

Magnuson Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

December 11, 2024

Attendance

MPAC Members: Samanth De Abreu (co-chair), Jan Bragg (co-chair), Nancy Wilder, Ruth Fruland, Dave Hudacek

Absent: Virginia Humes, Aaron Hoard, Jonathan King, Bladimir Recinos

SPR Staff and Presenters: Kim LeMay, Joanne Orsucci, Erin Doherty (DON), Ben Burtzos

Eight members of public attended the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

De Abreu calls the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Members introduce themselves and share something that they are looking forward to this week.

Announcements & Information Sharing

Noting that there is currently a quorum of MPAC members, co-chairs elect to introduce a proposed advocacy letter to SPR Superintendent AP Diaz about the proposed pickleball development at Magnuson Park for discussion and possible vote.

Burtzos notes that all public comment pertains to this project and suggests allowing public comment to proceed first. Members agree.

Public comment is offered on the following topics:

- Various perspectives concerning proposed 24-court pickleball development at E5 parking area. 2 commenters are generally in favor of the proposal as currently put forward by SPR; 3 commenters are in favor of a smaller footprint or relocation of the project.

Fruland adds that opposition to the proposed project reflects the proposal specifically, rather than pickleball as a sport. Fruland also notes that she would like to see more detailed plans for accessibility.

De Abreu notes a feeling of “pay for play” and other negative impressions that SPR programming can have on nearby park residents.

Bragg shares draft advocacy letter.

Wilder moves to send letter to SPR Superintendent as written. Fruland seconds the motion.

Fruland suggests that a copy of the letter also be sent to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners (BPRC). Bragg agrees and notes that the recipient list likely does not require a separate motion to alter; this is a common practice for advocacy.

Members vote on the proposed motion. The vote is 5 in favor; 0 opposed; 0 abstaining. The motion passes.

Adopted: MPAC Advocacy Letter to SPR Superintendent AP Diaz Regarding Proposed Pickleball Development at Magnuson Park

[Copy of letter attached]

Sand Point Naval Air Station Landmark District

Erin Doherty, DON Landmarks Program Coordinator, delivers the presentation.

Doherty provides an overview of the Sand Point Naval Air Station Landmarks District, including:

- A brief history of the District;
- What elements of the park are and are not included in the District;
- How the Sand Point District fits into the broader picture of Seattle's Landmark Districts

Doherty gives MPAC members a guided look at the Landmark Districts website and explains how to find information. Doherty also explains the process of applying to make alterations within the Landmark District, and gives some practical recommendations for tenants, business owners, and environmental volunteers (and other stakeholders) regarding this process.

Bragg asks what a potential process to demolish Building 2 would have to include. Doherty clarifies that this type of action would require a Certificate of Approval from the Landmarks Review Board, and a significant review like this would require significant detail, likely resting on a financial basis. The review fee for this kind of review scales with the proposed project cost but has a cap of \$5,000. Doherty also notes that other restrictions exist on this building.

Wilder asks if there are any ongoing reviews and proposals. Doherty clarifies that there is one current proposal: a Safe Routes to Schools project by SDOT at the south end of the District. The local committee has approved the proposal and the full Board will consider the proposal on December 18.

Fruland asks if any project proposal should include current photographs (as opposed to historic images). Doherty affirms.

Bragg asks about details regarding removal or installation of trees and plants, particularly native plants. Doherty clarifies.

Consent Agenda

A quorum of members no longer being present, the consent agenda is deferred.

Magnuson Park Manager's Report

Joanne Orsucci, Interim Magnuson Park Manager, delivers the report.

[See attached]

Fruland asks about Kevin Bergsrud and current staff leadership of pickleball project at Magnuson Park. Orsucci clarifies that Bergsrud has retired from SPR, effective this month.

Fruland asks for additional detail about the wood chip pile near the E5 parking lot. Burtzos clarifies that this is a holding site for all SPR crews and that chips are used citywide for mulch and landscaping. These are not a publicly available resource.

Magnuson Community Center Report

Kim LeMay, Magnuson Community Center Coordinator, delivers the report.

Youth basketball season is underway! MCC is hosting 6 teams this year. Due to demands on the facility, there will be fewer drop-in programs, particularly on basketball gamedays.

The Tot Winter Carnival was last weekend; about 120 guests attended for fun and games geared towards children and families.

MCC will be closing early (6:00 PM) on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve and will be closed on Christmas Day and New Years Day.

Bragg asks how many indoor pickleball courts are hosted in the MCC gym. LeMay clarifies that MCC has 3 courts in the gym for drop-in pickleball on Thursdays and Saturday, and this program is very popular. Fruland asks if most drop-in pickleball players are local to NE Seattle; LeMay clarifies that players travel from all over the city for this program. Hudacek asks if MCC has loaner equipment. LeMay affirms that MCC has a small amount of equipment to lend.

De Abreu asks if MCC volunteers need to be 18 or older. LeMay clarifies that teens can volunteer if they are independent and responsible.

Old & New Business

Bragg and De Abreu offer parting comments as co-chairs for the year.

De Abreu notes that she will help Jonathan King, MPAC chair for 2025, with the transition. She also notes that targeted, small actions (such as subcommittee work and initiatives) can sometimes be very helpful.

Bragg reflects that her time as co-chair of MPAC caused her to recognize and collaborate to advance the project priorities of a variety of members, instead of focusing just on her own.

Gratitude & Adjourn

Co-chairs Bragg and De Abreu adjourn the meeting at 7:32 PM.

The next meeting will take place on January 8, 2025.

December 11, 2024

Dear Superintendent Diaz,

The Magnuson Park Advisory Committee (MPAC) has discussed the impacts of the Pickleball project being planned for Magnuson Park and opposes having a complex of 24 courts. **Each member has his/her concerns, but together we agree that the project should be limited to 8 courts now and into the future.**

Magnuson Park fulfills a variety of purposes, carefully balanced among diverse and valuable interests. Establishing a 24-court pickleball center, along with the necessary supporting infrastructure, would disrupt this balance, favoring a single special interest group. This shift would significantly alter the park's character, moving it away from the tranquil environment at the south end, which currently features open green spaces and wetlands.

The primary concerns identified include:

- 1) Impacts due to high levels of noise.** At our September 11 MPAC meeting, Kevin Bergsrud was unable to assure us that the sound of paddles hitting pickleballs can be dampened other than by covering/enclosing the courts. We are concerned about the disturbance to wildlife in the adjacent created wetlands, as well as the loss of a quiet place in nature where people can walk for their mental health. We have also heard feedback from residents living adjacent to the proposed location that are concerned about the additional noise.
- 2) Magnuson Park does not have sufficient resources to address safety and mitigate vandalism.** Even though the park gate has been closed since mid-August, as of mid-October SPR staff had been unable to keep it locked at night. Portable restrooms have not been sustainable in the park for over a year. Both EV charging stations were vandalized earlier this year and have been out of operation ever since. The restrooms by the Sports Meadow have been locked because of vandalism for weeks. **How is SPR going to prevent vandalism of pickleball courts if there are not resources to address existing safety issues?**
- 3) Long-term ownership, responsibility, and benefit to the park community.** If a non-profit were to fund construction of additional courts, who would be responsible if there were vandalism? The non-profit or SPR? (Kevin said on Nov 21 that this is TBD.) Further, we have not been assured of equitable access and enjoyment or benefit for low-income residents of the park community. Park residents already live with high levels of noise, traffic, parking challenges, and safety issues, and have expressed concern about the Pickleball project adding to this.
- 4) Loss of \$250,000/year parking revenue from Seattle Children's Hospital.** The SPR budget is expected to have \$600,000 cut for grounds maintenance in 2025. Though revenue from the E-5 lot is a minor portion of park funding, addition of the Pickleball Courts (particularly in the expanded plan) will represent a significant cost for additional park maintenance.

- 5) **Increased traffic and congestion.** Traffic infrastructure improvements within and surrounding the park have been very limited in scope, rare, and piecemeal, resulting in excessive traffic traveling at high rates of speed, daily parking challenges for residents, and unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bike users. Adding one of the largest Pickleball Facilities in the region will put additional burden on our aging and neglected infrastructure.
- 6) **Parking and accessibility.** E-5 is the nearest parking lot for accessing the wetlands and for the ball fields. Cars already park along Sportsfield Drive to access the ball fields despite "no parking" signs, and this has not been addressed. E-5 also serves as the overflow lot for the boat ramp as well as numerous events and fundraising races held in the park.
- 7) **Litter Management.** The grounds crew cannot handle the amount of litter in the park currently, which has been an ongoing issue voiced by many park users. What planning is in place to support the addition of a concession stand to this area of the park?
- 8) **Placement and sensitivity to wildlife:** The E-5 Parking lot is directly adjacent to some of the park's most sensitive environmental areas. In addition to the noise and human activity, the artificial lighting that would be needed for the Pickleball Courts will be detrimental to area birds and other wildlife. An indoor court in one of the many available buildings on campus would be much more appropriate, as well as ensuring that Pickleball players can play indoors during increasingly hot summers safely.

As a committee, our recommendation is that a review be done that addresses these concerns prior to the finalization of this project.

Thank you for taking the concerns of MPAC into consideration.

Janice Bragg, Samantha DeAbreu
Co-chairs MPAC

Magnuson Park Advisory Committee (MPAC)
Report from Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) – Joanne Orsucci
December 11, 2024

Topic	Updates/Notes
<p>MPAC Priority #1: Healthy People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure and Lighting • Improve safety and reduce crime 	<p>Ongoing Security Concerns</p> <p>SPD has had a good presence in the park recently. SPD cars parked at the beach parking lots and the mobile precinct onsite frequently.</p> <p>Parking lot south of the Mountaineers that attracted encampments has been fully blocked by eco blocks to prevent future encampments.</p> <p>Overall encampment activity this month is low.</p>
<p>MPAC Priority #2: Healthy Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address event-related traffic. • Addressing garbage/litter + animal waste in the park. 	
<p>MPAC Priority #3: Strong Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Communication within Magnuson Park + surrounding community. • Inclusive and communicative planning. 	
<p>MPAC Roster and Recruiting</p>	<p>No current interest in joining MPAC from business tenants.</p>

<p>Seattle Parks Updates</p>	<p>Budget issues: The City’s hiring freeze continues and the normal team of 4 at Magnuson Admin Office is currently a team of 2 staff. We appreciate your understanding as we prioritize tenant operations work and put other projects on hold as we navigate this hiring freeze.</p> <p>2025 budget was approved by the City Council Select Budget Committee on Nov 19. The City budget focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Helping people stay housed -Investing in shelter and homelessness services -Strengthening public health and safety -Addressing unaffordability -Reducing and delaying City layoffs
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	<p>Seattle City Council Select Budget Committee approves 2025-2026 budget proposal, sends it to final Council vote - Seattle City Council Blog</p> <p>Tenant renewals: Goodtimes project renewed in Bldg 138 for one year.</p>
<p>MPAC Updates</p>	<p>What are the current issues that the MPAC group is working on?</p>