

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>  
Meeting Minutes  
August 24, 2006

***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present:

Angela Belbeck  
Jack Collins  
Terry Holme, Acting Chair  
Debbie Jackson  
Jackie Ramels  
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Kate Pflaumer, Chair

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

B.J. Brooks, Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commissioner Holme called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Belbeck moved and Commissioner Ranade seconded approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the August 14 agenda, and the July 27 minutes, as corrected.**

**Superintendent's Report**

Deputy Superintendent Brooks reported on the following items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>. Superintendent Bounds will return to the office on Monday, August 21. Deputy Superintendent gave kudos to Parks staff who have done a great job during the Superintendent's absence.

Occidental Park: The construction fences came down at Occidental Park on Friday, August 18. A grand re-opening is set for 5:00 pm, on Thursday, September 7. Weekly lunchtime concerts will be scheduled for Wednesday or Thursday, August through September. The park looks fabulous. For more information on this project and the grand opening, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/pioneersquare.htm>.

Commissioners asked the Deputy Superintendent about visitors to the park since the fence was removed. She answered that the number of park visitors during lunch time is good, that people are once again playing bocce, and more seem to be crossing through the park to visit the bakery. The trailers will soon be removed, which should increase pedestrian traffic. Some personal safety concerns remain. The park will be open for the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday art walk. Pioneer Square Community Council is very active in this project.

Freeway Park: In addition to the weekly concerts happening in Freeway Park from mid-July through the end of August, last week also included the second of the "Intergenerational Days" designed to bring together seniors with

the local day care centers. Parks staff are working with the Downtown Seattle Association on this. For more information on Freeway Park and this project, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/FreewayPark.htm>.

South Lake Union Park: The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) issued the long-awaited shoreline permits for South Lake Union Park on August 24. Bid opening is now scheduled for September 6. There is still an issue regarding the Shoreline Conditional Use permit for the bridge. Parks' staff are working with DPD to resolve this in the near future. For more information on South Lake Union Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/southlakeunionpark.htm>.

Citywide Skatepark Plan: Parks staff will schedule a briefing with the Mayor's senior staff before proceeding with our next round of public meetings on potential sites for future skatepark development. These meetings are planned for late September and early October.

City Council's PELL Meeting: Parks figured prominently on the August 16 agenda of the Council's Parks, Education, Libraries and Labor Committee (PELL). Agenda items included briefings on the proposal to move the Museum of History and Industry to South Lake Union Park, golf finances and plans, Pier 62-63 Central Waterfront Draft EIS, and International District parks.

Aquarium/Pier 59 Project: On August 16, the City Council's Finance and Budget Committee approved a funding proposal presented by Parks and the Seattle Aquarium Society; if and when the Full Council approves, the shell and core completion follow-on project will begin. For more information on this project, see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/about/pna/index.html>.

Concrete Workers Strike Impacts Parks Projects: Starting this week, the following park construction projects have been shut down by the concrete workers strike: Laurelhurst Community Center, Montlake Community Center, Van Asselt Community Center, Aquarium exhibit, West Seattle Stadium, Delridge parks project, Occidental (soft opening is today, but work can't be fully completed), Ella Bailey Park, Kubota Garden crew quarters, Mt Baker Rowing and Sailing Center, and Columbia Park.

Public Involvement Policy: The Assistant City Auditor, Claudia Gross Shader, is in the final stages of Phase I of the public involvement audit and anticipates a public hearing at Council's PELL Committee on the evening of September 27. During Phase I, Ms. Shader performed a documentation review for Dakota Place, Van Asselt, and Homer Harris. During Phase II, she will perform a case study review of the Loyal Heights Playfield project. For more information on the public involvement policy, see [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/public\\_involvement\\_policy.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/public_involvement_policy.htm). For more information on PELL Committee agendas, see <http://www.seattle.gov/leg/parks.htm>. For purposes of this audit, Ms. Gross Shader may be contacted at [parksaudit@seattle.gov](mailto:parksaudit@seattle.gov).

Gold Rating for Yesler CC: Yesler Community Center just received the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) Gold rating. This is the second gold-rated building for the Parks department, with the first at Carkeek Park. For more information on Yesler Community Center, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Centers/yeslercc.htm>. For more information on the LEED rating, see <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19>.

Masters National Rowing Championships: Green Lake was recently the site for four days of top level rowing. More than 1,400 older athletes competed, representing 109 rowing teams from across the U.S. and three other countries. For more information on rowing at Green Lake, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Boats/Grnlake.htm>. For more information on the Masters National Rowing Championship, see [http://www.usrowing.org/Events\\_Regattas/MastersNationalChampionships/index.aspx](http://www.usrowing.org/Events_Regattas/MastersNationalChampionships/index.aspx).

Langston Hughes Receives Funding Support: The Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center received an award of \$10,000 from Nesholm Foundation to support the popular Teen Summer Musical program. A past supporter,

Nesholm Foundation has been providing significant support to the Center since 2003. For more information on Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Centers/langston.htm>.

Carleton Park Benches: Deputy Superintendent Brooks, Project & Development Director Erin Devoto, and Operations Director Christopher Williams visited this site, located in Magnolia. The Board recently heard testimony opposing the re-installation of the benches as a safety hazard. This is a very small park and has a view. Seattle Department of Transportation has no records of traffic or complaints from this park. Community members who oppose the benches will contact the City's Risk Management staff in an effort to stop the re-installation.

## **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 testified. A brief summary of their testimony follows.

Claudia Gross Shader: Ms. Gross Shader introduced herself as the Assistant City Auditor currently auditing Seattle Parks' Public Involvement Policy and gave a brief review of the audit, which will be in three phases. There have been 849 responses to the on-line survey with lots of positive comments.

Commissioner Collins asked if Ms. Gross Shader is here for tonight's discussion on the public involvement policy and she answered yes. She has already met with the Park Board Chair who suggested she introduce herself this way. She commented that it is premature for her to comment on the Board's discussion which will be held later in this meeting.

## **Briefing: 2006 Gap Report Update: An Assessment of Gaps in Seattle's Open Space Network**

Kate Keahny, Seattle Parks Planner, and Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks Manager of Major Projects and Planning, presented a briefing on the Gap Report. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

This briefing is for informational purposes. The goal of the briefing is to familiarize Commissioners with the content of the 2006 Open Space Gap Report Update.

#### **Project Description and Background**

The 2006 Open Space Gap Report Update revises the 2001 Open Space Gap Report which identified deficiencies in Seattle's open space network.

#### ***Report Goals***

The updated report has two goals. The first objective is to highlight the progress made in filling gaps in open space since the original Gap Report was produced in 2001. A second purpose is to identify gaps that remain in urban villages and single family areas across the city based on open space goals in the City's Comprehensive Plan and Seattle's Parks and Recreation 2006 Development Plan.

#### ***Report Content***

The Gap Report Update presents the City's open space goals and definitions and utilizes maps and demographic data to analyze whether open space goals are being met.

The report includes a series of maps that present Seattle's open space network including the over fifty new acres of Usable Open Space acquired and developed through Pro Parks and other funding sources since 2001. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, the maps also show specifically where gaps in open space exist.

For the first time, the Gap Report also includes demographic data that addresses whether the City is meeting urban village population-based open space goals.

Additionally, the report summarizes open space gaps in each sector of the city and considers the location of the most significant remaining gaps. The report's appendices include various open space-related information, including a list of acquisitions by sector and an inventory of parks that serve urban villages. The appendices also include tables that identify whether Urban Village open space goals are being met.

### ***Report Conclusions***

Highlights of the report's conclusions include findings suggesting that:

- 16 urban villages have open space gaps in over half their total land area
- Eight urban villages do not meet the City Comprehensive Plan's open space and housing goals
- Urban villages facing some of the most significant gaps in Usable Open Space include the Belltown, Denny Triangle, First Hill, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and University urban center villages.

### **Additional Information**

This 2006 Gap Report Update will be used as background for a Strategic Business Plan to be prepared in 2007.

#### ***Verbal Briefing***

Mr. Stoops gave a brief overview and history of the report. In 2001, Seattle Parks determined it should look at how it was meeting its goals for open space and prepared the first Gap analysis. Ms. Keahny was hired to do the report, on a temporary basis. She was hired, again on a temporary basis, to prepare this report and August 25 is her last day with the Department.

Ms. Keahny pointed to seven maps that were displayed for the Board/s review. She stated that the two goals of the 2006 Gap update are (1) determine what progress has been made in filling the current gaps, and (2) what remaining gaps exist. To help make this determination she reviewed the amount of breathing room open space (the goal is one acre for every 1,000 people), and (2) usable open space. She next gave detailed information on how to read the seven maps.

She pointed out the areas where progress has been made. Eighteen Pro Parks Levy projects have been completed since 2001, with a net gain of 80 acres of open space. More projects are pending, which will add more open space. She next described the remaining gaps and pointed out their locations. There are three major gaps in single-family neighborhoods: Wedgwood, Whittier, and Beach Drive in West Seattle.

She next pointed to the largest of the 38 Urban Villages, stating that all have gaps. In addition, eight urban center villages are not meeting goals, especially in the Belltown area.

#### ***Board Questions & Answers***

Commissioner Ramels commented that the coloring is difficult to understand and suggested that the gaps be highlighted with a different color. She commented that the Gap report is a wonderful way to analyze the current open space situation. She asked if the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) is making use of this information for planning purposes. Mr. Stoops answered that the Gap Report is one tool to use and there is a citywide group of Departments working on this analysis. The greatest challenge is to provide open space in dense areas.

Commissioner Collins asked if there is a way to incorporate the demographics while also showing the geographic needs. Once the demographics were included, it would be more evident whether Wedgwood and Belltown deserved as much open space as other areas. Ms. Keahny commented that the census is another tool to use. Mr. Stoops agreed that the Gap Report is not multi-dimensional and doesn't include topography, park quality, or who lives nearby.

Commissioner Collins asked why the Burke Gilman Trail was excluded as open space and wondered if it were included if that wouldn't reduce the gap in the Wedgwood neighborhood. Mr. Stoops answered that staff first included it in the open space, and then removed it as it is mostly a trail without picnic areas, benches, etc.

Commissioner Ramels asked if the University and Ravenna areas show a gap because the University of Washington campus cannot be included. Mr. Stoops agreed and said that the University has future building plans for much of its current open space. He stated that staff also looked at open space that is not Parks property, such as Hiram Chittenden Locks' gardens, shoreline access, etc.

Commissioner Collins remarked that the Olmsted Brothers goal was to have a park within ½ mile of every citizen and Seattle Parks did it! There appear to be few gaps and many large areas are well covered.

Commissioner Holme asked how accessible this report is to the public and suggested staff do additional effort to distribute it, especially to the downtown library and branch libraries. He believes it is fascinating information and is a driving force of the Pro Parks Levy. Ms. Keahny stated that the report is online and has been sent to the Department of Planning and Development.

Commissioner Holme stated that the acquisitions are eagerly awaited by the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee and commented that the Gap Report is quite impressive. He requested that Donald Harris, Seattle Parks Property & Acquisition Services Manager, brief the Board and the Levy Oversight Committee soon on the acquisitions the Department has made.

The Board thanked Ms. Keahny and Mr. Stoops for the briefing.

### **Briefing/Discussion/Recommendation: Seattle Parks' Public Involvement Policy**

Dewey Potter, Seattle Parks' Communication Manager, gave an update briefing on the policy. The Board heard a briefing, followed by a public hearing at its May 11 meeting, and held a discussion at its May 25 meeting. To view minutes of those two meetings, please see: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2006/05-11-06.pdf> and <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2006/05-25-06.pdf>. The Board has continued to accept written testimony since May 11.

#### ***Written Briefing***

Prior to this meeting, the Board received three items for consideration: (1) the current policy with redlined proposed changes; (2) internal Parks questions to ask in determining the scope of a public process; and (3) a draft letter to the Mayor. To view these lengthy documents online, see: [http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/public\\_involvement\\_policy.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/public_involvement_policy.htm).

#### ***Verbal Briefing***

Ms. Potter introduced herself and gave an overview of the current public involvement policy. She thanked Commissioners Pflaumer and Ramels for their review of both the policy and testimony received about the policy, and for their ideas for improvement. The Department has tried to respond to almost all the suggestions from the public hearing and testimony.

Ms. Potter next reviewed the proposed changes in the policy. The Board received a version of the policy with proposed changes highlighted in red. Ms. Potter stated that a policy statement would be included for the various projects. She gave the search for an off-leash area in the Magnolia/Queen Anne area as an example. Department staff didn't take a list of proposed sites to the public, but rather asked the public for suggestions. The list of suggested sites has now been compiled and the Superintendent will narrow the list to three sites sometime within the next week. Going to the public and asking them to suggest the particular site is not always possible on a project, due to restrictions. The policy statement will help the public better understand when and what type of suggestions can be utilized in the projects. The planning process for projects is lengthy and it is sometimes difficult to get people involved at the onset. There can be a lengthy time span from the planning stage of a project to the time it becomes

visible to the neighborhood. Sometimes, the community members who helped in the planning stage have moved away by the time it becomes a project. Parks staff will now review the planning process with the community at the very beginning of a project.

### ***Board Discussion and Recommendation***

Commissioner Ramels noted that there are different types of public involvement. Sometimes it is merely an announcement, sometimes it is seeking input into a planned project, sometimes it is seeking comment on a completed project, and sometimes it is seeking comment on a change of use. She suggested that a paragraph be added differentiating the different types of public involvement, and also specifying what Parks intends to do with the collected information. Then the public can be clear about what is being solicited, and what effect their comments might have. Ms. Potter agreed. Commissioner Ranade said he is very pleased with the changes to the policy and believes it addresses concerns that the Board has been hearing over the past year. Commissioner Belbeck asked how telephone comments are recorded and circulated. Ms. Potter answered that this will be included in the policy for the project's public meetings. It was clarified that telephone testimony cannot be accepted for Park Board public hearings.

Commissioner Collins stated that the policy is already a very good public involvement policy, which other cities want to emulate. These changes are a layer of icing to an already excellent policy. He commented that the work done by Commissioners Pflaumer and Ramels is excellent and he is prepared to vote on the new proposed policy tonight. He hopes that City Council realizes this is a first-class policy operation. Commissioner Ramels said that she echoes these sentiments. She has attended three National Recreation and Parks Association conventions and has learned there that Seattle Parks is a beacon of public involvement policy for many other cities. Seattle citizens have a high expectation of public involvement.

Commissioner Holme referenced specific areas of the policy and made suggestions on page 7 “regarding user groups within the last three years.” On page 9, where the policy refers to how many attended, excluding staff, he suggested that the policy be changed so that project managers explain that the Department made a conscious decision to limit the number of staff at the meetings — as was requested in public testimony at the Board's public hearing.

**Commissioner Ranade moved that the Superintendent adopt the proposed amendments to the Public Involvement Policy, including the additional changes suggested in tonight's meeting. Commissioner Ramels seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous in favor. Motion carried.**

The third document the Commissioners received was the draft letter to the Mayor. Ms. Potter reviewed the letter and Commissioners made several suggestions that Ms. Potter agreed to add. **Commissioner Collins moved that the Board authorize the Chair to execute the letter as amended with the support of the entire Board. Motion was seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous in favor.**

Commissioner Holme asked Ms. Gross Shader how the public can best access her on the audit and she provided a separate e-mail address of [parksaudit@seattle.gov](mailto:parksaudit@seattle.gov). Commissioner Holme asked how comments received after the survey's completion will be handled. Ms. Gross Shader answered that on September 27, during City Council's public meeting on the Department's public involvement, that the e-mail address will be available so that the public can e-mail comments live, as well as phone in their comments to Council.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Potter for the briefing.

### **Briefing: National Recreation & Parks Association National Conference to be Held in Seattle**

#### ***Verbal Briefing***

Deputy Superintendent B.J. Brooks, who is co-chairing the conference, presented a Powerpoint presentation on the upcoming National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Conference to be held in Seattle October 10-14, 2006. Commissioners also received registration forms and other information. 12,000 people are expected to attend the conference, with a financial benefit to Seattle of upwards to \$10 million. 200 programs and sessions are planned,

with a welcome party being held at Freeway Park. Seattle Parks is excited to host this event. The Commissioners are all members of the NRPA and will be attending portions of the conference.

**Old Business/New Business**

New Committee: Commissioner Belbeck volunteered to serve as the Board’s representative to the Discovery Park Oversight Committee and the Board agreed to this new committee assignment.

SR520 Environmental Impact Statement: The Coordinator had received two copies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and these were given to Commissioners Collins and Belbeck to review. WSDOT will be contacted to provide additional copies for other Board members. The University of Washington has asked WSDOT for an extension from the October 2 comment deadline. The Board agreed to write a letter supporting this request. Commissioner Collins asked that the Board add an agenda item within the next month to take a formal stand on the DEIS or a position on the alternatives.

Great Partnership: Commissioner Ramels complimented Parks staff on the great partnership in working with Alki Elementary School in West Seattle.

Park Board Positions: Three Board members have first term expirations of 12/31/06: Belbeck, Collins, and Jackson. All three have agreed to submit their names to the Mayor for consideration for re-appointment. The Coordinator will work with the Mayor’s staff person on this.

Duwamish Story Pole: Deputy Superintendent Brooks announced that the artist recently finished the Duwamish Story Pole and a great number of citizens turned out to celebrate. Commissioner Ramels was at the celebration.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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

DATE \_\_\_\_\_