

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
100 Dexter Avenue North
March 13, 2008

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams
John Barber
Terry Holme
Christine Larsen
Jackie Ramels, Vice-chair
Amit Ranade, Chair

Excused:

Donna Kostka

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Kevin Stoops, Director, Planning & Development Division
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Vice-chair Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and both welcomed the large group in the audience and former Parks Superintendent Ken Bounds, who will present tonight's John C. Little Award. Commissioners acknowledged the record of correspondence received by the Board since its last regular meeting of February 28, 2008. **Commissioner Barber moved, and Commissioner Adams seconded, approval of the agenda. The vote was taken and the motion carried.** Commissioners received draft copies of the minutes for review prior to the meeting. **Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Barber seconded, approval of the February 28 minutes as corrected. The motion was voted on and carried.** Commissioner Ranade, Chair, joined the meeting at this time.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Gallagher and Deputy Superintendent Williams are both in Washington, DC, at a conference. Kevin Stoops, Director of Seattle Parks' Project and Development Division, presented the Superintendent's report. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

AZA Grants Accreditation to the Seattle Aquarium: Accreditation was granted on to the Seattle Aquarium on March 7 by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) independent Accreditation Commission. The Aquarium underwent a thorough investigation to ensure it has met, and will continue to meet, ever-rising standards which include animal care, veterinary

programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five year in order to be members of the association. For more information on Seattle Aquarium, see <http://www.seattleaquarium.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=183&srcid=-2>.

Young Entrepreneurs Leadership Program at Seven Community Centers: The Young Entrepreneurs Leadership Program, funded and staffed by the Warren Miller Freedom Foundation, is now at Garfield, Southwest, Meadowbrook, Rainier, Van Asselt, and Yesler Community Centers. As a part of the ten-week curriculum, teens will create their own business with mission statements and marketing plans. They will practice public speaking using business vocabulary and learn budgeting skills. For more information on the Warren Miller Freedom Foundation, see <http://www.warrenmiller.org/>.

Langston Hughes Management Developments: Parks staff are working with Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center interim manager Vivian Phillips to develop a plan and draft charter to convene a citizen advisory steering committee. The committee will make a recommendation to the Superintendent on a management model for the Center. For more information on Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, see <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/centers/langston.htm>.

Commissioner Adams is interested in the citizen steering committee and will contact Ms. Phillips; Parks staff will forward her contact info to him.

Mc Gilvra Middle School Work Party Held: This week 260 children from McGilvra Middle School came to Magnuson Park to help plant hundreds of native plants at the North Shore area. This was a wonderful learning opportunity for these students and fostered environmental stewardship of the park. For more information on Magnuson Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Magnuson/>.

Park Rangers' Hiring Update: The 170 Park ranger job applications received by the February 26 closing date have been screened, allowing approximately 65 applicants to move on to the next level, which is a written test. The goal will be to identify 30 to 35 candidates for the first round of interviews. A brief guide to center city parks to provide rangers with bulleted info on the history, flora, art pieces and other interesting facts about each park is being compiled under contract with a writer/historian. Training is scheduled to start on April 30.

Magnuson Park Legislation Moves to City Council: The Mayor's office anticipates sending legislation to the City Council in the next week asking for approval of agreements with 1) Civic Light Opera for the improvements and operation of the theater in the Magnuson Community Center, 2) Seattle Court Sports Unlimited for development and operation of an indoor/outdoor tennis center, 3) Cascade Bicycle Club for the development of the Northwest Center for Cycling in the former navy fire station, and 4) with Building 11 LLC for the development of a multi-purpose recreation center in the former navy public works building. A set of land use code amendments are also expected to be sent to City Council for approval of zoning changes that are necessary for the tennis center, improved site signage, and allowing additional uses in the Sand Point Overlay District. For more information on Magnuson Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Magnuson/>.

Commissioner Holme asked if the legislation for Arena Sports and Building 27 are going to City Council at this time and Mr. Stoops answered that it is not.

Racism Workshop Held: City Year, which "unites young people of all backgrounds for a year of full-time service, giving them skills and opportunities to change the world", arranged a sleep over at Rainier Beach CC and brought in 22 high school students from Ballard, Garfield, Sealth, and West Seattle who participated in various work shops, discussion groups, and group forums throughout the night. The theme of the sleepover was racism. This experience reinforced the fact that the Rainier Beach community, especially Rainier Beach Community Center, is a safe and fun place and the participants will be ambassadors by spreading a positive message about their experience. For more information on City Year, see <http://www.cityyear.org/home.aspx>.

Violence Around Van Asselt Community Center: There has been an increase in youth violence, graffiti, and break-ins in the community around Van Asselt – including two incidents at the Community Center. In response, South Precinct police, New Holly’s property manager, Terry Hirata, and Van Asselt staff have met to share information and resources and create a plan to prevent future incidents. Seattle Police Department officer Damon Deese is spearheading an effort to pull together individuals from nearby community organizations, businesses, and neighborhood groups in order to strengthen the collective knowledge and relationships in helping the youth. For more information on Van Asselt CC, see http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=431.

Lake Union Park’s First Phase Opens: On February 29 – Leap Day – the Seattle Parks Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Safeco Insurance Foundation opened the first phase of Lake Union Park: a bridge, a boardwalk, and waterfront steps. For more information on Lake Union Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/lakeunionpark.htm>.

Golden Gardens Water Line to be Repaired: Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) railroad contractors gave notice on March 12 that they plan to begin work at Golden Gardens Park on March 24. BNSF will install a pipe casing under the railroad to be used for the parks’ existing water service. A jacking pit for the construction will be located in the park drive adjacent to the picnic area. Vehicle access to the bathhouse will be maintained but will include temporary traffic revisions. Golden Gardens Drive NW located east of Seaview Ave NW Street will be closed for approximately two weeks. The water service and the original casing were damaged by a BNSF contractor in 2005 and repaired on an emergency basis. The new casing will allow for a permanent repair according to BNSF standards. A press release and public notice signs are being prepared immediately. For more information on Golden Gardens Park, see http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=243.

Cesar Chavez Park to Celebrate: The community has collaborated with sculptor [Jesus Moroles](#) to develop this underused open space in South Park and includes musical stone sculptures, seating walls, paths, and plantings. The project will be completed within the next few days and the community has planned a celebration on April 17. For more information on Cesar Chavez Park, see http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=4448.

Georgetown Playfield Improvements Being Made: The contractor completed installation of the leveling-course aggregate for the play field and has made good progress with site restoration. The synthetic turf contractor is scheduled to begin installation of the carpet next week. Construction is ahead of schedule. The synthetic turf will allow for play 360 days a year. For more information on Georgetown Playfield, see http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=410.

New Park for Ballard: Mr. Stoops showed a map of the Ballard area, with a one-acre parcel located 2-1/2 blocks from Ballard High School. On Monday, the Department closed the purchase of this new park property.

Draft Strategic Action Plan near Completion: The draft Strategic Action Plan will be available to the public on Tuesday, March 18. It will be posted on the Department’s home web page, and copies will be distributed to community centers, pools, libraries, and neighborhood service centers. The Park Board will be briefed on the draft plan at its March 27 meeting. Parks will host over 30 public meetings and four all-staff meetings in April to solicit comments on the draft. For more information on the Strategic Action Plan, see <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/Publications/ParksActionPlan.htm>.

Presentation: John C. Little Award

Tonight former Parks Department Superintendent Ken Bounds presented the John C. Little Spirit Award to Patti Petesch, Seattle Parks’ Environmental Learning Centers Manager.

Mr. Bounds stated that it is a great honor for him to be invited to tonight’s meeting to present this award to Ms. Petesch. He spent some time talking about John C. Little, for whom the award is named. Mr. Little was an active volunteer for much of his life, with a special focus on developing programs to help youth. He was a Park Board Commissioner for eight years and other members of the Board, Parks’ staff, and the community frequently turned to him when they wanted sage advice. He worked tirelessly for Seattle’s youth and helped create the Central Area Youth Association (CAYA) and an Urban 4-H

program in Seattle, which has since been the model for similar programs in other cities and towns. Mr. Little knew almost all the kids at Franklin High School by name. Mr. Bounds recalled walking down the street with Mr. Little and it was difficult to get very far, as almost everyone knew him and came up to talk to him.

At Seattle's Parks and Recreation Department, there are others who have Mr. Little's dedication to youth and work with kids every day to make their lives better. Mr. Bounds worked with Ms. Petesch for 11 years and she was always known as a "go-to" person to get things done. She worked closely with the School District to develop after-school activities and many young people have been helped by her. He next read from the written nomination distributed by Superintendent Gallagher when the award was announced:

"I am pleased to announce that Patti Petesch has been selected as the 2007 recipient of the John C. Little Spirit Award.

This is the seventh year we have awarded the Award. Past recipients have been Pat Warberg, Elaine Dunn, Don Ganchorre, Dennis Cook, Tom Ostrom, and Isiah Anderson, Jr. There is no question that Patti exemplifies the life of Mr. Little in his work with youth, and is a deserving recipient of this prestigious award.

In addition to his countless honors and volunteer positions, John Little, Sr., served the community as a member of the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners from 1990-1997. In John's seven years on the Board, he is most remembered for his gentle judgment of how a proposed policy or new undertaking would be perceived by the people we serve, particularly by the young people. His sensitivity to the needs and the attitudes of youth was extraordinary. If the Board wanted a thoughtful, wise opinion on a subject, it turned to John.

John C. Little's motto was, "In order to improve the life of all people, you must improve the life of young people."

We created this award in his honor. To be eligible for nomination, the individual must demonstrate the following characteristics: mentoring our youth; providing leadership in the community; making a difference in young lives; and going above and beyond the call of duty.

In Patti's nomination applications, the following are some of the reasons mentioned as to why Patti should receive the award:

- *Ms. Petesch has made a career of mentoring youth.*
- *In the early days Patti coached kids – before long Patti coached the coaches*
- *Patti knew all the kids by name in every Parks' sports program from all the community centers*
- *Patti's behind-the-scenes efforts to create an after-school activities program for youth in the Seattle Public Schools involved much more than sports: tutoring, arts, and basic education skills. This became a model for all communities to emulate.*
- *She would seek out those who had been working as volunteers with youth and sell the opportunities that are available throughout our Parks and Recreation programs.*
- *Patti developed a cadre of Parks staff whose commitment matched her own in placing the priority on kids who didn't have the means to participate in club teams, but who had the desire and passion to be on a team.*
- *Patti found dollars from local businesses and from national corporations to help kids participate in Parks' programs.*
- *I don't remember a weekend when she wasn't volunteering with a community group to help kids.*
- *Patti has shared her time, talent, and treasure, asking for nothing in return.*
- *She has helped kids with jobs, school, clothing, food, and a variety of family situations.*
- *There is no better tribute to a job well done than to have the youth you have mentored follow in your footsteps and career path. In Patti's case, there are too many to count.*

Patti spent 25 years as the supervisor of the Citywide Youth Athletics Division and, as part of Patti's job, she developed several programs for Seattle's youth, including The Jesse Owens Games, Pepsi Hot Shots, Hershey Track and Field, and the Hoop It Up Basketball Tournament. Kids from every part of the city have been touched by her guidance. We know how

dedicated and selfless she is in her work with athletics and the youth of Seattle. She is viewed as a trusted leader, mentor, and friend.”

Mr. Bounds presented an inscribed award to Ms. Petesch, followed by a standing ovation. Ms. Petesch spoke for several minutes about her passion for working with the youth of Seattle. Her first job was working for Seattle Parks for \$1.20 per hour and she’s been here ever since! She introduced several “mature” people in the audience as former youth she worked with who now dedicate their lives to parks and recreation. Mr. Bounds introduced Mr. Little’s wife and several of the Little children. His daughter, Brenda Little, gave a short talk about her father and presented Ms. Petesch with a dozen red roses and a gift from the family. She stated that Ms. Petesch’s life has been parallel to the life led by her father and thanked her for her hard work. Commissioner Holme also spoke about the influence Ms. Petesch had on his life. He would not be a Park Board Commissioner today without her. When he first began volunteering as a coach, he knew Patti was a person he could go to and get straight answers. She always inspires others to greater efforts and she is an incredible role model.

Ms. Petesch closed her remarks by saying that if everyone would mentor one young person, there would be far fewer problems in the world.

Commissioner Ranade called for a 10-minute recess and refreshments were served. The meeting resumed with a call for Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

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

Briefing: Recreation Division Director’s Report

Michele Finnegan, Acting Director of Seattle Park’s Recreation Division, presented a briefing on the Division. In 2008, Commissioners are being briefed on each of the Department’s six Divisions. Commissioners received written a briefing paper prior to the meeting. Both the written briefing and verbal briefing are included in these minutes.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action: This agenda item is an informational briefing on the Recreation Division of Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Division Function: As the name implies, the Recreation Division is responsible for the delivery of recreation services provided by Seattle Parks and Recreation and includes:

- **Community Centers, Teen Centers and Citywide Programming:** manage and staff the City’s 26 neighborhood community centers, 3 teen centers, and City-wide recreation facilities and programs which allow Seattle residents to enjoy a variety of social, athletic, cultural, and recreational activities. This includes focused staff and programming for teens, those 50+, and those with special needs.
- **Aquatics:** provides a variety of structured and unstructured water-related programs and classes so participants can enjoy and develop skills in a range of aquatic activities. This section is responsible for the programming and operation of our 8 indoor and 2 outdoor pools, 2 small craft centers, 7 boat ramps, 9 lifeguarded beaches, and 25 wading pools.
- **Environmental Programming:** provides environmental stewardship programs, cultural programs, and outdoor opportunities to people of all ages; endeavors to inspire residents to take actions that respect the needs and rights of living things and encourages stewardship of our urban environment.
- **Citywide Athletics:** provides opportunities for individuals to maintain their physical fitness through exercise and athletics, as well as enhance opportunities for social interaction with the community through events, programs, and class offerings.

- **Golf:** provides maintenance and contract management for the City's four golf courses at Jackson, Jefferson, West Seattle, and Interbay in order to provide positive golfing experiences to golfers of all ages and skills while maximizing golf course revenues.
- **Out of School Time Programs:** provides programming and contract management in accord with Parks' role in the Families and Education Levy, manages the scholarship qualification as well as the childcare scholarship allocation and reimbursement processes for the Department, and manages the quality assurance process for DSHS licensed child care programs provided in our facilities by the Associated Recreation Council.
- **Administration:** The Recreation Division is also home to the Business Service Center which manages the Department's computerized registration system and acts as the primary liaison with the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) for partnership communication.

Division Organization and Staff: The most recent Recreation Division organization chart is attached for your reference. The Division is comprised of 305.11 regular Full Time Equivalent staff (FTE).

Upcoming Programmatic Initiatives:

- Offer additional public hours of operation at our Community Centers.
- Develop and integrate the Healthy Parks and Green Calorie Initiatives throughout the Department's Recreation programming.
- Strengthen the Department's approach to Teen Programming.
- Draft policy structure necessary for Seattle Parks and Recreation to offer gender specific programming as a means to address cultural differences (for example, Women of the World Swims.)
- Complete a system-wide review of scholarships and other subsidies and draft recommendations to improve access and equity to recreation programs in partnership with ARC.
- Increase programming for participants with special needs.
- Plan for the programmatic needs of the baby boomer population and coordinate Parks programming for senior adults with other City programs.

Upcoming Issues for Possible Board Review/Consideration:

As part of my quarterly update to the Board, I plan to update you on our progress on the above programmatic initiatives. If there are additional items of interest that you would like included in my updates, please let me know.

Additional Information

If you would like any additional information, please feel free to contact me at michele.finnegan@seattle.gov or 206-684-7157.

Board Discussion

Ms. Finnegan reviewed the information in the written briefing. She has been visiting a different community center each night during the busiest programming times to observe how staff interact with youth and other visitors.

Commissioner Holme had several questions and comments. On April 10, the Board will hear a briefing on the joint Parks/Seattle Public Schools use. He asked Ms. Finnegan to notify the Board if they may be of assistance in any way. He commented that an assessment of recreation programs can be a beneficial tool and asked what kind of assessments Parks is doing to ensure it is hitting target groups and not overlooking some groups. Ms. Finnegan responded that this is a good observation and one of the Department's most useful tools is the CLASS system, which shows how many people have registered for which classes and where.

Commissioner Ramels noted that when she was on the Alki Community Center Advisory Board, most of the programs were scheduled by the Associated Recreation Program (ARC), rather than by the Parks Department. Ms. Finnegan answered that most recreation programs are contracted through ARC staff and managed by Parks staff. This frees Parks' professionals for other work. Commissioner Ramels, who is the Park Board's representative to the ARC Board, commented that she has heard at ARC that some community centers aren't as busy as others. Ms. Finnegan answered that the data from CLASS will help to

verify this. If the centers are underutilized, programming will be increased. Discussion continued for a bit longer on ARC and programming at the Centers.

Commissioner Barber stated that he is also concerned about measurements and how the programs are run. This came up recently in his local community meetings. He would be interested to know how many programs are now offered and the participation and future plans. There is a tremendous amount of funding put into the buildings, therefore the need to bring them to their true potential in serving the communities and they are a great opportunity for citizens to have positive involvement with Seattle Parks. The Department must constantly be aware of the opportunities. Ms. Finnegan will bring more information to the Board about the creative programming.

Commissioner Adams stated that it is great that the Department is expanding its programs, especially to youth. However, security is a must! He was at Van Asselt Community Center during one of the episodes Mr. Stoops referred to earlier this evening. He recommended that the Department review how it provides security at certain community centers. He would appreciate hearing more on the Department's overall plan to secure the centers and how staff are trained to deal with security issues. Ms. Finnegan agreed and stated cameras are being installed so that front desk staff can observe what is happening in various parts of the centers. Commissioner Larsen agreed with the need for conflict/resolution training for staff.

Commissioner Larsen also referred to the summer playground programs that used to be held in conjunction with the summer wading pool program and asked if the playground programs are scheduled to return. Ms. Finnegan answered that the drop-in playground programs aren't scheduled to return due to low attendance. Parents prefer programs where their kids are signed in, rather than dropping them off at a site and leaving them. Commissioner Larsen recommended that Parks try holding the programs once a week in neighborhood parks, with parents included. This could be a good marketing tool and would expose both the kids and parents to Parks' programs.

Commissioner Ranade asked for an update briefing on the Citywide Skatepark Plan and other recreation plans to give the Park Board a context of where the various playfields and programs are located. Ms. Finnegan agreed and will work with Mr. Stoops on a joint briefing.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Finnegan for the briefing.

Old/New Business

Commissioners reported on the various committees to which they are appointed:

- **Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee**: Commissioner Holme is the Board's representative to this Committee; however, he was out of town at the last meeting. Susan Golub, Seattle Parks' Strategic Advisor to the Oversight Committee, noted that \$5 million has been allocated for the Neighborhood Parks Development Fund. The Committee spent considerable time at its last meeting discussing this allocation and will continue the discussion at its March 24 meeting. Commissioner Holme stated that at a prior meeting, the Oversight Committee approved a motion to support that the funds be used only for Pro Parks Levy projects. Mr. Stoops commented that Mayor Nickels has stated that it can be used for any "good-idea" project. Commissioner Larsen suggested the \$5 million could be used to help fund shortfalls in Neighborhood Matching Fund projects. Commissioner Holme commented that the Oversight Committee recommended a \$250,000 threshold for funding.
- **Parks Foundation**: Commissioner Larsen attended the Foundation's most recent meeting. The Foundation is preparing for its annual retreat where it will develop its Strategic Action Plan, scheduled for completion in June. The Foundation has successfully reached its goal of raising \$20 million for the new South Lake Union Park.
- **Parks Naming Committee**: Commissioner Adams reported that the Committee considered names for the new Lake Union Trail at its last meeting. Citizens were invited to submit names and over 700 people responded, with many identical or similar names submitted. The Naming Committee first narrowed the list to 10 names, then to four. Those four have been submitted to Mayor Nickels, who will make the decision and announce the name of the trail. The winner will receive prizes and awards. A number of people submitted Native American names for the trail; some historical research was done to ensure that the correct words were being used.

- Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan: Commissioner Barber reported that this Committee hasn't met in two months. Seattle Parks has hired a new horticulture manager, who will arrive from Washington, DC, at the end of March. A meeting on the Vegetation Management Plan may be scheduled soon after.
- Seattle Art Museum Board: Commissioner Ranade was out of town and missed the last meeting. However, he and Commissioner Holme attended the reception for the exhibit "The Romans are Coming," and encouraged everyone present to attend the wonderful exhibit.
- Associated Recreation Council: Commissioner Ramels reported that the Associated Recreation Council held its annual board meeting, with over 300 attendees.

Agenda Items: Commissioner Ranade asked that all Commissioners review the Future Agenda and agenda matrix lists during the next two weeks and notify the Coordinator if there are additional agenda items they want brought forth.

Brown Bag Meeting with City Council: Commissioners Adams, Barber, Holme, and Larsen met with Seattle City Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee members Rasmussen, Drago, and Burgess for a brown bag lunch on Friday, March 7. Superintendent Gallagher and Deputy Superintendent Williams also attended. Commissioners were very pleased with the meeting and felt the Council members listened carefully to their comments and appeared very interested.

Commissioner Holmes noted that he has been a Park Board Commissioner for five years and this is only the third time the Board has met with City Council's Parks' Committee – although the Board made several requests to meet in earlier years. Several scheduled meetings were cancelled and not re-scheduled. Councilmember Rasmussen, selected in January to chair the Parks and Seattle Center Committee, initiated this meeting with the Park Board soon after becoming the Committee's chair. He also attended the Board's January 10 public meeting – the first time in at least 17 years a Council member has been in attendance. The Board is very pleased with this positive relationship with Councilmember Rasmussen and the Committee.

The next brown bag is scheduled for September.

New Parks Levy: Commissioner Ramels recently had lunch with Councilmember Rasmussen and they discussed the prospects of a new Parks Levy. City Council is promoting a Parks Levy and surveying citizens for their interest in one, while the Mayor is promoting other levies [Seattle Center and Pike Place Market.] Commissioners will await the outcome of the survey and if a new park levy moves forward, lend its support.

Board Room Logistics: Commissioners have expressed a desire for a different table set up for their meetings so that they can see each other during discussions. Staff will experiment with some different configurations in hopes of finding a solution. A difficulty is that the main table is one piece and is approximately 12' long. Commissioners have also asked that the Superintendent stand at the podium during the Superintendent's report.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Amit Ranade, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____