

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2005

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present: Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Joanna Grist
Terry Holme
Debbie Jackson

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

B.J. Brooks, Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Terry Holme moved and Commissioner Angela Belbeck seconded that the minutes and agenda be approved. The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.**

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bounds was out of town. Deputy Superintendent Brooks reported on the following:

Yesler Community Center Has Grand Reopening: More than 300 hundred people turned out at the grand opening on February 12. The Center's computer lab was open and in use, and art-related activities included an exhibit of framed student photography. Music, dance, and refreshments were rounded out by a variety of informational displays including Parks and Receptions' traveling display on sustainable practices.

Progress on the Pyramid Project: The Pyramid Project for Parks community centers, a software registration and reservation system, is in full deployment. Ten sites were live beginning February 23. The deployment has gone well, and is on schedule. In addition, the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) Board voted to augment the Mayor's one-time allocation with an additional \$75,000. (The Mayor's 2005 allocation of \$150,000 required a funding match.) The ARC Board is considering the merits of future investments, which they will take up at their next board meeting.

Swimming Pools Hold Unique Events: Rainier Beach pool staff hosted the Department's second Dog Swim on February 20 as the final program before the preventative maintenance closure. Under the Health Department variance, Parks provided on-site Animal Control staff and a pre-swim dog cleaning station, and allowed only dogs in the water. Other pools will offer Dog Swims prior to their maintenance closures. In addition, Medgar Evers and Helene Madison pools hosted Dive-In movies this past weekend where lighting in the building is reduced and a popular film is projected on a wall.

Octopus Week at the Aquarium: *The Seattle Times* published a full page article in the February 17 Northwest Weekend section about Octopus Week, including a large color photo. In addition, KING TV, KOMO TV, KCPQ TV, and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* covered Octopus Week on February 19.

Langston Hughes receives \$10,000 from Paul G. Allen Foundation: Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center received a \$10,000 grant from the Paul G. Allen Foundation to support the popular All-Teen Summer Musical. Funds will pay for artist fees and production supplies.

Race & Social Justice: Parks' Race and Social Justice leadership team's sub-committees met with executive sponsors to discuss roles, responsibilities, and work plans related to the initiative. This group is preparing a presentation for the expanded March 7 Executive Team meeting to be held at Yesler Community Center.

Downtown Parks Task Force: The Task Force held its first meeting on February 18 with all members present. The group agreed on operating principles and meeting schedules, identified challenges, and identified information needed for the March 11 meeting.

Sweetheart Dance: The annual sweetheart dance at Fircrest was complete with refreshments, a picture booth, and karaoke. This Parks co-sponsored event attracted 225 adults with disabilities, and everyone had a great time dancing and singing.

Earth Day (Month): April 22 is Earth Day, but Parks will celebrate throughout the month of April with more than 200 events at parks, community centers, and environmental learning centers. Parks is partnering with the Cascade Land Conservancy/Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) on these events.

Upcoming Events:

Japanese Garden ready for opening day: The Opening Day Celebration to kick off the new season will be held February 26, noon to 4:00 p.m. The annual Shinto Blessing will be followed by a Taiko drum performance. The regular season begins March 1 and continues through November 30. Regular operating days are Tuesday through Sunday. The Garden is closed Mondays for maintenance, except for a series of special events provided with the support of the Advisory Council.

Northgate Community Center, Library and Park: The City received six bids on February 10 for construction of the Northgate project. Four of the six were within the project budget. The apparent low-bidder is Absher Construction of Puyallup. Parks anticipates executing the contract by March 10 and has planned a groundbreaking on Saturday, March 19.

Aquarium/Pier 59 Project Moving Forward: To facilitate the next step for this project, Parks will hold a public meeting on March 31 to discuss the project with the community. This is a re-scheduled date.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. No one signed up to testify.

Discussion/Recommendation: Revised Supplemental Use Management Guidelines for Magnuson Park

At the February 10 meeting, Kevin Bergsrud, Parks Planning and Development Specialist, came before the Commissioners to give a briefing on the Revised Supplemental Use Management Guidelines for Magnuson Park. Eric Friedli, Parks Enterprise Division Director, assisted with the briefing, which was immediately followed by a public hearing. Tonight the Commissioners are asked to discuss and make a recommendation on the staff proposal.

Discussion/Recommendation

Commissioner Holme asked about the status of the Environmental Impact Appeal Hearing for Habitat Wetlands. Mr. Friedli answered that the hearing was held the previous Tuesday; the ruling from the Hearing is expected soon. The appellants appeal was based on Parks looking at other parks, while Park's contention is that the effort is to develop Magnuson Park and looking at other sites does not work as a way to do this.

The Commissioners had a number of items/questions for discussion.

Item #1: Inclusion/exclusion of community groups

Commissioner Collins asked if Northeast District Council (NEDC) has been included in the revision of the Guidelines and Mr. Friedli answered yes. He then asked why Sand Point Liaison Committee (SPLC), which is not a member of the NEDC, was not included. Mr. Friedli answered that it seemed redundant to invite them as a group because all are members in other capacities of NEDC. Commissioner Collins requested Parks to either include both the NEDC and SPLC or exclude both. He believes that both supporters and opponents should be invited to the table. Mr. Friedli agreed to include both groups; however, Friends of Magnuson Park will not be included, as this group formed for the purpose of bringing litigation against the Department.

Commissioner Holme moved that Sand Point Liaison Committee be included. Motion was seconded. The vote was taken, with unanimous approval.

Item #2: Children's Hospital Parking

Commissioner Collins stated that he was surprised to hear Jeannie Hale, Laurelridge Community Council President, make the generous offer for Children's Hospital staff to use street parking in the Laurelhurst neighborhood, rather than paying Parks to use parking in Magnuson Park as a temporary measure. He believes that the agreement Parks made to allow those workers to temporarily park at Magnuson Park is a done deal which was done for the short term to help out a nearby neighbor. He advised Parks to tread carefully in the future on making this type of arrangement.

There was consensus on this advice from the rest of the Commissioners.

Item #3: Comments about Natural Areas

Commissioner Collins feels Parks has been sensitive and requested that they be even more sensitive in the future. Assign events to paved areas, whenever possible. Chair Pflaumer commented that she was concerned with testimony that some guidelines were added by Parks staff after the December public meeting. Mr. Friedli stated some were added and referred to 4.3.3. The wording was changed after discussion at the February 10 Commissioner's meeting.

Commissioner Collins stated that he believes the Department has now corrected this.

Item #3: Sound Amplification

Commissioner Collins urged Parks staff to be sensitive to this issue. There are lots of senior citizens in the nearby area, including him, who have trouble sleeping. He recognizes that events with large audiences must have amplification, and requested Parks staff to turn the loudspeakers so they face away from the neighborhoods and Mr. Friedli agreed to this and also commented that the Department already uses the standard of Seattle's noise ordinance.

Commissioner Collins remarked that (in regard to some other testimony received), if you live near Magnuson Park you get all the benefits and must pay some price.

Item #4: Security/Safety

Commissioner Holmes referred to a community request to include wording in the guidelines to address security issues. He believes that the best policy is to abide by the City's overall policy and not have a special policy for Magnuson Park. At the February 10 meeting he requested Parks staff send him a copy of the template Parks staff follow when

criminal activity occurs. He received some information, via e-mail, but didn't feel that it was condensed enough. He urged that Parks have a one-page handout for all staff containing this information. Mr. Bergsrud stated that he had completed further research just before the meeting and found that Operations staff has a number of protocols in place, as well as a critical response plan. Mr. Friedli commented that most community center and crews in the field have this information.

Commissioner Holme commented that he had assumed this policy was in place and urged that it be kept in the forefront for all staff to follow.

Item #5: Permitted Activities

Commissioner Holme commented that he received the list of activities that are currently permitted. He is also interested in new events that haven't been held before and the protocol for approving them. Mr. Bergsrud stated that the event scheduler may take this type of request to the Superintendent to approve or disapprove. Commissioner Holme asked that this be included in the Guidelines. Mr. Friedli agreed to do so, 4.7.1, couple sentences.

Commissioner Holme recommended approval of the revised guidelines, as revised on February 24. Commissioner Jackson seconded. The vote was taken and was approved unanimously.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Friedli and Mr. Bergsrud.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Freeway Park Concept Plan

Susanne Friedman, Parks Planning and Development Specialist, came before the Commissioners to give a briefing on the Freeway Park Concept Plan, followed by a public hearing. The Commissioners received a written and verbal briefing from Ms. Friedman, with both included in these minutes.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

On February 24 staff will brief the Park Board on the Freeway Park Activation Project and present staff recommendations for immediate action. There will be a public hearing the same night. The Board will discuss and vote on the staff recommendations on March 10.

Project Description and Background

The Freeway Park Activation Project is the development of a plan to increase activity in Freeway Park. The goal of the project is to: "Balance Freeway Park's tranquility with activities."

Freeway Park is comprised of approximately 5.5 acres of land, spanning Interstate 5 between Seneca St and the Convention Center. It is split between two neighborhood planning groups – Downtown and First Hill Neighborhood, and between the East and West Police Precincts. First Hill is characterized by apartment buildings, retirement homes, the Virginia Mason Hospital complex, local churches and Town Hall. Downtown areas that border the park consist of hotels, office buildings, the Convention Center, and much of the Theatre District.

Freeway Park as we know it today was developed in three phases: the first portion was dedicated on July 4, 1976, the expansion of Piggott Corridor in 1984, and connections to the Washington State Convention and Trade Center (WSCTC) in 1988. The initial portions of the park were funded in part by the King County \$334 million Forward Thrust bond issue and federal and state highway funds for the I-5 lid.

The park was designed by the firm of Lawrence Halprin & Associates with Angela Danadjieva as the project designer for all three phases. Part of the design intent was to create an "oasis" within this unusual urban environment, to mimic the surrounding building scale with "canyon" waterfalls that muffled the sound of the freeway below. The original design allowed for ample sunlight into the park and bright colorful displays of annuals.

Recently, however, many people perceive Freeway Park as unsafe in certain areas and its entrances as ambiguous. Parts of the park have changed since its inception due to maturing landscaping, which has created visual and physical barriers between the park and adjacent buildings. Budget cuts have limited the department's maintenance staff and previous programming has shifted to other venues around the city or disappeared altogether. In recent years the park has been attractive to the homeless and to drug dealers. All of these factors have contributed to perceptions of the park being underused, and at times, unsafe. The incidents of drug dealing and use have dramatically changed since the nearby apartment building, The Jensonia, burnt down. However, the lack of clear sight lines and sunlight, and the numerous hiding places still exist.

The Freeway Park Neighborhood Association (FPNA) has been active since 1993, organizing neighbors and property owners in raising funds and awareness of issues surrounding Freeway Park. Many projects in the park have been funded by money raised by FPNA, ranging from \$50,000 in in-kind donations for the 8th Avenue underpass, to \$12,000 for summer concerts in the Park. FPNA has also contributed monetarily to the hiring of the MID, a private security company, for additional security in the park

Last year FPNA received a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant from the Department of Neighborhoods for a portion of the 2004 Activation Project. Parks matched their contribution from the Department's Neighborhood Response fund and contracted with Project for Public Spaces Inc. (PPS) to work with Parks, stakeholders, and community groups in developing strategies to activate the park. The goal was to develop a program plan with a range of activities to draw together members of the diverse Downtown and First Hill communities — families, visitors, local business, and neighbors — by providing opportunities for social interaction and improving security. Activities in Freeway Park will enhance security and thereby make it more viable as a place not only for those active amenities but also for the pleasures of quiet and stillness. The final report includes recommendations for immediate, near-term, and long-term action. PPS also covers the range from programming to physical modifications of the park.

Public Involvement Process

Together, Parks and FPNA organized a series of community workshops and meetings starting in October 2004, resulting in over 140 participants contributing to, and giving input on, the projects ideas and recommendations. Outreach was accomplished by area-wide mailings, meeting announcements, and press releases.

The project was also supported by an advisory group (Client Group) consisting of representation from the FPNA, the Mayor's office, Downtown Seattle Association, local businesses and non-profit organizations surrounding the Park, the Washington State Convention and Trade Center, Seattle Design Commission, and Seattle Parks and Recreation. Their role has been to give input and direction to the consultants during the process and the group has met five times over the last four months. One of the key factors to having this project be a success has been the ability of the Client Group to work together. We are relying on their continued support and assistance with implementation of many of the action plan items listed at the end of this memo.

Overall the nature of the public comments have been very supportive of the Activation Project, with a wide variety of programming suggestions made for the outer edges of the park, coupled with the community wanting to preserve the quiet oasis that the interior of the park currently provides. Neighborhood residents who live near the park see it as a huge asset and are delighted to have Parks and FPNA implement improvements. The broad community has also expressed the need for balance between preserving the park's original design integrity and implementing changes to open up sight lines and improve security issues.

Some of the components of PPS's report will result in a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project in 2006. We are asking for your direction on the proposed staff recommendations for immediate action for 2005 and will be coming back to you for direction on the 2006 CIP project later in the year. The CIP process will have its own public involvement process, in keeping with the Department's policy. It is anticipated that a Request for Qualifications will be released second quarter 2005 for the CIP components.

Summary of PPS's Observations and Recommendations

PPS observed the park on several occasions and interviewed the Client Group and other key constituents on their perceptions of the park in its current configuration. At the first community workshop, PPS divided people into small groups to evaluate different sections of the park (please refer to the 'bubble' diagram attached). These small groups later reported back to the entire group their likes and dislikes, and their suggestions for how the park could be changed. These community driven recommendations and observations provided the background and basis for PPS's recommendations and Parks subsequent Action Plan.

Key Issues

1. **Lack of activity.** There is little to do in Freeway Park. Office workers use some areas around the Convention Center and around Park Place to smoke, eat lunch on nice days and to socialize. Much of the rest of the park is underused other than by people walking through.
2. **Poor perception.** Many people consider the park to be unsafe; to others, it is dark and bleak. Although actual crimes in the park have not been numerous and security patrols have increased in recent months, the presence of people sleeping and using or dealing drugs give the park a poor reputation.
3. **Poor connection to adjacent buildings.** The park is poorly connected both physically, and visually, to the buildings around it. As a result, people in these buildings are not providing the much needed "eyes on the park" informal security. Park Place, the Convention Center, Horizon House, and the Benaroya Research Institute have great potential to provide this.
4. **Hidden entrances.** Despite the number of entrances into Freeway Park, most are not clearly marked and concrete walls and indirect staircases block views into the park. Several routes are well used and could attract more people into the park if improved.
5. **Inadequate signs.** Inadequate signs make orientation within Freeway Park confusing, particularly for first-time visitors. Orientation is further complicated by sightlines that are often blocked by high walls of concrete and overgrown evergreens.
6. **Lack of a broad management strategy that goes beyond maintenance.** Currently, there is no entity that has responsibility for managing the activities that need to occur to make Freeway Park into an important place.

PPS Objectives and Recommendations

1. **Improve access to the park with better entrances, lighting and signs.** Each entrance into Freeway Park needs to be improved in terms of its visibility and views into the park by providing better directional information and adding pedestrian and theatrical lighting.
2. **Restore the parks' original experiences, optimizing sunlight and forest areas with plant management.** Originally Freeway Park's planting plan included a wide variety of color with annual beds, mounded grass berms for sitting, and a light airy tree canopy. Sightlines and plant variety could be improved by the removal of some trees along with the restoration of an annual planting plan.
3. **Increase activity in the park and provide amenities.** For Freeway Park to become a magnet for people and development, it needs to be thought of as a series of smaller "places" that are designed and managed to draw people into the park in key "anchor locations" throughout the park.
4. **Improve the park while respecting its original design vocabulary.** When it was built, Freeway Park was innovative, both structurally and architecturally. Today, many people still appreciate the park's original design

features. Freeway Park needs to be updated to respond to the current needs of park users and to knit the city and park oasis together, but the original purpose and design of the park should not be abandoned.

5. **Enhance the relationship between the “inner” and “outer” park by creating connections with future development around the park.** There are several opportunities for redevelopment around the park that would help to better connect the park with the adjacent neighborhoods.
6. **Develop an active management and funding strategy.** A plan for active management of Freeway Park – which includes a funding strategy for development, public-private partnerships, operating and capital improvement budget, along with event coordination, concessions marketing and management, and enhanced grounds maintenance – should be developed.

Staff Recommendations for Immediate Action

Immediate action items that Parks can initiate in 2005 towards activating Freeway Park fall into four categories: Vending, Programming, Maintenance, and CIP projects.

Vending

- *Determine locations and infrastructure needs to support vendors and performances.*
- *Issue temporary permits for vendor carts for spring/summer 2005, with the development of long term vendor programming, with possible café collaboration with Park Place café and WSCTC.*

Programming

- *Bring back Summer Concerts in the Park for the summer 2005, along with other performance opportunities.*
- *Develop and implement the park-wide exercise loop for spring/summer 2005.*
- *Develop 4 season, multi-generational programming for Cascade Fountain area, WSCTC plaza and 8th Ave walk way.*
- *Create a game center space. Provide movable tables and chairs around Cascade Fountain, and work with vendors for set up and take down.*

Maintenance

- *Implement annual plantings at key entrances & other select locations within the park.*
- *Restore grass berms in the American Legion Fountain Area.*
- *Selectively thin and limb up trees, with possible select tree removal.*

CIP projects

- *Remove concrete slabs along the staircase on the north side of the Canyon Fountain to open up sight lines.*
- *Implement new signs and way-finding concept into and within the park.*
- *Implement new lighting concept for the park, focusing on circulation paths, entrances and fountain areas.*
- *Implement new bench program – done in conjunction with Programming efforts.*

Budget

Specific funding sources for Vending, Programming and Maintenance action items have not been identified at this time. We are currently looking at a variety of funding approaches to fulfill these items. The CIP action items have funding of \$100,000 in the 2005 budget to proceed with the design phase of the project, with \$400,000 targeted in the 2006 budget for the construction phase, pending City Council approval.

Schedule

2005 – Implementation of Vending, Programming and Maintenance items once funding is secured

2005 – Design Development and Construction Documents for CIP items

2006 – Construction of CIP items

Additional Information

The full report can be found on line at: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/FreewayPark/ActivationPlan.pdf>. For additional information, please contact Susanne Friedman, Parks Project Planner, at: 206.684.0902 or susanne.friedman@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Friedman reviewed the information in the written briefing that was previously sent to the Commissioners and displayed several large maps of Freeway Park, pointing out various areas referred to in the briefing.

Commissioner Questions & Answers

Commissioner Holme asked about the areas on the map designated by large blue asterisks. Ms. Friedman answered that the graphic was an organizing principle and that these sites could be possible meeting/exercise sites. Parks staff members propose to put in temporary signs right away and install permanent signs in early 2006 designating these sites and at major entrances.

Commission Collins stated that Jim Ellis was instrumental in building the park and asked that Parks staff consult with him as these plans move forward. Commissioner Collins was a Seattle Deputy Mayor when Freeway Park was built. At the time, it was a bold experiment thought to cost an outrageous amount of federal dollars. He recalled that Mr. Ellis thought it was very important that nearby neighbors donate the annual plantings. Ms. Friedman agreed with this and stated that Parks would do the plantings this year with the goal of neighbor groups adopting the flower beds in the future. She stated that David Brewster, Director of nearby Town Hall, is actively working on this project with Mr. Ellis.

Commissioner Holme asked about the wayfinding loop shown on the map. Ms. Friedman described it as directions mixed with some art that may be color oriented or light oriented. Commissioner Grist asked the length of the loop and Ms. Friedman answered that it is approximately a 10-minute walk. Distance markers will be installed. Commissioner Grist stated that this project has lots of potential that she is excited about. She asked if the art collection in the Washington Convention Center will tie in with the benches at Freeway Park. Ms. Friedman answered that she is coordinating this effort with the Convention Center, Town Hall, and nearby theaters. Commissioner Grist asked about other potential vendors and Ms. Friedman answered that the library is being contacted to hold a used book sale, holiday lights are being programmed, and game centers for chess and checkers (like at Occidental Park) are suggested. Commissioner Grist asked if a playground for kids is planned. Ms. Friedman answered that some play elements are being planned, but not a full blown play area. There are seven or eight childcare facilities nearby, with one group applying for Starbucks funds for parks for this purpose. A play area must be done very strategically.

Commissioner Holme asked about the theatrical lighting and its use at night. Ms. Friedman answered that the park originally had theatrical "uplighting" and it is being evaluated to determine what it will take to get it working again. The goal is to provide night-time lighting so visitors feel comfortable walking through the park, to improve circulation, and to improve safety.

Commissioner Belbeck asked about the reference to "selective tree removal" and the number and size of trees to be removed. Ms. Friedman answered that the specifics haven't yet been decided. Iain Robertson (University of Washington Department of Landscape Architecture) and Duane Penttila and Mark Mead (Parks' horticulture division) will look closely at all the trees. Chair Pflaumer requested that, when the selections are made, this be brought back before the Board for review and Ms. Friedman agreed to do so.

Commissioner Collins recalled a 1979 Seattle Symphony performance in Freeway Park, with Lennie Wilkens as conductor, and urged that the park be the future site of major events. Ms. Friedman stated that noise impacts on nearby neighbors must be weighed before major events are planned.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began, with 8 citizens testifying. The Chair reminded the audience that each person has up to three minutes to speak and will be recorded and timed. A very brief summary of their comments is included:

Mike Evans: He is President of Freeway Park Neighborhood Association and stated that there is fertilizer in the irrigation system which makes the trees grow fast. He referred to the near load limit in some areas of the park, due to the full grown and large landscaping. His Association has long supported Freeway Park and raised \$50,000 for the pedestrian walkway and other areas. They have also worked on security issues and directed \$27,000 towards better security in the park in 2004. He believes the PPS report has many, many good ideas and is a good first step. The public meetings were well attended with up to 40 people present. He urged that the park be activated to give people a reason to go there. There are 12 entries to the park, with most difficult to find. His organization is very much in favor of the PPS proposal.

Bob Anderson: He is Executive Director of Horizon House and Vice-President of Freeway Park Neighborhood Association. He stated that this has been a good process. A year ago, the Mayor was invited to meet with community groups to determine ways to improve Freeway Park. The Mayor assigned staff to this and funds were leveraged. Mr. Anderson also thanked Superintendent Bounds for his support. A Department of Neighborhoods grant was received to pay for the PPS study which gives vision and a road map to the needed improvements. He believes PPS prepared a balanced report, which is practical and specific about the infrastructure, access, and activation of the park. Freeway Park is both a jewel and a gem and he hopes that this project will help it reach its full potential.

Bill Rennebohm: He has lived at Horizon House for the past 18 months and recalled in 1974, when Senator Scoop Jackson's recreation imperative mentioned Freeway Park. At that time Mr. Rennebohm lived elsewhere and was the chief of the Department of the Interior's outdoor recreation division. Now he is living next door to Freeway Park!

He thanked the Mayor, City of Seattle, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the Board of Park Commissioners for bringing this project forward. The PPS report is a great start and he urged that this process be continued to make Freeway Park a village green for all.

Richard Haag: He is the designer of Gas Works Park and asked if Parks staff have consulted Mr. Halprin (designer of Freeway Park) on this project. Ms. Friedman answered that she hasn't spoken with him directly. Mr. Haag referred to an architectural forum to be held at Horizon House on Sunday and stated that today's New York Times contained an article about Gas Works Parks. He believes that parks are under siege with gentrification. Be careful when removing benches and shelters where the down and out gather. This process started with Regrade Park. Where are these displaced people being put? Are the homeless represented here this evening? He also believes it is illegal to close parks at 11:00 pm and would like to see the ACLU get involved with this. He urged that Parks go forth carefully with this project. He stated that if residents at Horizon House want privacy from the park, they should close their window blinds.

Liz Birkholz: She co-authored a draft research paper, cited in the PPS study and stated that researchers come from around the world to see both the plantings and the designs of Freeway Park. Keep to the original design and original design materials. She supports the programmatic elements of a planned walk and additional benches. Don't add theatrical lighting. She advocates some change but keep to the original design. She will e-mail additional information on the lighting design to the Board's Coordinator for forwarding to the Commissioners.

Brice Maryman: He believes this is a well thought out report. He co-authored with Liz Birkholz the draft research paper, cited in the PPS report. He commends the Friends of Freeway Park and PPS for their hard work. He has two concerns: legacy of precedent setting in a nationally important park and doesn't believe the report reflects this.

Carolyn Stearns: She is employed at Greentree early childhood center, located nearby, and is an advocate for children downtown. She has taken kids to the King County Jail grounds to play because of the lack of downtown play areas for

kids. Many unsafe things happen in Freeway Park and she also referred to sexual activity that takes place in the park. The Children's Waterfall is unsafe for children to play on. Please design and include space for children to play and climb, including wood chips underneath the play structures.

Muriel Dohrmann: She lives at Horizon House and uses Freeway Park as a cut-through when walking. She is careful when in the park, as there are some blind spots. She urges Parks to preserve the historic elements but be sensitive to future needs and the changes that need to be made to this park.

The Public Hearing concluded.

Additional Commissioners Questions and Answers

Commissioner Holme asked about the references to the park's historical aspects and Ms. Friedman answered that the park is not landmarked yet. This project is not looking at concrete removal, which would be a separate long-term public process requiring several million dollars. Chair Pflaumer asked if any improvements to the entrances involve concrete removal and Ms. Friedman answered that staff are working with Park Place office building to adjust planter boxes to improve one of the main entrances. Commissioner Holme asked who monitors the load limits and Ms. Friedman answered that it is the Seattle Department of Transportation. Commissioner Holme urged that the load limits be looked at early in the strategy, if they are nearing the limit. Ms. Friedman stated that a load limit study has not yet been done. Resources are limited, with \$400,000 budgeted for 2005. The Board requested that the load limit information be sent to them. Commissioner Grist asked if proposed concrete removal is controversial and Ms. Friedman answered yes. Lawrence Halprin is a nationally-known architect who has designed several other parks. However, some of his designs in other cities have proved to be problematic and have been removed. The goal is to honor the history of the park, and to also balance that history with safety.

Commissioner Jackson asked about security improvements in the plan. Ms. Friedman stated that previously the park was monitored by both the East and West Seattle Police Department precincts. That has been changed so that now East Precinct monitors the entire park. Since the Jensonia Hotel (located next to the park) burned, drug deals in the park have dropped dramatically. Freeway Park Association has spent \$30-40,000 yearly on added security patrols. The activation plan is designed to use the park more on a "timeshare" basis with the homeless. Commissioner Holme asked how the paid security patrols operate. Ms. Friedman answered that they wear blue and yellow uniforms, make frequent walks through the park, and call Seattle Police if they observe any problems. They do not rouse or remove anyone.

Ms. Friedman referred to the benches located in various areas of the park. Several of the benches are placed in ways that are not conducive to people sitting on them (i.e., placed where people walk both in front of and behind the bench) so the benches receive little use. These would be relocated to more appropriate areas.

Commissioner Grist suggested that the historical significance could be recognized in signage at the park and Ms. Friedman commented that this is a great idea. Commissioner Grist also commented that design shouldn't take precedence over the use of a park. Commissioner Collins stated that the Board realizes this is a concept plan and that the detailed plan, including any specific trees proposed for removal, will come back before the Board at a future meeting. Ms. Friedman agreed. Commissioner Collins referred to a recently completed and impressive Wayfinding project at the Washington Park Arboretum and suggested it as a reference for Freeway Park.

The Board thanked Ms. Friedman for the briefing. The Commissioners will discuss this proposal at the March 10 meeting and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

Board of Park Commissioners' Business

None

New/Old Business

Commissioner Holme has noticed a problem near Seward Park, at the parking lot of the boulevard park on the West shore of Andrews Bay, where vehicles are driving over the curb, and down to the waterfront beach, damaging the area. He is requesting staff review this, with the consideration of reinstalling bollards which were removed when the park was recently renovated, or adding signage prohibiting vehicles on the beach.

At a recent Board of Park Commissioners' meeting, Commissioner Collins shared information on the Washington Park Arboretum's Wayfinding and Interpretive Plan. He was very impressed with the Plan and will share a copy of it with the other Commissioners.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____