

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Debbie Jackson
Jackie Ramels
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Kate Pflaumer, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Ken Bounds, Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commissioner Holme called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. **Commissioner Ranade moved and Commissioner Jackson seconded approval of the October 26 agenda, the October 12 minutes as corrected, and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence.**

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bounds reported on the following items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

NRPA is a Success!: Judging by visitor comments and sheer numbers, the recent National Recreation and Parks Association conference held in Seattle is was one of the most successful NRPA conferences ever. The all-time registration record for this annual conference was broken, with 9,500 registrants and 500 vendors. Visitors brought in an estimated \$15 million into the local economy. The weather was spectacular and so was the planning and hard work of Parks staff, members of the Local Host Committee representing jurisdictions from Washington, Idaho, Alaska, and Oregon, and more than 400 volunteers. Both Deputy Superintendent B.J. Brooks and Parks' staff Adrienne Caver-Hall deserve special recognition for their tireless efforts and good spirits. The kickoff event at Freeway Park was amazing. A number of the visitors were taken on tours of various Seattle parks and voiced strong admiration for Seattle's park system.

Golden Gardens Beach Fires Update: Golden Gardens beach fires ended for this season on October 17. Since May 15, visitors enjoyed 115 days of beach fire fun. Public comments about the revised beach program have been positive, with more families using the beach fire area and reporting that they feel welcome and safe. For more information on beach fire management, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/BeachFires.htm>

Southeast Seattle Park “Jamboree” Held: On October 19, Parks crews from all over the city met in Southeast Seattle to conduct an all-day "jamboree", a one-day work event to focus maintenance on a single park or area of the city. The crews focused on Genesee Park, Rainier Community Center, Rainier Playfield, Lakewood Park, and Columbia Park.

Denny Awards Ceremony November 1, 5:30–8:30 pm in the Bertha Landis Room in City Hall: The following individuals and organizations have been selected to receive a 2006 Denny Award: Nancy and Les Malmgren, (Carkeek Park stewards); Carolyn and Charles Jackson (20 years stewardship of the Central District Panthers Football League), Jerry Rosso (Advisory Council for Special Pops for 20 yrs.), Longfellow Creek Watershed Council Stewards. For more information on the Denny Awards, see <http://www.seattle.gov/news/detail.asp?ID=6654&Dept=14>

Trick or Treat on the Waterfront: The Aquarium and Downtown Waterfront Neighborhood have planned a safe and sane event on Sunday, October 29, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This Halloween event gives kids a chance to dress up before the sun goes down and trick or treat door to door at businesses along the waterfront. The Aquarium hosts a Halloween party with special guest appearances by JP Patches and the Seafair Pirates. Gray Line of Seattle will be providing free rides on a double-decker bus along the Trick or Treat route, as well. For more information on the Aquarium, see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/>.

Langston Hughes to Partner with Seattle Rep Theater: Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center is embarking on a partnership with the Rep on the new “Open Doors” program. Open Doors was created in memory of playwright Wendy Wasserstein, who passed away from Breast Cancer last year, and is aimed at exposing young people to professional theater. Last weekend, nearly 30 youth attended the Rep’s production of “Doubt”. This was part of the Pro Parks Levy Teen Development Fund. Afterwards, they had the opportunity to meet well known DJ Spinderella, who spoke to the kids about her long history as a hip hop star. For more information on Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Centers/langston.htm>.

Yesler and Delridge CC Teens Program: The Yesler and Delridge Community Center Teen programs partnered to produce a public service announcement video as a project for Week Without Violence. Thirteen teens spent two sessions discussing the kinds of violence that affects their daily lives. They selected playground bullying as the subject of their video. The message is ‘Nobody Likes a Bully’. The video was written, directed, and performed by the participating teens. The Superintendent will arrange for the video to be presented to the Commissioners.

City Council Budget Hearings: The next public meeting is on Monday, October 30. The public may go online to watch the proceedings at Seattle Channel, <http://www.seattlechannel.org/>.

Commissioner Holme asked if the street levy will impact the budget. The Superintendent stated that on Monday the Council will issue its first round of recommendations, which could contain budget cuts. There will be additional public meetings, with no decision made on the budget until after the November 7 election. Commissioner Collins volunteered to testify at a hearing in favor of the park rangers proposed under the Downtown Park Initiative.

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 testified.

Discussion/Recommendation: Magnolia/Queen Anne Off-Leash Area

At the Board's October 12 meeting, Lana Krisman, Seattle Parks' project manager, presented a briefing on the proposal for three new off-leash areas to be located in the Magnolia/Queen Anne areas. The briefing was followed by a public hearing. Tonight the Board plans to discuss the proposal and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent. Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks' Manager of Major Projects, was also present to answer questions.

Discussion/Recommendation

Commissioner Ramels asked how and why the sites were reduced to three during the public process. Ms. Krisman stated that five sites were selected as a result of the public process. Staff then looked at the topography and other factors and the sites were narrowed to three. Commissioner Ramels asked if staff sent out a notice announcing the reduction in the number of sites. Ms. Krisman stated that the briefing paper was distributed and the information was also posted to the web pages. Commissioner Ramels asked if staff looked at non-Parks sites. Ms. Krisman answered that there is wording in the resolution that non-parks sites may be considered, but staff only looked at Parks' property sites at this time. Commissioner Ramels asked if staff have ever advocated for any non-park sites to be used as off-leash areas. Staff answered yes, that both the off-leash at Blue Dog Park and I-5 Colonnade Park are on non-park property. Commissioner Ramels stated that some criticism the Board heard was that staff did not look at non-park sites and she asked staff to do so in the future. The Superintendent commented that Parks is always open to non-park sites for use as off-leash areas.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarification on the next steps in this process. Ms. Krisman said there could be one or three sites selected for the 18-month pilot period. At the end of the pilot, the issue will be brought back to the Board before determining whether to make the sites permanent off-leash areas. Commissioner Jackson was under the impression, from information presented at the previous meeting, that there are no funds for this project. She asked how the pilot program would move forward. Ms. Krisman stated that the elements for the off-leash areas are inexpensive and consist primarily of fencing and wood chips; funding will be allocated for the selected sites. Commissioner Collins referred to testimony that one pilot site would draw too many users and the sites should be spread over the area.

Commissioner Ranade asked why the Bay Terrace Road area at Discovery Park wasn't considered. Ms. Krisman answered that many citizens suggested Discovery Park; however, it has a master plan that doesn't include an off-leash area so the site was not taken back to the community for discussion. [Bay Terrace Road was acquired after the master plan was approved and is not covered by the plan. A separate road leads into it.] Mr. Stoops commented that five sites were selected as an outcome of the public meetings with the community and Citizens for Off-leash Areas (COLA); Discovery Park was not one of the five. The Superintendent stated that staff can go back and look at the Bay Terrace Road site.

Commissioner Ramels asked if the upper area of Smith Cove has been considered. Ms. Krisman answered that this new acquisition currently has a master plan being formulated. The site in question is being considered for a viewpoint, which would not mesh well with an off-leash area. In addition, there is little parking.

Commissioner Jackson referred to testimony that stated David Rodgers Park is a critical wildlife habitat. Ms. Krisman agreed and said several other Seattle parks are so designated and include a number of active uses. Mr. Stoops added that staff must first check with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to see if there are any protected species in the area. If so, a "caution" is issued. Commissioner Collins referred to testimony that bald eagles and an owl live in Kinnear Park.

Commissioner Ranade asked if the pilot period could be shorter than 18 months and Ms. Krisman answered that the City Council ordinance requires an 18-month pilot. The Superintendent added that the pilot can be terminated for good reason. For instance, the off-leash pilot at Volunteer Park was terminated due to impaction of tree roots in the off-leash area.

Commissioner Belbeck referred to testimony concerned with an off-leash area located on top of a reservoir lid. Ms. Krisman pointed to the proposed site on a large map and noted the current fencing already there. Parks staff have asked Seattle Public Utilities to move the fence back.

The Board determined that it would not vote yes or no on all three sites at once and made several motions.

Motion #1: Commissioner Collins moved that a pilot off-leash site be located at Magnolia Manor Park and Lower Kinnear Park. Commissioner Ramels seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Ramels visited all three sites last Sunday, which was a beautiful and sunny fall day. Magnolia Manor was almost empty and she encouraged staff to enlarge the off-leash area at this park. Upper Kinnear was very nice and inviting. At Lower Kinnear, she saw homeless people drying blankets and noted a large encampment. There were very few other people in this area. The tennis courts, on the lower level, were covered by moss and leaves. An off-leash area in Lower Kinnear would give “eyes” to the park and encourage more use of this area. Everyone at David Rodgers Park had dogs with them and most of those were off their leash.

Commissioner Ranade visited Magnolia Manor and agrees that this is a good area for an off-leash area. When he visited David Rodgers Park it was empty except for two kids playing soccer. He realizes there are always two sides to every proposal and emphasized that these off-leash areas are pilots and can be removed if they don’t work.

Commissioner Belbeck will abstain from voting as she was not present at the October 12 public hearing and did not listen to the tape of the meeting. However, she does favor an off-leash area at Magnolia Manor, as there is a great deal of space there. She also agrees with Commissioner Ramels regarding Lower Kinnear.

Commissioner Holme added a word of caution. Testimony received on this proposal has been varied. There is a great deal of support for off-leash areas in Magnolia and Queen Anne, but not necessarily at the three selected sites. This is a pilot program and not a permanent addition to the parks.

The vote was taken with four votes in favor. Motion carried. Commissioner Belbeck abstained; the chair only votes to make or break a tie.

Motion #2: Commissioner Jackson moved that a pilot off-leash site be approved for David Rodgers Park. Commissioner Ranade seconded.

Discussion:

Commissioner Collins believes that this heavily wooded and used park is special. The proposed site for the off-leash area is next to the tennis courts, and would be a distraction to the tennis players. He does, however, agree that it is preferable to have several off-leash sites.

Commissioner Jackson commented that several of the testimonies received by the Board referred to the number of dogs that now run off their leash in this park. A solution for this problem needs to be found.

Commissioner Ranade commented that he, too, doesn’t want to overburden one area with an off-leash site. The Board heard testimony that the site would be located next to the tennis court and that people will drive to this site,

where there is already little parking. He believes that several off-leash sites mitigate impacts and the site could be removed if it is problematic.

The Superintendent reminded the Commissioners that removing the pilot off-leash at Volunteer Park was extraordinary. Once the pilots are in, people become used to having them and it becomes difficult to remove them.

Commissioner Ramels commented that the Board received testimony that this is a residential area, with no parking for the off-leash area. She believes the area for the off-leash area is too small.

However, she stated for the record that she is extremely concerned with the proprietary rights that some citizens feel they have just because they live near a particular park. Seattle's parks belong to everyone and someone from another part of the city has just as much right to visit and use those parks as the nearby neighbors.

Commissioner Holme felt that the weight of testimony received did not favor an off-leash area at Rodgers Park.

The vote was taken with Commissioners Jackson and Ranade in favor. Commissioners Collins and Ramels opposed. The chair votes only to make or break a tie. Commissioner Holme voted against the motion, which then failed.

Motion #3: Commissioner Collins moved that Seattle Parks investigate the addition of a major off-leash area in the Bay Terrace Park area of Discovery Park, as it is not a part of the Discovery Park master plan. Commissioner Ranade seconded. The vote was taken with five votes in favor (Commissioner Belbeck voted on this motion). Motion carried.

Commissioner Ranade believes it is important to distribute the off-leash areas. Commissioner Ramels commented that she lives in West Seattle and there is only one off-leash in this area. It is a very large off-leash at Westcrest Park and works well. It is possible to have one large site instead of several smaller ones.

Commissioner Belbeck feels strongly that an off-leash area at Bay Terrace Park should be considered. Mr. Stoops commented that this site was looked at several years ago and was a very controversial site. The Discovery Park master plan took ten years to develop. Mr. Stoops and Ms. Krisman will go to the site to assess. The site is larger than the three proposed by staff and has parking.

Commissioner Ramels moved that staff also look at Upper Smith Cove for a possible off-leash area. After discussion, she rescinded the motion.

Commissioner Holme stated that in testimony regarding both Magnolia Manor and David Rodgers Park, many people admitted to now using these parks illegally as off-leash areas. It is unusual for people's bad behavior in parks to be rewarded, and he asked COLA members to continue their efforts to urge dog owners to follow the law and use only the legal off-leash areas.

The Board thanked Ms. Krisman and Mr. Stoops.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Marra Farm Park

David Goldberg, Seattle Parks' project planner, presented a briefing on the Marra Farm Park project. This was immediately followed by a public hearing. At its November 9 meeting, the Board plans to discuss the project and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent. Mr. Goldberg presented both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

Staff requests approval of the long term development plan for the park currently called "Marra Farm".

Introduction and Background

King County transferred the 8.7 acre site located at 9026 4th Ave S to Seattle Parks in December 2004. The west half of the site, known as Marra Farm, is a community farm. Formerly, it was a traditional truck farm that supplied fresh produce to Seattle markets in the mid-1900s. The east half of the site is separated from Marra Farm by a row of trees. It is an elevated area of clay fill covered by grass and blackberries and widely spaced trees mostly cottonwood.

Timeline of Recent Marra Farm History	
1970s	Marra family stops farming operations on Marra Farm
1989	Marra Farm (west half) acquired by King County through Open Space Bonds
1992	Fibres Property (east half) purchased by King County
1995	King County Phase 1 environmental assessment of properties
1995-6	USDA Immigrant farm grant for new gardeners at Marra Farm
1996	Community garden started by South Park groups SPARC and ECOSS
1997	Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW), Lettuce Link begin programs on site
1998	Marra Farm becomes part of P-patch program of DON
1998	Yao Fou Chou brings Mien gardeners as part of SE Asian gardener support program through WSU/KC Master Gardeners Program
1999	Puget Sound Urban Resources Partnership funds stream restoration project
1999-00	Jones and Jones Master Plan (1/00)
2004	Property transferred from County to Seattle Parks (12/04)
2005	Opportunity Fund \$180,000 award (9/05)
2005	Additional grants in 2005: Starbucks; CDBG; DON: Race and Social Justice AND Neighbor to Neighbor AND Small and Simple; SPU Soil Building
2006	SYGW moves all farming operations from U-District to Marra Farm
2006	Master Composter/Seattle Tilth program starts Marra Farm program
2006	UW students from Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Nursing, Community Development, and Anthropology conducting research projects at Marra Farm

Marra Farm Coalition

The MFC is comprised of the following organizations:

- **Lettuce Link** a program of the Fremont Public Assoc. that grows produce on .75-acre for South Park food banks. They also teach neighbors and local students about farming, nutrition and environmental stewardship, and support a children’s garden.
- **Seattle Youth Garden Works (SYGW)** Started in the University District and now based at Marra Farm, SYGW empowers youth with garden-based education, training, and employment. SYGW tends plots and sells produce at farmer’s markets.
- **P-patch program** is supported by Department of Neighborhood staff. In 2004, around 20 gardeners maintained plots at Marra Farm.
- **Mien Community Garden** is connected to WSU/King County Master Gardeners. Mien community members farm on .75-acre using traditional Mien agricultural techniques. The produce supports the Mien community and local food banks.
- **IMAPAL** worked with volunteers and the King County Conservation District on a program that day-lighted and restored a stream on the Park’s western boundary.
- **Master Composters/ Master Soil Builders** have recently located informational programs at the farm. The program is operated through SPU.
- **South Park Area Redevelopment Committee (SPARC)** is the neighborhood plan stewardship group and provides the MFC with meeting space and liability insurance.

Project Goals

The Marra Farm Coalition (MFC) nominated these properties for funding from the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund and received \$180,000. In September 2005, the Seattle City Council unanimously approved the Marra Farm

Community Project. Parks staff has worked with the MFC and community on a long term development plan for the new park as well as defining small scale improvements that will be built later this fall. Early community meetings confirmed the basic project goals outlined in the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund project:

- Develop a long-term plan that guides future growth and programming;
- Assist in the development of a Memorandum of Agreement between the City and MFC that supports the Marra Farm long-term development plan;
- Install and/or construct some improvements consistent with the scope of the long-term plan. These may include paths, park furnishings, and improved parking areas.

Public Involvement Process

MFC received a Race and Social Justice grant from DON to reach out to community groups. In 2004 the MFC worked with University of Washington graduate students to conduct outreach and develop a plan for the site. During 2005 a UW graduate student developed a “master plan” for the park. He met with numerous community organizations and MFC members. This plan is a good representation of MFC and community interests. Its concepts serve as the basis (though changes are being made) for the long range development plan. There is a high degree of community awareness of the MFC resulting from this outreach.

Outreach During Creation of Development Plan

- **Fall Festival October, 2005** – Prior to developing the design program Cathy Tuttle attended this fair to initiate community discussions about this project. About 17 people added their names to a sign in sheet, though many more attended the meeting.
- **Meeting #1 at Marra Farm April, 2006** – After ProView acceptance of the design Program, Cathy held a widely advertised public meeting attended by about 120 people including Mien gardeners, and neighbors. Materials were translated into Spanish. Spanish and Mien interpreters were present. The comments from this meeting confirmed the direction of the design program.
- **Concord Elementary May, 2006** - Staff met with a 3rd grade class to survey their interest for the park.
- **Meeting #2 South Park Community Center June, 2006** – About 25 people attended this meeting to discuss elements of the long range plan.
- **Meeting # 3 Summer BBQ at Marra Farm August, 2006** - Park advertised community-wide that staff and consultants would be presenting and discussing the draft plan at the BBQ. About 75 people attended the BBQ. Spanish and Mien translation was available. Attendees responded favorably to the project direction.
- **Meeting # 4 Fall Festival October, 2006** – Park advertised community-wide that staff would be present to discuss the plan at this festival attended by 75 – 100 community members and gardeners. The plan was favorably received.

Long Range Development Plan

The plan includes the following:

- Regrade the eastern portion of the site to integrate it with the western portion. The fill on the eastern portion separates it visually and physically from the rest of the site and the street. It is not possible to see into the site from S. Director St. due to the steep 8-foot hill. This area is silt and clay; unsuitable for farming without significant soils amendments.
- Relocate parking and gathering green to eastern portion of the site. By developing the eastern portion and moving the parking lot and community gathering spaces to this part of the site, more of the western portion is available for farming. This provides good stewardship of farm soil resources.
- Expand gardening/farming opportunities. Currently, the farmed areas amount to approximately 40% of the two sites. This area has been farmed in the past and the soils are best suited to farming.
- Establish a hierarchy of trails to encourage public enjoyment of the site and to allow maintenance. The plan identifies two main circulation features, a “Sun Arc” path and a perimeter path. The “Sun Arc” connects the corner near Concord with the park, farm plots and the Lost Fork of Hamm Creek (it doesn’t actually flow into Hamm). It also provides sufficient width for occasional access by maintenance vehicles. Portions of the perimeter path provide access for bulk materials distribution and for cleaning the drainage swale. Smaller paths provide access between farm plots.

- Develop several smaller social areas amongst the farm plots. The main social areas will be the gathering green and children's play area. Sitting and picnic opportunities will be integrated along the Sun Arc path to further re-enforce the public interaction with farming activities.
- Work with SPU to explore accommodating detention facility on-site. Addressing drainage issues in this area of South Park is a priority listed in the Action Agenda. Staff is working with SPU to explore mutual benefits to locate the facility on the park site. The concept is supported by the MFC if it benefits park development and it does not impact agriculturally-suitable land.
- Add a children's play area that features creative play elements with a farm theme. The play area would be sited to be visible from the P-Patch and the Gathering Green.
- Site a community pavilion. The MFC is interested in creating a focal point for continuing their successful Summer BBQ and Fall Festival that bring the community to the farm, and for classes and picnics. The pavilion may also have a community cooking oven. The architect on the design team developed concepts for the pavilion, the education center described below and work sheds.
- Identify a site for a potential education center. The Coalition does not currently have the capacity to undertake something of this scale, however there is growing interest in local produce and food security.

Near Term Improvements

The Opportunity Fund grant provides approximately \$50,000 to purchase furnishings and construct small improvements. The likely projects include some of the following:

- Construction of a main accessible path
- Provision of picnic tables
- Construction of fencing around some of the farm areas
- Installation of a rainbow sign
- Improving a service access to the farming areas.
- A composting toilet was considered infeasible due to conflicting health code requirements. It could be considered in the future if the code changes. A standard plumbed park restroom should be considered for this site. The architecture could relate to the agricultural theme of the site.

South Park Action Agenda

This Mayoral initiative identifies actions that will improve the South Park area. Parks staff coordinated with Claudia Arana from the Mayor's Office, attended meetings, and spoke with the Parks liaison to the project to get a sense of how aware the Action Agenda participants are of the Marra Farm project. Overall, the participants appear very aware and supportive of the direction of the planning. The draft plan contains specific language supporting the planning and plan elements.

Issues

Memorandum of Agreement - After completing the plan, staff and the MFC will develop a MOA to delineate maintenance and management responsibilities, expectations about community involvement and outreach. Although the MFC is committed to completing a MOA, it is not complete. Successful implementation and management of the plan depends on creating this agreement.

Grading – Locating the drainage facility on site may help grade the eastern portion of the site to better integrate it with the rest of the park and the surrounding community. If Parks and SPU are unable to reach agreement regarding the drainage facility, implementing major elements of the site grading would be left to a future project.

Trees – The majority of the trees on site are cottonwoods that have a short life. The trees in the center of the site are particularly liked due to their character and the shade they provide. As these trees mature they are susceptible to dropping branches. The plan elements will require cutting down many of the existing trees. New shade trees should be planted as soon as feasible to provide suitable replacement shade trees.

Budget

The Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund provided \$180,000 to complete the development plan and implement small scale improvements. The final plan will have rough construction costs estimates. Currently there is not a budget for

beyond the Opportunity Fund to implement the plan. Parks expects that the MFC will continue to pursue grants for their elements.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends accepting the draft long range development plan, provided the Marra Farm Coalition and Parks can successfully establish a MOA.

Additional Information

David W. Goldberg Seattle Parks Planner, 684-8414; or davidw.goldberg@seattle.gov The web site at: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/marrafarm.htm> provides information about the project, photos, and pertinent updates.

Verbal Briefing

Mr. Goldberg showed several large drawings and maps of the project and reviewed information in the written briefing paper.

Board Questions & Answers

Commissioner Holme asked for clarification that the City Council will approve the master plan and that Seattle Parks is working on the long-range development of this site. Mr. Goldberg agreed. Commissioner Ramels asked if this work is part of the Pro Parks Levy and Mr. Goldberg answered yes and it is now a springboard for doing the actual project. Commissioner Belbeck asked if staff borrowed from King County's master plan for this area and Mr. Goldberg answered no. Commissioner Belbeck asked for a description of the pathway and Mr. Goldberg answered that it will be ADA, ¼- gravel. Commissioner Belbeck asked about the large tree shown and if it would remain. Mr. Goldberg answered that it is a cottonwood. These trees grow tall and limbs break easily from the mature trees. Trees will be planted nearby to replace this tree. Some trees must also be removed to accommodate the pathway.

Commissioner Collins commented that in 2000 Jones and Jones prepared a master plan and asked if this plan violates that master plan. Mr. Goldberg answered that Jones and Jones prepared the plan with community funds and many of the citizens who paid for that plan are involved in this current effort. Commissioner Collins asked if the City is likely to be sued because of that original plan and Mr. Goldberg answered no.

Commissioner Belbeck referred to the SPU soil facility mentioned in the briefing. Mr. Goldberg answered that it is a fill site and mostly compost. Parks has asked that it be removed.

Commissioner Holme asked if the water in the bog area will be standing. Mr. Goldberg answered no, that the design will drain the water out to storm water collection sites.

Commissioner Ramels commented that staff did good outreach on this project, with four community meetings. She asked about minority population notification. Mr. Goldberg answered that this was extensive: the information was translated on the web, and translators were made available for the meetings. The Mayor's office also did extensive outreach in its South Park Action Agenda. A good mix attended the meetings. The Superintendent commented that this project has the engagement of the broader community.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that their testimony is limited to three minutes and will be timed. Speakers are called in the order in which they signed in. One citizen testified, with a very brief summary of their comments included.

Sue McGann: She has been working with Mr. Goldberg and the other planners and is very pleased that Seattle Parks recognizes the importance of keeping farmland and involving the community. She is very happy with this project!

The public hearing ended at 7:30 pm. The Board will discuss this project at its November 9 meeting and make a recommendation to the Superintendent. Commissioner Holme stated that he is impressed with the energy surrounding this project and recommended that all the Commissioners visit the site. Both he and Commissioner Ramels visited it on a Pro Parks Levy tour. Mr. Goldberg offered to arrange a tour for the Commissioners.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Goldberg for the briefing.

Briefing: Central Waterfront Master Parks Plan

Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks' Manager of Major Projects and Planning, and David Graves, Seattle Parks' project planner, briefed the Board on the Central Waterfront Master Parks Plan. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. The Board plans to discuss the plan and make a recommendation at its November 9 meeting. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing. The Board has heard several briefings previously on this project [listed below under Public Involvement. To read the minutes from those meetings, please see the Park Board web page at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>.]

To view the FEIS, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/maintenance/Pier62-63/default.htm>

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

On October 26, staff will present the staff recommendation for the Central Waterfront Master Parks Plan. The meeting on the 26 will be a briefing, public hearing and an opportunity for the Board to ask questions. On November 9, the Board is scheduled to deliberate and make a recommendation to the Superintendent on the preferred alternative.

Project Description and Background

Seattle Parks and Recreation has completed the environmental review for a new Central Waterfront Parks Master Plan as required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The environmental review, through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), involved an assessment of five alternatives: three action alternatives for the removal and reconstruction of Piers 62 and 63 and improvements to Waterfront Park; a rebuild alternative for the piers; and a no-action alternative.

The driver for this process has been the structural condition of Piers 62 and 63. The most recent structural evaluation of Piers 62 and 63, done in 2004, rates the pier structure as being in fair to poor condition. If a decision on the fate of the piers is not made, Parks may be forced to close the piers to all access in the next three to five years. Waterfront Park has similar structural issues and is due for potentially significant maintenance/repairs in 2008–2010. A Feasibility Study, done in 2005, began to highlight these issues. Parks aims to reach a decision on the future of both Piers 62 and 63 and Waterfront Park by first quarter 2007.

EIS AND PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Draft EIS for the Central Waterfront Parks Master Plan was issued this summer and the comment period ended on Aug. 1. Parks received very few comments. Responses to these comments were prepared and incorporated into a Final EIS. The Final EIS was issued on Oct. 3, 2006. Also included in the Final EIS is a *staff-recommended* preferred alternative. (See attached.) The preferred alternative is the "Multi-Use Pier," as described in the Draft EIS. This alternative provides a large flat space immediately north of the Seattle Aquarium to accommodate special events, concerts, and other uses that fulfill the intent for a major civic space on the waterfront as envisioned by the Department of Planning and Development's Waterfront Concept Plan. The alternative also incorporates marine habitat enhancement measures (see attached graphics).

Public Involvement Process

The Feasibility Study, which was presented to the Park Board in December 2005, provides the foundation for the Master Plan. A preliminary presentation on the EIS process was made to the Board in January 2006 and the EIS Scoping meeting was held in February 2006. Three people attended the Scoping meeting. One person attended the public hearing on the Draft EIS and we received eight written comments from the Washington State Departments of Ecology and Transportation, the Seattle Aquarium, Seattle & King County Public Health, Kitsap Transit, the Seattle Aquarium Society, People for Puget Sound and One Reel. The Seattle Design Commission was briefed on the project on July 20, 2006. The Design Commission did not submit formal comments on the Draft EIS but they did indicate that the “Aqua Link and Multi-Purpose options appear to be the more sustainable and preferred alternatives as they afford the best use and address the preciousness of pedestrian experience.” Finally, we last updated the Board on the EIS process on June 8, which was prior to the issuance of the Draft EIS.

Issues

Adoption of the actual Master Plan will require City Council action, by ordinance. Depending on review by the Executive, legislation could be ready to transmit to Council in January 2007 for action early in 2007.

At a department briefing to the Parks, Education, Libraries and Labor Committee on Aug. 16, Council members expressed concerns that the Draft EIS did not include an option that would remove all of the piers and create a naturalistic shoreline and subtidal area. Parks explained that the EIS comment and input periods were advertised, per the State EIS mandated process, that the written comment period had closed on Aug. 1, 2006, and that the final version of the EIS was scheduled to be released in early October. The EIS evaluates impacts associated with the removal of the piers and a range of habitat enhancements along the seawall and out into the marine environment. By combining these elements, an alternative can be developed within the context of the EIS that is consistent with Council concerns.

The Mayor’s Senior Staff expressed concerns over the cost of rehabilitating and maintaining Waterfront Park as a Phase I component of the plan, particularly given the ongoing public safety and operational issues associated with the park. Senior staff also noted that the area where Waterfront Park is located could be an attractive habitat enhancement/creation site, as is envisioned in the Phase II component of the preferred alternative.

Budget

Adoption of the Master Parks Plan has relatively minor budget implications. However, implementation and demolition and construction activities do raise significant budget concerns - reconstruction of the piers and the habitat work will be very expensive.

Schedule

Following review by the Board of Park Commissioners, and based on the Board’s recommendation, the Superintendent will recommend a plan for the central waterfront spaces west of Alaskan Way, from Waterfront Park to Piers 62 and 63, not including the Seattle Aquarium. We anticipate forwarding this recommendation to the Seattle City Council, via the Executive, in early 2007.

Staff Recommendation

No action is required at the October 26 meeting. On November 9, staff is asking the Board to make a recommendation to the Superintendent on the preferred alternative, with any changes, additions, etc. as the Board deems appropriate.

Additional Information

If you any questions, contact David Graves at 684-7048 or e-mail to david.graves@seattle.gov. The project website is: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/maintenance/Pier62-63>

Verbal Briefing

Mr. Stoops reviewed the information in the written briefing and displayed several large maps and drawings of the Pier 62/63 area and described these in detail.

Board Discussion

The Superintendent stated that last Friday (October 20), four City Councilmembers (Conlin, Della, Rasmussen, and Steinbrueck) sent a letter to him asking that this process be stopped. The Councilmembers requested the letter be forwarded to the Commissioners. Seattle Parks' staff will respond to the letter and cc: the Board on the response. Staff were surprised to receive the letter, as they have been working under a schedule negotiated with City Council last year. The Board spent some time discussing the letter. Commissioner Collins asked if these four Councilmembers are critical of the process or of the end product [preferred alternative.] The Superintendent answered that one of the four Councilmembers has not yet been briefed on the preferred alternative. Parks staff will respond to the letter before the Park Board's November 9 meeting and hope to soon brief Councilmember Rasmussen.

The letter in part requests that coves be built back into the seawall. The Department has not received any prior suggestions to do this. The creation of these coves would affect both the viaduct and waterfront utilities. If the seawall is reconfigured, Washington State Department of Transportation and Seattle Department of Transportation must be involved. The Army Corp of Engineers owns the seawall and is working on a draft environmental impact statement for its repair that should be released next spring or summer. The seawall repair is a separate project from the planning Parks is doing in this area and Parks staff have been working under the assumption that the seawall will not be moved.

There is some urgency involved in the decision. Under current regulations, adding anything new that extends over the water is extremely difficult. If the piers were removed now and not replaced for several years, it could be difficult to reintroduce the proposal to rebuild them. If the City wants to keep the piers, the replacement cycle needs to be put in place soon.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that their testimony is limited to three minutes and will be timed. Speakers are called in the order in which they signed in. One citizen testified, with a very brief summary of his comments included.

Todd Vogel: He is a member of Allied Arts, which believes that the Preferred Alternative presented to the Board is a good step. He added four suggestions to enhance the design:

- (1) Include an accessible walkway over the water
- (2) include a friendly beach, good quality sand, and habitat restoration
- (3) include easy pedestrian movement from Alaskan Way to the water's edge
- (4) include a water taxi depot from Colman Dock

He urged that good people space be an important element as the project moves from Phase I to Phase II.

Commissioner Belbeck asked if Allied Arts has any preference for the concert venue. Mr. Vogel answered that they have no strong objections to the preferred alternative site. They would urge that the concert venue be accessible and adaptable to use for purposes other than concerts.

The public hearing concluded.

Board Questions & Answers

John Braden, is Director of the Seattle Aquarium Director, and was in the audience. Commissioner Collins asked his opinion of the preferred alternative. Mr. Braden stated that the Aquarium is now investing \$59 million on Pier 59 and likes the preferred alternative as the best choice. This is a conceptual plan and there will be many details to work

out when it moves into the design stage. There is nothing conceptually here that would affect the Aquarium in a negative way and would provide many benefits to the Aquarium.

Commissioner Belbeck asked about concert noise and how it affects the Aquarium, staff, and sea creatures. Mr. Braden answered that this type of concern can be mitigated in the design process. (He commented that one of the fur seals was born during a Chris Isaac concert and was named Isaac.)

New/Old Business

Park Board Appointments: Commissioners Belbeck, Collins, and Jackson received second-term appointment letters from Mayor Nickels this week. The next step is for City Council staff to schedule the confirmation hearings.

City Council Brown Bag Cancelled: The Board briefly discussed its October 23 brown bag meeting with Councilmember Della — which he had requested — that was cancelled by his office a few hours before the meeting. The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent met with him today and Councilmember Della discussed his reason for canceling the meeting. The brown bag has been rescheduled with the full PELL committee on December 12.

Election Campaigns & Ethics: The Board held a brief discussion regarding any Commissioner’s involvements with campaign issues. As always, Board members may campaign on their personal time as an individual and not as a representative of the Board and not on City property.

NRPA Conference: Commissioner Ramels congratulated the Department for hosting such a wonderful conference. Commissioners attended a number of the events and were very complimentary.

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

APPROVED: _____
Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____