennan Staley as an example of a meaty topic where the Commissioners heard information and had adequate time to discuss and give feedback to DPD on land use and new uses for park property.

Commissioners need well-written briefing papers at least one week prior to meetings, focused on policies and proposals the Board can weigh in on. Acting Superintendent Williams agreed; the Park Board's role is evolving and he and staff welcome the Commissioner's feedback on how it is working. Commissioner Heahlke would also value clear direction on how the Board can help the Department develop its Strategic Action Plan. Commissioner Maryman suggested Parks staff present a draft of the Plan to the City's Planning Commission for their input. Commissioners will let the chair know if there are particular agenda items they want brought forth. Commissioner Maryman suggested the Board consider establishing sub-committees to work on particular topics.

Commissioner Kincaid suggested the Board have a blog as a further means to engage the public.

Combined Sewer Overflow Report: Commissioner Keith referred to testimony the Board heard at its July 26 meeting re: sewage overflows at Carkeek Park. Acting Superintendent Williams has been in contact with Seattle Public Utilities' Director Ray Hoffman and will send a written report to the Board with findings.

September 13 Retreat: The Board will hold a retreat on Thursday, September 27, 4-8:00 pm at the new Belltown Community Center. Commissioners Heahlke and Maryman volunteered to help determine the agenda.

Zoo Holiday Light Concerns: Following testimony heard during tonight's Oral Communications, Commissioners asked how the Zoo will deal with traffic from its new holiday lights program. Acting Superintendent Williams stated buses will bring people from the east side and visitors will also be encouraged to park in the Zoo's lower parking lots and ride a shuttle to the lighted area. He noted the lights will not be visible from the streets outside the Zoo. Zoo staff are also proposing that offices, now housed in trailers, be moved to make way for additional parking. While the Parks Department owns the land, the Zoo Society is responsible for Zoo operations, including the holiday lights program.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jourdan Keith, Vice-Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_