

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
Meeting Held at 100 Dexter Avenue North  
January 24, 2008  
Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present:

Neal Adams  
John Barber  
Terry Holme  
Donna Kostka  
Jackie Ramels  
Amit Ranade, Chair

Excused:

Christine Larsen

***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Tim Gallagher, Superintendent  
Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and acknowledged the record of correspondence received by the Board since its last regular meeting of January 10, 2008. Commissioner Ranade joined the meeting a bit later and took over as chair.

**Commissioner Kostka moved, and Commissioner Barber seconded, approval of the agenda. Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Adams seconded, approval of the October 16, November 29, December 3, and January 10 minutes as corrected. Motions carried.** The December 13 annual retreat minutes will be revised and presented at the February 14 meeting for approval.

## **Superintendent's Report**

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

Coyote Traps in Discovery Park: Recent sightings of a coyote in and next to Discovery Park prompted a resident of the military housing area to ask the company that manages the property to get a permit to set a trap. The City does not set traps or otherwise harm wildlife on public property. The management company requested and received a trapping permit from the USDA. Under that permit, a contractor hired by Forest City placed two "padded leg traps" on the property in the area known as the "Washington Avenue Properties." On Tuesday, January 22, citizens began to contact the City asking about the traps. City staff, including Parks and Recreation managers and staff from the Seattle Animal Shelter, investigated.

Yesterday City officials contacted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to express the City's concerns that the traps are near park property, that severe injury is possible to people or pets, and asked that they consider revoking the permit on that basis. A Fish and Wildlife official responded that the traps have been removed and will not be reset.

Commissioner Ramels commented that coyotes also live (peacefully) in Schmitz Preserve Park. The Superintendent agreed and stated that coyotes generally eat small rodents, etc., as their food source.

Discovery Park Chapel: During a rabbit rescue operation (primarily from Green Lake Park), hundreds of rabbits were temporarily stored at the Discovery Park Chapel. When the rabbits were moved, it was determined that the floors had been badly damaged. The Department is restoring the floors and wrote a letter of apology to Heidi Carpine and the Friends of the Chapel on the Hill.

Gang Violence: Superintendent Gallagher reported recent gang violence outside both South Park and Northgate Community Centers, with teens assaulted by other teens. Last Friday the Mayor held a community meeting on this festering situation. The gangs represent almost every ethnic group. Parks is working to design more programs to attract these youth to positive outlets.

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center: Vivian Phillips was recently appointed temporary manager for the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center and things are going well. The Seattle Symphony recently performed there and it was a standing room only audience. 500 youth were recently at an all-day event at the Arts Center. Superintendent Gallagher urged the Commissioners and audience members to attend and support events at Langston Hughes PAC.

Gas Works Park: The parking lot at Gas Works Park is being used as a park and ride for many vehicles. Staff have observed that the parking lot is frequently full, with many cars parked there all day and the drivers are not using the park. A four-hour parking limit will be enforced and violators will be cited. If this effort doesn't solve the problem, a pay station may be installed.

Horticulture Manager Interviews: Interviews for this position will be held on Tuesday, February 5. Commissioner Barber is on the panel, as well as Doug Jackson, former President of Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks.

Seattle Parks Suspends Use of Power Leaf Blowers: Recently the Department received complaints from a Green Lake homeowner that the power blowers were being used before 7:00 am. At Occidental Park, complaints were received that the blowers were being used too late in the morning. Superintendent Gallagher and Deputy Superintendent Williams reviewed the options and have notified staff to stop using the blowers. Instead, sweepers are being used that have a pull-along attachment that sucks up the leaves. Staff will install signage about this policy and evaluate the results.

South Lake Union: Superintendent Gallagher met recently with United Indians of All Tribes to discuss a site for the tribe on the west side of the park. The first meeting went very well. He will next meet with representatives from the Center for Wooden Boats.

Statue of Liberty Project in West Seattle: The neighborhood has successfully raised the needed funds for this Neighborhood Matching Fund project and will start construction in late spring/early summer.

Commissioner Ramels stated that the Neighborhood Matching Fund process does not appear to have the same level of vetting to the public that other Parks projects have. She asked that this project have additional public process – not to add new elements but to determine if any elements should be removed. This is a very old project and if a public process was held, it was a long time ago and part of the community is unaware of it.

Parks Department to Hold All Staff Meeting: All Parks staff will meet on Friday, March 21, at Seattle Center. The Department has approximately 1,000 employees. Guest speakers are scheduled for the morning and workshops for the afternoon.

Olympia Meetings: The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent were in Olympia today and met 8-9 of the State legislators and will return on February 12 to meet additional legislators. The Washington Recreation and Parks Association (WRPA) presented Parks' position on several bills.

Parks Projects Win Seattle Design Awards: The Seattle Design Commission recently announced five winners of its design awards and two of the Park Department's recent projects were winners: Ella Bailey Park and the Northgate Library, Community Center, and Park complex. For more information on the projects and the awards, see [http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design\\_Commission/What\\_We\\_Do/DesignExcellenceAwards/2007/default.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Commission/What_We_Do/DesignExcellenceAwards/2007/default.asp).

Magnuson Park (Phase 2) Wetland, Habitat and Athletic Field Development Project: On January 17, 2008, the Friends of Magnuson Park filed a lawsuit in Federal Court vs. the City and the Army Corp of Engineer's regarding the Magnuson Park – Wetland, Habitat and Athletic Field Development. Seattle Parks and Recreation released the following statement: *"The City is confident that the permit issued for this project by the U.S. Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act is valid and that it meets all requirements of the Clean Air Act and NEPA."*

The Superintendent has instructed staff to move ahead with the project and keep working until the City's Law Department instructs it to put the project on hold.

Commissioner Holme asked if there have been other federal lawsuits regarding Magnuson Park. Superintendent Gallagher answered that there has been one, which was settled in 3-4 months. However, the lawsuits can linger for long periods of time. Commissioner Kostka asked that Parks staff forward a copy of the complaint to her.

### **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. One person signed up to testify.

Nancy Malmgren: Ms. Malmgren is a very active volunteer for Piper's Creek at Carkeek Park and very concerned with the health of the City's creeks. She stated that she is anxious that FEMA help with repair and other work as a result of the December rain storm that flooded Thornton and other creeks in Seattle.

### **Briefing: Seattle Parks' Reorganization**

Superintendent Gallagher presented the Department's new organization chart and described the different divisions.

Prior to the meeting, Superintendent Gallagher provided copies of the chart to the Park Board. He stated that this is a fairly minor re-organization. Only one new position has been created, due to reallocating resources. He explained that during past budget cuts, most of the Department's strategic planning unit had been cut. This has led to the Department reacting to events/issues and has hindered its ability to plan for the future. The new chart reflects a rebuilding of this unit.

The new organization reflects that Deputy Superintendent Williams is now Chief of Operations, with immediate oversight of six divisions: Aquarium (Director John Braden), Finance (Director Carol Everson); Human Resources (Director Darwyn Anderson); Maintenance (later re-named Parks) (Interim Director Melinda Nichols); Planning & Development (Interim Director Kevin Stoops); and Recreation (Interim Director Michele Finnegan.) The new Parks Division was previously known as Facilities & Maintenance and some units have been transferred to this Division. The new Recreation Division was previously known as Operations. Four units will answer directly to the Superintendent: Communications (Manager Dewey Potter), Community Connections (Manager Mickey Fearn), Policy & Business Analysis (Manager Rebecca Salinas), and Partnerships (Director Eric Friedli.) In addition, Vivian Phillips has been hired to manage Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center for the next year and reports directly to the Superintendent.

### ***Board Question & Answers***

Commissioner Adams asked about the Planning & Development Division. Superintendent Gallagher noted that the reorganization doesn't include an overall space planner or teen coordinator, or a staff person who specializes in dealing with gang issues. Commissioner Ramels asked who will be the primary interface with the Associated Recreation Council and Zoo. Superintendent Gallagher answered that he will. Commissioner Adams asked for more information on the Partnerships Unit and Superintendent Gallagher answered that this unit oversees the Department's more than 100 concession agreements.

Commissioner Kostka suggested that the Maintenance Division be renamed the Parks Division and that the open space group be included in that Division. Superintendent Gallagher stated that he will consider the suggestion. Commissioner Barber asked which positions are appointed and Superintendent Gallagher listed them. Currently three of the Division Directors are "interim" (high-level staff already working in the Division and now working temporarily as the Director.) The Superintendent could appoint staff to these positions; however, superintendent Gallagher is holding a competitive process and may ask some of the Park Board members to be on the interview panel.

Commissioner Ramels asked about the names of the six directors who report directly to Deputy Superintendent Williams. Staff will send Commissioners a version of the org chart that lists the names.

Commissioner Adams referred to the new Policy and Business Analysis and the Community Connections units and commented that both are great ideas. Commissioner Ranade asked what will be the work of the Community Connections unit. Superintendent Gallagher answered that the unit's work will be tremendously important and will help determine how the Department reaches out and deals with the community and how it improves this outreach. Commissioner Holme suggested that the Community Connections and Communications Units could be combined into one unit.

## **Old/New Business**

Appoint Park Board Member to Associated Recreation Council (ARC) Board: Bill Keller, Executive Director of the Associated Recreation Council, addressed the Board to describe the new Park Board position on the ARC Board. This position will be one of 15 voting members of the ARC Board, will be for a term of three years and meets the first Wednesday of every month, 6:30-8:30, in the Park Board Room.

He looks forward to a more interactive, mutually supportive relationship between the Park Board and ARC. The ARC Board is self-generating, as members rise up through the Advisory Councils. ARC is also looking outside its membership to fill some of the Board positions. The Park Board and ARC Board deal with some of the same issues, including recreation opportunities, how to attract more users, and hours of operation.

ARC is a fiscal sponsor for many Friends of groups. Commissioner Kostka asked how many and Mr. Keller answered that ARC provides fiscal sponsorship if the Friends of Group has a current project with the Parks Department. At this time, 18 of the 140 Friends of Groups are working on projects. Heron Habitat, which Commissioner Kostka is very involved with, is one of the 18.

Commissioners discussed the position and Commissioner Ramels volunteered to serve. Commissioner Kostka, who joined the Park Board at its January 10 meeting as a voting member, was encouraged to consider this position in the future. Commissioner Ramels will now leave the Parks Naming Committee and Commissioner Adams volunteered to be the Park Board's representative to that Committee.

Review & Discuss Matrix of 2008 Park Board Agenda Items: Prior to the meeting staff prepared a matrix of possible 2008 agenda items that included 14 proposals from Deputy Superintendent Williams; a list of projects from Kevin Stoops, Interim Director of the Planning & Development Division; a list of Pro Parks Levy projects that will be completed in 2008, and annual briefings from the Department's partners – Associated Recreation Council and Seattle Parks Foundation and Woodland Park Zoo. In addition, staff included the Department's policies and City Council ordinances that require proposals to come before the Park Board for a briefing or public hearing. These include, but are not limited to, pilot or permanent off-leash areas, change in hours of operation at a park, new exclusion zones, etc. Superintendent Gallagher commented that it isn't possible for the Board to have briefings on all these items; however, he wants the Board to be more

involved in setting the agenda items. In addition to those already listed, some items come to the Board on an “emergency” basis and must be added to the agenda as they arise.

Deputy Superintendent Williams gave more description on the 14 proposals/projects. After discussion, it was agreed that it is a given that any proposals that are required by the Department’s policies or by Council ordinance will come before the Park Board (none are scheduled at this time.) All Commissioners will review the 14 proposals from Deputy Superintendent Williams and let staff know of their interest in having briefings/being involved in these proposals.

Commissioners were also asked for any items that aren’t on the list that they would like briefings on and they asked for four briefings: School Joint Use Agreements; Neighborhood Matching Fund’s public involvement process; event scheduling procedures and how fees are based; and major maintenance of the Department’s 100 comfort stations (currently one per year receives major maintenance.) Commissioners will add any other suggestions to the list to be returned to Parks staff.

Park Board Chair Term: Commissioner Ramels noted that, at the Board's December 13 retreat, the Board incorrectly moved to make the chair position a two-year term (the City Council resolution states that the term is for one year.)

**Commissioner Ramels moved that the December 13 motion be amended to read that the chair will serve a one-year term, to be in compliance with ordinance 122332. Commissioner Holme seconded. The vote was taken and the motion was unanimous.**

Vice-chair Election Process: Prior to the meeting, Parks’ strategic advisor Susan Golub prepared a decision paper for the Board’s consideration on electing the Vice-chair. After discussion, the Commissioners determined that the Vice-chair is not in training to be the next chair. Elections for both positions are to be held annually [preferably at the last regular meeting each year] and any interested member may run for either office [if they haven't previously held the office.]

**Commissioner Adams moved approval of Option 2: “Nominations are solicited by staff: Instead of a Board subcommittee soliciting nominations, this approach would have staff contacting all Board members to determine their interest in serving as Chair or Vice-chair. Staff would bring forward the names to the Board for a vote at the following meeting. Commissioner Kostka seconded. The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Adams stated that having staff solicit for candidates and gather names is the most efficient method. Commissioner Kostka commented that this process makes it very clear that the Board is abiding by the Open Public Meetings Act. The Board’s Coordinator was asked to solicit Board members’ interest in the position and prepare paper ballots for the February 14 meeting.

During the February 14 Old/New Business, interested candidates will have the opportunity to make a brief presentation why they want the position. Voting will follow by paper ballot and given to the Coordinator, who will announce the winning candidate. If there is a tie vote, the Chair will vote to break the tie. The Coordinator will keep the ballots on file.

Seventh Member Selection Process: At the February 14 meeting, Commissioners will discuss the process they developed in the fall of 2007, make any needed changes, and may recommend to add the procedures to the Board’s Operating Procedures.

Current Committee Reports: Commissioner Adams asked the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to consider creating a new Board-appointed position to the Community Connections and Policy and Business Analysis units. Superintendent Gallagher agreed to consider this suggestion.

Commissioner Ramels has been the Board’s representative to the Parks Naming Committee. Recently the Dexter Pit Project was formally named as Thomas C. Wales Park. Commissioner Ranade represents the Park Board on the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) Board. Attendance is down at the Museum and he encouraged all to visit the Roman Art and Renaissance Gates exhibits that will soon be on exhibit at the downtown SAM. Commissioner Holme represents the Board on the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee and reported, in response to a question from Commissioner Ramels, that the \$200,000 in

Pro Parks Levy funds for the Cascades People Center was spent entirely on the roof. The Oversight Committee will not meet during the next month.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Amit Ranade, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_