

Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
August 25, 2005

***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present: Angela Belbeck  
Jack Collins  
Terry Holme  
Debbie Jackson  
Kate Pflaumer, Chair  
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Joanna Grist

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

Ken Bounds, Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. **Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the August 11 minutes as presented, and the August 25 agenda. Commissioner Ranade seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed. Commissioner Holme abstained from voting approval of the minutes, as he was absent from that meeting.**

**Superintendent's Report**

Ken Bounds, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, reported on the following:

Seattle Parks Annual Employee Appreciation Picnic: The Department held its annual employees appreciation picnic today at Magnuson Park, with a good turnout and great weather. The Mayor stopped by, and staff were pleased that Commissioner Collins was able to attend.

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center: Performances of "Uncle Willy's Chocolate Factory" are under way at Langston Hughes, with 70 kids from summer day camp as the actors in this production. Langston Hughes staff members have enjoyed a great deal of positive press over the past several weeks. These summer performances are usually held at the Paramount; however, there was a scheduling conflict this year. Tickets sales have been slow but are expected to increase, with people buying at the door. Cost is \$2 per person.

Local Youth Honored: On Monday, August 15, the City Council honored area youth who participated at the USATF Junior Olympics and the North American Hershey Track and Field Nationals. Miller, Rainier, Rainer Beach, Garfield and Van Asselt Community Centers were recognized.

Asian Pacific Islander Caucus: Twenty of the 200 state legislators participating in the National Asian Pacific Islander Caucus of State Legislators from around the U.S. toured the International District/Chinatown Community Center. They were impressed both with the attendance at the community center and with the community's need for this facility.

Brief Closure of Seattle Aquarium in September: The Aquarium will be closed to the public September 7-16 for demolition of the east end of Pier 59, and will reopen on Saturday, September 17 at 10 a.m.

Chinese Garden Ground Breaking Ceremony: On August 17, staff attended the ground breaking ceremony at South Seattle Community College to help celebrate this new garden. It was a great event to mark the beginning of the construction for Phase I. Representatives of Seattle, King County, and Chongqing, Seattle's sister City in China, as well as Mayor Nickels and private sponsors were in attendance.

The Superintendent clarified for the Board that this new garden is not Seattle Parks' property; it is managed by a non-profit group and South Seattle Community College.

Jefferson Park Golf: The Jefferson Park Driving Range will soon close for the season. Much needed improvements to the netting and target areas will be done this fall, with the range scheduled for re-opening by early 2006. Special promotions will be offered at Interbay for all those driving range visitors who will be displaced for the next couple months.

Emerald City Open Water Swim: 350 people attended the Emerald City Open Water Swim in Lake Washington on Saturday, August 20.

Danskin Triathlon: This annual event, held on Sunday, August 21, drew approximately 5,000 competitors to the Lake Washington Boulevard and Genesee Park area. From a water safety standpoint the combination of lifeguards, kayakers, and "Swim Angels" who provided assistance were a help and support to the weaker swimmers.

Old-Timers Picnic: The 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Old-Timers Picnic was held Tuesday, August 23, at the Woodland Park Zoo and was attended by approximately 1,600 seniors. Mayor Nickels and Deborah Jensen, CEO of the Woodland Park Zoo, welcomed the crowd.

### **Upcoming Events**

- September 11 Beer Sheva Park Dedication Ceremony
- September 17 Cesar Chavez Groundbreaking Ceremony
- September 24 Cal Anderson Groundbreaking Ceremony

### **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. One person signed up to testify.

Steve Milam: He spoke on the Montlake Playfield Project, stating that more park property would be lost to public use with the re-location of the fields than what has been projected. Mr. Milam had been out of town, had just returned, and had not had an earlier opportunity to give this information to the Board.

The Chair reminded Mr. Milam that the Montlake Playfield Project had a public hearing at the Board's July 28 meeting. In the future, he should be aware that the Board does not hear verbal testimony on a project once the public hearing is concluded. This policy is followed so previously unheard information isn't presented to the Board just before it makes its recommendation — without the Board having adequate time to ascertain the information's accuracy.

### **Discussion/Recommendation: Montlake Playfield Project**

At its July 28 meeting, <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/07-28-05.pdf>, the Board heard a briefing on this project from Susanne Friedman, Seattle Parks' project manager, immediately followed by a public hearing. The Commissioners are now asked to discuss the project and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation. After the July 28 meeting, Ms. Friedman sent the Commissioners an

additional briefing paper to answer several questions that arose at the meeting. She asked if the Commissioners had any other questions on the project and then turned the podium over to Susan Golub, Seattle Parks' strategic advisor, who reviewed a decision paper the Board received to assist in its decision process, as follows.

### *Written Decision Paper*

#### **Requested Board Action**

The question before the Board is whether to recommend that the Montlake playfield renovation project be moved forward to project status. The Board received a briefing paper on Montlake before the July 28 public hearing and received a memo with the Board packet for the August 25 meeting with responses to questions raised at the July 28 meeting. This memorandum, based on the analysis previously provided, presents a range of options for the Board to consider.

#### **A. Policy Issue: Should Parks Accept Funds from Seattle Prep for Field Renovation?**

The first question for the Board to consider is whether Parks should accept funds from a private institution for the renovation of a City field. Seattle Prep is pledging to raise the full amount for the renovation, which is estimated at \$2,150,000. No City funds are available for this project. The redevelopment of the Interbay Stadium by Seattle Pacific University is a recent precedent for accepting funds from a private institution for field improvement. The staff recommendation, provided in the July 28 briefing paper, is to accept the Seattle Prep pledge to fund the project.

#### **B. Board Review Process**

If the Board agrees with the concept of accepting private funding for the Montlake renovation, a question before the Board is what points of Board review there should be during the process. Two options are presented for the Board to consider.

1. Project moves forward with Board review after good neighbor agreement has been developed (before permit process begins): Seattle Prep and the Montlake community have begun the process to develop a good neighbor agreement. The agreement will address issues, such as traffic and parking. An option for the Board to consider is to have the agreement process include additional parameters regarding field renovation, such as field layout, and have the Board review the agreement before the permit process begins. Staff recommends that the community/Prep effort to develop project guidelines be limited to two months and that the process be coordinated by Parks staff. At the end of two months the Board would review and make a recommendation on the project guidelines agreed to by the parties and those, if any, where no agreement has been reached.
2. Project moves forward with Board review after Environmental and SEPA process completed: Another point for the Board to weigh in on the project will be after the environmental review process is complete. As outlined in the previous staff paper, there are significant environmental permit issues because parts of the site are located in shoreline and environmentally critical areas. The environmental review process will also include a parking and traffic analysis. The Board could decide to recommend the project proceed to the permit process as currently designed (shown on the map included in the July 28 briefing paper), and come back to the Board for review when that process is complete.

#### **C. Parameters for the Field Renovation**

The Board could include in its recommendation to move the project forward additional recommendations for what the field renovation looks like. This could be what the Board recommends the parties consider as the good neighbor agreement is developed, should the Board recommend Option 1, above; or could be the recommendation to Seattle Prep for the proposal as it moves forward to the permit process (Option 2).

The current proposal moves the football field and track slightly to the west of its current location. The baseball field is moved slightly northwest and becomes a 90 foot diamond with outfield dimensions commensurate with a standard high school baseball field. Regarding the fields at Montlake, Parks' Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program (JAFDP) states: "proposed improvements include moving the field to the west and rebuilding with irrigation,

drainage, turf renovation, track improvements, soccer/multi-use sports field replacements, baseball/softball improvements, tennis court resurfacing.”

1. Recommend the baseball field alignment remain as is: As the Board heard at the public hearing, some in the Montlake community are concerned that the proposal eliminates grassy open space at the park. The concern is over the shift of the football field to the west and the shift of the baseball field to the northwest and its expansion to a 90 foot diamond. The Board could recommend that the field alignment remain as is. This would retain the same amount of grassy open space as currently exists, but would eliminate Prep’s ability to practice and play baseball games on a regulation sized field, and keeps the football field in the wettest area that has experienced the most settling. The staff recommendation is to have the proposal move forward with both fields shifted and the baseball field enlarged.
2. Recommend no lights be added and include a no lights provision in the Seattle Prep/ Parks Memorandum of Agreement: Seattle Prep, Parks and the Montlake neighbors all agree that there should not be lights added to the fields at Montlake. The Board could recommend that the strongest action legally possible be taken to ensure that lights are not added in the future.

### *Board Questions/Answers/& Recommendations*

Following the verbal review of the decision paper by Ms. Golub, the Commissioners began their discussion. Commissioner Jackson asked if there is a cost difference between Option B1 and B2 above. Ms. Golub answered that there would be a time element involved, with additional staff time for Parks and there is the cost of waiting to Seattle Prep due to delaying its fundraising for the project. It was further clarified that Option B2 would move the project forward into the permitting process and would preclude the two-month community involvement process to develop the good neighbor agreement laid out in Option B1.

Commissioners Collins and Pflaumer asked several questions to clarify the two options and whether Option B2 would serve both purposes, by getting agreement while the permitting process is underway. The Superintendent commented that the approach of Option B1 is to try to define the scope of the project; define the issues and where there is agreement of all parties and where there isn’t agreement; and then make the decision as to whether to move forward on the project. Given that the project moves forward, then the particulars of the project would be defined.

Commissioner Jackson commented that Option B2 seems more like a “done deal.” Ms. Golub stated that it is possible to go through the permitting process to find that the fields cannot be moved, due to the environmental review decision.

**Commissioner Collins moved that the project be moved forward to project status, which anticipates acceptance of funds from Seattle Prep for field renovations. Commissioner Holme seconded. The vote was taken with five votes in favor. Motion passed.**

The Commissioners next discussed the Board’s review process, listed above as “B: Board Review Process.” Commissioner Jackson commented that Option B1 gives neighbors the impression they will have more involvement in what the project will look like during the two-month process, and asked what role the neighbors will actually play. Both she and Commissioner Pflaumer asked for clarification on that involvement. The Superintendent stated that after the two months process, Parks staff will come back to Board with clarification of the neighbors’ objectives.

**Commissioner Collins moved to recommend to the Superintendent that the project have a thorough community involvement process, hopefully leading to an agreement between the three parties of interest. Motion was accepted. Commissioner Jackson added a friendly amendment, which was accepted by Commissioner Collins, that the community involvement process should be completed within approximately two months.**

### *Additional Discussion*

There was a brief discussion on the three parties of interest referred to in Commissioner Collins motion — neighbors, Seattle Prep, and Seattle Parks — and whether Parks should be included in the good neighbor agreement. Commissioner

Collins believes that Seattle Parks would facilitate the agreement and Parks' point of view must be represented as it owns the property. After a bit more discussion, the Superintendent commented that Parks would be a convener and an interested party. The good neighbor agreement would be between the neighbors and Seattle Prep. If the project later moves forward and Seattle Parks accepts funds from Seattle Prep for the project, then Parks would go to City Council with legislative action. The subsequent legislative action might embody some of the concerns of the neighbors and Seattle Prep and would then be more than an agreement — it would be legislation.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked, if the project moves forward, whether construction might begin in summer of 2006. Ms. Friedman answered that it could be as much as two years before construction begins. Seattle Prep is in the middle of its capital campaign fund and are anxious to move forward with the fundraising efforts.

**The vote was taken, with 5 in favor. Motion passed.**

Commissioner Holme requested that the accuracy of Mr. Milam's drawings, given during his verbal testimony earlier in the evening, be verified. Ms. Friedman agreed to do so.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Friedman and Ms. Golub.

### **Discussion/Recommendation: Dahl Playfield Skatespot Proposal**

At its August 11 meeting, <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2005/08-11-05.pdf>, the Board heard a briefing from Seattle Parks Neighborhood Matching Fund project manager, Pamela Kliment, on the Dahl Playfield Skatespot Proposal. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. Susan Golub, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, addressed the Board to answer any additional questions. The Board is being asked to make a recommendation to the Superintendent on the proposal.

#### ***Board Discussion/Recommendation***

Ms. Golub reviewed the summary of a community meeting that the Wedgwood Community Council held to facilitate some community agreement on the proposal. A representative of WCC dropped off the results of that meeting earlier this evening and copies were given to the Commissioners for review.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked about measurements and displacements and referred to citizen testimony that 13-15 parking spaces would be displaced by the skate spot. Commissioners had been told by Boarders 4 Parks that only 7 spaces were proposed to be used. Ms. Golub stated that, if the skatespot is approved, the proponents would next do fundraising and then the design process would start, which would clearly define the number of parking sites to be used. The design will be brought back to the Park Board for review. Teresa Sumeral of Boarders 4 Parks asked to clarify that the northern site, if selected, could take approximately 10 parking spaces.

The Chair commented that the Board has received a great deal of correspondence on this issue.

Commissioner Ranade referred to the two sites (one in the north area on what is currently concrete parking spaces and one in the south area near the wetland) that are potentials for a skatespot. He asked if the Skate Park Advisory Council (SPAC) is in favor of Dahl and whether it favored one site over the other. Ms. Golub answered that SPAC is in favor of a skatespot at Dahl, but did not specify a site.

Commissioner Jackson requested clarification on whether the Board is being asked to vote (1) to have a skatespot at Dahl Playfield or (2) being asked to vote on the location. Ms. Golub stated that the Board could choose to recommend the skatespot and also recommend the site. Commissioner Belbeck asked for clarification on whether the skatespot would be a separate project from the renovation project by Friends of Dahl Playground. Ms. Golub stated that the skatespot is a separate project and, as this time, has no funding. Commissioner Collins stated that the location is a critical issue to him.

**Commissioner Ranade moved to recommend to the Superintendent that the skate spot be allowed at the northern site and displace the parking, but not allowed at the southern site. Commissioner Jackson seconded.**

Discussion of the motion: Commissioner Holme stated for the record that, although he missed the August 11 meeting, he listened to the taped version and read the written testimony, which makes him eligible to vote. He commented that the high quantity of e-mails received on this proposal was similar to several issues that have come before the Board; however, he thought the quality on this issue was higher. In the past, the Board has received many e-mails that were copied from another e-mail and forwarded to the Board as testimony. This did not occur on this proposal and each written testimony sent to the Board appeared to be individually written.

Commissioner Holme asked if a skatespot isn't located here, then where? Every neighborhood has concerns about locating a skate facility, but this site is worthy of serious consideration. He also thinks a discussion that must be held is: once a skatespot is built, pressure may mount to expand it into a skatepark. He doesn't believe that Seattle Parks skateboard policy is currently specific enough to address the difference between a skatespot and skatepark.

Commissioner Ranade was concerned with locating the site at the southern boggy area. He believes the northern site addresses concerns that green space not be paved over and avoids the drainage issues at the south site as referred to in citizen testimony. Commissioner Belbeck agreed that this was also a compelling point with her. Commissioner Jackson believes the southern site would impact the wetlands and the design process of Friends of Dahl Playfield, while the northern site would interfere with neither.

**The vote was taken, with 5 votes in favor. Motion passed.**

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Golub.

## **Video Presentation: Outdoor Activities (02)**

Leila Wilke, Seattle Parks Environmental Stewardship Manager, next presented an 8-minute video on the Outdoor Opportunities (O<sub>2</sub>) program, an outdoor expedition level program designed to expose multi-ethnic teens to environmental education, urban conservation, and stewardship, while creating an environment for community leadership and empowerment. O<sub>2</sub> is headquartered at two Seattle Parks: Golden Gardens, with Matt Axling as Program Coordinator, and Seward Park, with Bob Warner as Program Coordinator. Mr. Warner assisted Ms. Wilke in answering several of the Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Jackson asked how many employees staff this program. Mr. Warner answered that he and Mr. Axling are the two staff; both have approximately 100 kids in their program trained as junior naturalists. These kids, in turn, help train approximately 1,000 additional kids in the community center's service projects. The Superintendent commented that the two Coordinators do a great job.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked how kids sign up for this program. Ms. Wilke answered that the kids, who must be between 14-19 years old, may sign up through school or on the web at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Teens/O2/default.htm>. Mr. Warner commented that this program makes the outdoors fun for kids who might not otherwise have those opportunities. Commissioner Holme asked if there are waiting lists for the program and Mr. Warner answered yes, that there are sometimes waiting lists. Kids are recruited each fall at the community centers and schools.

Commissioner Holme asked how the Pro Parks Levy is involved in this program. Ms. Wilke explained that the program does get some grants and partnership funds. However, the program expansion from the Seward Park site to include Golden Gardens depended on the Pro Parks Levy for funding. The Golden Gardens expansion is a pilot program and has been very successful. Commissioner Holme asked what is planned for the program once the Pro Parks Levy ends in 2008. The Superintendent answered that the Department is working to determine funding.

Commissioner Collins commented that the Board usually learns about Parks projects; he believes seeing the video was a good opportunity to see the fun side of parks. He thinks the video is classy and could be used for fundraising efforts. Ms. Wilke commented that the video was shown on the Seattle Channel for several weeks.

The Board thanked Ms. Wilke and Mr. Warner for the presentation.

### **Board of Park Commissioners' Business**

- None

### **New/Old Business**

- Seafair & Other Recent Park Events: Commissioners Holmes referred to the recent Seafair activities a couple blocks north of Stan Sayres Pit, particularly in the two staging areas where the concessionaires set up the bleachers and beer gardens. He had two complaints: (1) the fence company leaves galvanized cut wire behind. In a recent one-mile walk along the area, he picked up 50 or so pieces of wire, with most 5-6" in length. He also noted a 2" protruding fence post that had been sheared off and left behind. These metal items are mowing issues. (2) The excavated "benches" for screws jacks were left behind and need to be regarded.

The Superintendent commented that Seattle Parks' crews do a post-Seafair inspection and Seafair is then charged for any cleanup. Commissioner Pflaumer asked if Seafair shouldn't also pay for cleaning up the large amounts of debris thrown into Lake Washington during Seafair events. Commissioner Jackson commented that at the recent Danskin Triathlon, the fence was set up and taken down on the same day — Seafair should consider using that fence company for its events. She complimented Seattle Parks' crews for their efficient next-day cleanup after the Danskin event.

- The Superintendent gave each Commissioner a tee-shirt to commemorate the employee recognition picnic.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kate Pflaumer, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_