

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2002

Present:

Bruce Bentley, Chair

James Fearn

Susan Golub

Yale Lewis

Sarah Neilson

Kate Pflaumer

Excused: Kathleen Warren

Staff: Ken Bounds, Superintendent

Michele Daly, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. The agenda consent items were approved as submitted including approval of the February 14 agenda, minutes of FEBRUARY 14, 2002 and acknowledgment of correspondence. Kate Pflaumer recognized the "incredible work Michele did on the minutes; they reflect that the people testifying at the public hearing were really heard."

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience:

Andrew Taylor, Miller neighborhood resident, commended the volunteers serving on the Board of Park Commissioners who have to listen to large rooms full of animated neighbors with very different points of view and even turn out on Valentines Day. Mr. Taylor also turned out to speak on Valentines Day, which is also his wedding anniversary. He stated there are desperate groups of neighbors and part of their antagonism is they are not talking to each other. He urged the Board get the groups to meet, talk to each other and see if they can work out their differences so that we can use our increasingly crowded city to the best advantage. Mr. Taylor volunteered to help get the Department and neighborhood groups to work together.

Renee Barton, Seattle Residents for Fair Field Lighting, recommended future procedures to the Department as it continues its mission to make our city more livable for all the citizens. Voters selected the new Mayor for his inclusiveness for the city. As the Department continues to work on park development she encourages it to enhance its public transparency. She thinks a lot of frustration is in part due to the need for greater transparency. When flyers are sent out to notify neighbors of a park development she recommends they include everyone within ½ mile of the park. Instead of a vague reference to park improvements, include what is really going to happen such as drainage, lighting, artificial turf, etc. on the notices. There are other Boards in the city that provide all the public comments before and after meetings. The Library provides 30 sets of public comments received which are available to the public for free. The public needs to hear

what everyone is talking about. Ms. Barton agrees with Andrew Taylor about fostering cooperation rather than pitting groups against each other. Parks needs to be a leader and provide the kind of forum that can come up with compromises and solutions rather than polarization in the community. We are all stakeholders in our parks and future funding depends upon everyone getting their needs met.

Jeffrey Wasson, Seattle Schools, Local 609, spoke about the long running history the School District has with the Parks Department. In some cases it has shared parks and fields for over 100 years. He hopes the Schools and Parks can share more information and work more collaboratively in the future. Many of the District workers enjoy working on the same sites as Parks and are equally proud of those sites. He echoed that information be shared broadly with interest groups.

Charles Prestrud, Ingraham neighbor, understands the desire to have facilities for active and passive recreation opportunities in Seattle that are comparable to those found in the suburban cities. He suggests the Department take a lot at what suburban cities have done to mitigate the impacts that come from having organized sports facilities in residential areas. If we want first class facilities we should also try and make sure we have first class neighborhoods.

Sharon LeVine, Queen Anne resident, referenced the Department's Comp Plan and in the twelve years or so that she has been following Park's activities she stated it is one of the best processes that Parks has ever had. From this process and in the public meetings a lot of neighborhood people got involved. When it was discovered there were not enough neighborhood protections an update was developed in May of 2000. Ms. LeVine referenced Exhibit A of her handout taken from the Seattle Parks and Recreation Plan 2000, page 16, "improve sportsfields to ensure playability. Improvements such as synthetic turf and lighting on selected fields will be considered to increase scheduling capacity where appropriate and where adverse neighborhood impacts as identified in public involvement processes can be mitigated." She further referenced the Plan, page 58 "update the Joint Athletic Field Development Program...consider improvements to selected fields...to increase scheduling capacity but only where adverse impacts as identified in public process can be mitigated. Ms. LeVine stated the neighborhood protections are being watered down in the JAFDP. Page 14 of the Program states "sites should be selected where impacts to surrounding neighbors can be minimized and mitigation measures can be maximized." Also in the JAFDP guiding Principle 2, "Page 18, it states " minimize the potential impacts of field use on surrounding neighborhoods to the extent possible given site considerations, resources..." Ms. LeVine stated it is very important when a new plan is being considered the language meets the strict criteria of the overall guiding policy for Parks.

Keith Hoeller suggested the Board and Department be cognizant in future dealings with the Mayor's State of the City address where he says he intends to be the Mayor for all the people in the city and the alternative if we do not do all we can to promote a genuine idea of community inclusion is unacceptable. Mr. Hoeller hopes the Board and Department

will do their best to live up to the Mayor's idea that his agencies ought to be for everyone, not for one exclusive group as opposed to another group.

Peter Lukevich, Friends of Athletic Fields, urged the Board and Department to look at the JAFDP in concert with the Pro Parks Levy wording. As an example issues involving lighting or use need to be consistent in the two plans. He thinks there is a disconnect in one or two examples.

Heidi Wartelle, Roosevelt neighborhood, would appreciate if the Board would be far more forthcoming in their plans for neighborhood. None of the neighbors in and around Roosevelt High School are aware of the JAFDP to increase the hours of field use in an already dense neighborhood. No one from Parks has been at the School meetings to clarify the Joint Use Agreement.

Joint Athletic Field Development Program - Board Discussion/Recommendation

Alix Ogden, Strategic Advisor to the Superintendent, distributed a summary of public comments received since the January 24 hearing, a memorandum dated February 14, 2002 to the Board members responding to issues raised during the public comment period, and a listing of Seattle Residents for Fair Field Lighting recommended changes for incorporation into the JAFDP..

Alix reviewed the Seattle Residents for Fair Field Lighting recommendations with the Board. The Department is working on lighting design guidelines and comments will be addressed. The Ballfield Lighting Study specifically references the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America standards and principles. Planning and design work is done after the Department has money for a project. Money is not available to do planning and design before there is money for a project. Parks and Schools will work with affected stakeholders of fields. Pedestrian and traffic safety will be looked at through the public involvement process. An across the board set aside for a percentage of time for non-scheduled local neighborhood use of fields will not work in all locations. The Scheduling Policy is being revised and will be brought to the Board for review and a public hearing. In terms of notification within ½ mile, the Department has a Public Involvement Policy and would not want to do anything different for a playfield project than it does for other projects. Alix will discuss the "Be A Good Neighbor" recommendation with Renee Barton. In terms of lights and potential wildlife impacts, these would be addressed during the Environmental Impact Statement and SEPA checklist process. The final recommendation from the Seattle Residents for Fair Field Lighting to reference both Parks and Schools and not Parks alone has been acknowledged. The Department will be discussing this document and its process with Schools and their involvement and commitment to the recommended changes.

The Board reviewed the February 14 memorandum prepared by Alix summarizing the issues raised during the public comment process.

- **West Seattle Stadium:** The current recommendation in the JAFDP is to take a facility that has 10 football games a year and some track and field events and turn it into a track and field-only venue. The stadium currently has a 400-meter track, long jump, triple jump, pole vault, high jump, and an area for a hammer throw, shot put, and super weights. It also has capacity seating for 2500 spectators. Some of the existing track and field events are not visible from the stands. The site does not accommodate steeplechase or the javelin throw and does not have the capacity for full event meets because they require two sets of facilities for several track and field single events. The four new school stadiums all have some facilities for track and field. None have a full compliment of activities or they have facilities that do not meet regulations. Because the four complexes are multi-use, you cannot have many of the field events going at the same time as soccer or football because of safety concerns. Track and field has the third highest youth participation in outdoor sports in the city after soccer and baseball/softball. Patti Petesch stated there are 14-15 youth meets, 4 masters' events and 9 high school meets currently held at the Stadium. The number of usages for meets is primarily from May 1 to middle of June. From the first of June to the first of August the stadium is full every night from 40 to 150 people practicing as well as on the weekends during the day. Kate Pflaumer stated there was talk about rescheduling the high schools that play at the stadium and other sites would not accommodate the more than 1,000 spectators that come to the games. Alix said O'Dea and Prep would have to use Memorial Stadium and West Seattle High School would be accommodated at Denny-Sealth if the West Seattle Stadium is closed to football. The games may not be held at the most desirable times. Memorial Stadium also has a higher usage cost. The Department has asked a designer to look at an option that would allow for a full compliment of track and field events and football.

Staff proposed three options for Board discussion: A) status quo, B) as proposed in JAFDP and C) improve for both track and field and football. Staff recommends Option C if the research bears out that it is possible to accommodate both activities within a reasonable budget. If it is not, staff recommends staying with Option B of a track and field only venue.

The Department is looking at an option that would allow for both a full event track and field venue that also can accommodate football in the fall. It may be possible to accomplish both because the Department believes that the site does not require as much seating as currently available. One important goal is to ensure that most of the track and field events are visible from the stands. However, it may mean redeveloping the south seating in such a manner as would impact the rifle range.

Susan Golub questioned if it is the goal to have spectators view all the track and field events from their seats. The proposed configuration is a compromise and not every event will be able to be viewed from each seat. Spectators will be able to move to the other side of the stands to view other track and field event elements. The challenge that the architect is looking at is something between the track and the stands and at the south stands perhaps have fewer seats but improved restroom

facilities and other facilities that are better for the spectators and users. Yale Lewis noted that expanded facilities for more events will draw more spectators. Sarah Neilson inquired how many people use the rifle range. The Dahl Rifle Range group is comprised of a very dedicated group of sportsmen who belong to a club. It is estimated their membership is 100. They have been notified that they may be removed from the site in two or three years.

Kate Pflaumer stated she has some discomfort that if Option C does not work out then there is a hard choice of B or A. Similarly, lighting Queen Anne Bowl and saying lights out at 9 p.m. might be reasonable but 11 p.m. is not reasonable. She is not going to be able to make that decision this evening. Sarah Neilson wants to know what kind of lights are being considered and view some lighting examples. Bothell has some field lighting that will be similar to the technology being considered.

The Superintendent stated it became very clear to the Department that there two large issues that having the JAFDP approved by the City Council does not address: what are the scheduling policies as relate to evening use, drop-in play and what are the lighting standards. The City Council does not adopt standards for lighting. It makes sense to have people understand what those are before there is an ultimate decision made on the physical development part, which is the Program. The Program lists which fields will be developed for which purposes, which will have lights or not have lights. The Board is being asked to tentatively act on the Program if it can or hold it in abeyance until the Department comes back later with recommendations on the revised Scheduling Policy and Ballfield Lighting Study. There may be some situations where some fields may be lit later than other fields.

Kate Pflaumer stated the athletic user community tends to be citywide and the neighborhood community tends to be site specific, which creates a difficulty unless you have a common place for those people to come. Yale Lewis noted that he cannot conceive that the Board will hear new testimony than what has already been given regarding fields and lights. The Board will be given input from the community on what the staff recommends. Each individual site will have a public involvement process as well as permitting process, which deals with issues of noise, traffic and lights. That is where you get the neighborhood issues addressed. Susan Golub stated when there are more fields available citywide, more people may be able to play on their neighborhood parks and get an sense of ownership.

James Fearn asked what the Board is being expected to do this evening as he thought it was to vote on the JAFDP. There are certain things the Program does not provide for but states we are of the general approach to athletic field development. All of the specifics are going to wait development at particular sites when environmental analysis will be done and any impacts are determined at those sites. One of the neighbors' concerns is they would like to foreclose some things right now because they do not want to wait and are afraid of what might

happen in that process. In theory we will find out what the impacts of lighting will be - will there be spillover, glare. James thinks we need to get into the specifics of these projects and Andrew Taylor's suggestion of taking Miller Playfield and see how it works might be good.

The Superintendent stated if you boil it all down in terms of the goals and the language in the JAFDP document itself, the specific actions are really in Attachment B. Attachment A lists the funded projects and some of those projects are actually going through or have gone through the process. Attachment B projects would expand the system. The actual scope of work at each project will be determined through the public process. The action of the Plan would state the intent of the project. None of the projects listed on Attachment B are funded. The Superintendent noted the list in Attachment B represents the culling process ending up with the fields that meet the criteria that has been identified in the plan and be candidates for these kinds of improvements if funding ever becomes available. There is no project priority on Attachment B.

Yale Lewis stated the way to decrease the hours a field is lit is to increase the field capacity. The notion of interests being pitted against each other is predicated on scarcity. A very scarce resource pits neighborhoods against users. If the resource gets expanded, fields are available for drop-in use, are closed earlier and regulations can be enforced more vigorously that will help alleviate the conflicts.

James Fearn stated if we look into the future we can say that all the fields need to be used as much as they can be used. He thinks all the fields should be developed in a way to permit maximum use. The use of the field should not impact the neighborhoods in certain ways. Lighting, traffic, etc. need to be looked at on a case by case basis and are the things that will determine how a particular field is used. There may be generic things that may be decided on such as lights should not be on until 11 p.m. The Plan as it is written allows the Department to get started on this process.

Bruce Bentley noted if the JAFDP is recommended for approval and it is desired to include Comp Plan language in the Program that would need to be made now. If we are separating the question of lighting standards and sports participation/scheduling policy those two elements will be included in the JAFDP. The Program language needs to be compatible with the Pro Parks Levy and Comp Plan language. Alix Ogden noted the Comp Plan language is in the JAFDP on page 5, second bullet. The goals and guiding principles might have slightly different language.

Alix Ogden stated the description in the Pro Parks Levy is approximately ten words and the language in the JAFDP takes that description a little farther, i.e. Meadowbrook lighting. The levy language says it should have lighting among other things and when the criteria was reviewed, staff recommended Meadowbrook not be lit. West Seattle Stadium Pro Parks Levy language

state... "improve the stadium for a variety of active uses including track and field." The JAFDP is taking the levy language and further refining it. In those two cases people feel that there is a substantive difference.

Susan Golub noted when you say "mitigated" you are trying to help solve the problem but you are not eliminating the problem. James Fearn noted if during the SEPA process a situation cannot be mitigated then the project can be denied. James stated he is not prepared to take anything off the list because it is not known what the actual impacts will be. If those things came to us on a case by case basis and we were informed that the light spillage is 5% for instance, then he could make a judgment about whether or not he thinks it is appropriate.

Kate Pflaumer stated she would feel comfortable voting if the principles are matching the list. She does not feel prepared to vote on the lighting time until the Scheduling and Lighting policies are refined and brought to the Board. All the fields would not have the same issues for lights out at a certain time. There may be a generally consistent rule with exceptions noted. Sarah Neilson wanted to make sure that the impacts are not determined by the economic benefactors of the surrounding neighborhoods. Some neighbors cannot come out to testify and may not be heard.

James Fearn moved approval of West Seattle Stadium Option C, striking the second sentence of the staff recommendation. He is in favor of approving the West Seattle Stadium for Football, Track and Field. He is not prepared if that does not work within a reasonable budget to make the stadium only for a track and field venue. The motion was seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

- **Queen Anne Bowl:** The current draft of the JAFDP proposes to install field lights at the Queen Anne Bowl (this project is not currently funded and is therefore listed in Attachment B to the JAFDP). A synthetic surface was installed on the field three years ago. The Queen Anne Bowl is scheduled by soccer and some lacrosse teams and is limited to approximately 1200 hours a year. This figure does not represent full utilization of scheduling opportunities but was arrived at by the Department after a request by the Queen Anne Community Council to limit the scheduled use to 800 hours per year.

Argument in favor of the proposal: installing lights at Queen Anne Bowl is consistent with the lighting criteria developed in the JAFDP. Installation of lights would mean that the field could be scheduled between 2000-2400 hours a year if the Department were to re-examine the cap of 1200 hours. It is currently the only all-weather field on Queen Anne.

Argument against the proposal: The field at Queen Anne Bowl is the smallest of our larger fields. The increase in use is relatively small compared to other proposed projects in the area. For example, the JAFDP also proposes installing synthetic turf at Queen Anne Playfield (already lighted). This proposal would increase the hours for soccer by approximately 1300 hours as well as an additional 600 hours for baseball/softball, resulting in a total of 1900 hour

increase from current use levels. Public comment received during the Department and Park Board comment periods reflect opposition to this project. Staff recommend keeping the proposal to light the field in the JAFDP as it is consistent with the criteria.

James Fearn stated until he knows what the impacts are to the neighborhood he is not prepared to take it off the list. At some point the impacts will become known. **James Fearn moved the Board recommend that Queen Anne Bowl be kept on the list and recommends accepting the staff proposal. The motion was seconded and approved with Kate Pflaumer voting against the motion.**

- **Smith Cove Park** -This property is owned by the Navy and has been discussed as an acquisition for several years. The Pro Parks Levy provides for \$1 million for acquisition and another \$2 million is possible from the Shoreline Park Improvement Fund (SPIF) program. The Department believes the actual acquisition costs to be in excess of \$3 million. There has been an interest in developing this site for active youth. There are no formal restrictions on the use of SPIF for athletic field acquisition.

Susan Golub moved the Board recommend approval of the change in the JAFDP language to reflect the following: Smith Cove, a property owned by the United States Navy, is a property that the Department and Magnolia community have wanted to acquire for park purposes. Some members of the community have expressed support for the development of an active youth field. Others support the development of passive park space. The Future use of this site will be subject to a public process." The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

- **Other amendments to the JAFDP** - Structure for public involvement on JAFDP projects: Staff recommends that the Department use the successful Project Advisory Team (PAT) structure for the projects in the JAFDP that "significantly increase capacity." Projects that significantly increase capacity would be defined as those that propose the installation of a synthetic or all-weather surface where there had been grass or new lights. PATs will include representatives from user groups and neighbors. The Department will encourage the School District to use the same method for public involvement.

James Fearn moved the Board approved the staff recommendation to use the Project Advisory Team (PAT) structure for the projects in the JAFDP that significantly increase capacity. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Susan Golub moved it be noted on the Attachment B and C lists that the projects are not funded or prioritized and should be alphabetized. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Susan Golub inquired about the Montlake Playfield and the relationship with Seattle Prep. Susan is uncomfortable with institutionalizing that relationship. It is a public-city park. **Susan Golub moved to delete the reference to partnership with Seattle Prep. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Kate Pflaumer stated for the record that she is willing to reconsider her vote on Queen Anne Bowl for unanimity purposes but just not willing to do it without knowing the neighborhood impact.

It is proposed to get a draft of the revised Scheduling Policy and Guidelines, Sports Participation Policy and Development of Lighting Design Guidelines available for public distribution and Board at least two weeks prior to the March 28 Board briefing and public hearing

Park Board Business

Superintendent's Report:

- **Summer Reading Program** - The Department will partner with the Seattle Public Library on the Summer Reading Program, which has an environmental theme this year.
- **Greenwood Park** - The proposed location of a comfort station at Greenwood Park is continuing to upset owners of four nearby properties. They are concerned about the visual and safety impacts and have asked that the comfort station be relocated. A public meeting was held on January 22 to present the design and discuss concerns. Parks reviewed the overall park design and two alternative locations for the restroom.
- **Northgate Community Center** - Parks held the final public meeting on February 12 to discuss the siting of the Northgate Community Center. Specifically, the meeting focused on a proposal to purchase 3.55 acres on 5th Avenue NE for the construction of a community center, park and library. Staff plans to compile all the comments from this meeting and make a recommendation to the Mayor to purchase the site know as the Bon Tire Store.
- **Pier 62/63 Emergency Piling Replacement** - Work related to piling replacement has started under an approved emergency declaration for the first phase of work. The piers will be closed to public use through the end of May.
- **Clean Seattle Campaign** - Plans are being formulated to target Othello Park and the surrounding neighborhood as the first site of the Mayor's Clean Seattle Campaign event. The park is located in Southeast Seattle.
- **SAFECO Scoreboard Proposal** - A proposal to accept a scoreboard for Rainier Playfield will be declined as it does not meet department policies regarding advertising. The Board will be reviewing Corporate Sponsorship policies at a future meeting.
- **Alki Bathhouse Renovation** - Pro Parks Levy funding will be used to renovate the Alki Bathhouse building. The goal of the renovation is to create multi-purpose

spaces that can accommodate a variety of uses. It is not a goal of this renovation to redesign the building exclusively for potters and painters.

- **NRPA Award** - Seattle Parks and Recreation has been selected as the recipient of the National Parks and Recreation 2002 Excellence in Aquatics Award. This award is presented annually to honor one agency or institution that demonstrates excellence in planning and managing diversified aquatic services.
- **Northwest Flower & Garden Show** - The Department participated in the 2002 show as an educational exhibitor. The display showcased department programs under the theme of "Stewardship and Conservation." It included Urban Forestry, Horticulture, Resource Conservation, Environmental Education and Volunteer programs and facilities.

Items of Interest to the Board:

Sarah Neilson inquired about Environmental Education legislation. It involves the Seattle Zoological Society; the city is not involved. There is some language controversy and words will be changed.

Sarah informed the Board members of Youth Involvement Day scheduled for April 30 and urged them to save the date on their calendars. Three agenda items will be education, transportation and recreation. More details to follow.

Retreat - The March 22 Park Board Retreat will be rescheduled due to calendar conflicts.

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

APPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

Bruce Bentley, Chair