

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES

June 27, 2002

Present:

Bruce Bentley
James Fearn, Jr.
Kathleen Warren
Susan Golub
Sarah Neilson

Excused:

Kate Pflaumer

Staff:

Patricia McInturff, Parks Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Department of Parks and Recreation Draft Policies:

Dewey Potter, Parks' communications manager, gave an overview of three department policies being developed: corporate sponsorship, gift acceptance, and naming policies. Board members had previously been mailed a draft copy for their review.

Corporate Sponsorship Policy: is a new policy that gives the department a way to enter partnerships with for-profit businesses that, in recognition of financial support and/or goods and services given to Parks, want to be acknowledged. It allows these relationships and keeps Parks at the helm of how it happens. There are four types:

- single event at a single site
- citywide event
- temporary logo or recognition display (more than a week, less than a year)
- long-term sponsorship (naming, display of recognition for more than a year)

Parks reviews each request for appropriateness, and whether it supports the mission and there is value added by the money or goods/services. The Superintendent will decide which proposals warrant review by the Park Board. Agreements are in writing, materials meet design specifications and standards and comply with sign ordinances, and each proposal is reviewed using these criteria:

- compatibility with our mission
- the corporation's past record in community projects
- the desirability of the association

- the readiness of the corporation to enter an agreement
- the actual value in cash or goods/services
- community support or opposition
- operating and maintenance costs
- the corporation's record of environmental stewardship

The policy is specific in excluding from consideration sponsorships by religious and political organizations or by businesses dealing in pornography, alcohol, tobacco or firearms.

Dewey gave the recent naming of the playfield at Lower Woodland Park as an example: Mariner Allstar Field League at Lower Woodland Playfield. Board members asked if this policy would allow corporate names to be posted on the playfield fences. Dewey answered that no billboards would be allowed in the parks.

Parks would not be soliciting these corporate sponsorships; however, it would give staff a policy for accepting the sponsorships, while remaining in control of the project. Any sponsorships of magnitude would be brought to the Park Board for its recommendation.

Gift Acceptance and Donor Recognition Policy: is an update of a 1977 policy that gives Parks written guidance to make decisions about offers of donations of money or goods and to recognize donors appropriately. These are gifts such as sports equipment and donors may be recognized, if they desire.

It encourages public and private gifts that are consistent with the department's mission, that are given with no contingencies other than that they be used for a specific site or program, are appropriate, and need not be replaced if destroyed. It discourages donations that are memorial in nature.

It provides for "recognition objects" that are appropriate, limited to built areas, and are consistent with department design guidelines. It sets up an internal review process, and the Superintendent decides which proposals merit review by the Park Board.

Memorial donations are discouraged, as donors sometimes personalize the area they have memorialized, and forget that it is a public domain. If someone wants to donate a bench, they may do so and have a small plaque on it with just a person's name engraved - it may not read "memorial". The policy wording will be revised to reflect the "no memorial."

Naming Policy: is an update of the 1985 naming committee policy. It provides for the three-member naming committee, for naming newly-acquired or developed or as-yet-unnamed parks and recreation facilities. It is more specific about how nominations are solicited and it reinforces guidance to the naming committee as it recommends park names to the Superintendent:

- approaches the task with caution, patience, and deliberation (this line may be removed from the policy)

- reviews existing names to avoid duplication
- considers geographical location, historical/cultural significance, distinctive features, and wishes of the community
- to name after a person, the person must have been dead for three years (this was previously two years) and have made a significant contribution to parks and recreation
- Parks Superintendent makes the final decision
- in general, there will not be names for portions of parks or facilities, but the committee may consider exceptions
- naming will be completed as quickly as possible because working names tend to take on a life of their own
- a name, once bestowed, is permanent

A draft fourth policy, Public Involvement, will be brought before the Board soon. A public hearing will be scheduled for these policies.

Dewey also announced that Parks has applied for recognition to "Nations in Bloom 2002" and will know in mid-July if it is a finalist. Chair Bruce Bentley thanked Dewey for the report on the policies.

With a quorum present, the agenda consent items were approved, along with the June 27 agenda, minutes of the June 13 meeting, and the acknowledgment of correspondence. **The motion to approve, as corrected, was made by James Fearn, seconded by Kate, and approved unanimously.**

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:

Chair Bruce Bentley reminded the audience the general public comment portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. A number of attendees had signed up to testify regarding Westcrest Park Offleash Area, which had a public hearing on June 13, with oral testimony accepted at that meeting. Written testimony was accepted until noon, June 27. The public hearing process stipulates that no further oral testimony is heard at the Board's discussion/recommendation meeting.

Two people signed up to discuss the Olympic Sculpture Park.

Tom Graff - believes that everyone near this future park supports the proposal, which will be a stunning park with a fabulous design. The park is designed with actual waterfront so park users can touch the beach, which is an important element. Seattle is fortunate to have the Seattle Art Museum supporting this park and the City should now do its part in funding a portion of the development.

Zander Batchelder - Belltown Community Council Chair, believes the new park will be a top attraction to tourists and a gateway to Belltown. Waterfront access in downtown

parks is scarce and this is an important element of the park. He urged Parks to continue its support of this project.

Westcrest Park Offleash Area Discussion/Recommendation:

A public hearing was held at the June 13 meeting. At the June 27 meeting, the Board will discuss the proposal and make its recommendation. Michael Shiosaki and Karen Galt, Park Department project managers, and Nadine Laszlo of Murase Associates were present to answer the Board's questions.

Board member Susan Golub was absent from the June 13 meeting; however, she read the minutes and read the extensive correspondence mailed to the Board from interested citizens. She also visited Westcrest Park the afternoon of this meeting and encountered two dog owners who were very abusive. In the first incident, the un-leashed dog was in the "leashed" area and came running towards Susan and sniffing at her. She asked the owner to leash the dog and the woman called her names and told her to get out of the park. The second owner had two dogs off-leash in the forested area. Both dogs ran towards Susan and when she asked the second woman to leash her dogs, she also told Susan to get out of the park - that it was a dog park. Susan believes human use of the park should be a priority and feels some people have the idea that the park belongs to the dogs. She strongly favors fencing the unleashed area and keeping dogs out of the forested area.

Board member James Fearn shares a concern that dogs do damage to the forested areas and recommends that the off-leash area be retained to a fenced area. If the northeast loop trail could be fenced, he would be in favor of that, but it is too costly. **He moved to approve the plan as recommended by Parks staff. Susan seconded the motion.**

Discussion continued. Board member Sarah Neilson had three suggestions for the Board in response to public comments. The Board should 1) write a letter regarding illicit behavior in Westcrest Park to the appropriate Seattle Police Department unit; 2) alert local community center staff to the problem of kids damaging park trails by building jumping ramps. Community center staff should contact the kids and route them to appropriate jumping sites; and 3) keep in mind the possible future lidding of the Westcrest Park reservoir. It is adjacent to the off-leash area and future use of either site could affect the other.

Sarah agrees with James on the trails. In an ideal world, Parks could afford to fence the trails, but does not have the funds to do this. Bruce recommended clear signage in the off-leash area and that dogs in the family meadow must be leashed.

Using large display board maps of Westcrest, Parks staff pointed out where the fence would be. Bruce asked if people who parked in the north parking lot want to go to the play area, wouldn't they come in contact with dogs off-leash? Karen answered that it would be a long walk through the woods from the north parking lot to get to the play area, or more likely, they would park in the south parking lot to go to the play area. Bruce believes it is important to balance use of the park for all users.

Bruce called for the vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Olympic Sculpture Park:

Chris Rogers, Seattle Art Museum Director of Capital Projects, and Mimi Gates, Seattle Art Museum Director, presented an update on the Sculpture Park and presented an information packet. They thanked both the community for its positive support of this park and the Park Board for receiving their presentation.

Background/Design

Seattle Art Museum's collections are currently housed in two locations: the Seattle Art Museum's main building in the heart of downtown and the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park. The Olympic Sculpture Park will serve as the third venue for the Art Museum and is central to its mission to extend art beyond its walls and make art accessible to all. The Olympic Sculpture Park will be administered by the Seattle Art Museum Board of Trustees and staff and will be open to the public free of charge.

The final concept design for this 8.5-acre, \$60 million sculpture park overlooking Elliott Bay was recently unveiled. Located in Belltown, just north of Seattle's central business district, the park will serve as a major cultural and scenic destination. It is designed to transform Seattle's largest and last undeveloped waterfront property from a former industrial site to vibrant new green spaces for people to experience art outside Seattle Art Museum's walls. Alexander Calder's well-known Eagle, temporarily located in Volunteer Park, was purchased for the sculpture park in 2000. Visitors can dangle their toes in Puget Sound, watch the sun set behind the Olympics, and see the city skyline behind them. 400,000 people visit adjacent Myrtle Edwards Park yearly; Chris and Mimi estimate that the Sculpture Park will draw 300,000 yearly.

Weiss/Manfredi Architects was chosen from a pool of 52 applicants for the design. They have worked in the public realm, creating both memorials and parks. The design was unveiled at Town Hall and supporters have been pleased with public support.

Chris presented a model of the proposed sculpture park, which has a drop of 40 feet from the site's edge at Western Avenue to the shoreline of Puget Sound. The architects have created surfaces that rise above both the streets and train tracks that currently separate the park into three separate parcels. This "invented" landscape will transform the park into a continuous surface for exhibiting sculpture.

Visitors will descend the park through a series of three changing landscapes: a dense evergreen mini forest of fir, cedar, and ferns; a transitional forest with deciduous trees; and a shoreline garden with low-lying pines and a series of aquatic terraces.

Development/Funding

In 1999, the Seattle Art Museum, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, purchased the property. The proposed park borders Broad Street to the south, Bay Street to the north, Western Avenue to the east, and Elliott Bay to the west. The subsequent acquisition of additional property at 10 Broad Street and the inclusion of an undeveloped street right-of-way owned by the city will result in the park adjoining the city's popular Myrtle Edwards Park.

To date, the Seattle Art Museum has secured more than half of the overall \$60-million capital campaign. Land acquisition was \$20 million, with \$17.5 million raised from private donations and \$2.5 million raised from public sources. Development of the park is an additional \$40 million, with \$15 million raised. There is an additional \$25 million needed. Seattle City Council contributed \$150,000 of City funds toward the park's design. Private donors contributed \$17 million in the initial nine months.

Construction is expected to begin in 2003, with a projected opening date of 2004. This is contingent upon final routing and replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The Art Museum is working closely with City of Seattle and State of Washington representatives to coordinate design and construction of both projects concurrently. They are also working closely with King County on the location of the trolley barn. Three of the four proposed Viaduct plans would affect the Sculpture Park design.

James asked if the designers are working with the City's Department of Design, Construction and Land use. Chris answered that they are and a planner has been assigned.

Michael Shiosaki said there is \$3,000,000 in the Pro Parks levy, which could be used for this park. The Thomas Street connection is also competing for these funds. There is also \$900,000 in the Shoreline Park Improvement Fund (SPIF). If the Levy funds and the SPIF funds were combined, there would likely be enough funding to complete the Thomas Street connection with long access ramps, but not include an elevator at Myrtle Edwards Park.

Parking/Transportation to the Park/Amenities/Safety

James asked if any parking sites would be lost due to the park. Chris said that 68 spots would be. The nearby parking has been surveyed and is normally used to 30% of capacity during daytime unless there is a major event going on nearby. A 54-stall parking garage is being built in conjunction with the park. The park will have surveillance cameras and security guards, stationed in the parking garage, will monitor the park.

James believes many people will use their vehicles to come to the park and was concerned with parking. Chris said that a shuttle bus from Seattle Art Museum is being considered. Because of the railroad track crossings making it difficult for buses to keep on schedule, no buses run along Alaskan Way or Western Avenue, however, quite a few run along nearby 1st and 2nd Avenues. Also, lots of joggers/walkers already use the area and many people who live/work downtown will visit the park. 5,000 new units of housing have been built in downtown Seattle in the last four years. Other than Ballard, Downtown

is the most park-deprived area of the city. This new park would add badly-needed Downtown park space.

Burlington Northern railroad's tracks run along the waterfront and Sarah asked about the safety in having pedestrians cross the tracks to get to the shoreline. Chris said Burlington Northern would keep the tracks fenced on both sides. Pedestrians would cross over the tracks to access the shoreline.

Sarah asked about restrooms in Sculpture Park and the possibility of additional restrooms being added to the south end of Myrtle Edwards Park, where these two parks would connect. Seattle Art Museum is discussing additional restrooms in that area with Parks Superintendent Ken Bounds.

Mimi stated that the northwest corner of Sculpture Park would be located only two blocks from the corner of Pacific Science Center and Seattle Center. She said additional uses for the new park are being developed: outdoor movies, outdoor concerts, and a wonderful site to watch firework displays.

Bruce complimented the plan as a jewel for the Emerald City and thanked Mimi and Chris for their presentation.

Superintendent's Report:

Deputy Superintendent McInturff gave the following report:

Athletic Field Lighting: Mayor Nickels' office sent out a news release today with his recommendation. He had made several site visits to ballfields and made only a few changes to the plan recommended to him by the Park Board and Parks Department. The recommendation will next go to City Council for its approval. Patricia has been meeting weekly with Councilmember President Peter Steinbrueck. They have discussed the extensive process that Parks staff and the Park Board used to balance the needs of both athletics and neighbors of lighted fields in its recommendation.

Golden Gardens Beach Fires: Park Superintendent Bounds went to the park on Saturday night and observed approximately two dozen fires. The proliferation of illegal fires has become a real problem, and the Environmental Protection Agency has cited Parks. Parks is working to find a way to allow beach fires, but make them safer. The park will be closed for one week and the beach area will be given a thorough cleaning to eliminate the vast amount of partially burned wood, nails, and other debris from the sand. Twelve fire rings will be installed and wood will be sold from the shelter house to discourage pallets being brought to the beach for burning.

South Lake Union Park: Parks Board Chair Bruce Bentley was part of the selection team that chose Hargraves Associates, which has developed several world-class parks.

Southwest Community Center Skateboard Park: A three-month trial skateboard park has been developed for Southwest Community Center. Parks has been working with both the adults and kids in the community on this project.

Ballard Skateboard Park: is up and running.

Canada Geese: Federal agents are not rounding up geese this week for euthanization. A protestor caused an intentional vehicle accident, which injured one of the agents. The protestor jammed on his brakes, causing the agent to drive into the back of his vehicle and be taken to the hospital. The protestor was arrested and later released.

There are a number of issues with Canada geese - too many geese in the area; a plentiful year-round food source so the geese don't migrate; geese live 15-20 years; the disproportionate number of geese affects the ecosystem and can affect salmon recovery efforts; Eastern Washington no longer wants geese transported to that part of the state; an adult goose excretes three lbs. of fecal matter daily; Parks staff had been cleaning all wading pools and docks daily to remove the excrement; and the Health Department in 1999 determined that the fecal matter washing into swim areas is a health hazard to young swimmers. Beaches in some areas (not the Seattle area) have been closed due to this health hazard.

An alternate to euthanizing the geese is to find the eggs in the nest and addle them. This procedure is difficult for several reasons: the geese attack the addlers; they lay additional eggs after the addled eggs don't hatch; and many nest on private property, but visit the public parks to feed and, subsequently, excrete fecal matter. Private citizens can call federal agents to addle eggs on their property. Agents usually respond within 24 hours.

Due to the various efforts, the number of geese is decreasing, consequently cleanup of docks and wading pools and other damage to parks is decreasing. Parks' staff does not mow the grass short any more because geese like the new, tender grass rather than tougher, mature grass.

60% of the calls protesting the killing of geese are from callers outside the Seattle area. Other cities around the country are following the same program as Seattle. This is part of a regional effort, with the federal government as lead and State, County, and all cities around Lake Washington joining the effort.

Youth Engaged in Service (YES): This summer's YES Program has 117 people confirmed for placement, with 203 applications received. This program is oriented to middle school-age kids and helps get them ready for regular jobs when they are older. Confirmation letters for placement have been sent, as well as letters of regret for those who didn't get placed in the program due to Parks limited financial resources. A few of Parks Community Center Advisory Councils have responded to a request for additional financial support. Their support is extremely valuable in placing additional YES applicants.

Park Board Business

Bruce asked members to sign a letter to Mayor Greg Nickels supporting efforts to lid all reservoirs in Seattle parks.

Patricia said the new Parks Department organizational structure will be in place in July.

Sarah will be absent from the August 8 Board meeting; James will be absent July 25.

New Business/Old Business:

There was a brief discussion regarding Board of Park Commissioners' participation on various Park committees.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair