

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES

MAY 23, 2002

**Present:**

Bruce Bentley  
James Fearn  
Sarah Neilson  
Kathleen Warren  
Susan Golub

**Excused:**

Kate Pflaumer  
Yale Lewis

**Staff:**

Patricia McInturff, Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. While waiting for a quorum, the Superintendent's report was given.

**Superintendent's Report:**

Superintendent Ken Bounds was in Michigan attending a wedding. Deputy Superintendent Patricia McInturff gave the following report:

- Fremont Market The Special Events Committee has issued a one-month trial Special Event Permit authorizing the Fremont Market to operate on city streets from Sunday, April 28, 2002, through Sunday, May 19, 2002. Staff from several City departments monitored the event during this trial period and determined there are not significant public services required, so after May 19 the Market will operate under a street use permit from Seattle Transportation.
- Alki Bathhouse Renovation The Friends of the Alki Bathhouse sponsored a fundraising auction May 18 in order to augment the Pro Parks bathhouse renovation budget. The event, hosted by Dukes, was a resounding success with a preliminary estimate of \$5,600 dollars being raised that evening.
- Pro Parks Recommendation The Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee made its formal recommendations for the Opportunity Fund, which will now go to the Mayor, then on to City Council. The committee visited every site on the list and came to a unanimous consensus on its recommendations. There were many excellent projects. Money is set aside for a second round of allocations and those not funded in the first round were encouraged to apply in the second round.

- Motorized Scooters on Alki Parks staff have received several complaints about the recent use of gas-powered scooters on the bike trail at Alki. It seems a private vendor is renting the
- causing quite a bit of noise and safety issues. Park staff are investigating whether policies or ordinances are currently in place to ban the use of these scooters in parks and on trails. If so, Parks will work with Seattle Police if it becomes an enforcement issue.

Bruce called the meeting to order and the agenda consent items were approved as submitted including the May 23 agenda, minutes of the May 9 meeting, and the acknowledgment of correspondence. **The motion to approve was made by Kathleen Warren, seconded by James Fearn, voted on, and approved unanimously.** Sandy Brook was introduced and welcomed as the new Park Board Coordinator.

Chair Bruce Bentley asked for a shift in the agenda to move the discussion of the Revocable Use Permit for Burke Gilman Playground.

### **Revocable Use Permit Burke Gilman Playground**

Don Harris, Parks Property and Acquisition Manager, came before the Board with a request for policy and procedure, seeking approval and opportunity from the Board for a revocable use permit at Burke Gilman Playground. The request before the Board was from the Ronald McDonald House. Don introduced Pat McDonald, Executive Director of Ronald McDonald House, Fitz Kirk, Project Manager, and Don Mossman, Halgerson Contractors.

Don presented a diagram of the proposed revocable use permit. The project is located at 40th Ave Northeast, near Children's Hospital in the Sand Point area. Ronald McDonald house is requesting a 9-month permit, September 2002 until May 2003. The permit would allow a new \$14 million facility to be built from private donations. In order to facilitate construction, they have asked for the permit on a wetland perimeter of Burke Gilman Playground, with 450 square feet to be excavated as a construction staging area. In addition to the excavation staging, the construction company will install watering wells during the construction to drain the water away. They will also do soil nailing. The water will be re-channeled back into the area after construction is finished. The fee, which is \$12,100, will be held in escrow by the Parks Department. In lieu of payment, Ronald McDonald House may instead install a sports court or some other amenity. This will be determined during the course of the construction.

Pat McDonald thanked Don for his help during this challenging project. Ronald McDonald House is a home away from home for seriously ill children and their families from a four-state area. The children undergo treatment at nearby Children's Hospital. The Ronald McDonald House opened in 1983 and has served 3,500 families. It has experienced 100% occupancy for the last five years, which required housing some families in area hotels. Children's Hospital has made the land available for the new facility. The current occupancy is 22 families. The new construction will add 48

additional units. Ronald McDonald House plans in the future to add 10 more units to accommodate bone marrow transplant families but this permit is only for the additional 48 units. The park is important to the families and staff of the Ronald McDonald House and they have involved the local community in the process.

Don stated that using the corner of the park as a staging area has not been an easy decision. The significant plantings will be restored as completely as possible. The land that will be excavated is currently a passive buffer to the parking lot. There are picnic tables in the area and a small basketball court. Board member Kathleen Warren asked if there is community opposition. Don stated there is some community concern, but no outright opposition. **James moved that the revocable use permit for Burke Gilman Playground be approved, Kathleen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

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

Chair Bruce Bentley reminded the audience the general public comment 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 and reminded to be respectful.

**Randy Williams** - President of Marker Buoy Dive Club, shared his concerns regarding the extended use of Seacrest Park as the West Seattle dock for the water taxi. The current commitment called for May 2002 as the end of the one-year demonstration. He has heard that the County and City are considering extending the water taxi's use of Seacrest Park through the end of this summer. Last year the promise was made that May 2002 would end Seacrest Park's use as a passenger terminal. Divers have spent many volunteer hours installing a rope marker trail. He stressed that Seacrest is a park - not a transportation terminal. He asks that the promises made last year be kept.

***Park Board discussion:*** The County has identified funding to extend the water taxi for three months. County Councilmember Dow Constantine sponsored the extension of the water taxi. The funding from the County would extend the contract to run the water taxi for another three months. The County has secured a \$150,000 grant to study using Bronsom Street as a permanent dock for the water taxi; the study is complete. If long-term funding is secured, construction will begin on a permanent dock site. Board member Sarah Neilsen had heard of a water taxi users meeting the previous week, where water taxi riders said they like the Seacrest location for its convenience. Patricia stated that the water taxi is a component of Mayor Nickel's transportation strategy.

### **West Raye Street Vegetation Management Plan - Briefing and Public Hearing**

Mark Mead, Parks Department urban forester, briefed the Board on the proposed West Raye Street Vegetation Management Plan. Copies of the plan were available at the meeting and are also available at Magnolia Community Center. Mark gave a presentation of the proposed plan.

**History:** The original 1998 application was for a view permit. The current plan is the direct application of the Park Department's new tree policy. The thinning/topping of trees paid for by private citizens at this site dates back to 1982. In 1998 nearby upland residents asked for a view pruning near the end of Magnolia Boulevard. They were told that a plan was necessary for a project of the scope described. In January 2000 they submitted their plan (formerly known as the Reich Plan and now referred to as the Vegetation Management Plan). This plan requested tree removal and replacement directed at regaining views for property owners immediately north of the project area and included removal of several trees and several hundred tree stems. Due to the plan's large scope, a public meeting was held. After continued discussions with the permit requestors and significant comments from interested community members Parks developed the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP), which is in line with the Parks Department Tree Policy. There are two sides to this equation: the view above the slope and the stability of the slope. Safety and slope stability are the #1 concerns to Parks Department.

Parks has received letters in support and in opposition. Parks current tree policy states that no trees are to be removed for views and no topping other than at a designated viewpoint. Current problems at West Raye Street include invasive plants (ivy and blackberries), Big Leaf Maple stems, lack of native conifer understory, hazard trees, steep slope, and some active springs. There are also problems from previous pruning resulting in hazardous regrowth near the walkway and trees hanging over West Raye Street.

In 1999 Seattle Transportation completed a road repair and stabilization project on West Raye Street. This project focused on stabilizing the downhill side of the road cut, and included significant re-vegetation and the installation of a slope stabilization wall. This work required the removal of a number of large trees and understory plants. The project also included a significant amount of replanting of trees and understory plants. Geo-technical studies were done to support this work.

**Scope of Proposed Work:** There are 11 specific zones of work in the VMP, each with different needs. Mark pointed out photographed areas and discussed the type of work to be done. Weaker, dead, and dying stems would be removed, leaving straighter stems in place. The scope of the work would include conifer replacement, native understory growth, no inappropriate pruning, and topping decayed limbs. International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) techniques will be applied and will include crown cleaning, crown thinning, crown raising, and crown reduction. View corridors (not wide open, but framed views) will be included. Invasive plants would be removed and replanted with native plants. Snags and some deadwood would be left as habitat for wildlife.

Mark reviewed the proposed work in each of the 11 areas (a description of the area and prescribed work are detailed on page 11 of the Vegetation Management Plan.) The work will be completed in two phases.

Removal prescriptions for each area:

Area 1: None

Area 2: 30% of stems per specifications, concentrating on stems less than 6" diameter

Area 3: None

Area 4: Remove no more than 20% stems per prescription

Area 5: Dead and dangerous stems only.

Area 6: Remove no more than 20% stems per prescription, with focus on dead or dying stems

Area 7: Dead and dangerous stems only

Area 8: Limited hazard reduction based on stem density and hazard. Remove one overhanging alder at post.

Area 9: Reduce stem density by removal of all hazards and deadwood, no more than 30% stem reduction.

Area 10: No major removal other than designated hazards

Area 11: Reduce stem density by removal of all hazards and deadwood, no more than 30% stem reduction.

**Process:** The Park Board will continue to accept public comments until it discusses the plan and makes a recommendation at its June 13 meeting. The Board's recommendation will then go to Fritz Hedges, in lieu of the Parks Superintendent.

**Board questions and discussion:** This is not a legally designated view area and it is not the Parks Department intent to give the permittees a view. The plan will take out hazard trees, and 20-30% of stems leaving nice, strong stems. The improvement to the view for homeowners at the top of the slope will increase by 15-30%. Parks Department staff will oversee the work.

This is work the Parks Department would do itself, if it could afford to. Nine private citizens have applied for the permit and private citizens will pay for all the work. The cost, including volunteer labor, is estimated at \$30-50,000. The permittees paid for the Reich report and the \$100 application fee. They have not paid for the preparation work on the VMP by Parks Department staff. If the VMP is approved, the permittees would have to follow Parks guidelines and pay for the work as outlined in the Plan. The Board recalled a discussion from approximately one year ago where they recommended that no trees be cut for view purposes. There is concern that under the current Parks Department Tree Policy, only wealthy citizens could afford to pay for this type of work on Parks property.

There has been extensive public input to the VMP and the work is similar to the vegetation management at Camp Long, Lincoln Park, and Frink Park. Mark was asked if the Parks Department were paying for the work, would this be one of its top ten priorities? He answered that it would be a mid-priority and that it is very typical of work needed in the Department's 4,000 acres of open space.

Board Chair Bruce Bentley moved the discussion to the public hearing segment. Board member Kate Pflaumer, whose mother owns view property in West Seattle, removed herself from the decision. She stated that her integrity had never before been questioned and asked members of the audience to refrain from personal attacks.

**Keith Martinson** - Mr. Martinson stated there was no community support for the VMP, Parks failed to meet its commitments, and this is not a good private/public policy. The proposal is flawed and filled with half-truths and misrepresentations. The Shannon Wilson Report shows seepage, unstable ground, and steep slopes. He did not receive the hearing notice until last Thursday or Friday.

**D. Salvino** - Protests the lack of adequate public notice of the hearing. She received notice of the public hearing only seven days ago, the notice did not appear in the Queen Anne News until the May 15 issue, and the hearing was scheduled two days before the Memorial Day holiday. She opposes the project: 75% of the Parks Department proposal is tree trimming; there was no water testing to determine slope stability; the basin stream is fed by many springs. The permit is flawed. Bob Heller has trimmed trees in the proposed area since 1982, with disastrous results. She doesn't trust him and doesn't want him in charge of the project. She will also give written comments.

**Bob Heller** - He has received four permits from Parks prior to this one. There were no objections from neighbors at that time, despite the requirement to obtain signatures before the work could be done. In 1998 the Parks Department took a different approach, with no tree topping approved. This is a private/public benefit and he is trying to make a positive project impact. He has hired the best professionals, but is exhausted from the process.

Chair Bruce Bentley explained that the public notice did go out late and stressed that public comment received via e-mail and letter before the Board makes its recommendation carries just as much weight as testimony at the public hearing. To send testimony via e-mail, send to Sandy Brooks at [sandy.brooks@ci.seattle.wa.us](mailto:sandy.brooks@ci.seattle.wa.us).

**Robert Kildall** - Distributed written comments to the Board. The first meeting on the West Raye Street VMP was held 1-1/2 years after the 1996-1997 landslides, for which the City never reimbursed homeowners. The Board must keep in mind the fear and anxiety of Perkins Lane residents and protect them over the expansion of views. He read several segments of his written comments.

**Marco Magnana** - The purpose of the VMP is to increase slope stability and vegetation. If nothing is done, the trees will fall and the view will really be enhanced. Seattle Transportation re-did the street access with drainage, which was a much more extensive than removing 30% of the vegetation. He supports the project.

**Myra Carp** - She has had two major slides on her property in the past 30 years. She is concerned with the length of commitment of the Parks Department and that the VMP reads that there are few springs in the area. The Seattle Transportation project improved conditions, but water still sheets on West Raye Street. This also puts people above in great danger to slides as the downed trees that aren't removed can create water dams that break loose. She believes it is nice to improve the views, but stability is the most important issue and has not been properly addressed.

**John Speer** - He apologized for the personal attacks on Susan Gottlieb. He recommends that Parks Department wait until it can pay to have this work done. There was zero community support for the project at a meeting of 80 people held three weeks ago. There are springs everywhere in the belt and new springs have appeared since the Seattle Transportation project. He opposes this project and will send written comments to the Board.

**Sharon Levine** - Parks again has not followed its own process and procedure again. At the last meeting Parks couldn't answer questions and was to come back with information, but they didn't. No notice was posted in the greenbelt area. She requested a 4'x6" sign at the proposed site, with a project description and flyers. The community shouldn't have to instigate the public process. This is a gigantic plan with up to 260 removals. She is concerned with future maintenance. The plan is inadequate, no time for the community to review, and the City has failed.

**Bonnie Miller** - Seattle Audubon Society delivered testimony from the Society, which has 3,800 members in the Seattle area. She has mixed feelings on the project. The site has been poorly maintained for decades. She supports the view relief for those living above. She asked who will do the actual work, Parks staff or persons hired by the permit holders, and recommended that Parks staff do the work. She thinks the plan currently lacks adequate specifics; however, if the specifics were included it could be used as a model plan for other areas. She presented the Board written comments.

**Edwin Schubitt** - Spoke for himself and Mrs. Narduck, a longtime Perkins Lane resident. The new plan does not contain adequate detail. Two of the slides in tonight's presentation were pictures of areas not included in the project. He was out of town last weekend and just learned about the hearing in the mail, which was not reasonable notification. At the last meeting he attended, the plan was to cut four trees for views and now the plan has been changed. He believes the impetus is to give views to the homeowners above.

**Sue Pattonow** - Has lived in the Perkins Lane area for 27 years and believes the area needs attention. The growth is spindly and fragile and not what was shown in tonight's presentation. She presented two photos she had taken of the area and requested they be included with tonight's records. She urges Parks to apply the known best practices to the area and keep politics and emotions out of the decision.

**Diane Spalding** - Her father lives on Perkins Lane. She believes the water drainage needs to be addressed and believes that planting native dogwoods and rhodies is dressing up the area too much. She recommends that everyone work together in a civil manner.

**Tyler Allen** - Has lived in Perkins Lane for 22 years. He has empathy for the view seekers - it is a beautiful drive. He applauds the ivy removal in the bowl area but is against cutting trees on the slopes as it could decrease stability. He stressed that for some upper homeowners, their view is the trees - the homeowners just can't see through them. He is concerned about wildlife habitat being disturbed by the work and spoke of various

birds he has seen in the project area. He asked who will do the maintenance work after the three-year scope of the project has expired.

Public testimony was completed. At its June 13 Park Board meeting, the Board will discuss the VMP and make a recommendation. Board member Kathleen Warren asked that two questions be kept in mind: 1) how does thinning affect stability? and 2) are there points of agreement that the community agrees should be done?

The discussion closed at 8:55 pm. Chair Bruce Bentley thanked the audience for their participation.

**Park Board Business - None**

**New Business/Old Business:** Future agenda.

Susan will be excused from the June 13 meeting.

Patricia requested that the sponsorship and donor policies be included on the June 13 agenda for the Board's recommendation. A copy of the draft policies will be mailed to Board members. Sarah asked that when the Zoo Society takes over management of Woodland Park Zoo, if a young person would be appointed to its board. Patricia said the Parks Superintendent, Mayor, and City Council each appoint one position to the board. Bruce recommended this be expanded to two positions.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Bentley, Chair