

**Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2004**

Present: Bruce Bentley, Chair
James Fearn
Joanna Grist
Terry Holme
Kate Pflaumer

Excused: Sarah Neilson

Staff: Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Michele Daly for Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Note: Archived agendas and minutes from January 2000 to present may be viewed online at
<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/parkboard>

Chair Bruce Bentley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **James Fearn moved and Terry Holme seconded that the February 12 agenda, January 22 minutes, and acknowledgment of correspondence be approved; the motion carried unanimously.**

Superintendent's Report

Parks Superintendent Ken Bounds reported on the following:

Regrade Park: The first volunteer work party was held on February 8; volunteers spread chips, added rock to tree wells, helped lay out the dog exercise area, and generally cleaned the park. Fencing is being installed this week. It is anticipated that the opening party will be scheduled for early March.

Seattle Beach Marine Reserves: Illustrated signs have been installed in view of beach visitors to help protect the marine habitat at six Seattle area beaches that have been designated "marine reserves." The signs highlight the richness of Seattle beaches and the need to protect them as reserves. An educational campaign will begin when the Beach Naturalist Program starts this spring.

Clean Seattle Projects: Two special events are being planned as part of the overall Clean Seattle effort. On March 13, a partnership between Parks and the Boating Advisory Council will mobilize about 200 volunteers for an afternoon of shoreline cleanup along Lake Washington Boulevard from Mount Baker Beach to Seward Park. On May 15, in partnership with Puget Sound Keepers Alliance, the second annual Lake Union cleanup, featuring about 300 volunteers, will take place from South Lake Union Park.

Green Lake Alum Treatment: A contractor is now on board and will begin the project on March 1st with completion anticipated three weeks later.

South Lake Union Wharf and Park: The contractor, S. L. Larsen, began work on the South Lake Union Wharf, Phase II. This phase of the project includes the decking, guardrails, and building out the finger pier to accept transient vessels, such as the Virginia V. The pedestrian seating and other amenities will also be installed.

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center: Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center returned to full-scale operations on February 8 with a gala inaugural evening of “Illuminating Langston.” This celebration of Langston Hughes’ contribution to American arts and culture was one of several elements of Seattle Parks Department celebrating Black History Month. Hosted by City of Seattle First Lady Sharon Nickels and two former First Ladies — Pam Schell and Dr. Constance Rice — several hundred members of the arts community enjoyed a performance reception. Artistic Director Jackie Moscou and former Mayor Norm Rice shared master of ceremonies responsibilities, while a host of African-American and other artists read or performed selected works of Langston Hughes.

STEP Program Funding and Planning for Summer 2004: The 2004 Pro Parks Youth/Teen Development Fund awarded the maximum \$10,000 for the 2004 STEP program. With this funding, the \$10,000 from the ARC Opportunity Fund, and another \$15,000 from the Colman Park Fund, the Parks Department will be able to hire at least 50 teens again this summer. Other outside funding options are still in the works, with a goal of hiring one teen for every park district, or 90 teens.

High Point Community Center Update: The High Point Community Center is nearing completion, with the ribbon cutting ceremony and open house event scheduled for March 20.

Flower and Garden Show: The Department had a booth on the topic of invasives. Lots of people stopped by the booth and, unlike ten years ago, many people today know about invasive plants.

Other Topics:

At its January 22 meeting, the Park Board discussed and made a recommendation on the new Homer Harris Park. Terry noted that, as part of the recommendation, Parks Department staff were asked to schedule an additional community meeting, mainly focusing on the trees, for the new park. He asked that the Board receive a brief report on this meeting at its February 26 meeting.

Joanna Grist recently spoke with Lisa Pelly of the Fish and Wildlife Commission and when they were hearing about the marine reserves there was concern about outreach to tribal members. The Superintendent stated there is a little confusion and what the Department is doing is an educational effort and has not changed any laws. There are harvesting laws at the State level and enforcement may be changed. Paula Hoff, Parks Strategic Advisor, stated there was a miscommunication about what the Department’s marine reserves are and what the State is trying to accomplish. Educational signs have been installed, brochures will be printed and the Department’s Beach Naturalist will begin the educational campaign this public this spring and summer. Meetings are being set up with the Asian/Pacific Islanders and the tribal community to explain what the State and the Department is doing, as there is a change in policy regarding fishing.

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. Four people signed up to testify.

Kelly O'Neill, Puget Sound Skatepark Association, expressed appreciation to Park Board Coordinator Sandy Brooks for the helpful information she provided. Kelly is a skateboarder and supports the inclusion of the Ballard Skateboard Park into the planned municipal park in Ballard. The skateboard park that is at the nearby site in Ballard now fills an immediate need for the community. If the park is truly going to be multifunctional it needs to have a place for sunbathers and Frisbee throwers, as the Ballard Chamber of Commerce has suggested, and it also needs room for the skateboarders. Skateboarding is one of the fastest growing sports in the U.S. and one of the biggest recreational activities. This park provides a safe and controlled environment for the skaters. The bottom line is common sense dictates that the skate bowl be kept as it is, as it is valued at \$75,000-\$100,000. Kelly asked the Park Board to continue their support of the skateboard park and also support more skateboard parks in the Seattle area.

Michael Starnes, Director of the “Scott Starnes Give it to Kids Fun(d)” informed the Board that his son was killed three years ago. Scott was a professional skate and snowboarder and was the center of all skateboarding and snowboarding in the northwest. The fund in his name was set up to help underprivileged kids with alternative sports. He would be very happy to support any fundraising, as more skateboard parks are needed in Seattle. Scott had a part in digging the West Seattle skate bowl and has had several skateboard parks named after him, including a 30,000 square foot skate park on Orcas Island another one going up in Port Angeles, and one in Kent. There has been a misconception about skaters. Most of the skaters’ priorities are family, friends, animals, and Mother Nature. Almost every Olympic snowboarder began as a skateboarder. The Foundation will do everything it can to keep the skateboard park in Ballard.

Mark Servine, Puget Sound Skatepark Association, supports the skateboard park in Ballard. The skateboard park was largely built through community participation. The bowl is one of the best in the area and, on any given day, there is anywhere from 30-60 skateboarders at the park. Skateboarding is the sixth most popular sport in the country today. There are 13 million participants of all ages and it fuels a \$30 billion dollar industry. Seattle has 204 fields and only two skateboard parks. Mark and the Puget Sound Skatepark Association would like to encourage the Department of Parks and Recreation to pursue its Skateboard Draft Policy June 2003. A good start would be to keep the Ballard bowl.

Matthew Johnston, Puget Sound Skatepark Association, stated that the Association is organized, serious, and dedicated to their sport and to the community. There is a community based around this activity that is healthy and positive. A letter to the Ballard News Tribune by the Ballard Chamber of Commerce advocating the destruction of the bowl stated it was noisy and bad for business in Ballard. Matthew is an audio consultant and did sound readings today and has data that basically refutes that claim. He noted the grocery store was louder and in violation of the noise ordinance. He spoke to businesses in the area and they are vehemently supportive of the skateboard park and the business it brings to Ballard. He will forward letters of support from the businesses to the Department.

The Board will be scheduling a public hearing in April or May. Terry Holme recommended the skateboard group introduce themselves to the Seattle Sports Advisory Council, as the purpose of the Advisory Council is to actually get different user groups to work together.

Olympic Sculpture Park Update

Mimi Gates, Director of the Seattle Art Museum (SAM), thanked the Board for this Olympic Sculpture Park briefing opportunity and introduced Chris Rogers, the Director of Capital Projects at SAM. Mimi and Chris gave the Board a general overview of the progress that has been made on the park. In 1999, SAM purchased the 8.5-acre former industrial property on the waterfront for art and people in downtown Seattle. The park is located in Belltown with spectacular views of the Olympic Mountains, Elliott Bay, and the city. It is adjacent to Myrtle Edwards Park and near the Seattle Center and the Aquarium. Weiss/Manfredi Architects was chosen to forge a connection between city park and urban environment for the park. Weiss/Manfredi worked closely with Landscape Architect Charles Anderson to create a multi-textured landscape that is divided into distinct precincts — valley, grove, meadow, and shore. There is a 40-foot change in elevation from the water’s edge to the eastern-most point of the site. A system of

staggered landforms connects the parcels by spanning the intervening roads and rail tracks, creating a meandering and continuous engineered landscape for art. The park will not be impacted by a proposed underpass that was once part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement strategy. Following the City and State viaduct team's decision not to pursue the underpass, SAM is able to move forward. The park is now scheduled to break ground in 2005 with a projected opening in the spring of 2006. The park will be free to the public and offer a seamless connection to the waterfront.

Art in the park will fall into three categories: infrastructure projects that will be integrated into the design and construction of the park, such as the pedestrian bridges, trellises, benches, and walkways, anchor works that serve as major points of interest to draw attention to each precinct of the park; and temporary exhibitions and installations that will take place through the park including a pavilion. The 8,000 square foot glass and steel pavilion will house special events, public programs, a café, and covers below-grade parking.

The valley area will contain dense plantings of fir, cedar, ferns, and groundcovers and will complement Alexander Calder's Eagle sculpture. The Valley also features an amphitheater that provides a unique setting for outdoor movies, performances, or quiet contemplation. The park's mid-section includes the Grove, featuring dense planting of native aspen, birch and maple. A greenhouse idea, designed by Mark Dyon, with an 80-foot nursing log on display, will offer a creative science experience in the park. There will be magnifying glasses for kids to actually watch the log deteriorate and see bugs and plants. Vehicle drivers will be able to see into the nursing log as they travel down Elliott Avenue. The meadow areas include the bridges and open paths that will lead visitors through the park. The meadow's grassy landscapes will feature grasses and wild flowers that can be manipulated to accommodate changing art installations or future earthworks.

Art will also be integrated into the shore, the water's edge of the park. The shore area will feature a pocket beach. SAM is exploring a proposal with the City to buttress the front of the existing seawall, which will, in a sense, negate the purpose of the wall itself. Fill material from the tidelands SAM owns would be used, decreasing the depth of the water, which will be beneficial to salmon by creating an inner tidal zone. Kelp and underwater grasses offshore will form a regenerative landscape for fish, which is specifically designed to assist in the development of salmon habitat recovery in Elliott Bay. The 900 ft. seawall project is estimated to cost \$6 million, which the Museum is trying to find funding for, versus full replacement of the wall, which is estimated at \$50-80 million.

The Superintendent noted that SAM has done a great job on the Olympic Sculpture Park, especially the interface with Myrtle Edwards Park. The seawall and the trolley barn issues may impact the schedule.

Questions and Answers

Joanna Grist clarified that SAM will maintain ownership of the land and maintenance of the park and the primary issue for Parks is the integration with Myrtle Edwards Park. Chris Rogers stated SAM does need to work out the co-management of the Alaskan Way portion. The Superintendent stated the Alaskan Way piece is a street right-of-way and there are conversations with Seattle Department of Transportation regarding street vacation versus a long-term permit. SAM is going to ProView on March 9 and 16 for technical review of the design. SAM has an endowment established for the cost of operations. James Fearn inquired if the park will be gated. Chris Rogers stated the park will not be gated and there will be very limited fencing. Along Western Avenue there will be fencing because of the steep slope but just around the corner from the slope, the park will be open. There will be some obvious entrances and SAM will let people know when the park is closed. There will be 24-hour security on the park site. Terry Holme stated the key word is "Park" and there has to be good cooperation between SAM and the Department in regards to maintenance and how the pieces come together. Chris Rogers stated the hours of operation would probably mimic Myrtle Edwards Park. Mimi Gates noted SAM would work closely with Parks in terms of the interface between the two areas. The goal is to make the whole area pedestrian- and bike-friendly. Currently, there are 300,000-400,000 people a year who visit the waterfront. Mimi further noted the park is not just going to be for

art, as there will be projects where people can participate and be involved and there will be many things provided for families.

The designers recently received a Progressive Architectural Award, which is an award given to unbuilt projects. SAM hopes to someday receive an award for the completed project.

Extend Temporary Location of Calder Sculpture at Seattle Asian Art Museum

The Alexander Calder artwork was purchased by the Seattle Art Museum through a donation from Jon and Mary Shirley. In the spring of 2001, based on a recommendation from the Board of Park Commissioners, the Superintendent approved the temporary siting of the Calder Sculpture in front of the Asian Art Museum at Volunteer Park during design/construction of the proposed Olympic Sculpture Park. The Calder sculpture was installed on the open grass park area for a period of no longer than three years. The Olympic Sculpture project was delayed due to the City and State viaduct team pursuing an underpass under this new park site. It was recently learned the park will not be impacted by a tunnel and, based on that decision, SAM is able to move the sculpture park project forward. To accommodate the revised schedule and factor in any additional delays, a three-year extension is recommended. Paula Hoff, Parks Strategic Advisor, informed the Commissioners that the Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks has gone on record that it desires the sculpture remain in Volunteer Park no longer than absolutely necessary. The Superintendent stated the temporary sculpture location is working fine with the maintenance staff and the public. Mimi Gates noted the sculpture has been well received by the community and SAM will return the lawn area to its original condition when the sculpture is moved to its permanent site.

Terry Holme moved to approve the staff recommendation to extend the temporary siting of the sculpture for another three years (until 2007). James Fearn seconded the motion. Kate Pflaumer asked if she could make a friendly amendment to the motion that the sculpture be moved as soon as practical. Terry accepted the amendment and the motion carried unanimously.

Briefing/Public Hearing — Bobby Morris Playfield Improvements

Eric Gold, Parks Landscape Architect, presented a briefing on the recommended schematic design for the Bobby Morris Playfield in Cal Anderson Park, 1635 11th Avenue on Capitol Hill. The project entails grading the fields, building pathways, and installing synthetic turf throughout, as funding allows. Eric explained the project is a component of the larger improvements going on at Cal Anderson Park and displayed a Berger Partnership drawing showing a fully-built Cal Anderson Park including the Lincoln Reservoir lidding and Bobby Morris Playfield. The playfield area is basically between Nagle to 11th and Pine Street to the shelterhouse.

The Bobby Morris Playfield is one of the older athletic fields in the City's inventory. Pre-dating the planning efforts of the Olmsted Brothers around the turn of the century, this site was used by the community as a baseball field. The Olmsted Brothers recognized this by including it in their planning for this site, circa 1904, albeit in a second plan, and only after much prodding by the Parks Commission. The field underwent a restoration in the mid-1940s, and lights were added in 1961. The condition of the field was deteriorating through the 1960s, and in the early-mid 1970s was converted to the then-popular crushed cinder surfacing in an effort to sustain the intensive, year-round scheduling that was beginning to become the norm.

As the useful life of the crushed cinder surface came to an end in the mid-1990s, the Parks Department chose to replace it with SportGrass, a hybrid surface consisting of a synthetic substrate through which natural grass is grown. The field was converted to SportGrass in 1997 at a cost of approximately \$865,000. Although proven successful and still in fairly wide use in other regions of the country, scheduling pressure, local climate, and the resulting increase in necessary maintenance has led to a steady and continuing decline in scheduling capacity, as well as unmet expectations among the user community.

While developing the most recent version to the Joint Athletic Facilities Development Plan (December 2002), conversion of this field to the now-proven infill-type synthetic turf was recommended as a means to recapture scheduling capacity. A \$100,000 allocation was made in 2003 for planning and design. An additional allocation request of \$1,623,000 for construction was reduced to \$1,223,000 by Council, with a provision that the Parks Department return to Council for review and approval of the recommended plan prior to requesting the balance of the necessary construction funding.

Replacement of the athletic surface appears at first to be a simple matter of removal and replacement; however, the Department's site analysis and a thorough review of the requirements necessary to provide a safe, stable, and cost-effective conversion have found several complicating issues, including technical considerations, user needs, community concerns, project response, and Landmark status.

Technical Considerations

The primary characteristic of the infill-type turf system, which results in its predictable qualities, is the loose fill composed of sand and crumb rubber. These two differing materials do not compact and, when dry, are essentially flowable. Because of this, under normal play the material bounces and moves. This movement means that the flatter the surface is installed, the less the likelihood of migration of the material. The Department's other two infill synthetic fields, Queen Anne Bowl and Genesee Field #2, are installed at the maximum recommended slope of ½ of 1%. The existing slope at Bobby Morris is 2%. Given the site constraints, Parks is proposing a compromise of 1%, although this still requires some grading impacts beyond the field surface.

The current field configuration includes a pathway around the perimeter of the field, as well as a series of chain link fences in strategic locations. Of primary concern has been a 25' fence located adjacent to the sidewalk on 11th Avenue, which is deep left field for the baseball field. The pathway crosses on the field side of the fence. The Department is strongly opposed to providing a developed pathway within the field of play, especially within a baseball field.

User Needs

Creating a synthetic turf field that is universally functional for baseball, softball, and soccer, as well as for the multitude of other activities that occur less frequently, presents some challenges. Foremost among these challenges is the variety of surfaces traditionally provided. Baseball and softball almost always have an area around the bases composed of soil, which facilitates sliding as well as digging a solid footing to get a "jump" off the base when running. This creates a significant maintenance challenge when constructed adjacent to the loose fill of the synthetic system described above. Also, a soccer field laid out across multiple types of surfaces creates a difficulty for soccer. The Department seeks to resolve this by eliminating soil base cutouts at the baseball and softball fields.

Community Concerns & Project Response

Individual citizens within the community, as well as established organizations, have expressed concerns about the project on several fronts.

One of the most significant concerns brought to the Department through its public process to date is public safety. There has been illicit activity occurring in Cal Anderson Park. The Department's primary project goal of improving the surface to provide higher scheduling capacity is consistent with CPTED guidelines recommending a high frequency of legitimate activity. Elevating the grade of the southeast corner and providing additional pathways into the site will create improved visibility into the site. Phase 4 of the Cal Anderson Park project also addresses a parallel fencing issue in the northwest corner. Parks staff performed a CPTED analysis of the field project, as recommended, with the East Precinct Public Safety Officer.

Roughly concurrent with the 1997 SportGrass project, Groundswell Off Broadway initiated a Neighborhood Matching Fund project through the Department of Neighborhoods to reconfigure an abundance of fences that surrounded the field and create visually meaningful entry points into the site. Groundswell Off Broadway has

expressed a strong desire that this hard work and “sweat equity” invested in the park be respected and remain as is. The Department’s recommended alternative has a very minimal impact on the surrounding landscaped edge. The recommendation does not change any of the fencing, although the two backstops and associated wing fencing will require replacement due to the change in grade at both corners of the field. There is a modest reduction in the amount of fencing associated with the backstops at field #1.

Following the initial open-house information meeting at Cal Anderson Park shelterhouse in August 2003, many citizens expressed concern about a perceived lack of public process, including opportunities for input regarding the current project. The Department became aware of the complexities and issues and its process evolved accordingly.

There is considerable concern that scheduled use will take precedent over making the field available for neighborhood “drop-in” use. While the Department typically considers allocation of field time a citywide endeavor, the community would like to see certain times dedicated to drop-in use. The development of the Lincoln Reservoir portion of Cal Anderson Park provides considerable passive space including open lawn areas for the kinds of uses typically mentioned by the community.

Landmark Status

The Bobby Morris Playfield site was designated a Seattle Landmark by ordinance in December 2002. Modifications to the site are subject to review and approval by the Landmarks Preservation Board. The Department is mindful of the value of the cultural resources under its stewardship, particularly with respect to sites that are part of the Olmsted Brothers legacy. The challenge with this site is reconciling that past with the collective current needs, standards, and expectations of the neighborhood, the field users, and the Department. The Department is working with the Architectural Review Committee of the Landmarks Preservation Board to achieve a reasonable balance. The presentation to the committee on January 30 went very well, with the suggestion received already incorporated into the plan as recommended.

Public Process

This project is envisioned as an in-kind replacement of a field surface in the Department’s Major Maintenance Program. Although information site signage and notification of the Department’s intent by targeted mailing is the prescribed public involvement process for projects of this nature, the Department recognized that the scale and high visibility of the project warranted additional process. An open-house format informational meeting was originally expected to be sufficient, however, as the physical complexities and community concerns have become apparent, the process has been expanded significantly. The open house was held on August 27, 2003, followed by signage, website posting, Landmarks Board meetings, public meeting on November 20, 2003, on-going website updates, public meeting held January 28, 2004, Landmarks Board meeting on January 30, Board of Park Commissioners briefing and public hearing on February 12, Board discussion and recommendation scheduled for February 26, and a full Landmarks Board application for Certificate of Approval.

Department Recommendation

Through December 2003, the Department has accumulated input from neighboring citizens and uses of the athletic facility. Significantly, at the November 20, 2003, meeting, Concept #2 emerged as the majority preference among three varying concepts presented. The only considerable change to Concept #2 as presented at the last public meeting occurs on the field surface. The Department has addressed the challenges of multiple surface types with the major users and is recommending that infill-type synthetic turf be used throughout the playing surface. Below is a narrative summary of the recommendation:

- Regrade field surface to 1% gradient, generally from northwest to southeast
- A maximum 2’6” wall will hold the surrounding site above the baseball field (field 1) in the northwest corner, with the backstop installed directly atop. Nothing changes outside the grade of the backstop. When the field grade is lowered the backboard height is also lowered. A stronger connection will be established between the shelterhouse, restrooms and ballfield, as was the case in the original plans for the park.

- Extend the grading limit in the southeast corner to the entry steps, reducing by half the grade separation between the area behind this backstop (field 2) and the adjacent sidewalks. This will eliminate a number of existing steps.
- Construct two symmetrical pathways from behind field #2 generally upward to the adjacent sidewalks for ADA-compliant access to other amenities at the site.
- Adjust grade across the north field edge adjacent to the Cal Anderson Shelterhouse by means of a belvedere-like prominence overlooking the field. Provide wide, generously-scaled steps down to the field surface. This is the primary connection between the shelterhouse and the field.
- Adjust all other grades from the revised field surface grade to surrounding fixed topography within the landscape. There will be a grassy swell created along the east field side, which will protect the synthetic surface from runoff from the vegetation. Five trees will be planted along the west side of the field to help mitigate the loss of the loop path.
- Identify the field limit and install infill-type synthetic turf throughout. Play lines are proposed as follows: All baseball lines in white, to include base lines, foul lines, coach boxes, infield arc, and warning track. Baseball pitchers mound to be portable. Soccer field to be permanent and lined in high contrast yellow. Material samples of the turf, play lines, warning track, etc. were displayed. The turf system is nearly sieve-like. It is installed on an 8" bed of course aggregate and you can literally open a hose on it and the water drops through.
- All fencing remains in its current configuration, with only the backstops being affected by the work. These will be replaced in-kind to respond to grade changes with minor modifications associated with providing accessibility. To accomplish this without continuing the conflict with pedestrian circulation, the interior loop pathway is not replaced.

Completion of the planning and schematic design for this work is expected to conclude shortly following the Board of Park Commissioners' recommendation. Production of Contract Documents and securing the Certificate of Approval from the Landmarks Preservation Board may take an additional three to four months. The Department currently anticipates construction to begin in the spring of 2005, following City Council approval of an additional allocation. Construction is expected to take approximately four months with the facility opening for public use about September 2005. Recent updated costing information associated with the plan as recommended verifies the original budget of \$1,723,000.

Questions and Answers

Kate Pflaumer inquired if the decrease in hours was due to the existing surface deterioration. Eric stated the whole trend of the park has been historically reviewed. Historically the field had about 2,000 hours of use with lights and cintrex. The cintrex was starting to deteriorate and falling out of favor with user groups. When the hybrid installation was completed, use increased for approximately two years and later decreased. The current field usage ranges from 600-800 hours.

Terry Holme asked if there was any potential or possibility that the project could be completed this year. The Superintendent stated there is no money in the 2004 budget and the Department has to go back to the City Council and have the project integrated into its 2005 CIP. Terry attended two of the public meetings and noted a lot of focus by the public on the actual cost estimates. Terry thinks, in response to that public interest, it would be helpful to present the cost estimate in more specific terms. Eric gave a breakdown in terms of phases: \$13,000 expended on planning, \$73,837 planned through the design phase, \$628,000 dedicated to the construction phase, and \$8,000 at the closeout phase. Terry stated this is part of a bigger picture in terms of sharing with the public the costs of all projects and educating them as to how much the public process costs and the actual construction costs. Eric explained the cost estimating process. The line item functions include a 15% design contingency, which is roughly \$1.3 million, \$1.68 million for the construction phase, which also contains a contingency (\$130,000), sales tax, project/contract administration (\$25,000), inspections, testing, and inspections (\$25,000). Terry requested an easily read detailed outline of the budget be prepared; Eric will try to get the estimate to the Park Board members prior to the February 26 meeting. Kate Pflaumer noted the construction costs also include the grading and the materials.

Bruce Bentley attended a portion of one of the public meetings. He heard at the meeting that the Department just put in a field and now is taking it out. He also heard concerns about the lighting and wondered if it is adequate or is it going to be updated. Eric stated the lighting will need to be updated; it has been assessed and it is on the list but it is not yet known when the upgrade will be implemented. The landscape edge will allow easy installation of conduit for an upgraded lighting system.

Public Hearing

Bruce explained that speakers are limited to three minutes each during the public hearing portion of the agenda. Seven people signed up to testify.

Ralph Stemp, Capitol Hill Soccer Club, spoke in favor of the Bobby Morris Playfield project. There are approximately 1,000 members in this organization, which provides a program for physical fitness, recreation, and good citizenship. The program is run by volunteers and is very successful. They are missing the big part, the field, but are powerless to get it and need the Park Board's assistance. It is a major piece that can help the soccer club and can help the kids. They are so close to getting the project built and if it needs more money, ask the club for money. They want the project built as promised and they need it now.

Darlene Hickman, Chair, Seattle Sports Advisory Council, supports the approval of the Bobby Morris field design and the proposed surface. Since the installation of the SportsGrass field and the surface failure, hours of usage have gone from 2,062 to an average of 853 over the last six years. Due to the demand of use in Central Seattle, the replacement is vital. The current plan for surfacing with synthetic turf on the entire field allows for safer play for multiple sports and for longer hours than any other combination would allow. The field complex is already lighted so the hours of play available could be scheduled for maximum usage. Neighbors and supporters of this and the adjoining Cal Anderson Park are concerned about the negative and illegal activity that currently occurs in the park and sports field area. People who do drugs like their privacy; they like it dark and they do not like people around. Regular sports usage will be a deterrent for this activity and hopefully over time eliminate it completely. The Seattle Sports Advisory Council strongly urges the Board to adopt this plan and encourage the City Council to restore the \$400,000 funding to this project.

Andrea Manzin, Capitol Hill Soccer Club, coaches soccer and stated there is a lack of fields. It is a monumental issue for the club. There have been discussions in past years to limit the number of kids because there have not been sufficient fields to practice on which is a crime. We want to assure that all of the children have the opportunity to play and have something to do rather than looking for something to do.

Tom Aaron – did not testify when name was called.

Ed D'Alessandro, Seattle Youth Soccer Association, fields advocate, informed the Board has 11,000 young athletics with 8,000 in Seattle and 3,000 in Shoreline. The SYSA is strongly in favor of the Bobby Morris Playfield renovation and encourages the Park Board to do what it can to facilitate the completion of the project as previously planned in 2004. The Association has worked hard on this issue, did a lot of planning, has been on the ground floor, and thinks it really deserves the field. In 2003, the SYCA did an analysis of the fields within their association around the city and Bobby Morris rose to the top of that analysis as one of its priorities. It is a critical field and has the potential for the best capacity. It is located in a dense population of the city; it is the home for a number of young athletes. There is an obesity epidemic in our country and one of the key factors in getting kids out to exercise is access to good fields. If the field is renovated it will alleviate a number of scheduling problems for the Capitol Hill Soccer as well as for the whole Seattle Youth Soccer Association. The Association has worked with Seattle Parks, users groups and Friends of Olmsted to try to make this project happen. A year ago this project was to be completed in 2004; now it is being talked about completion in 2005 because the City Council cut \$400,000 out of the budget. They are concerned that the money will keep disappearing and the project will not get done. Mr. D'Alessandro is here tonight to ask the Park Board to do what they can do to get the project done, preferably in 2004, if the Board can find a way to make that happen.

Walter Schact, President of Seattle Pony Baseball (youth baseball organization in the Capitol Hill and Central Area). When Mayor Nickels threw out the first ball at the Cal Anderson Park opening ceremony he asked how the Parks Department was doing in terms of supporting the pony baseball programs and Mr. Schact told him the Parks Department was great but they are not getting support from the City Council and Mayor in terms of resources they are given to do the job they need to do. The Seattle Pony Baseball organization supports the renovation and resurfacing of Bobby Morris Playfield. The Central Area is really deficient in terms of baseball facilities. Mr. Schact does not want the existing backstops put back, rather a tall backstop like they have at Miller, Ingraham and Rainier Beach should be installed. He thinks it would be a poor investment to do this quality of a field and end up with a “Mickey Mouse” kind of backstop. This is an important project for the city and the baseball organization supports the project.

Terry Holme thinks it is important to get some reassurance from the baseball users that the material is okay with the consistent product in the field rather than the change of surfaces. Mr. Schact thinks this field being able to bounce back and forth between alternate sports that they have an all turf field turf facility. The mound will be removable dirt and would be removed for soccer season. Home plate will not have dirt. Mr. Schact stated they would go along with any design that would maximize the use of the field.

Merwin Peters, Capitol Hill Soccer, stated the group was very discouraged on how the budget cut decision got made and he thinks the City Council needs to be better informed. Mr. Peters stated the synthetic turf market is very competitive and he is curious to know how many vendors were reviewed and how the field material choice was made, as it is the biggest cost. He believes the Association can make the field happen with the money they have and he would like a little more discussion about costs and how they can make this happen this year.

The Superintendent stated the money for the project was in the Mayor’s budget and the Department was committed to building the field this year. There was no particular warning or communication that this cut was going to occur. The Council had heard from some folks about the controversy around the project and the public process. Mr. Peters stated three different councilmembers told him three different reasons why they took money out and he thinks they just did not truly understand. The Park Board sent a letter to the City Council requesting that they restore the funding for the Bobby Morris Playfield project. They took the money out of the Cumulative Reserve Fund and placed it into the General Fund to pay for some police improvements around Cal Anderson Park. Eric Gold related they were allocated \$100,000 in 2003 for the design of the project. The Department is continuing to proceed with the design process. They need to get to 90% construction drawings so they can get approval of the Landmarks Board and basically have the entire project ready to go to Council. The Department cannot go out to bid for a project unless it has all the money in the bank. Eric noted each component of the project is very integrated with other components and there is not a place where a line can be drawn and one portion of the project can be completed.

Questions from various members of the audience continued about the budget and if there would be any reassurance the money will be there for completion of the playfield renovation project. The project will be in the Parks budget for 2005 but there is no assurance until the budget is passed. The audience was informed to keep involved and make sure they communicate with their elected officials who make these decisions that they think this project is important. The audience asked if they could come up with the \$400,000 could the project be built this year and Eric Gold noted as part of the Council’s allocating the \$1.2 million, a provision was attached that said we could not expend any on construction of the Bobby Morris project until they had reviewed and approved the project.

The Board of Park Commissioners will be discussing the Bobby Morris Playfield project at its February 26th meeting and make a recommendation to the Superintendent. Kate Pflaumer stated there is a potential for private sources and potential project budget cuts and the project is so close that it seems like it should happen. The Department will need to go to the Parks Committee for design approval and get their permission to unfreeze the money. The Park Board will forward a second letter to the City Council following the February 26th Board meeting.

Chair Bruce Bentley related he allowed people to “chime in” from the audience, which he should not have, but he did want the discussion to flow. Written comments may be submitted to the Board, prior to their February 26th meeting, for review and consideration. Bruce Bentley closed the public hearing

Park Board Business – Items of Interest to the Board

In January, Terry Holme visited a phenomenal skateboard park by the river in Denver. It is sited in the city, almost in an interchange of freeways. There were many kids at the park and Terry stated he does see the value of trying to find a site that will accommodate a good size park. The Superintendent informed the Board that Susan Golub, Parks Strategic Advisor, was visiting potential sites and meeting with the skateboard community.

Old/New Business

Joanna Grist would like to receive a list of the various Department Advisory Council Committees.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Bruce Bentley, Chair