

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES**

**August 22, 2002**

**Present:**

Bruce Bentley  
James Fearn, Jr.  
Susan Golub  
Sarah Neilson  
Kate Pflaumer  
Kathleen Warren

**Excused:** O. Yale Lewis, Jr.

**Staff:** Ken Bounds, Parks Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Kathleen moved that the agenda consent items, minutes of the August 8 meeting, and the acknowledgment of correspondence be approved. Item 4 on the agenda was deleted. Sarah seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.**

**Superintendent's Report:**

Superintendent Ken Bounds reported on the following:

*Colman Park Trees:* There has been intensive newspaper, radio, and television coverage of the cutting of numerous Colman Park trees under the direction of a private citizen. The individual hired a contractor to cut trees "on and near his property." Both the citizen and the contractor are responsible for the damage. The damage was discovered by a sewer inspector who notified the Parks Department. The citizen had received a permit in 1981 to top trees and do pruning, and would have been aware of the procedures for altering trees on Parks property. The King County Prosecutors Office is considering criminal charges and the City will probably file civil charges.

*Pioneer Square Pergola:* The newly-restored Pergola had a grand re-opening on Saturday, August 17, with approximately 500 community members in attendance.

*Green Lake Algae:* Green Lake will probably remain closed for the remainder of this year's swimming and small boating season. Despite the addition of water to the lake, which may help in the long run, most recent test results show that the toxin already released into the water is at a safe level, that there is a new algae bloom forming, and that the toxin contained in the cells of the algae (which can be released when cells die or break down), presents a potential health risk. This was the conclusion of professionals

from Public Health, Seattle Public Utilities, and Parks. The public will be urged to visit the seven Lake Washington beaches for swimming and small boating. Green Lake also experienced an outbreak of this toxin three years ago.

*Danskin Women's Triathlon:* Stan Sayres, Seward and Genesee Parks, and Lake Washington Boulevard provided an excellent venue for one of the largest national women's triathlon events, with approximately 8,000 participants. Swimmers took their mark at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 18, at Stan Sayres, followed by a 20K bike ride, and ended with a 5K run.

*Possible Advisory Council for Downtown Parks and Community Centers:* Parks staff received unanimous approval from the Downtown Parks Strategy Task Force on a proposal to create a downtown parks and facilities advisory council. The task force, a sub-committee of the Downtown District Council, has representation from all six downtown neighborhoods. The proposal is to create an advisory council for downtown with three sub-committees, one each for Belltown Community Council, Chinatown/International District Community Council, and one for downtown parks. Next steps are to present the proposal to the full Downtown District Council in September and brief the neighborhood committees. We expect that full approval will take several months. John Taylor of the City Council central staff advised the task force to keep the City Council informed as the proposal progresses. Parks Department will provide staff at the two future community centers and downtown parks.

*The Wiz With a Renaissance Swing:* Ken attended the opening performance of *The Wiz*, the annual teen musical produced by Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, which drew a full house at the Paramount. This annual event serves as summer camp for the participants and also provides summer employment. The performance was set in the 1920's, in the Harlem Renaissance, in honor of Langston Hughes' 100th birthday. Billie Holiday served as the Good Witch of the South and Langston Hughes as the Wiz. The 70 young people who had been rehearsing for eight weeks sang, danced, and acted their hearts out. All performances were "sold out."

*Seattle Aquarium:* A giant squid display will debut on Saturday, August 24. This rare 9-foot squid was found washed ashore at Hansville and has been preserved in alcohol for public display.

*ProParks Opportunity Fund Celebration:* Scheduled for October 2, Mayor Nickels will attend to celebrate and officially announce the 19 acquisition and development projects funded through the first cycle. Flo Ware Park is the likely location.

*Northgate Park, Community Center, and Library Acquisition:* The acquisition of the Bon Tire site at Northgate was completed on August 14. The 3.5 acres will encompass a new branch library, community center, and 1.7-acre park. Funding sources include the library bond measure, Community Center Levy, ProParks Levy, and County Conservation Futures Tax. An application has also been submitted for a State IAC grant. The ProParks Levy also provides \$1 million development for the new Northgate Park. Both the Library

and Parks continue to work on a Memorandum of Agreement to encompass design, construction, and public involvement. It is anticipated that this agreement will be finalized sometime within the next six weeks.

*Tall Ships:* Approximately 150,000 folks saw the 19-20 tall ships on their several-day visit to Seattle. The event went well, with no major problems.

*Personnel Issues:* A number of Parks staff applied for the Early Separation Incentive Program, which has a September 19 deadline. Applicants have seven days after the deadline (September 26) to change their minds. Those staff who are approved for the Early Separation will have a final working day of September 30. 120 of the 165 Zoo staff initially applied; Zoo Director Deborah Jensen has guaranteed that the Zoo will hire them on October 1.

*John Mitsules* died last week. John worked for the City for over 30 years and ended his career as the Parks Department safety officer. John is also remembered for his work in the Mayor's Office to help set up the "Little City Halls."

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

Bruce explained that the general public comment portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had or are not scheduled for a public hearing. No one signed up to give general public comment.

#### **Cheasty Boulevard/University of Washington Revocable Use Permits Discussion/Recommendation:**

David Goldberg, Parks project manager, and Terry Dunning, Property Manager, came before the Board on August 8 to give a detailed description of two Revocable Use Permit (RUP) requests from the University of Washington Laundry Facility near Cheasty Boulevard. Since the August 8 presentation, David attended a public meeting held by Sound Transit and gave a brief presentation to the public at the end of that meeting. Citizens have asked that a cut-through not be allowed at the parking lot at the current Canned Goods and laundry site.

With the Parks Superintendent's assistance, a new plan was devised so traffic will go down 27th to Hanford, then into the laundry facility. This is a significant benefit in the design. David displayed several large maps of the area and pointed out how the large trucks will access the laundry facility in this new design, which will be much more pedestrian-friendly. Seattle Transportation will make some improvements to 27th and Sound Transit will also perform collaborative work in this area.

The Board asked if Hanford is zoned as an industrial area. It is now zoned L-4, which is low-zone residential. In the long-term, it will be zoned as residential. The 10-truck deliveries per day will cause some conflicting use, as the neighborhood wants the area as residential use. Terry Dunning explained that this is a trade off. Kate asked about

mitigation (trading land in exchange for use of Park land, to satisfy the requirements of Initiative 42.) Terry said that is the second part of the RUP.

Kathleen asked about the paving that happened in the past week at Canned Foods. Canned Foods paved its drive and only had a permit to re-pave its parking lot. The drive, which isn't being used, must eventually be removed.

**Kathleen moved that the Board approve the requests and also recommend to City Council that it grant the permits. Kate seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.**

### **Sand Point/Magnuson Park Wetlands/Sports Fields FEIS Discussion:**

At its July 25 meeting, Parks staff Eric Friedli and Kevin Bergsrud came before the Board to give a briefing on the Drainage, Wetland/Habitat Complex and Sports Fields/Courts Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Since that meeting, three groups successfully filed appeals with the City's Office of Hearing Examiner, to review whether the FEIS adequately presented viable project alternatives and analyzed the potential environmental impacts of these alternatives. Eric explained that the Hearing Examiner will hear the appeal on October 21 and has scheduled four days for the hearing. After the hearing has concluded, the Hearing Examiner has 15 days to publish a decision. If the Hearing Examiner rules in favor of the project, further design work could continue. The appellant groups could still file an appeal in Superior Court; however, work on the project could progress.

Even though the Park Board cannot make a recommendation until after the Hearing Examiner has made a decision, Ken asked the Board to continue its discussion while both the Parks Department briefing and the public testimony is fresh in their minds.

The Board had a number of questions.

- In regards to a letter from Marty Kohlers and Co-Rec Soccer, will the full cutoff lights work for Little League? Parks staff answered yes.
- The Board received very late notice of the recent lighting demo at Lower Woodland fields. Parks athletic staff, Patti Petesch, answered that there will be another demo and the Board will be notified earlier. She described the results of the demo.
- The Board asked how the demo at Lower Woodland differed from the Sand Point demo held before the July 25 meeting. Eric answered that at Sand Point two lighting vendors demonstrated their lights. The lights at Lower Woodland were on the actual light poles; at Sand Point a 40' Genie lift was used. The actual field wasn't lit  $\frac{3}{4}$  the demonstration was to let the neighbors view the technology. The lighting angles weren't what the final angle will be.

Eric introduced project manager Guy Michaelsen and Jeff Girvin from landscape architecture firm, The Berger Partnership. He also introduced Diane Sheldon of Sheldon

and Associates, an environmental consulting firm that specializes in wetland analysis and restoration.

Several large drawings showing the scope and areas of the project were displayed. Guy and Eric described the five phases of the project. The first two phases are already completely funded.

*Phase I:* is the restoration and expansion of the existing sports meadow (Magnuson Fields, north central part of park) and will have no impact on the wetland.

*Phase II:* is the first of two mass grading periods. During this phase 25,000 square feet of wetland area will be filled in and 342,000 square feet of new wetland will be created.

*Phase III:* completes mass grading for the new sports fields, with some wet meadow and existing upland forest area being filled. 197,000 square feet of wetland will be destroyed. 129,500 square feet of new wetlands will be added by removing impervious surfaces (parking lots, etc.).

Guy said that Phase III is the "tricky" phase. The water must be treated appropriately as it moves from the sports fields to the lagoon. The new sports fields with its sub-turf drainage system will act like a big "sponge". That is, after soaking up on-site water it will slowly release it to wetland areas and Lake Washington. While the sports fields are under construction appropriate interim drainage measures will be taken.

*Phase IV:* 300,000 square feet of wetland will be filled and 70,500 square feet of wet meadow will become upland forest. Construction of the remaining athletic fields will be completed.

*Phase V:* Largest element will be the completion of the north Sand Point fields parking lot. This is also a catchall phase that would allow completion of project facilities and amenities such as landscaping, site furnishings, public art, etc.

Guy explained that the removal and destruction are in the last stages, not the beginning, of the project.

Diane urged the Board to visit the park and walk through it to observe the different areas. She explained the difference between "upland" and "wetland." The current wetlands have very low functional value. 30 years ago, the area was covered with asphalt (when the park was a Navy airfield.) The hard, compacted soil holds water pockets and it is considered a wetland because upland vegetation cannot grow in these conditions. With the proposed project, the federal, State, and local governments will look at increasing the function of the remaining soils. Consequently, the quantity loss of current wetlands is low, while the quality gain in the soils is high.

This is still an EIS. Parks hasn't applied for any environmental or construction permits. Federal and State agencies and the public will regulate and give the permit to proceed.

Susan asked about Phase IV and how the lagoon is fed. Diane answered that it has a groundwater source. It is an arm of Lake Washington and mimics whatever the lake does. The lagoon is not dependent on field water.

Susan asked how much Phase IV will cost; figures were not available at the meeting, but the information will be sent to the Board. Eric described the various funding sources. Kathleen asked what were citizens promised in Phases I and II? Eric and Ken answered that the public will get four lighted, synthetic fields (fields 7, 11, 14, and 15.) The ProParks Levy did not spell this out, as the Levy was not this specific. Eric said that in 1998 and 1999 the overall concept plan for the Park was developed after working with various groups and holding numerous community meetings. The concept plan was taken to City Council. City Council asked that planning for the fields be continued, which it was in 2000 and 2001. The plan was then taken back to City Council. The Park Board gave its unanimous approval to the plan in January 2001. Project managers, planners, and the public continue to look at the plan to make it better.

Patti Petesch discussed the citywide demand for additional fields; among adults the need is for additional soccer fields. Soccer players can play year round. Kate commented that the Park Board is not hearing from baseball and softball players.

Patti said that there is currently nowhere in Seattle that baseball players can play year round, but they will be able to at the proposed fields at Sand Point. There are currently no regulation-size men's slow pitch softball fields in Seattle. Many fields have been rehabilitated during the last ten years. Because the fields cannot be used for either softball or baseball during rehabilitation, fewer games have been scheduled. Lower Woodland Playfield is currently being rehabilitated, and then it will be available for fall baseball. Part of the decline in the demand for softball fields is also due to outlying areas building tournament complexes, which draw the teams away from Seattle. In the current Sand Point plan, two 90' baseball diamonds will be built next to each other for tournament play  $\frac{3}{4}$  the only such fields in Seattle.

Kate asked about the combined impact of noise and lights from putting so many fields in one area. Could some of the fields be unlit to reduce the impact? Susan said that 13-19 year-olds play first on baseball fields in the evening, and then the older players get the fields. Play begins in March and it is dark by 5:30 or 6:00 p.m.

Ken asked Guy and Diane to discuss what impacts can be mitigated. Guy said that wildlife and lights are the big issues and that (1) currently the plan may not be in conformance on lighting at field #14; (2) light poles will be visible to neighbors; and (3) the impact of the spill light (light which is visible behind the targeted area of lighting) is in conformance with City standards, but it can spill into the wetland area. So what is the impact on wetland habitat? Diane said that the answer is unknown, as no research has studied lighting that shines into wetlands for a portion of the night, and then is turned off. Research has been done in areas where lights shine into wildlife habitat all night. Lighting does affect insect behavior. The EIS states that science doesn't say whether there is an adverse affect or not an adverse affect. The City is willing to monitor the lit and

unlit wetland areas after the lights are installed and take steps if there is a difference found. Diane's proposed solution is to push the marshy pools towards the east and plant trees on the western edge.

James asked for further information on the spill of lighting and whether it would be dark on the backside of the lights. Guy talked about ambient lighting, or lighting that already exists in this area: reflected light, moonlight, etc. Diane said this is not a wilderness area. She was there late one evening, when it was cloudy and the reflective, or ambient, light clearly lit the walking areas. Kathleen asked what affect the lit fields at the University of Washington have on the nearby wetland areas and if there have been ill affects to wildlife from these lights. Eric said that the UW lights are brighter, but are not currently on nearly as often as the Sand Point field lights will be.

Sarah asked what monitoring and stewardship components were included in the wetlands plan. She supports trees separating the wetlands from the sports fields. She believes there is public concern that the wetlands won't succeed. Diane said that the permit process will require 10 years of monitoring. State and federal agencies will force the City to make the wetlands work  $\frac{3}{4}$  quantifiable measures will be set and monitored and annual reports must be submitted to the agencies. The Washington State Department of Ecology has the strictest standards of all 50 states. And the public will closely examine the permit and hold the City accountable.

Ken asked if Parks does what is designed, what is the chance of failure? Diane said that, although the margin of failure is very small, a lack of water and a lack of follow up would be reasons for failure.

Ken said the wetlands isn't mitigation, but is a primary focus of the infrastructure. Parks is just as committed to the wetlands as to anything else in Sand Point/Magnuson.

Sometimes, though, things don't work as planned in wetland areas. Diane talked about the problem of beavers cutting down trees at Meadowbrook Pond and Ken talked about the problem of abundant bullfrogs at Pritchard Beach.

Kathleen asked where the 2nd phase of transitional housing will be located. Eric showed on the diagram that all the new housing will be outside the spill light area. The difficulty is with the existing housing, where the light will be bright but not beyond what is allowed. Guy explained that there are three types of lighting expected at the complex: (1) glare, which is the actual visibility of the light source; (2) spill light, which is the light that spills beyond the area; and (3) sky glow, which is the glow over the field.

Ken has talked to Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) about developing/moving to housing further away from the lights/ballfields. Bruce asked about the timeline of the 2nd phase of housing and Eric said the units would be completed in late 2005 or early 2006. Tenants are allowed to stay in the housing 1-2 years. Planting 30' tall trees would block a portion of the light that will shine on the current transitional housing units, but would also block the wonderful views of the lake, park, and mountains.

Ken said a goal is to also restrict skyglow. Kathleen asked if, as a letter to the Board suggested, darker synthetic fields would absorb more of the light. Jeff said that darker fields are more expensive, absorb more heat during the day, and tend to fade. Patti said that the temperature on a 70-degree day could reach 90 degrees on a synthetic field. Guy said no matter what the synthetic field color, it will have a glossy sheen and if it is wet, will be reflective.

Kathleen asked about the noise issue. Is there an assumption of how many people will be playing and how many fans will be attending? Guy said that the complex is not providing a spectator facility, but assumes some fans will be there. More fans generally attend youth games, which are played earlier in the evening. Because the adult games are played later in the evening, fewer spectators attend. Eric distributed an information sheet on noise levels and Eric and Kevin discussed the ratings. Guy said that the only possible ordinance violations would be at field 7 and 11. Mitigation could consist of turning the fields in a different direction.

Sarah suggested that the "1% for Art" be looked at as a way to enhance the poles. Patti said that aluminum poles seem to fade into the background, as people get accustomed to seeing them.

Ken requested that at a future Board meeting, a discussion be held on how the fields would be scheduled and that all 11 fields won't be scheduled until 11:00 p.m. every night. Before the Board makes a recommendation, it will look at other forms of mitigation.

Because of time, James asked that the Board move on to the next portion of the agenda.

### **Park Board Business:**

**Joint Athletic Field Development Plan:** Kathleen will send her comments to the Board for the letter being drafted to City Council. She requests a more forceful letter, stating the Board's approval of the Plan.

**Hansa, the Baby Elephant:** The Board asked if there is a lawsuit regarding the recent allegations that a keeper struck the baby elephant. The Board also asked if there is a care-taking controversy. Ken said the keeper admits he struck Hansa with a control device approximately three times, and he reminded the Board that the keepers are very dedicated to Hansa.

**Advisory Councils:** Bruce sits on the Associated Recreation Council Board for new community centers. They will be meeting to help set up and recruit advisory councils for the new community centers being built.

**Leschi Community Council:** Kathleen asked about the recent letter from the Community Council regarding tree topping at Aldine Place and Leschi Natural Areas and stating that the nearby community was not contacted about the work. Mark Mead, Senior Urban Forester, forwarded copies of the letters that were mailed to the mailing route that



surrounds the park. A copy of both the Community Council and Mark's letters are to be forwarded to Ken for his review.

**Other Business:**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Bruce Bentley, Chair