

Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
July 28, 2005

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present: Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Debbie Jackson
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Kate Pflaumer

Temporary

Leave: Joanna Grist

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Acting Commission Chair Terry Holme called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Commissioner Collins moved approval of the July 14 minutes as presented and July 28 agenda as amended. The vote was taken and passed unanimously.**

Superintendent's Report

Ken Bounds, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, reported on the following:

Latest Park Namings: Four new park names were recently named: I-5 Colonnade in Eastlake (a new park); Solstice Park (previously known as Lincoln Park Annex) in West Seattle; Dakota Place Park (formerly California substation) and Plymouth Pillars Park in the Pike-Pine neighborhood (formerly known as Boren-Pike-Pine Park.) The Superintendent thanked Commissioner Jackson, a member of the Parks Naming Committee, for her assistance with the naming process.

Construction to Begin on Ballard Commons Park: Contractor PCL Construction Services of Bellevue will begin construction on Ballard Commons Park during the week of August 8, as Phase 2 of the project. Phase 1 included demolishing the temporary skate bowl and the former Safeway building. The park will include a brand new 4,500-square-foot skate bowl, a water feature, open lawn area, plaza, walkways and sidewalks, seating areas, four art sculptures by artist Valerie Otani, street trees, landscape plantings, and new pedestrian lighting by using an existing conduit to deliver power to light columns. The park is expected to open before the end of the year.

West Point Lighthouse: The Department anticipates receipt of the deed for West Point Lighthouse next week. Planning for an acceptance ceremony is underway.

Matthews Beach Reopens: After a seven-day closure due to high levels of bacteria, Matthews Beach opened for public swimming. The fecal coli form and E-Coli tests showed low levels of both bacteria. Signage remains along the lower section of Thornton Creek indicating high bacteria levels and discouraging water contact at that location. Matthews was the only Seattle location with repeated closures that was included on the list of offenders.

Community Building at Hing Hay Park: Once again parks are great venues for community building. There will be a “Crime Night Out” event at Hing Hay Park, on Tuesday, August 2, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This community event will have jazz, food, face painting, and arts and crafts for children. Crime Night Out is an event to celebrate community safety. This is a national effort for communities across the country to reclaim their streets. There will be a \$2 to \$5 sliding scale donation. All proceeds from the event will go towards supporting the International District Emergency Center (IDEC).

Volunteer Hours on Increase in Parks: For the first six months of 2005 Seattle Parks experienced a 7% increase in volunteer hours in its parks and recreation facilities. A total of 113,658 volunteer hours have been donated January-June 2005 by individual citizens, non-profit partners, and corporate groups. Half of the hours were spent in Seattle parks restoring habitat, developing trails, and cleaning beaches and off-leash areas. The second half was spent in community centers, pools, and other public facilities supporting youth development and community programs.

Alaskan Way Boulevard: A few weeks ago, UNOCAL began excavating an area of petroleum-contaminated soil on the Alaskan Way Boulevard, just south of the entrance to Myrtle Edwards Park. This project is in preparation for the Olympic Sculpture Park project and will affect pedestrian access to Myrtle Edwards Park. While this work is under way, and until the Olympic Sculpture Park construction is complete, access to Alaskan Way Boulevard and Myrtle Edwards Park will be affected. Parking at the site is no longer available in order to accommodate the construction.

Oxbow Park to Open: A ribbon cutting and dedication is scheduled for Saturday, August 13, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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. Three people signed up to testify.

Mike Ruby: He spoke on the need for a Wallingford/Fremont recreation center and the opportunity to use the old Lincoln High School site for this purpose. In the 1980s he was involved in a joint effort by the City of Seattle and Seattle School District to use the old Lincoln High as a recreation center for the area; however, that idea was dropped when Lincoln was used to house the students from two schools that were being re-built. Now there is another opportunity to consider this. He urged that Seattle Parks include \$60,000 in its 2006 budget to work on this proposal with Seattle School District.

Josh Runion: He is a member of the Montlake-Madrona adult men’s softball league, which is part of the Parks Department Recreation Softball league. He described major communication problems his ball team has encountered with Seattle Parks staff during the past few years. These problems center on field scheduling and games being cancelled without reason or notification. Only after his team was excluded from the playoffs this year, did his team manager learn from the league director that a balance was outstanding. Mr. Runion then described details of the transaction, where the League failed to handle the transaction properly, thus adversely impacting his team. Today he spoke with Royal Alley-Barnes, Seattle Parks Manager and other City staff. He is looking for an amicable solution to these problems.

Curtis Knopf: He is also a member of the Montlake-Madrona adult men’s softball league and addressed the same problem. He asked for an apology from the Department and a solution to the scheduling problems.

The Superintendent stated that the Department does owe them an apology as it was in error, and he has asked Parks staff to set up a meeting to resolve this.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Montlake Playfield Renovation Proposal

Susanne Friedman, Seattle Parks' project planner, presented a briefing on the Montlake Playfield Renovation Proposal. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing; both are included in these minutes. In addition to the written briefing, the Commissioners also received a Proposal Elements Map from DA HOGAN & Associates and a Consultant Permit Issues Memo from David Graves, Seattle Parks Senior Planner. The briefing was followed by a public hearing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

July 28th Parks staff will brief the Board of Park Commissioners on the recommended action to move the Montlake playfield renovation proposal to project status. A public hearing will follow the briefing on the same night. The Park Board will make a recommendation on this action on August 25.

Playfield History

In 1933, the Montlake Playfield site was a dahlia garden surrounded by "low, swampy ground covered with swamp grass and rushes . . . an ideal breeding place for mosquitoes and vermin . . . decidedly a very unhealthful location." (1937 letter from City Engineer.)

Petty crime and juvenile delinquency in the community spurred the conclusion that Montlake needed a playfield and recreation center. The District secured a WPA project grant and City funds bought materials for construction of a recreation/community center and development of the playfield. It was dedicated in 1935. Playfield improvements included the first public archery range. Almost immediately, there was a request to raise the level of the playfield to eliminate the frequent flooding and soil saturation by the bay.

Some filling was done to develop the playfield area but the shoreline remained in its natural condition - the highly viscous ground material was an ominous obstacle to further filling (in 1971 the bog was found to be 20' deep). In 1960, the entire field was filled - which put it out of service. Then work commenced on the bridge access highway [SR 520] and the resulting excavation became available for shore landfill. Huge truckloads of earth dumped in piles for future spreading exerted uneven pressures on the viscous peat below, causing upheavals in the playfield area and shore lands. The public could use the playfield only with very short-term planning, depending on mud or conditions caused by the latest upheaval. The soil being hauled in was unsegregated, not necessarily suitable for proper drainage and growing conditions for an athletic field. By 1966, sand and gravel was beginning to come from Metro's "Ravenna Sewer Tunnel." Two ballfields with backstops were put into service while the hauling and spreading continued. (*information taken from the Sherwood files - <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/history/Montlake.pdf>*)

Proposed site plans from 1963 show the Montlake Playfields consisting of two football fields, an archery range, three small softball fields, one handball court, two volleyball courts and two tennis courts. The ball fields consisted of backstops only, with no formal outfields constructed. Several of these elements were right along the water's edge. Continually wet and boggy conditions propelled the Montlake, Roanoke-Portage Bay Communities, and Parks to undertake a master plan proposal. This planning process was completed in 1970 and included a children's play area, water access opportunities, passive open space, a jogging and bicycle trail, a rowing club facility, and future swimming area. Many elements proposed in this master plan were never implemented. The multiple softball and football fields were eliminated and replaced with one intermediate baseball (adult slow pitch) field and one regulation football/soccer field and track in their current configuration. The passive open space, track, football/soccer field, and baseball field were built in 1975 with \$8000 contributed by Seattle Prep for these renovations. This field configuration remains today.

Proposal Description, Background and Elements

In 2004 Seattle Preparatory School proposed to Parks a renovation of the Montlake Playfields. The school is in the process of a capital campaign; if the proposal for renovation moves forward to project status, funds needed for the playfield renovation would come from this fundraising effort. A Memorandum of Agreement between Seattle Prep and Parks will be developed at a later date pending a Board recommendation and decision by the Superintendent. It is not

limited to, but would in all likelihood, include: funding, project management and oversight, construction costs, development and implementation, future maintenance, and permit issues.

The track and soccer/football field is predominantly located within a Shoreline Environment. The northeast corner of the track and field is located in an area that is extremely close to the shoreline of Union Bay and has experienced significant settling. The northeastern portion of the field currently sits almost five feet below center line. On a site visit on February 3, there was standing water and what appeared to be wetland vegetation in that corner. This is significant as the preceding week it had been dry. Additional site visits confirm the boggy conditions present. The current proposal moves the track and field to the west, which moves it out of the area that has experienced the most settling, but is still within the Shoreline environment, which raises regulatory issues. (Please refer to the attached Permit Memo for further environmental and permit details).

Seattle Prep averaged 287 hours of reserved practice time on the fields between 2001 and 2004, which places them in the top three user groups for this field. The Montlake Community Center and Seattle Youth Soccer are the number one and two user groups, respectively, with averages of 743 and 361 reserved hours. Detailed user group hours are listed below in the table under 'Key Issues Raised.' At this point in time, Seattle Prep does not envision actively increasing their practice hours, but the renovated fields would allow them to use the fields for their allotted time, which is currently not the case due to the poor field conditions.

In the Joint Athletic Facilities Program 2002 (JAFDP), the Montlake Playfield is listed under the *Unfunded Priority Projects that Increase Field System Capacity* category. It states, "proposed improvements include moving the field to the west and rebuilding with irrigation, drainage, turf renovation, track improvements, soccer/multi-use sports field replacements, baseball/softball improvements, tennis court resurfacing." (JADFP pg. 29)

Seattle Prep's original proposal included a renovated track and soccer/football field with new all-weather synthetic turf surfaces and areas for high jump, pole vault, and shot put; a renovated baseball field with asphalt pathways connecting the baseball and soccer/football fields with the community center; a new baseball/softball field located behind the existing community center; two new tennis courts; and additional parking.

As a result of the input thus far from Parks and the public, several elements have been removed from the original proposal. They include: the parking lot expansion, tennis court expansion, new softball field, protection fencing along the southern portion of the playfield parallel to E. Calhoun St., and a separate shot put area. Elements that have been carried forward include (please refer to the attached map):

- Shifting and renovating the track and football/soccer field
- Adding synthetic turf and drainage systems to the football/soccer field
- Improving the high-jump and warm up area
- Shifting and renovating the baseball field to include synthetic turf infield
- New backstop, wing fencing and dugouts
- Wetland mitigation

The refined proposal from Seattle Prep would implement the recommended improvements as outlined in the JAFDP (pg 29). Synthetic turf provides for year round play for soccer and other field sports because of good drainage and durability. It also provides a safer and improved playing surface in addition to increasing the scheduling capacity at a given site. These features are in keeping with the JAFDP Guiding Principle Goal: To benefit from new technology (pg 22).

Public Process to Date

The original proposal was presented in a preliminary way by Herbye White to the Montlake Community Center Advisory Council (MAC) and other community groups, followed by a briefing to the Board of Park Commissioners in November 2004 (please refer to the meeting minutes from November 18, 2004 http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2004/11-18-04_minutes.pdf). It was determined at that time that the proposal needed to have a more structured process for public comment.

Since then, Parks and Recreation has hosted two public meetings, on April 20th and May 18th 2005, to gather community input on the proposal. Ninety-two citizens signed in at these meetings. Parks publicized these meetings through mailings to the surrounding neighborhood and interested community groups and organizations. Public involvement ‘project’ signs were posted on the site and updated with current meeting notices.

In addition, Parks staff has met several times with Montlake Community Center Advisory Council members and representatives from Seattle Prep to discuss the components of the proposal and key issues. Several citizens have also written to Parks with their thoughts and concerns.

Web links and hard copies of the 2002 Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program and Parks Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities Policy were made available at the public meetings.

Synopsis of Public Input and Key Issues Raised

Comments received at the public meetings have been mixed, while the majority of correspondence has indicated support for the proposal. In an article written on May 18, 2005, Montlake Community Center Advisory Council (MAC) supported the proposal. However, at their June 6th meeting, MAC requested additional time to re-evaluate their endorsement. At the June 11th meeting, the following resolution was approved:

The Montlake Advisory Council gives conditional support to the Seattle Prep proposal for the Montlake playfields, subject to the following conditions:

1. Traffic study must be done to include mitigation and an enforcement plan.
2. Commitment to wetland restoration and trail development
3. M.O.A. to be entered into between Seattle Prep and Montlake community.
4. No lights on any playfield.
5. No artificial turf in the outfield of the ballfield.
6. Seattle Prep will use fields for practice only (no games)

This resolution reflects some of what has been heard at the community meetings. While most community members agree that the playfields are in desperate need of renovation and that improvements would benefit the children and community at large, concerns have been expressed over potential traffic impacts, the amount of time Seattle Prep is scheduled on the field, overall park site programming, and the fear that Parks will propose to install field lighting at a later date.

Traffic impacts – Traffic concerns fell into three categories: 1.) Potential impacts due to expanded field usage, 2.) Seattle Prep students driving down the hill between the school and the park, and 3.) Neighborhood-wide traffic congestion, limited parking and speeding vehicles.

Parks staff noted that if the proposal moves forward to project status, under SEPA review an independent traffic consultant would be hired to conduct an impact analysis based on the project components. Some members of the community feel that traffic impacts should be analyzed at the proposal stage. Seattle Prep is willing, and has made a verbal agreement with the neighborhood, to enter into a ‘good neighbor’ agreement with the community – a component of which would include restrictions on student drivers driving to the Montlake field for school practices and games. Neighborhood-wide traffic concerns fall under the purview of Seattle Department of Transportation.

Scheduled use – The issue of field scheduling seems to have two components: 1.) resentment toward Seattle Prep for using the field in what is perceived as a disproportionate amount of use time compared to other leagues and user groups, and 2.) parents and coaches who desperately want to see the fields renovated so that children can play on the fields on a regular basis.

Improvements to the playfields would benefit the various users already scheduled at Montlake, such as Seattle Youth Soccer and a variety of softball and baseball users. Synthetic surfacing on the football/soccer field would result in the most significant changes in use. This would allow for year-round soccer use, rather than the fall-only use that exists now

because of the muddy grass surface. Renovation of the baseball field would continue to allow Seattle Prep to hold practices and home games at Montlake.

Parks staff outlined Parks policy and procedures for ‘Use and Scheduling of Outdoor Athletic Facilities’ and noted that Seattle Prep is not asking for additional use time as part of the proposal, and that they would continue to be scheduled on the field with Parks’ policy criteria, specifically: 1.) priority access for youth programs, 2.) historical use will be considered (over new user groups), and 3.) local sports needs are given priority over citywide needs.

The increase in projected hours, listed below, is based upon the assumption that improvements will allow MAC to expand their programming of youth activities by approximately 500 hours. Synthetic turf would allow for year-round soccer use, rather than the fall-only use possible now with the muddy grass surface. Year-round soccer would extend to weekends through the late fall, winter, and spring, with an additional 100 hours of scheduled time available. The Ultimate Frisbee community would like to increase their use of the field. The chart below shows current and projected field usage at Montlake by organizations and was made available to the public.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2007 Post Project Projected Hrs	
TOTAL MONTLAKE FIELD USAGE (including Track)	1,905	1,950	1,510	1,722		2,574
USAGE by ORGANIZATION					2001-2004 TOTALS	
Montlake Community Center	1,031.50	983.50	481.00	475.50	2,971.50	1,050.00
Seattle Youth Soccer	346.50	348.00	360.50	388.50	1,443.50	400.00
Seattle Preparatory School	223.75	358.50	219.75	347.75	1,149.75	400.00
Montlake Madrona Little League	173.75	91.25	148.00	172.75	585.75	200.00
City Wide Adult Athletics	80.00	71.25	75.00	76.25	302.50	80.00
Greenwood Lacrosse			110.00	110.00	220.00	150.00
Seattle School District CYO	17.00	35.00	40.50	17.00	109.50	17.00
Epiphany School		17.00	12.00	46.00	75.00	50.00
St Joseph School	19.00	19.00	12.50	19.00	69.50	19.00
Misc			22.50	22.50	45.00	22.50
United Methodist Softball League	10.50	17.75	5.00		33.25	
Holy Names Academy			3.00	27.00	30.00	42.00
Fall Ultimate League	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	12.00	10.00
Mariners Baseball				8.00	8.00	30.00
RUG Senior Little League		6.00			6.00	
Team Danskin				5.50	5.50	
Bertschi School			2.00	3.25	5.25	3.00
SIBL			5.00		5.00	
N. Central Little League			2.50		2.50	
City Wide Youth			1.50		1.50	
Additional groups Nov-Feb weekends						100

*The 2007 projected hours are rough order of magnitude and subject to change.

Park site use/programming – A few community members would like Parks to develop a master use plan for the park instead of using privately donated funds for playfield improvements, and believe that setting aside the limited space for

specialized interests groups (Seattle Prep) to use was not in the best interests of the community. Others were concerned that Parks is violating state law and separation of church and state issues by accepting funds from a school affiliated with a religious organization.

Some community members were concerned that shifting the playfields to the west would result in less park space for use by the broader community, and questioned the priority given to organized sports. Seattle Prep has promised to incorporate into their proposal wetland access ideas and visions from the community's Department of Neighborhoods Small and Simple award planning effort for this site.

Permit Issues There are significant permit issues – Shoreline, Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA), and SEPA. The track and soccer/football field is located predominantly within a Shoreline Environment, and the northeast corner of the track and field is experiencing significant settling. The Shoreline designation is Conservancy Recreation (CR) – the existing track and field is a non-conforming use. Repair and maintenance of the existing track and field in its current location would not be considered a Shoreline Substantial Development. However, relocating or renovating the track and soccer/football field with new all-weather and synthetic turf surfaces, a retaining wall to prevent subsidence, and providing areas for high jump, pole vault and shot put, are beyond the scope of the maintenance exemption, and *would* require a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit. A large portion of the track and field is also located within an identified Liquefaction ECA, and adjacent to a Wetland ECA. Development is not precluded in a Liquefaction ECA; but it must comply with Seattle Municipal Code requirements.

Field lighting – While staff has reiterated that field lighting is not a component of the proposal at hand and has outlined criteria from the 2002 JAFDP that does not support lighting at this site, the issue of field lighting has become a lightning rod for some members of the community and Montlake Community Club (MCC) in particular. In the June issue of the Montlake Flyer, MCC has published a resolution stating that *“the Montlake Community Club will actively oppose Seattle Prep’s proposal unless Seattle Parks provides an enforceable promise not to install lights at the Montlake Playfields.”*

Budget

The current estimate for the project shows a net construction cost (what the consultants expect for the project bid amount) of \$1,800,000. With project soft costs and sales tax the gross project cost would be \$2,150,000. The consultants will work to find some efficiencies to reduce these amounts if possible. Seattle Prep would also need to have some contingency dollars available for conditions that may arise during construction that could not have been contemplated before the fact.

Staff Recommendations

Allow the proposal to move forward to project status with the following assumptions:

- Under SEPA review, an independent traffic consultant will be hired to conduct an impact analysis based on the project components.
- Under the Master Use Permit (MUP) review, wetland areas both east and west of the site will be enhanced, the form of which will be influenced by the community's Small and Simple planning effort.

Schedule

The project schedule has yet to be determined.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact Susanne Friedman, Parks Project Planner, at: (206) 684-0902 or susanne.friedman@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers

Ms. Friedman displayed a large map of Montlake Playfield and pointed out the wetland buffer, liquefaction zone, bay, community center, tennis courts, nearby streets, and the playfield's proximity to major roadways. She pointed out

various parts of the proposal on the map and reviewed the written information already received by the Commissioners in the briefing paper.

Board Questions & Answers

Commissioner Jackson asked if Seattle Prep will fund the entire project and Ms. Friedman answered yes, Seattle Prep will fund the proposal through its current capital campaign. Commissioner Jackson asked if there are any strings to the proposal and Ms. Friedman answered no, that all the details will be laid out in the Memorandum of Agreement. Commissioner Jackson asked if Seattle Prep is requesting any increased use of the field and Ms. Friedman answered no. Of the amount of hours the field is currently scheduled to Seattle Prep, only about 2/3 of those hours are actually used due to the poor condition of the field. Improving the field will not increase the number of hours the field is scheduled to Prep, but it will increase the percentage of those hours that are usable because the fields will be in better condition.

Commissioner Ranade asked whether there is any athletic lighting planned and Ms. Friedman answered that Montlake Playfield is not listed under the Joint Athletic Field Development Plan to have athletic lights installed and there is no funding in this proposal for lighting.

Commissioner Collins asked for confirmation on whether the shot put goes away or stays, as the briefing paper and the large drawing have conflicting information. He would be pleased for it to go away as he believes a shotput can be a semi-dangerous activity when it is near a children's playground. Ms. Friedman will verify whether it stays or will be removed and get back to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Collins stated that he believes it is important to include language in the Memorandum of Agreement that Seattle Prep only use Montlake Playfield as a practice field and never hold any regular games at the site. Ms. Friedman stated that Seattle Prep has played practice football games, practice baseball games, and regulation baseball games — but no regulation football games — at the playfield. Commissioner Collins stated that this is an issue with the community and both he and Commissioner Holme recommended that the Memorandum of Agreement state clearly whether Seattle Prep's practice or regulation games would/would not be allowed. Commissioner Holme commented that the impacts from regulation baseball or soccer games are likely to have different impacts than regulation football games. Mr. Graby, Seattle Prep's Vice-president of Development, commented that the field will not accommodate Seattle Prep's varsity football games. Seattle Prep would like to have a few regulation soccer games on a trial basis, and then meet with the community and Seattle Parks to evaluate the impact and how to mitigate the impacts of spectator traffic on the community.

Commissioner Jackson asked about the number of parking spaces in Montlake Playfield and why some are being removed. Superintendent Bounds answered that the adjoining Montlake Community Center is currently being expanded and the parking spaces are being removed due to the expansion. Commissioner Holme asked if a traffic analysis is planned for the community center expansion and Ms. Friedman answered yes, an independent traffic study has been completed and parking at the community center will not be expanded.

Commissioner Holme asked if the upfront funding costs will be borne by Seattle Prep and Ms. Friedman answered yes. Commissioner Belbeck asked how the funding would be conveyed to the City and Ms. Friedman answered that this is still to be determined and will be included in the Memorandum of Agreement.

Commissioner Belbeck referred to testimony the Board received in November 2004 that the property was deeded to the City with deed restrictions. Ms. Friedman will verify this testimony and report back to the Commissioners. Commissioner Collins commented that although he believes Seattle Prep is motivated to do this project because it will benefit, he also believes it is a generous act to provide improvements that the community can also use. The City loves private-public partnerships.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing began. The Chair reminded the audience that each person has up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. A total of 13 citizens testified; a very brief summary of their comments follows.

Kate Lee: She is a junior at Seattle Prep and a member of the track and field team and practices at Montlake Playfield daily. The field is a swamp during the spring rains and has potholes. The track is uneven and is an accident waiting to happen. She stated that Seattle Prep is a good neighbor and listed a number of reasons to approve this proposal.

Robert Graby: He is Seattle Prep's Vice-president of Development. Seattle Prep has been located next to Montlake Playfield since 1919 and began using the park through a joint use agreement in the 1960's. Montlake fields are unsafe for students and athletes. Seattle Prep is prepared to spend \$1.5 at the playfield for soccer, football, and baseball improvements, as well as needed drainage, landscaping, and wetland mitigation as part of its Capital Campaign program. This is a win-win situation as Seattle Prep would benefit from having improved and more usable fields for sports and the community would also benefit from the improvements. Under this proposal, Seattle Prep is asking for no additional hours of use. Neighbors are concerned with the possibility that field lights would later be installed — Seattle Prep does not want field lights, either. The community is also concerned with traffic and parking impacts. The school will fund a pre- and post-construction study to address any mitigate impacts and will meet with Montlake Advisory Council on a regular basis. The school will also sign a formal written agreement with the Montlake Advisory Council. Seattle Prep wants to be a good neighbor. He gave the example of the partnership between Seattle Pacific University and Interbay Playfield, owned by Seattle Parks, as a successful example of this type of partnership. He asked that the Commissioners support this proposal.

Patty Gorman: She testified as a representative of Montlake Community Club. The Club asks that the Commissioners reject the proposal and not advance it to project status. The Commissioners also received a letter from MCC listing their concerns.

Kathy DiJulio-Smith: She thanked the Commissioners for holding this public hearing. She and her husband are Montlake community members. In the 1970s a Master Plan was developed for this park and she asked why major changes are now being considered without a new Master Plan. Don't sell the park to the highest bidder. It is a violation to move ahead without the Army Corp of Engineer's approval. Removing 18 trees would remove the barrier between the playfield and would remove the site barrier of SR520 for picnickers using the park. This proposal benefits Seattle Prep, but not the rest of the city. It is based on verbal promises and agreements. She asked that the Commissioners not advance the proposal to project status.

Signa Hayden: She lives across from the field and is concerned with impacts from parking, traffic, and lights.

Nancy Van Leuven: She lives near Montlake Playfield and described the park and stated that much of its use is by families. A property assessor recently told her that if lights were installed, she would need to declare the lights as a nuisance in relation to ever selling her property. Former Seattle Parks Recreation Director Herbye White told the neighborhood there would never be athletic lights at Montlake Playfield. This issue must be addressed to appease the neighbors.

Patty Gorman: Ms. Gorman has lived in the Montlake area for over 30 years. She spoke earlier tonight as a representative of Montlake Community Club (MCC) and stated that MCC and the Montlake Advisory Council are separate organizations. She spoke on the gridlock parking that already exists at this park and doesn't want more parking in the neighborhood. She prefers open space, trees, and families using the park.

Fred Wardenburg: He asked that Parks slow down the process and do a Master Plan. He lives one block from Montlake Playfield and believes the parking issue is a time bomb. It isn't just nearby neighbors who will be impacted, but when additional people are trying to get to the fields this will cause temper flare-ups and accidents. He asked that a good traffic study be completed. He believes that if this proposal goes forward and the field is improved that the Board of Park Commissioners will eventually be pressured to add athletic lighting to the field.

John Sauvage: He lives on Capital Hill and has played sports on, and coached, at Montlake Playfield. There is a shortage of good athletic fields in Seattle. This is a win-win situation for Seattle Prep and for the City, as Seattle Prep would pay for the improvements. He understands, however, that neighbors may not want the project to move forward.

William Oseran: He has lived near Montlake Playfield for 58 years and the site has egress and drainage problems. Seattle Parks has ignored the site for decades and was using good judgment, as to do so would be putting money down a rathole. Six-eight times each month the nearby parking is terrible. The park has been ignored for decades and he urged that Parks now go slowly on this proposal. He recommended that Parks complete the Montlake Community Center renovation and expansion first, evaluate that project, and then do a parking study. Seattle Prep is not asking for more play time, but they do want to take over more area of the park. Moving the field's location takes park land away from others.

Lou Hobson: His child attends Seattle Prep. He is proud of the current Seattle Prep and its involvement in the city. He lives near both Madrona Elementary School and Group Health and is very aware of neighborhood parking issues. This is a win-win situation and he hopes the City and County engage in more partnerships like this.

Fred Andrews: He is a 25-year resident of the Montlake area and the field was always dangerous when his kids played there. Potential field lighting is the main issue and he asked that this project not become a religious issue.

Michael Alcantara: He is a Seattle Prep graduate and stated that practicing on the field is very difficult. Kids are less motivated and their morale lessens when the fields they play on are in such terrible shape. This proposal is beneficial to both Seattle Prep and to the kids. He lives near Nathan Hale and knows that the new fields there are used a great deal by community members.

The public hearing concluded at 7:10 p.m.

Additional Board Question & Answers

The Commissioners spent some time discussing whether the Memorandum of Agreement can include binding language that would preclude athletic lights being installed at Montlake any time in the future. Commissioner Collins commented that an objection to the proposal comes from concerns that the improved fields would be lighted in the future and that it is quite clear that the community never wants lights at the field and needs some assurance that this won't happen. Seattle Prep has also stated it does not want lights at the field — how can language be included that specifies no lighting. Commissioner Belbeck commented that there are other factors, besides Seattle Prep's agreement, that determines when fields are lighted. She is concerned that the City will consider adding lights at this field sometime in the future. Commissioner Collins commented that the Memorandum of Agreement with Seattle Prep cannot bind future City Councils and Board of Park Commissioners. Superintendent Bounds agreed that, unless there is a covenant on the land, it is very difficult to bind future governing bodies. Commissioner Holme asked if, because the agreement would be a public/private partnership, City Council will pass an ordinance sanctioning the agreement. The Superintendent agreed that City Council would do this and Commissioner Holme suggested that the ordinance could include language in the ordinance addressing the lighting issue. The Superintendent stated this could be done, but could be changed in the future.

Commissioner Holme asked about the scope of tree removal for the project. Ms. Friedman pointed to the large map and showed where the 18 trees are located that are slated for removal. These trees and their roots are located in the construction area. Tree roots are adversely affected by construction, causing them to eventually need to be removed. They will be removed during the project and replaced in-kind.

Commissioner Jackson commented that she lives across the street from a large park, agrees that a traffic study would be helpful, and asked if Parks staff have planned a study. Ms. Friedman answered yes, that a traffic study will be completed by an outside and independent traffic consultant and is required as part of the SEPA process. There are three components to the traffic study: (1) an assessment of the impacts that would come as a result of Seattle Prep's specific proposal components; (2) the traffic components listed in the Seattle Prep Good Neighbor Agreement pertaining to the school's

traffic; and (3) the traffic in the community that is unrelated to Montlake Playfield. This third element is under the purview of Seattle Department of Transportation, which has its own Neighborhood Traffic Coordinators. Commissioner Jackson asked about ways to mitigate the traffic, especially in regards to the limited one-way streets. Ms. Friedman answered that much of this would be determined in the traffic analysis.

The Board thanked Ms. Friedman for the briefing and the public for attending the meeting and giving testimony. The Board will discuss this project at its August 25 meeting and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

Discussion/Recommendation: Loyal Heights Playfield

Susan Golub, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, verbally reviewed a Parks staff decision tree memorandum sent to the Commissioners on July 27 to aid in the decision process. This decision tree reviewed the requested Board Action. The major question before the Board is whether to make an exception to City and Parks' policies and not renovate the Loyal Heights Playfield with synthetic turf. It listed the pros and cons regarding the staff recommendation to renovate the field with synthetic turf and described mitigation proposals which have been raised by the community if the Board's recommendation is to renovate with synthetic.

Board Discussion & Recommendation

Commissioner Collins stated that he thinks it is crucial to get proper lights installed as mitigation. He described his visit to the Loyal Heights Playfield and stated that a fundamental issue to him is the additional amount of fun kids can have playing ballgames on the improved field. He supports the staff proposal to install a synthetic athletic field.

Commissioner Belbeck visited Queen Anne Bowl and then Loyal Heights Playfield. The lower area, which is where the athletic field is located, has the feel of being kind of on its own, due to the topography. She supports the compromise proposal to install a synthetic infield.

Commissioner Jackson visited Loyal Heights and it was apparent to her that the lower area is a ballfield and not a park. The topography delineates the original intention of a ballfield. Extended use of the athletic field is important and she supports the staff proposal.

Commissioner Ranade also visited the site and the athletic field also appears as a separate area to him. He is very involved in sports and has found field turf much better to play on than grass and safer for athletes. He echoed the sentiments expressed by Commissioner Collins to improve the lights within this project, if possible.

Commissioner Holme stated that he volunteers a lot with athletics. He asked staff, if the project includes renovation with a combined synthetic and grass combination, would the project include taking out the entire field and installing vertically drained turf in order to build up the playability of the surface. Ted Holden, Seattle Parks' landscape architect commented that all Parks' grass athletic fields are closed in winter. The temperatures are lower and grass that is damaged during this time will not re-grow. It doesn't matter how well the field is built up, the grass component of a combination surface would not grow in the winter and would be unavailable for play.

Commissioner Holme made a number of comments:

- The Commissioners must look at this proposal as a citywide issue in that this is Pro Parks money and 10% of the development funds are designated for fields. As those funds are being spent, the goal is to increase the scheduled hours of the fields.
- The neighborhood proposal would increase the % of current scheduled hours that would be usable (due to improved field conditions). However, it wouldn't increase the amount of hours the field could be scheduled [see Ted Holden's comments above.]
- In his involvement with Seattle Youth Soccer Association, he learned that Ballard has 13 teams and is the most "field needy". Scheduling more hours at Loyal Heights would help with this need.
- He was very involved in the Joint Athletic Field Development Plan, a process that took two years to complete. Three citywide meetings were held and thousands of citizen volunteer hours went into the Plan's development.

- Ultimate Frisbee and lacrosse are emerging sports that also are looking for fields to schedule.
- Every additional hour that a field can be scheduled gives, on average, 24 additional hours of play for a team sport (based on two teams with 12 members each.) This is significant.

Commissioner Collins moved to recommend to the Superintendent approval of the staff recommendation for Loyal Heights Playfield, including renovation of the field entirely through the use of synthetic turf, and that the Superintendent consider installing new lights. Commissioner Jackson seconded.

Commissioner Belbeck asked to clarify the term hybrid (combination of synthetic and grass) and whether the difficulty with the hybrid is the risk of grass growing into the synthetic. Commissioner Collins said he was persuaded by testimony from a technical expert who said the synthetic field surface can be either brown or green in color. He believes that a full synthetic replacement is needed and not a hybrid combination. Commissioner Holme commented that perhaps hybrid is too broad a term to use. Previously Bobby Morris and Interbay fields had a combination of a synthetic mat with grass growing through. The installation failed and subsequently had to be replaced.

Commissioner Collins commented that he has never received so many e-mails on one subject and respects the passionate testimony sent to the Board. Commissioner Holme commented that the Commissioners read all the testimony and the testimony contains lots of truths; however, the Commissioners must also look at the City’s perspective. Commissioner Collins complimented the Board’s Coordinator (Sandy Brooks) for forwarding the large volume of correspondence to the Commissioners and for efficiently managing the large number of e-mails.

The vote was called for and Commissioners Ranade, Jackson, and Collins favored. Commissioner Belbeck opposed. Motion passed 3-1 (the Chair votes only in case of a tie.)

Commissioner Holme recommended that Parks staff work with the neighborhood on the disposition of whether or not field marking will be a part of this project, as part of the mitigation.

Briefing/Public Hearing/Discussion/Recommendation: Prentis Frazier Park Operating Hours

Royal Alley-Barnes, Seattle Parks Resources North/Central East Manager, Larry Campbell, Seattle Parks Security Supervisor, and Seattle Police Department Community Policing Officer Charles Davis came before the Board to give a briefing and ask for a recommendation on a community proposal to change the operating hours for Prentis Frazier Park. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing. The verbal briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing, Board discussion, and recommendation to the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

The Board is being asked to consider a change to the operating hours for Prentis Frazier Park.

Project Description and Background

The Friends of Prentis Frazier Park has requested a change from the current park operating hours of 4 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., to park operating hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Friends request to change the hours of operation is based on concerns regarding the use of the park in the evening and early morning hours. The youth of the neighborhood are playing basketball in the evenings and some neighbors are complaining about the noise. They feel drug sales and use are happening in the park and along the streets to the south and east of the park.

In late fall 2004, representatives from the Seattle Police Department met with the community to work with them on these issues. The effort was to teach the community successful methods of documentation of problems within parks. Training included when and how to call 911. In March 2005, Parks staff met with the park neighbors and responded to several community questions on the park, providing them with the park hours, the noise enforcement requirements, how and when to call 911, and the process for initiating a review of existing hours. Staff has also met with neighbors on site about general park design and volunteer initiatives.

As of June 13, 2005, Seattle Police Officer Tyrone Davis found that in 2005 only six calls were made during the hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. from residents pertaining to this neighborhood park. Only two calls were directly related to park issues. Parks security staff drive by the park in the evening hours twice per shift. No illegal activities are being observed and the basketball courts are seldom in use. A review of Parks' incident reports and e-mail shows no indication of increased litter, drug use or other illegal activities.

Public Involvement Process

A community meeting was held on March 31st with 21 park neighbors attending. Since the meeting, Parks staff has attempted to contact by phone all attendees, speaking with some and leaving messages with others.

Potential Impacts from Changing the Operating Hours

The beneficial impacts of this citizen proposal: Changing park operating hours would be a positive response to the request from Friends of the Park, which encourages continued stewardship. The police and Parks would work with the neighbors through the change creating a closer partnership.

The adverse impacts of this citizen proposal: The impacts of shortening operating hours include a loss of hours of public park usage. Consistency in our operational hours across the City will be reduced. Past changes usually have represented a move toward consistent operational hours.

Alternatives to Consider

90 Day Assessment Period: Instead of immediately deciding on operating hours for Prentis Frazier, one alternative to consider is to implement a 90 day review period of park activities. The police, for their part, will respond to the community with a letter outlining the needs of the police in terms of monitoring illegal activities in the park and calling 911 to document the date, time location and level of the problems in the park. This review period would begin after Park Board approval of this alternative and would continue for 90 days, after which time we would evaluate the collected information and return to the Board for a decision on whether the hours should be changed.

No Change in Operating Hours: A second alternative is to continue to monitor and work with Prentis Frazier Park neighbors, but not to implement a 90 day review period and not change the operating hours. The general park operating hours (4 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.) were established to address illegal late night activities in all Seattle parks. The current information suggests that the level of illegal activities in this park falls even with or below that of other parks of this size and usage.

Change Hours as Requested: A third alternative is to change the hours as requested by the neighbors.

Budget

If the park operating hours are changed, the park sign will need to be revised at a minimal cost to Parks.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends implementing a 90 day review period.

Additional Information

For additional information about this project, please contact Larry Campbell, Park Security Officer, at 684-7088 or larry.campbell@seattle.gov.

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Barnes introduced herself, Mr. Campbell, and Officer Davis and reviewed the Friends of Prentis Frazier Park proposal and the information in the written briefing paper. This park is located at East Harrison and 24th Avenue East. Friends of Prentis Frazier Park are concerned with noise from the basketball court and drug sales in the park.

There is a single basketball hoop, so no games are being played. Parks staff report seeing little litter in the park. Reducing the hours eliminates 12 hours per week that citizens can use the park and would make the hours of use

inconsistent with other local parks. Parks staff are recommending a 90-day review period and would work with the community and Seattle Police Department. Officer Davis stated that Sonja Richter, Crime Prevention Coordinator, has talked with the community to give training on how to call 911 and report incidents correctly. The incidents are currently not happening or are being under-reported. He drives by the area often.

Public Hearing

The Public Hearing began. The Chair reminded the audience that each person has up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. A total of three citizens testified; a very brief summary of their comments follows.

Rebecca Weiss: She has lived two doors away from Prentis Frazier Park for 30 years. She gave a brief history of the park and her neighborhood involvement. This is a problem and the neighbors need help. She referred to the March 21 meeting of neighbors, Seattle Parks Department staff, and Seattle Police staff. A primary problem is the basketball hoop – please limit the hours. She can hear the noise from the basketball court from her deck and there are people playing basketball often when the lights are on. If the lights are off, they do not play basketball. She doesn't call 911 because noise is not illegal.

Kathy Hanson-Mack: Her bedroom is 10 feet from the park border. She described the park as a natural amphitheater. She has had two frightening confrontations with park users when they were disturbing her family with noise. The park is currently open at 4:00 am in the morning and if people want to play basketball at that time, there is nothing that can be done to stop them. The situation is so unbearable she is considering selling her house and moving elsewhere.

Eileen Maloney: At the March 21 meeting, 21 neighbors said “yes, change the hours.” She regularly picks up needles, condoms, sex toys, and other debris left in the park and throws it away to protect the children. Neighbors of the park are very vested in making this a strong park. Please help them get rid of the problems and make the park an asset, not a nuisance. She believes some of those in the park at early hours are coming from a nearby business, Dino's. She can hardly believe that SPD has only received six calls, as she has made at least that many. Please help the neighbors with a remedy.

Office Johnson referred to the comments about Dino's, which is a nearby lounge and grocery store. Seattle Police are putting pressure on that area, which may lead to people moving to the park. This is a very diverse neighborhood and the problems near Dino's are a neighborhood problem. He also stated that the address of the park is 401 24th Avenue East. When citizens call 911 to report problems at the park, the database system may be capturing the citizen's address and not showing the complaint as Prentis Frazier. That could account for only 6 calls showing on his report. He will continue to work with the community on reporting calls about the park.

Board Discussion/Recommendation

The Commissioners asked a number of questions about operating hours of Seattle parks. The Superintendent gave further context on operating hours of Seattle parks. Ten years ago the Board of Park Commissioners and City Council determined that the operating hours of Seattle's parks would be 4:00 am – 11:30 p.m. Thirty three parks currently have operating hours that are exceptions to this, including Miller Playfield, Van Asselt Playfield, and others. If a park had already gone through a process to set alternate hours, the hours were not changed to 4:00 am-11:30 pm.

The basketball court is a service to the community and they do not want the one goal removed — they want the hours of its use changed. Commissioner Holme commented that it is an old backstop of metal and wood and Ms. Barnes said it would be replaced.

Commissioner Collins moved to change the hours of operation as requested by the community from 6 am – 10 pm. Commissioner Belbeck seconded. Motion passed, with three votes in favor (Commissioners Belbeck, Collins, and Jackson.) Commissioner Ranade had previously left the meeting.

Board of Park Commissioners' Business

- None

New/Old Business

- Commissioner Collins recently attended a Seattle Parks Executive Team meeting and recommends that other Commissioners do so, too.
- Commissioner Collins requested a future briefing to the Board of Park Commissioners on the Seattle Conservation Corp.
- The Department’s employee picnic is scheduled for August 25, 11:30 am – 2:30 p.m. All Commissioners are invited to attend.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
 Kate Pflaumer, Chair
 Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____