

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES  
June 12, 2003**

**Present:**

Bruce Bentley, Chair  
James Fearn  
Joanna Grist  
Terry Holme  
Sarah Neilson

**Excused:**

Kate Pflaumer

**Staff:**

Ken Bounds, Parks Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. **Terry moved and Sarah seconded that the agenda consent items be approved, including the June 12 agenda, May 22 minutes as amended, and the acknowledgment of correspondence. The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.**

Sarah asked if Parks staff have prepared a response letter to the Friends of Seward Park regarding the Environmental Learning Center's budget. Ken said staff would follow up on this.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Ken Bounds reported on the following:

**Staffing Changes:** Ken welcomed Joanna Grist as the newest member of the Park Board. Tonight was the second meeting for Terry Holme. Efforts are underway to fill the remaining position on the Board.

Mayor Nickels has chosen Deputy Superintendent Patricia McInturff as new head of the Human Services Department (HSD). Patricia and her assistant Barbara Pelfrey are transitioning from Parks to HSD. Strategic advisor Alix Ogden and her family are moving to Providence, Rhode Island. All will be dearly missed by the Parks Department.

**City Council Parks Education and Library Committee (PEL):** Recently PEL endorsed the following: Parks' efforts to obtain ownership of the West Point Lighthouse; Audubon Agreement; Cascade Neighborhood Council agreement; and a \$1 land sale from Seattle Housing Authority to the Parks Department for Yesler Community Center.

**City Park Marine Reserves:** In July the Park Board will receive a briefing and hold a public hearing on a Park rule to create marine reserves in certain portions of Golden Gardens, Carkeek Park, South Alki/Richey Viewpoint, Lincoln Park, Schmitz Viewpoint,

and Discovery Park. These areas will benefit from enhanced protection as designated marine reserves.

***Illegal Beach Fires Update:*** During Memorial Day weekend only eight illegal beach fires were reported at Golden Gardens Park. In past years, illegal beach fires averaged 40 daily. This success is due to signs at the park, staff handing out explanatory brochures, and the presence of the roving Beach Patrol. Parks is working to expand these efforts to Alki Park.

***Maritime Heritage Foundation:*** The Foundation has agreed to formally suspend operations. The MHF Board believes that fundraising efforts may be more successful when the economic climate improves.

***Pro Parks Green Space Acquisitions Authorized:*** On June 2 the full City Council passed an ordinance to purchase green spaces with funding from the Pro Parks levy. Our acquisition efforts will be targeted on a shortlist of green spaces attached to the ordinance, including major greenbelts such as Duwamish Head and West Duwamish. This ordinance gives Parks more flexibility in purchasing green spaces and will allow for a faster processing time.

***Aquarium Holds Successful "Splash" Auction:*** The Seattle Aquarium's most successful fundraiser ever was held on May 30 at the Aquarium and the new Marriott Waterfront Hotel. Attendance increased from 350 guests in 2003 to 550 this year. More than \$375,000 was raised, with \$62,000 to be used for educational programs for at-risk kids.

***Sound Steps Walking Program:*** Senior Adult program staff and volunteers registered 431 walkers at six community centers. The senior adult team anticipates gathering more walkers as they begin neighborhood-based walks at Loyal Heights, Meadowbrook, Queen Anne, Garfield, Rainier, and Alki community centers.

***Wallingford Playfield Dedicated:*** Last Sunday, a large and enthusiastic crowd of adults and children joined the Friends of Wallingford Playfield and the Superintendent for the dedication of the renovated playfield at 43rd and Wallingford. The Friends group began work on this project in 1999, with the help of Neighborhood Matching funds. Pro Parks Levy funding allowed Parks to complete the playfield improvements that include a new path, park entrances, pool, and play area.

***Summer Programs to Begin:*** Later this month the summer playgrounds, day camps, wading pools, and beach programs get under way.

- Applications have been flowing in for the summer YES program, which is a volunteer middle school program with 150 spaces. A total of 142 applications have been received and an additional 18 applicants are on the waiting list for the July and August sessions. Youth hired through the YES program receive a stipend at the end of their session.

- STEP program: Last summer, 25 high school kids were hired through the STEP program. This summer, 50 youth will be hired to pull invasive plants and water vegetation. STEP is primarily funded by external sources.
- TREK: 15-20 junior naturalists will work at Seward Park this summer, providing educational classes to summer daycare kids.

**Upcoming events:** Groundbreaking ceremonies will be held for Lincoln Park P-Patch on Friday, June 13, at 4:30 p.m., and for Yesler Community Center on Friday, June 20, at 5:15 p.m.

Ken and Bruce will both attend the Urban Park Alliance Conference in New York and return to Seattle on June 26.

Fritz Hedges will substitute for Ken at the June 26 meeting.

The Board asked that invitations be sent to them for the Yesler Community Center ribbon-cuttings and other ceremonies. Parks staff will verify that mailing lists include current Park Board members.

### **Oral Requests and Communication 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. Testimony is limited to three minutes per speaker. Two people signed up to give testimony on non-public hearing topics:

**Dennis Ross:** representing the Admiral Community Council wants to bring an issue before the Board that is important to his community. The community supports the neighborhood plan for Hiawatha Playfield, but believes funding is not going where it should. Last week, the Parks Department's project manager said 40% of this projects' budget is to be used for overhead and expenses, which is excessive. The project's budget was reduced to \$340,000 by City Council and 40% of this equals \$136,000, leaving only \$204,000 to complete the project. Parks staff are insisting on an irrigation system for the playfield, although the neighborhood plan does not request irrigation. An irrigation system would further deplete the budget. Also, a charette was held with the University of Washington. West Seattle High School students participated in this charette and the community would like to see some of their ideas incorporated into the project.

**Renee Barton:** member of Seattle Residents for Fair Lighting. She is disappointed with the new Sand Point Magnuson Park Plan and believes the hours that ballfield lights are to be left on are still excessive. The light and noise during evening hours, especially during school, will impact Santos Place where kids sleep and study. She urges that lights be turned off earlier and fewer fields simultaneously lit. She has observed that nearby at Decatur Elementary School (40th and 75th NE), there are no weekend games on its ballfields. She urges that more of these unused fields be synthetically turfed and used on weekends before ballfields are lighted during weeknights.

**Brian Ramey:** lives in the University District. This is his first time to testify before the Park Board and he asks the Board's help in acquiring additional resources to acquire more open space in his high-density neighborhood. His neighborhood was lucky enough to get \$1 million in Acquisitions Funds because there is no open space in his area. Parks staff identified several good spots for open space and the community appreciates their work; however, there are two more possibilities at 4301 and 4307 that could be purchased. He distributed a conceptual drawing to the Board members of a passive park space at these spaces. One property is vacant and the second has a house on it. Both have been for sale for some time. He is upset that the property with the house was recently purchased by an organization for Asian students and they immediately began building onto the back of the property to increase the value of the property. He believes these properties should have been purchased for open space. Safeco is interested in giving money to help develop open spaces in this neighborhood. He asks the Board's assistance in acquiring open spaces.

**Gail Chiarello:** member of Friends of Magnuson Park and is proud to be a member of a city that has a public process. In tonight's Sand Point Magnuson Park briefing, Eric Friedli will most likely tell the Board about the long, drawn out public process and that there was a lot of public input; however, at some of the public meetings only 8-10 people attended. At most of the well-attended meetings, the majority opposed the sports complex or had serious reservations.

**Kim Wells:** member of Friends of Magnuson Park, daily park user, and lives close to Sand Point Magnuson Park. She read an excerpt from pages 16 and 17 of the Parks Department Joint Athletic Facilities Development Plan, "when deciding whether to put lighted ballfields into a neighborhood, four impacts should be considered: technology, topography, buffers, and existing ambient light." When Eric Friedli makes his presentation later tonight, consider why the plan is ignoring three of the four criteria when proposing 11 lighted ballfields:

Topography: the area is like an amphitheater and will affect tens of thousands of people all around the lake

Buffers: there are no existing trees large enough to shield 80' lights on poles. According to one study, there is likely to be four times more night skyglow than at Safeco Field

Existing ambient light: currently there is virtually no ambient light, other than the lighting from the UW family housing adjacent to the fields. The ballfields will be a dramatic increase in ambient lighting.

**Maggie Kitch:** lives in Santos Place transitional housing. There was an article in today's newspaper about her, as she lives in the housing. The 42 Santos Place residents who currently live there love the park the way it is. She lives next to the proposed fields. Please don't ruin the park.

**Sara Kupor:** distributed a poster to the Board members showing what Sand Point Magnuson Park looks like now and the proposed location of the fields. She stated that a 1999 study by King County Department of Development and Environmental Services showed that 90% of wetland restoration projects fail. The lights and noise that this project would create would doom its success. No neighborhood should have to suffer these

industrialized effects. Please consider an alternative site study before this project continues.

**Tom Yelin:** is a private citizen with no affiliation with any of the groups involved in this project. He believes that this project, as planned, is not in scale. As a passionate environmentalist, he has great concerns as to how this project will affect one of the last remaining stretches of relatively undeveloped shoreline along the western side of Lake Washington. The project will obliterate some of the habitat for species living there and significantly alter the rest of the habitat. He is an amateur astronomer who lives 1-1/2 miles west of the park and believes the lights will have a negative impact on astronomy. He is also concerned about traffic and noise from a project of this scale. The ballfield area is aimed at adult usage. He would prefer not to see any development; however a compromise could be reached by scaling back the project: 1. eliminate 30% of play fields by area and squeeze them together east-west to increase the buffer between housing to the east and Lake Washington to the west; 2. install full cutoff lights; 3. shine the lights downward; and 4. use energy efficient lights.

**Tom Knoblauch:** testified at the May 22 Park Board meeting regarding the Union Pacific railroad tracks near Georgetown Playfield. He reported that business groups had a meeting and a representative from Union Pacific was scheduled to attend. Superintendent Bounds stated that Parks Department staff visited the site, reviewed the jersey barriers, and believe the barriers help protect the playground.

The neighborhood is looking forward to the opening of Oxbow Park in the Georgetown area. Some residents will be doing a June 28 neighborhood cleanup at the new acquisition at Gateway North, in Duwamish at 8th Avenue South. Tom distributed invitations to the Georgetown Art and Garden Walk, Sunday, July 13.

**Mike Fenton:** is president of Windermere North Community Association. He doesn't want to repeat what has already been said the noise, lights, and traffic issues speak for themselves as problems in a residential neighborhood. The Board has immense power and what it decides to do with the park is important, not just for now, but for the next 100 years. As the Board has heard from previous testimony, wetlands and wildlife don't necessarily come back once disturbed. He gave Cressey Field in San Francisco as an example to follow. Cressey was once a funky, bad area where 4th of July firework displays were held. It, like Magnuson, was once wetlands, which had been covered. The City of San Francisco totally redeveloped Cressey Park into a beautiful area by removing the concrete and restoring the wetlands. There are playfields there, but they aren't lit at 11:00 pm at night. You don't do this in the middle of a city. He resents paying taxes to redevelop the park into artificially-turfed and night-lighted sports fields, after which private citizens will not be allowed to use the fields unless they pay fees. This is not a good deal for the citizens of Seattle. Keep Magnuson as a park for all. He objects to the organized sports lobby that is trying to turn the park into Safeco Field. This is entirely inappropriate.

**Sharon Levine:** has been coming to Park Board meetings for years to testify. Citizens from living in or near Queen Anne, Meadowbrook, Ingraham High, Jane Adams and Nathan Hale schools, around Miller Playfield, and all over the city have come before the Board to testify against ballfield lights in their neighborhoods. Some audience members may not realize that Parks has a plan to light virtually every existing field, so every neighborhood is being impacted. Magnuson is more impacted because of the number of fields. There are two new Board members and one has been involved in the organized athletic fields preparations. It is time for the Board and Parks Department to understand the pain of tens of thousands of citizens and look for alternatives. Consider adding these lit fields in industrial areas, which would be more appropriate. She is not opposed to ballfields, but is opposed to the impact that these artificial fields and lights have on neighborhoods. Parks should go back and explore south of Safeco Field and Harbor Island as potential sites.

### **Park Board Foundation Bi-yearly Update**

Park Foundation Director Karen Daubert came before the Board to give a bi-yearly update on the Foundation and distributed a handout. She last briefed the Board in October 2002 and a great deal has happened since then. The Parks Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization founded by and comprised of leaders of the civic, business, and philanthropic community to bring in private resources to our Seattle Parks.

Karen gave highlights of various projects the Foundation is working on:

- The major project has been the new South Lake Union Park. Park Board members will hear a briefing and hold a public hearing on this park at its June 26 meeting.
- Last week, a dedication of Schurman Rock at Camp Long in West Seattle was held. This climbing rock is the first man-made one in the nation, and possibly in the world. Due to budget cuts and other priorities, it was not a priority for the Parks Department. The Foundation stepped in to do the repairs. The repair project cost \$90,000, with REI donating \$45,000 in a matching grant. The Mountaineers Club donated \$25,000 and individuals donated the remainder of the funds. The project was a model on how to operate - bringing in foundations, organizations, and individuals who are passionate about Seattle's parks.
- Maple Elementary Children's Play Area in Southeast Seattle opened on June 10. It is the first Seattle School District property project the Foundation has undertaken. This playground, which was falling apart, has been turned into a magical area for kids to play.
- Volunteer Park Lily Ponds is a \$200,00 project. Parks Foundation received donations from three foundations. This was the first Olmsted Centennial restoration project. The twin lily ponds sit between the Asian Art Museum and the reservoir. The ponds had been empty and broken. The groundbreaking event was held at the closing ceremonies of the Olmsted Conference and work will be completed in fall of 2003.
- Benefit Park is a wonderful park at the south end of Beacon Hill. The Foundation worked with the community on the design of this project and will be assisting them with the fundraising.

- Thyme Patch Park is a tiny park in Ballard. The Foundation helped fund the entryway. Karen highly recommended a visit to this park.
- Volunteer Park entry is the brand new entry at 14th Ave. This was another Olmsted Centennial project.
- Olmsted Walking Tours are held the third Saturday of each month, 10:00 am-noon. The next tour will be at Woodland Park on Saturday, June 21. The Foundation hosts these tours, which are open to everyone.
- Homer Harris Park was a gift of \$1.3 million for the acquisition and development of a brand new park in the Central Area. The land has been acquired, through an excellent partnership with Pro Parks.

Since last year, the Foundation has raised almost \$2 million for our Seattle parks. Karen gave credit to an incredible Seattle Parks Foundation Board that is completely committed to improving Seattle parks and bringing in private resources. It is also a credit to the outstanding partnership with Parks Department staff who have shown incredible vision and flexibility working with the new Parks Foundation. She invited the audience to spread the word about the Foundation. Donations are welcomed and may be contributed through the web site at <http://www.seattleparksfoundation.org>

### *Questions & Answers*

Terry asked about the timeline on Homer Harris Park. Karen answered that it will take four-to-six months to complete the design, with construction being completed sometime in 2004-2005.

Joanna, after reviewing the financial statement, had a question on the budget. Karen answered that this was the previous budget. A new budget takes effect at the end of June and will show updated figures. Joanna asked where the \$2 million came from. Karen answered that the donations came primarily from foundations and individuals. The \$1.3 million for the Homer Harris Park was an anonymous donation.

Bruce commented that the Homer Harris park is outstanding and that Karen is doing a great job as Parks Foundation Director. Karen was previously a Park Board Commissioner. The Board thanked Karen for the presentation.

### **Sand Point Magnuson Park Drainage, Wetland/Habitat Complex and Sports Fields/Courts Project Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Briefing**

*Along with a written briefing, the Park Board received the following:*

*(Attachment #1) Public Outreach*

*(Attachment #2) 9/23/99 (Not available online)*

*(Attachment #3) 1/11/02,*

[http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/01\\_11\\_01\\_Minutes.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/01_11_01_Minutes.htm)

1/25/01, [http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/01-25-01\\_Minutes.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/01-25-01_Minutes.htm)

2/8/01, [http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/02-08-01\\_Minutes.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/02-08-01_Minutes.htm)  
Attachment #4) 7/25/02, [http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/2002/07-25-02\\_Minutes.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/2002/07-25-02_Minutes.htm)

8/22/02, [http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/2002/08-22-02\\_Minutes.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard/minutes/2002/08-22-02_Minutes.htm)

(Attachment #5) *Figure 1-5, Site Plan, Proposed Action*

(Attachment #6) *Table 1.5-1, Environmental Impacts of Alternatives*

(Attachment #7) *Schematic Design: Drainage, Wetland/Habitat Complex, and Sports Field/Courts Drainage*

### **Written Briefing**

The plan for the wetland/habitat complex and sports field complex at Sand Point Magnuson Park has been an evolving process since 1999. Attachment 1 highlights the public outreach and participation since 1999. The Board of Park Commissioners has reviewed this project at various stages in its evolution. Nearing completion of the environmental review process, it is now appropriate for final recommendations and decisions for the project.

## **BACKGROUND**

**CONCEPT DESIGN RECOMMENDATION - 1999.** Presentation, discussion, and Board recommendation occurred on September 23, 1999. The Park Board minutes from that meeting are attached for your information (Attachment 2). This recommendation was for the Concept Design for Sand Point Magnuson Park and included components beyond the wetland/habitat and sports field complex including the dog off-leash area. Following a presentation by staff and the design team (Ilse Jones, Jones and Jones), the Park Board recommended a plan with nine lighted, synthetic surface fields and an unlighted, grass-surfaced sports meadow and a large wetland area adjacent to Lake Washington. It also included six lighted tennis courts, three lighted basketball courts, a nine-acre dog off-leash area, community garden, and other amenities. The Concept Design approved by City Council resolution (November 1999) altered the recommended plan of the Park Board by moving the off-leash area to a different location within the Park, which resulted in a revised layout of the sports fields. The City Council maintained the number of fields and requested the Parks Department to develop recommendations on possible additional fields and lights.

**SPORTS FIELD CONFIGURATION - 2001.** A staff presentation and Board discussion on January 11, 2001; a public hearing on January 25, 2001; and the Board's unanimous recommendation of a revised sports field configuration on February 8, 2001. The Park Board minutes from that series of meetings are attached for your information (Attachment 3). The revisions to the Concept Design pertained to the configuration of the sports fields. The revised configuration included 11 fields with synthetic surfaces. No determination on lighting was included in the recommendation. Lighting was to be addressed following completion of the environmental review process. The City Council



unanimously adopted the revised configuration on April 2, 2001. This proposal was used as the basis for the preferred alternative in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**FINAL PLAN RECOMMENDATION - 2003.** A public hearing and staff presentation on July 25, 2002; staff presentation and Board discussion August 22, 2002. The Park Board minutes from those meetings are attached for your information (Attachment 4). Attachment 5 shows the proposal as presented in 2002. The Board deferred making a recommendation until the appeals to the environmental impact statement were completed. The Department published a final environmental impact statement (FEIS) in July 2002 and the appeal hearing was held in January 2003. The hearing examiner issued her decision in February 2003 requiring the Department to do additional analysis on the impact of sports field noise on wildlife. That analysis has been completed and was issued as a final supplemental environmental impact statement (FSEIS) on May 16, 2003. The appeal period on the FSEIS ends on June 17. The summary table from the FEIS and the FSEIS are included in Attachment 6.

### **CHANGES TO 2002 PROPOSAL**

Staff has worked with the consultant team to revise the proposal based on the findings of the environmental review and following additional input from the community. The Board is now being asked to make a recommendation on the final proposal. The changes to the proposal analyzed in the EIS and presented to the Park Board in 2002 are highlighted below. Attachment 7 shows the revised proposal.

- **WETLAND HABITAT COMPLEX:** There are no proposed changes in the 65-acre wetland/habitat complex.
- **SPORTS MEADOW:** There are no proposed changes to the 15-acre sports meadow. It is proposed to be grass surface with no lights.
- **SPORTS FIELD COMPLEX:**
  - **Configuration:** The most substantial proposed change is in the configuration of the 11 sports fields proposed to have synthetic surface and be lighted. The proposed reconfiguration is in response to issues highlighted in the EIS pertaining to potential noise and light impacts on close-by existing residential buildings. The primary concern was the proximity of the full size baseball diamonds to the transitional homeless housing building to the west. The housing is operated by the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI). LIHI originally appealed the EIS but after working with the Department on the proposed reconfiguration they withdrew their appeal and have agreed to support the new configuration.

In the revised configuration

- The five baseball/softball diamonds are moved to the south end of the site
- The four soccer and one rugby field are moved to the north end of the site
- The parking lot across the street from the housing is moved north across from the recreation center parking lot

- A more neighborhood-park like area is created immediately east of the residential area that will include the youth soccer field, the basketball and volleyball courts, and other park amenities such as benches and picnic tables
  - The pedestrian circulation is modified to fit the new configuration
  - A stronger connection is created between the existing children's playground and the wetland/habitat complex
- Hours of Operation: The proposal recommended for analysis in the EIS left unresolved the hours of operation. The analysis conducted in the EIS assumed that all 11 fields could potentially be lighted until 11:00 p.m. with no restrictions as to seasons of play or days of week. As a result of the EIS analysis and working with LIHI, the follow proposal for hours of operation was developed.

The hours of operation proposal:

- The lights on the youth soccer field (#10) will be turned off no later than 9:00 p.m. year round
  - Lights on the 10 remaining fields may be on until 10:00 p.m.
  - Lights on five fields only may be on until 11:00 p.m.
  - Lights on the soccer field (#7) and the little league field (#11) closest to the residential area would be the last ones to have lights on
  - Minimal security lighting would remain on for 15 minutes after the main field lights are off
- ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The Department is completing an addendum to the EIS that will provide a summary of the differences in the environmental impacts between the proposal as analyzed in the FEIS and the revised proposal. The analysis has been completed and the addendum is expected to be released by the end of June. The revised proposal is in response to the findings of the EIS and results in less potential environmental impacts.
  - Noise: The EIS identified noise association with the full-size baseball diamond closest to the housing as a potential significant adverse environmental impact because it potentially generated noise levels in excess of the Seattle Noise Ordinance after 10:00 p.m. The reconfigured layout moves this field farther away from the housing, diminishing this potential impact. The EIS recommended looking at field reconfiguration to address noise impacts.
  - Lighting: The EIS identified the potential for significant unavoidable adverse impacts associated with lighting. It identified restricted hours operation and additional vegetation between residential area and the lights, among other things, as potential mitigation measures. The revised proposal reduces the hours of operation and is specific on which fields would be lighted in order to reduce potential impacts on the residential area. The reconfiguration of the fields also results in more screening by existing trees and topography of the lights. It also places the fields more distant from residential areas, which will result in less spill light impacts.

- Other: No other elements of the environment were identified as having significant impacts that would be addressed by the revised proposal.

### ***Verbal Briefing***

Superintendent Bounds asked the Board to consider how it wants to move ahead with the review process - does it wish to have further public process and possibly another public hearing?

Several Parks Department staff and consultants came before the Board to give a verbal briefing and to answer questions: Sand Point Magnuson Park Director Eric Friedli, project manager Kevin Bergsrud, Citywide Recreation Manager Patti Petesch, Guy Michaelson and Jeff Girvin from The Berger Partnership (landscape architecture firm), and Diane Sheldon of Sheldon and Associates (environmental consulting firm that specializes in wetlands analysis and restoration).

Eric gave an overview of the process that has led to this point: a public hearing was held in July 2002, followed by a Park Board discussion in August. Three appeals were filed with the Hearing Examiner and the Park Board delayed a decision. Two of the appellants, Seattle Audubon Society and Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), withdrew their appeals. In January, the Hearing Examiner ruled in favor of the Park Department on seven of eight issues of the remaining appeal. The Hearing Examiner required additional analysis on the impact of sportsfield noise on wildlife. The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement has been released, with an appeal deadline of June 17.

In the additional analysis, the Parks Department, in conjunction with LIHI, looked at potential impacts listed in the EIS on Santos Place, one of the transitional homeless housing residential units located closest to the sports complex. More specifically, they looked at some of the measures to improve the design and mitigate the potential impacts for this particular building and to the other components, as well.

Eric described the field alternative, which included reorganizing the baseball diamonds, soccer, and rugby fields. The two proposed parking lot entrances were consolidated into one and moved further north and away from the housing. The hours of operation of the ballfield lights were changed: the lights on the youth soccer field (#10) will be turned off no later than 9:00 p.m. year round; lights on the 10 remaining fields may be on until 10:00 p.m.; lights on five fields only may be on until 11:00 p.m.; lights on the soccer field (#7) and the little league field (#11) closest to the residential area would be the last ones to have lights on; and minimal security lighting would remain on for 15 minutes after the main field lights are off. Parks staff and the consultants then developed a process addendum to the FSEIS to look at the effects of these changes.

Next, Guy Michaelson briefly discussed how the project got to this point. Two large drawings and photos were displayed. Guy discussed the new, additional design changes - the wetlands design remains unchanged; the only changes have to do with the arrangement of the sportsfields and more programmed areas. Athletics are grouped to use the fields more efficiently; parking lots are consolidated from four to three with the same

amount of parking spaces, which reduced the amount of paved area by one acre; the circulation pattern is improved; fingers of vegetative wetlands areas that extend to the sportsfields are enlarged; and the interesting concept of this urban park which used to be an airstrip is reflected in the design.

Ken asked for a more detailed description of the wetlands. Diane gave details. When the park was an airfield, two thirds of the eastern side of the park was asphalt. This asphalt was pushed aside and is under the area of the park now known as "Kite Hill". The current shoreline consists primarily of broken asphalt.

The vegetation and habitats that are in the park came into being 30-40 years ago. Today's habitat established itself mostly through benign neglect. The design in the habitat portion maintains the existing native trees and shrubs that aren't in the footprint of proposed fields.

Water from the artificial surfaces will channel water to the wetlands in the future. Without the proposed fields, the hydrology for the vegetation would be different. The current wetlands are due to "dimples" in the flat, nearly impervious soil. When it rains, the water collects and creates the wetland areas. The proposed future conditions were derived from a well-attended charette that included scientists, educators, kids, and neighbors of the park. The synopsis of this charette was "give us as much habitat as you can, give us different types of habitat, and give us areas of habitat where people can't go."

Before the airfields were built, before Lake Washington was lowered 8.8 feet, and before the Ballard Locks were built, there was a huge wetland area named Mud Lake. It is impossible to recreate Mud Lake; however, the plan gives the flavor of it by creating a lagoon habitat. Diane pointed to the map to show how the road becomes a pervious barrier to keep bass and carp from moving into the interior of the wetland area.

Diane asked to clarify testimony that was given earlier in the meeting regarding a 90% failure rate of wetland restoration projects. She assisted in the 1998 study cited, which was based on early 1990s information. Although many wetland mitigation restorations did fail, the report did not state that 90% of the mitigation sites fail; it said that "90% of the sites fail to meet the performance standards". To clarify this, Diane said that if she said she would lose 50 lbs of weight and only lost 49, she would have failed to meet the performance standards set, which was to lose 50 lbs.

Diane also referred to the testimony regarding Cressey Field and its excellent restoration of wetlands. Staff visited Cressey Fields before the design process to assist in the wetlands restoration of Sand Point Magnuson Park. Joanna asked if wetlands mitigation has improved since the 1990s and Diane said both the restoration methods and the oversight are greatly improved. Some mistakes are still made, but not nearly as many.

Terry asked how much maintenance is involved in developing ongoing wetlands mitigation. Diane answered that lack of water and poor design cause the most critical maintenance needs. Maintenance is very high for the first ten years. Controlling invasive

plants is the biggest challenge at this site. The second worse problem is the poor soil that has had little or no improvement in the last 40 years. Part of the challenge will be to get nutrients to the soil.

The red alders will grow until the conifers mature. Eventually the trees will grow to be 80 feet, and will shield the wetlands from the ballfields, but not in our lifetime. These trees will begin blocking views as they grow taller.

James asked about maintenance costs. Diane has not calculated this, but could do so by acre. The good news is that as time goes on maintenance costs decrease.

Sarah asked how Seattle Audubon's appeal to the Hearing Examiner was resolved. Eric said the appeal was withdrawn three weeks after it was filed. Seattle Audubon decided that although it still has issues with the plan, appealing the EIS was not the way to get the issues addressed.

Diane stated that an issue Audubon has raised before is how much of an area (pointed to on the map) is wetlands? The City hasn't yet delineated the wetlands; however, as the design progresses the wetlands delineation will be required. The amount of wetlands habitat in the plan has been maximized by the design itself, and not because mitigation required a certain amount of wetlands acreage. What is not known is whether this is enough wetlands mitigation. Because there are wetlands issues here, either The Army Corp of Engineers or Washington State Department of Ecology will take jurisdiction and will require the City to have appropriate levels of mitigation.

James asked if Nature were left alone, what would be there. Diane answered that if Nature were left alone, then the Ballard Locks would have to be removed, Cedar River's flow would be reversed, and all the houses surrounding the watershed would have to be removed. If the fields were left alone, there would be habitat. Improving the water flow will give good habitat.

James asked if there are impacts in the FSEIS that cannot be mitigated. Eric answered that putting in lights will significantly change the environment. Ken referred to the table in the EIS that describe the proposed action, lesser capacity alternative, and no action alternative. Eric said that the plan reduces impervious surface from the previous plan, which is an improvement. Joanna asked if the fields are considered pervious. Eric answered that the fields must be vertically drained and are considered pervious.

Sarah asked if LIHI approves the FSEIS. Eric said LIHI is satisfied with the new layout of the fields, but continues to advocate for fewer hours of ballfield operation. Sarah asked - to put the distance in perspective - for a comparison of how close the lights would be to the transitional housing at LIHI. The lights are approximately 350' from the housing. Staff referred to a building approximately 350' from the Park Board Room.

Terry asked about the administrative timeline for the addendum to the EIS. Eric answered that the supplement can be appealed until June 17. If there is no appeal, the Park Board

could make a recommendation to the Park Department Superintendent, and then the plan could go to City Council for approval. If an appeal is filed, the plan may be through the appeal process by October. Kevin said that if an appeal is filed, the Hearing Examiner would not examine the entire plan again, but rather would examine the adequacy of what the Parks Department was instructed to do - perform additional analysis on the impact of sportsfield noise on wildlife.

Diane stated that the Examiner's requirement addresses just the issue of sound on wildlife. No scientific studies could be found on the impacts of sportsfield lighting on habitat. The conclusion is that it will affect the habitat, but there is not a conclusion that it would destroy all habitats. Some wildlife will leave, some will adapt. There may be a shift in species and species' use of the park.

Ken asked about the impact of sportsfield sounds on the habitat. Diane answered that sound impact is as hard to pinpoint as light impact. Bats cracking, car doors slamming, and crowds shouting may cause a shift in habitat. Today's habitat is probably different from what will live there in the future.

Terry asked about the lighting technology. Eric and Guy discussed the difference between full cut off and shielded conventional lights. Low sodium bulbs will be used at the park. As construction nears, staff will review the lighting decisions and look for improved lighting technology.

Bruce asked about the hours of use for the fields and whether all 11 would ever be lit at once. Patti said no and listed the proposed schedule.

James asked if most baseball fields are used only during the March to October months. Patti said most of the baseball fields wouldn't usually be in use on winter evenings. Ken said that soccer is the sport most often played year round.

Joanna asked if staff looked at dimmer/lower wattage bulbs for the fields. Eric gave a rating scale, based on brightness, of various fields: lowest level for safe play on the field, #4; slightly higher lighting level for the audience area, #3, Husky stadium, #2; and Safeco Field, #1. The class of field lights proposed for Sand Point Magnuson Park is #4. Ken said that the Department performed a study last year and concluded that #4 was adequate for most of its ballfields. Other Park Department ballfields rate as follows: Interbay, #2; Lower Woodland Field number one, #3; all other fields, #4. Patti suggested that, for additional comparison, consider Memorial Stadium as a #2, Husky Stadium as a #1, and Safeco Field as a #111 (triple one). Terry said he was involved in the lighting study, which is easy to read and is public record. Other agencies come to Seattle to review this cutting-edge study.

Bruce said that several years ago Park Board members did a site tour to view different lighting levels. Sarah asked that the current Board members have a similar site visit. Parks Department staff will make the arrangements.

***What's Next***

Ken asked how the Board would like to proceed on this project. He has discussed the process with Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck and City Council intends to hold a full public hearing when the project comes to it for consideration. If there is no appeal, the Board could continue the process by reviewing the plan and taking action during the next few Park Board meetings. If the project is appealed, the project would be held in abeyance.

James said he did not believe there is a need for the Park Board to hold another public hearing. Members can review the information in environmental documents and make a recommendation. Sarah agreed with James. Ken said that, if there is no appeal, the project could come back to the Park Board for consideration in early July.

Terry said he heard a rumor of a possible lawsuit and asked at what point a lawsuit is no longer a threat. Ken answered that when City Council takes action on the project, it could be challenged in court. However, once the appeals process has been satisfied, there must be a reason for the challenge.

The Board thanked Eric, Guy, and other staff for the briefing.

**Park Board Business**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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