

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
November 26, 2007

Committee Members Present: Doug Dunham, Chair, Cindi Barker, Lisa Chun, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Cheryl Klinker, Joyce Moty, Alec Stephens

Staff: Bill Blair, Colleen Browne, Tim Gallagher, Susan Golub, Donald Harris, Kevin Stoops

Committee Business: The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes from the October 22, 2007 meeting.

Public Comment: There was none.

Acquisition Report: Donald Harris, Parks Acquisition Manager, provided an overview of the Levy Acquisition Program. The program has been 98% successful; Mr. Harris thanked employee Lise Ward and former employee Catherine Anstett for their excellent work in helping Parks achieve this success rate.

The Levy has three project categories:

1. **Neighborhood Parks:** \$16 million was allocated in the Levy for 18 projects. The last remaining acquisition in this category is First Hill.
2. **Green Spaces:** \$10 million was allocated. Significantly more was spent due to leveraging, and 42 acres have been purchased. One additional project is underway: the Soundway project which involves the transfer to Parks from the Seattle Department of Transportation of 31 acres.
3. **Opportunity Fund:** \$5.77 million was allocated to acquire 14 sites.

Leveraging has been a significant factor throughout the Acquisition Program: \$24 million has been added through grants and private donations; for every dollar of Levy funds, an additional seventy-six cents has been raised.

Neighborhood Parks Category

Acquisition highlights in the Neighborhood Parks category include:

- **East Capitol Hill:** 17, 145 square feet was purchased at 16th and Howell; there is a debate in the community between open space and community garden (p-patch) for this site;
- **Linden Orchard:** property was purchased at 67th and Linden and will be developed as a community garden and play area;
- **Northgate Park:** the project includes a library, community center and open space. In 2002 the City paid \$3.24 million for the 1.67 acres of property – the current appraisal is between \$9 and \$13 million.

- Homer Harris Park: the property was acquired in 2002; a \$1.3 million anonymous donation allowed Parks to purchase the 2 adjoining lots;
- 6th Avenue NW Pocket Park: Parks purchased the City Light substation and the lot next door;
- York Park: also a substation purchase;
- Albert Davis Park: in Lake City, also a transfer between City departments;
- Counterbalance Park: former gas station with a permit to build a condominium; the project will go to bid soon and construction should start soon after;
- Smith Cove: former Navy property; the upper area has been developed as Ursula Judkins Overlook, the lower area is a sports meadow; citizens are interested in getting additional Port of Seattle property in the lower area in order to make a bigger park;
- Dakota Substation: this project includes a historic building which the Hiawatha community group will program; development is underway;
- Delridge Open Space: property along Puget and Longfellow Creeks has been preserved, mostly for natural areas;
- Thornton Creek: 3.86 acres have been preserved in 4 locations; grants from the King County Conservation Futures Program leveraged Levy funds and enabled acquisition of more property than we had anticipated. Seattle Public Utilities is planning to removed Thornton Creek riprap which will allow the Creek to more naturally meander;
- Morgan Junction: purchase of a site formerly designated for a monorail station;
- Ballard Park: two lots were combined – one was an Opportunity Fund purchase, the other was in lieu of the Monroe Substation site;
- West Capitol Hill: a parking lot was purchased near the Starbucks on Olive Way, in lieu of the Bellevue Substation site.

The First Hill project is the only unfinished one in the Neighborhood Park category. Parks is in negotiations with property owners for a site at 8th and Madison. And there is one project that we were unable to complete. The Sylvan Way property in West Seattle was developed into housing by an owner who refused to sell to Parks.

Green Spaces Category

Acquisition highlights in the Green Spaces category include:

- St. Marks Greenbelt: property was purchased adjacent to the Blaine St. stairs, thanks to help from the Trust for Public land for this purchase;
- Northeast Queen Anne Greenbelt: .27 acres were bought in 2007 adjacent to MacLean Park.; Parks purchased a house that was an in-holding within the Parks; we are now able to close the road that went to this house, demolish the house and open up trails for neighborhood use;
- Westlake Greenbelt: .06 acres purchased in 2007, includes the last house in-holding in the Greenbelt (the house will be demolished);
- Harrison Ridge Greenbelt: .19 acres bought in 2007; includes house in-holding (the house is in good condition and will be moved);
- Leschi Natural Area: .17 acres acquired in 2001;

- West Duwamish Greenbelt: 9.97 acres acquired in 2001;
- Me-Kwa-Mooks: 2.14 acres preserved in 2003;
- Wolf Creek Ravine: .13 acres donated in 2004;
- Kiwanis Ravine: .48 acres acquired in 2005;
- Duwamish Head Greenbelt: .40 acres acquired in 2005;
- East Duwamish Greenbelt: 1.38 acres purchased in 2006 and 2006;
- Kubota Gardens Natural Area: purchased landscape area adjacent to garden which provides a buffer between the garden and the arterial; there is one building in the area – a decision has not yet been made whether it will be moved or demolished;
- Thornton Creek: 1 acre acquired in 2006.

Additional properties in the Green Spaces category are being pursued, including:

- The transfer of 40 plus acres on Soundway property from another City agency to Parks;
- Longfellow Creek acquisition; and
- Two properties in the Duwamish Head Greenbelt, one that is a jurisdictional transfer and one that is a potential donation.

Opportunity Fund

The first cycle of the Opportunity Fund provided \$5 million for acquisition of 12 sites. The second cycle provided \$770,000 for acquisition, and targeted two additional sites.

Eleven sites have been acquired or are in closing:

- International District: a 2007 purchase of a post office site at 6th Avenue S and S King Street will provide for the expansion of Hing Hay Park;
- 12th Avenue: a no-cost jurisdictional transfer was approved in 2007 for a site at 564 – 12th Avenue;
- Fremont Peak Park: opened in 2007, after the Opportunity Fund provided money for both the acquisition and development of this new park;
- Mount Baker Ridge: acquired in 2003 with development beginning in 2008;
- Ballard: Two properties were purchased; the community is raising additional funds for development;
- Maple Leaf Community Garden: property acquired and developed with Opportunity Fund money;
- Greenwood Park Additions: two properties were purchased to expand Greenwood Park;
- Pinehurst Pocket Park: opened in 2007, with the Opportunity Fund providing money to acquire and develop the property;
- Junction Plaza: the Opportunity Fund provided money for property acquisition and \$200,000 for development; the community is raising additional funds. Development will begin in 2008;
- Ercolini Park: The Opportunity Fund provided money towards property acquisition and development; construction is underway and should be completed by the first quarter of 2008;

- International District Community Center Weight Room: the Opportunity Fund allowed for the purchase of additional space for the International District Community Center; the space has been developed into a weight room.

Remaining Opportunity Fund projects include:

- Gateway North: land remediation work being done before property is transferred from City Light to Parks;
- University District: property being purchased is Seattle School District property – the south lot at University Heights School; additional funding required for acquisition;
- Denny Triangle: Parks is in negotiations with Cornish School and a private developer to buy a site.

A Committee member asked when the First Hill site would be acquired. Mr. Harris responded that staff is working on this project now, but that we have not yet received a response from the property owner. Several Committee members complimented Mr. Harris on the presentation and encouraged it to be shown to wider audiences, including the City Council.

Financial Overview of Pro Parks Development Program

Korie Voorheis, Parks Capital Investment Program Manager, presented the Committee with a snapshot of the financial status of the Levy Development Program. The original Levy budget included \$102,826 for 95 projects. 66 projects have been completed and 24 are underway, plus there are 5 Seattle Department of Transportation projects underway.

An inflation allowance was included in two categories: Neighborhood Park Development and Playfields and Facilities. Some of the allocated inflation allowance was designated to each project in the category and some was set aside for a contingency fund. (Although no inflation allowance was given to projects that started in the first two years of the Levy.) There is \$656,000 remaining in the Neighborhood Park contingency. All of the Playfield and Facility inflation allowance has been allocated to projects within that category and no funds remain. Responding to a question from Mr. Dunham, Ms. Voorheis stated that inflation allocations must remain within the project category where the funds were originally designated.

Ms. Barker asked how many projects have required additional funding beyond the inflation allowance. Ms. Voorheis responded that, while she does not have the exact count, she is certain that the number is less than ten, and each allocation has been reviewed by the Committee. Mr. Stephens asked whether the current tough bid environment will result in more contingency requirements for projects, and if so, is there enough in the fund balance. Colleen Browne, the Pro Parks Levy Development Manager, responded that the recent market downturn has helped slow the bid climate. Bids for the last two projects have come in close to estimates and with multiple bidders. As we continue to complete more projects, we will review the contingency balance with the Committee. Mr. Dunham asked whether allocated inflation and contingency funds must

remain within the Levy category to which they are originally allocated, and Ms. Voorheis replied yes, that this is a requirement of the Levy.

Orphan Park Wish Fund

Colleen Browne, the Pro Parks Levy Development Manager, briefed the Committee on the Orphan Park Wish Fund.

Ms. Browne identified three Pro Parks projects needing more money. The first is the Jefferson Park Master Plan, where significant elements of the Master Plan are not included in the current project budget. Elements eliminated are a basketball court and a skatepark, and there will be less pedestrian lighting than in the plan and the pathways will not be completed.

The second incomplete project is Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. This project has been finished, but elements of the project Master Plan were not done, including work on the upper edge of the Park that would include a picnic area, pathways and accessible parking.

The third project is Meadowbrook Playfield, where improvements were completed on the softball fields, but no work was done on the baseball diamonds, as was contemplated when the project was included in the Levy. Mr. Harper asked why Parks or the community did not come to the Oversight Committee and ask for more money to finish the baseball field development. Ms. Browne noted that the project was completed early in the Levy schedule, when it was too early in the program to allocate additional funding to a project.

Responding to a question from Ms. Barker, Ms. Browne noted that many projects do not have desired landscaping or elements such as benches or picnic tables. The three projects Ms. Browne spoke of are those where significant elements were not able to be funded.

Kevin Stoops, Manager of Parks' Planning and Development Division, reported that the Orphan Park Wish Fund amount is \$4.9 million. At the October Oversight Committee meeting Parks reported the Fund had \$7 million; however, the City Council spent \$2 million of the Fund in the 2008 budget, leaving \$4.9 million for the Committee's allocation process.

Superintendent Gallagher noted that the money will be available as of January 1, 2008. The Oversight Committee will be responsible for establishing criteria for allocating the funds – the money is from the General Fund is not restricted by language in the Levy Ordinance. At the October meeting the Oversight Committee indicated interest in limiting the funds to Pro Parks projects.

Mr. Stephens suggested the Committee develop and advocate for a process that addresses the Committee's interests. He stated the Committee would need to develop rationale for the criteria it adopts. Ms. Moty asked whether the Mayor or City Council allocated any funding to Pro Parks projects in the 2008 budget. Mr. Stoops responded that the budget

includes \$200,000 for Mt. Baker Viewpoint, in response to the high bids that were received for that project.

Mr. Dunham reviewed the Committee's options for proceeding:

1. The Committee could agree to spend the funding on Pro Parks projects needing additional funds;
2. Hold a classic, open opportunity fund process; or
3. A combination of allocating to existing projects needing money and open requests.

Whatever process is selected, Mr. Dunham stated it will be transparent and open to the public.

Mr. Harper asked whether demographic issues, such as might have an impact on a neighborhood's ability to raise money, come into play regarding the completion of the Jefferson Park and Martin Luther King, Jr. projects. Mr. Harper saw the uncompleted items at these two projects more as wish lists, whereas the Meadowbrook project did not meet the intent of the project as listed in the Levy. He requested cost estimates for the three projects Ms. Browne discussed.

Ms. Barker noted she had been getting a lot of recommendation requests from citizens regarding projects that did not get completed. She stated a need to have citizens involved in the allocation process. She also questioned what will happen to the 12 projects that have not yet begun – will they be in line for funds?

Mr. Stoops noted that in the previous two rounds of Opportunity Fund allocations were at a \$100,000 minimum, with the eye to making the projects have a bigger impact. The goal was not to add a bench or some landscaping. The Committee agreed, through consensus, that \$100,000 minimum award should be included in the allocation criteria.

Mr. Home made a motion to have the fund be eligible only to Pro Parks projects. The Committee unanimously agreed to this motion, with one abstention.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.