



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2008
Meeting Held at 100 Dexter Avenue North

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present, and
Seattle Channel tapes of meetings from June 12, 2008)

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams
John Barber
Donna Kostka
Christine Larsen
Jackie Ramels, Vice-Chair
Amit Ranade, Chair

Excused:

Terry Holme

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ranade called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. **Commissioner Adams moved, and Commissioner Kostka seconded, approval of the agenda. Commissioner Kostka moved, and Commissioner Barber seconded, approval of the minutes as presented tonight. Both motions were approved.**

Commissioner Ranade reviewed the correspondence the Board has received since its August 28 meeting, including written testimony on park issues, announcements, meeting notices, press releases, etc.

Superintendent's Report

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

Gang Prevention Program: Mayor Greg Nickels announced yesterday that his 2009-2010 proposed biennial budget will include more than \$9 million for a new initiative to prevent youth violence. The announcement

was made at Seattle Parks' Garfield Community Center. The initiative will focus on about 800 children annually who are at highest risk of perpetuating violence or becoming victims. The initiative includes approximately \$3.5 million in re-directed programs and about \$5.5 million in spending over the next two years.

The initiative will:

- Assist youth with repeat offenses to re-enter society from State detention programs
- Provide alternatives for youth who are arrested for crimes, but released because they don't meet the admission criteria for county detention
- Help middle school truants and students at risk of suspension stay in school and succeed
- Prevent victims of violence and their friends and relatives from continuing the cycle of violence through retaliations

Responding to questions from Commissioner Adams and Ramels on this initiative, Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that it is a departure from the Department's usual method of programming. Two violence interrupters will be hired to work and train young people. Parks will work in partnership with, and contract services from, the Urban League and other agencies. A high level Senior Recreation Leader will be on call at all times and will work out of the community centers, even during hours that the centers aren't open.

Update on Magnuson Park Building Leases: The proposed Lease Agreements for Buildings 11 and Building 27 went before Seattle City Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee (PASC) on Tuesday, September 9, with approximately 100 members of the public there to support the agreements. Because of recent changes in both lease agreements, PASC has scheduled a public hearing on Thursday, September 18, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. PASC may take action after the public hearing or may wait until its next meeting on Tuesday, September 23. For more information on Magnuson Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Magnuson/>.

Commissioner Barber asked if anyone voiced concern at the public hearings and Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that there was some opposition and concern that the leases benefit the private sector and not the public and that they are too long. The lease for Building 11 is 40 years and Building 27's lease is for 35 years. City Council will review the leases and come back with any conditions. The businesses who are interested in leasing the buildings will then either negotiate the conditions – or the conditions could be a deal breaker. The Department doesn't have a vision for these buildings if the contracts don't go forward.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams on whether a 40-year contract is unusual, Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that this is an unusual situation. There are millions of square feet of aging buildings at Magnuson Park, which if not refurbished, must be mothballed and demolished.

Commissioner Ranade asked if City Council discussed the nature of the businesses interested in signing the leases. Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that many people came to voice their support of Arena Sports for the Building 30 lease and several artists voiced their support for the Building 11 lease.

Commissioner Ramels asked that Parks staff send Commissioners a summary of changes in the leases that City Council is reviewing compared to the last version that the Park Board reviewed. Deputy Superintendent Williams agreed to do so.

Alternative Work Schedules: Approximately 125 Park employees at the Dexter and RDA Buildings started a 4/10 or 9/80 work schedule on Wednesday, September 3. This change is estimated to result in staff driving 47,000 less miles per year to travel to and from work. Superintendent Gallagher works a Monday-Thursday schedule and Deputy Superintendent Williams works a Tuesday-Friday schedule. An added benefit is that the front desks for both buildings have extended their afternoon hours from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Celebrations:

Alki Statue of Liberty Dedication – The newly-refurbished Alki Statue of Liberty was dedicated on Saturday, September 6, with an all day celebration that included crafts, food, music, luminaries, and more. For more information on Alki Beach Park and the Alki Statue of Liberty, see http://www.seattle.gov/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=445.

Ravenna-Eckstein Playground Dedication – Approximately 200 people attended the dedication of this Neighborhood Matching Fund playground project on Friday, September 5, 6-8:00 pm.

Strategic Action Plan: The Department's five-year Strategic Action Plan is now final. The next steps are for management to discuss and determine how to incorporate the Plan's concepts into concrete work plan items. To read the entire Strategic Action Plan, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/StrategicActionPlan.pdf>.

Park Street Closures: This summer, Seattle Parks periodically closed three park roads (Volunteer Park, Lake Washington Boulevard, and Seward Park) to vehicles. Parks staff are now working on ways to activate the streets during these closures and will keep the Board informed as discussions progress. For more information on the closures, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/walk.htm>.

West Seattle Stadium Request for Proposals: Seattle Parks' Partnerships unit is working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select an organization to take over operation and maintenance and responsibility for capital upgrades to West Seattle Stadium. A draft of the RFP will be completed by mid-to-late September. Parks will enter into a long-term concession agreement with the selected organization. Staff will meet with community councils and provide a briefing to the Park Board in October. For more on West Seattle Stadium, see http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=472.

Commissioner Ramels asked whether the lessee would get a monetary break on their rent for handling the maintenance and operation. Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that they would invest \$42.5 million for the maintenance and operations, which would be amortized by rent decreases. The lessee could have concessions and the Stadium could be used as a special event site to increase the programming. Nearly every private school in the city is interested and may join to form a consortium to bid on the lease.

Lake Union Park Phase 2 to be Launched: Phase 2 of this project will be launched on Tuesday, September 30, at 11:00 am at Lake Union Park. The event is sponsored by The Seattle Parks Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, The Center for Wooden Boats, United Indians of All Tribes, the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI), and others to launch the final phase of Lake Union Park's transformation into a world-class waterfront park. A brief ceremony and blessing will be followed by a launch of boats into Lake Union. Refreshments will be served and visitors can look at the plans for Lake Union Park, the Northwest Native Canoe Center, Center for Wooden Boat's Education Center, and the new MOHAI site. For more on Lake Union Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/lakeunionpark.htm>.

I-5 Colonnade Park: The ribbon cutting to celebrate the grand opening of the I-5 Colonnade mountain bike park will be held on Saturday, September 13, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The celebration also includes a barbeque, raffle prizes, and a wide range of exhibits from biking and outdoor companies and organizations. The trails will be open and the public is encouraged to bring bikes and helmets to check out all the riding opportunities. This is a free event for all ages. Located underneath I-5 between the Eastlake and Capitol Hill neighborhoods, the two-acre area used to be an urban wasteland of concrete which has been transformed into an official City of Seattle Park with over 1.5 miles of trails, as well as a wide range of technical trail features for all levels of cross-country, free-ride trails, and BMX riders. For more on I-5 Colonnade Park, see http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=4446.

Presentation to Nancy Malmgren: Deputy Superintendent Williams presented a framed and matted map and photos to Ms. Malmgren, who is well known in Seattle for her many years of work to protect the waters of Carkeek Creek and to steward the park. She stated that she first became involved when she reviewed the Department's Comprehensive Plan developed in the 1990s. She gave 20-25 pages of comments and, as a result, water use was added to land use in the Comprehensive Plan. A hearty round of applause followed the presentation. For more on Ms. Malmgren, see <http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/malm25.shtml> and http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/350702_jeff09.html?source=rss. For more on Carkeek Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/environment/carkeek.htm>

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. Six people signed up and testified.

Diane Duthweiler: Ms. Duthweiler is a neighbor of the Zoo and lives 1-1/2 blocks from the west entrance. She loves the Zoo and supports it; however, she does not want it to become "Disney-ized." It is appalling that the Zoo is considering building a second Zoo store at the west entry. The plan would also include a great deal of new paving and only increase the number of ticket booths by one. She believes the north and south Zoo entries are the two primary entries. She referred to a letter that City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen wrote to the Zoo, asking it to hold off on this. She commented that the Zoo takes public testimony but doesn't respond to it, resulting in little public involvement.

Irene Wall: Ms. Wall agrees with Ms. Duthweiler. She is also a neighbor of the Zoo and commented that she has walked a great deal in the Zoo recently and there were lots of people there. She asked how much thought the Zoo gives before it removes trees. The Board must ask when buildings in the Zoo's long-range plan become too much – including those at the west entry. When the Zoo's long-range plan was approved, it was generic and not the plan that is being presented for the west entry. She also referred to Councilmember Rasmussen's letter to the Zoo Society and asked that the Park Board recommend that the Zoo delay the west entry, as did Councilmember Rasmussen.

Paul Andrews: He is a member of the Phinney Eco Village and a writer. He stated that the Zoo originally opposed a west entry garage but eventually the Mayor forced it to accept the garage. He then read portions of an April 2004 memo. He believes that the west side entry expansion is a bad option.

Annie Davis: She is a Zoo neighbor and stated that the Zoo isn't a good neighbor to her. She doesn't believe the West Entry plan has been well thought out and that it will impact both traffic and parking on Phinney Avenue [the main north-south arterial on the west side of the Zoo.]

Morry Browne: He lives at the top of Green Lake Park, just off Golden Gardens Drive and commented on the heavy volume of parking at this Park. Many people come to the parking lots and play loud music from their vehicles, but do not otherwise use the park. He believes the Park would be a good site for the "It's a Walk in the Park" road closures and suggested that Golden Gardens Drive might also be made a one-way street. Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that the road closure program is a pilot and is being evaluated for possible additional sites for next year and his suggestion will be considered.

Ginger Edwards-Bueton: Ms. Edwards-Bueton is the attorney for Lake Sammamish Waterski Club and asked that the Board delay its September 25 public hearing on this issue as Parks staff did not contact the Club for any information for tonight's briefing. The Club wants the opportunity to educate the Park Board on their

waterski program at Green Lake. She stated that the Club's use of the Lake has no impact on birds, but disallowing the use of Green Lake would have an impact on the Waterski Club. Their website is www.lsc.org.

Commissioner Ranade stated that the Board will take this request under advisement. The Club's president also asked to address the Board; Commissioner Ranade asked all those who want to testify on this topic to do so at the public hearing.

Overview: Zoo Society Contract with Seattle Parks and Recreation

Charles Ng, Seattle Parks Contract and Concessionaire Manager, gave an overview of the contract between the Zoo Society and Seattle Parks and Recreation, just prior to the Zoo's annual briefing to the Board. A summary of the contract is included in these minutes.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This briefing is being presented to the Board for information purposes only, at the request of the Board.

Project Description and Background

The agreement between the City of Seattle and the Woodland Park Zoological Society is presented on the Contract Summary Sheet (attached).

Additional Information

Charles Ng: charles.ng@seattle.gov; 684-8001

CONTRACT SUMMARY

Contracting Party/ Lessee/ Concessionaire/Other: Woodland Park Zoological Society (Society)

Contract Title and Contract Type: Operations and management Agreement

Non-Profit or **For Profit**

New (authorized by Ordinance 120697 adopted December 17, 2001) or **Renewal (or extension of existing Lease)**

Premises: Woodland Park Zoo, property of the City of Seattle

Term of Lease: 20 years, commencing on December 20, 2001 through 2/28/2022.

Purpose of Lease (description of license): Authorizes the Society to operate and manage the Woodland Park Zoo on behalf of the City

Major Highlights of Terms and conditions:

Maintenance: Society has sole responsibility to maintain the facility.

City support for Zoo operations: a) At least \$5 million per year in city resource from General Fund for Operations support; b) A total of \$500,000 that is made of in-kind services and actual cash pay out per year for five years; c) A total of \$6.4 million over the first 7 years of the contract for major maintenance; d) Pro Parks Levy funds of \$2.5 million per year throughout the term of the Levy (ends in 2008).

Parking Garage: The City is responsible for the funding of a new parking garage if approved as part of the long range plan for the Zoo, via debt service financing. Income from parking revenues to be used to pay down debt and shared between City and Society.

Admissions and Fees: Society has authority to set admissions fees provided that the fees reflect market rates of comparable facilities in Seattle and elsewhere; City Council approval is required if admission fees are greater than such standards. Society required to provide reduced admissions to the Zoo for school groups, making available 40,000 free passes per year to human services agencies and improving access to the disabled, seniors, children, and low-income people.

Reporting: Society is required, throughout the term of this agreement, to submit to the City (Parks Superintendent): a) Annual Report denoting income and expense by May of each year; b) Annual Plan denoting an annual capital improvement plan at the Zoo and any proposed fee changes; c) Reports to the Park Board on a quarterly basis, including a summary of operations and services; d) Report to the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee of same; e) Monthly Report to the Superintendent summarizing its finances; including revenues and an accounting of costs; e) Annual Independent Audit within 60 days after the end of each fiscal year from a certified accounting firm.

Public Involvement: a) Involvement with the Society Board whereby members (3 year term) of this board can be appointed by the Superintendent, the Mayor, and the City Council Parks Committee when there are vacancies or expiration of the preceding term; b) Public review of Annual Report and Plan; c) Process to allow public input and outreach for potential capital projects; d) Neighborhood liaison from the society to interact with the neighborhood community councils; e) Notice to public about Society Board Meetings.

Other Pertinent Information:

Naming rights: The name of the facility cannot be changed without approval by the City Council and Park Board.

Insurance responsibility: Responsible for Commercial General Liability of \$2million for Personal and Property Damage with a \$5 million aggregate.

Indemnification: Mutual with each party holding each other harmless.

Termination of agreement; Both parties can terminate contract based on default with 60 days notice to other party.

Board Discussion

Mr. Ng reviewed information in the written briefing. Both he and Deborah Jensen, Woodland Park Zoo Director, gave answers to the Commissioners' questions.

Deputy Superintendent Williams responded to some of the public testimony. Parks staff checked with other zoos about zoo entrances and found that it is customary to have stores at the entrances. In response to a comment about tree removal at the Zoo, he stated that the Zoo's policy is to replace three trees for each one that is removed. Also, Superintendent Gallagher is a member of the Zoo Board and is involved in the Zoo's budget approval. The Zoo Board also includes representatives from the Mayor's office and three City appointees.

Commissioner Ranade asked how admission fees are determined and Ms. Jensen answered that the Zoo does a market survey of other cultural attractions in the area and sets a price so that the Zoo is not the highest priced local cultural attraction. Winter admission costs are lower than in summer.

Commissioner Ranade asked about the Zoo's public involvement process (PIP) for capital projects and Ms. Jensen responded that the Zoo's public involvement policy is modeled on the Park Department's policy. The Zoo holds public meetings at the Zoo grounds and also on the East Side and asks for comments online. In addition, Zoo staff meet with the Chamber of Commerce and Community Councils.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels on whether he wrote the contract, Mr. Ng responded that he didn't. The contract requires "reports to the Park Board on a quarterly basis, including a summary of operations and services". Commissioners Ramels and Barber asked about the Board's role in this and whether the City gives the Zoo any guidelines as to what it wants included in the reports. Mr. Ng answered that Parks and Zoo staff work together to help determine the information that Parks wants included in the reports. Commissioner Barber asked about the Zoo's public review process and Ms. Jensen responded that Zoo staff mail information to 37,000 households and post information on the Zoo website to ask for public comments.

Commissioner Kostka asked about the portion of the contract that calls for parking to be built, which hasn't yet been built, and whether that invalidates the contract. Ms. Jensen responded that the Zoo has a long-term parking problem which is not yet resolved.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Larsen to confirm that he is not presenting the full contract for Board review and approval, and that he is merely briefing the Board at a summary level, Mr. Ng confirmed.

The current West Gate design includes the addition of a second zoo store. Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that two zoo stores were common in other cities. Commissioner Larsen commented that just because other cities do something, doesn't make it a best practice. She continued by saying she has witnessed how difficult it can be for visitors with small children if they are forced to exit (for example the Aquarium) through the store. Commissioner Larsen said she recognizes the important revenue source and the marketing that a store provides and finds it understandable in a private venture such as the Space Needle, but doesn't think it serves our families, especially those on a tight budget. Ms. Jensen responded that Zoo visitors will not be forced to exit through the store. Commissioner Larsen thanked her and said that was commendable.

Commissioner Ramels noted that the Zoo receives \$2.5 million annually from the Pro Parks Levy for its operations and asked what are the plans for replacing this fund when the Levy sunsets at the end of 2008. Ms. Jensen responded that it will cause problems for the Zoo. She referred to the King County Levy, and a King County grant, which will provide \$3 million for six years, and what areas it can fund. Commissioner Ramels asked if Parks monitors this funding and Mr. Ng answered that the Superintendent and Seattle Parks' finance and contract divisions all monitor the Zoo's funding.

Commissioner Barber asked Zoo staff to send the Park Board a copy of its Public Involvement Policy. Commissioner Adams added that he is also interested in the Public Involvement Policy, as the Park Board hears a fair amount of criticism about this topic. People testify to the Board that they attend the public meetings but feel that the Department doesn't listen to them. He believes that the Department and Zoo need to pay attention to public comments, as it is very grating to attend a meeting and then learn your presence was not important. Seattle Parks is currently reviewing its policy because it creates a lot of "heat" for the Department. He asked if the Zoo is tracking how Parks is changing its policy. Ms. Jensen will work with Superintendent Gallagher on this.

Commissioner Ramels asked what is done with the public comment once it is received. Ms. Jensen answered that public comments were gathered and the Zoo's governing body reviewed them, and they did influence the design of the west entrance.

Annual Briefing: Woodland Park Zoo

Deborah Jensen, Woodland Park Zoo President and Chief Executive Officer, next presented the Zoo's annual briefing to the Park Board. Commissioners also received a written briefing paper prior to the meeting, which is included in these minutes.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action: None. Per Section 20.2.1 of the Management & Operations Agreement, reports to the Parks Board are required on a quarterly basis. Once each year, zoo staff is invited to provide a briefing directly to the Parks Board. Zoo President and CEO Deborah Jensen will present this year's report.

This has been a very successful year for the zoo in terms of attendance, guest experiences, education programs, numbers of volunteers and other metrics.

There also were some setbacks: the zoo still is searching for a long-term solution to its parking needs, and the zoo community was saddened when our Asian elephant, Chai, miscarried. Currently, the zoo has a proposal for a new West Entry pending before the Department of Planning and Development.

This paper will address those issues in turn.

Zoo attendance is significantly higher in the summer than in winter, and employment of seasonal staff and use of volunteers and docents reflects that. Both June and July were the highest months July on record for zoo attendance, and August was heading for record levels when the weather changed and rains began—a serious predicament for a primarily outdoor venue. During the summer season, we have many more interpretive programs and interactive guest experiences. In May through July of this year, 251,104 zoo guests participated in 3,258 programs. In the same period a year ago, 157,913 guests attended 1,902 programs.

Employment at the zoo is up by almost 8 percent from a year ago. The zoo employs 293 full- and part-time permanent staff. Peak summer employment – including seasonal workers – is up 465, or an increase of 11 percent over last year. Many of the new staff are seasonal summer educators.

In terms of volunteers, in 2007, 751 registered volunteers logged 78,521 hours, which was valued at \$1,366,857 in equivalent staff time. That includes community service groups, adult volunteers, professional consultants and Zoo Corps, a popular program for teen-agers.

One volunteer, Wendie Bank, was in the second docent class ever, in 1968, and has been a zoo volunteer for 40 years. Another, Kaye Cartwright-Lissa, was just honored for donating 9,000 hours of volunteer time to the zoo – that's the equivalent of 4-½ years of full-time work.

Zoo attendance is an important financial metric, as almost half the zoo's operating revenues come from earned income – admissions, concessions, membership, etc. Other revenues include public support, which is 37 percent of the budget, and contributions, 16 percent.

City of Seattle support in 2008 totals \$10.3 million, including \$6.1 million from the city for operations, \$1.2 million for major maintenance and \$2.96 million from the Pro Parks levy. This is the last year for the parks levy and city major maintenance funding. The zoo was not included in the new levy proposal that goes to the voters in November. However, the zoo was included in last year's King County levy, which will provide \$3

million in 2008, of which the zoo has allocated \$1 million to operations and \$2 million for the new Humboldt Penguin project, which will open next year. The county's levy commitment is for six years.

The zoo raised \$1.75 million at the 32nd annual Jungle Party, the second-best year on record. Altogether, the zoo expects to raise nearly \$9 million in private donations this year, exceeding its annual goals for the third year in a row.

In 2008 overall, the zoo's total revenue budget is just over \$37 million, including \$30.7 million in operations and \$6.5 million in capital

Education programs:

The Woodland Park Zoo is devoted to education programs. Programs range from classes, day camps, overnights, community outreach, public programs on zoo ground, ecotravel and volunteerism, and are in many cases aimed at global efforts to understand and protect the world's animals and their habitats.

Annually, more than 380,000 people -- that's about one-third of all visitors -- participate in an education program at the zoo. That number includes 65,000 teachers, students and chaperones who visit in school groups. In addition, approximately 15,000 school children are reached through offsite outreach programs.

One particularly important and successful program is the School-to-Zoo program, which was funded by the Pro Parks Levy. This provides programming and subsidized transportation for schools in which more than 30 percent of the students are on free or reduced-price meals.

In 2007, 112 schools participated with a total of 255 visits. Of those, at least 10 had more than 80 percent of their students on reduced-price lunches.

One school, Adams Elementary, came nine times (different classes each time.)

Some non-traditional schools participating in the program include two Bilingual Orientation Centers, as well as First Place, with students gathered from homeless shelters in Seattle. (They came three times in 2007.) The Refugee Women's Alliance brought their preschool and pre-K kids.

More than 450,000 guests are served annually in the Zoomazium, with more than 50,000 participating in one of the programs with a volunteer or staff member.

That number likely will increase significantly by the end of 2008 because of the addition of a number of new programs. And next year, there will be Zoomazium-based programs in the adjoining woodlot.

The zoo education staff believes that nearly half those who visit the zoo go to the Zoomazium, in part because so many visitors are families with young children. And on rainy days, almost all our visitors go there.

The annual ZooTunes concert series is an important zoo program, as well as a valuable financial contributor. ZooTunes, which just completed its 25th year, is now the only summer concert series in Seattle. Ten concerts were held this year -- the last one was August 27th. Among the artists were Boz Skaggs and Emmylou Harris; the concerts were at capacity virtually every night.

This is a very family-friendly series. It begins at 6:00 p.m. and is over by 8:30 p.m. Kids come for free with their parents. Zoo neighbors within two blocks receive free tickets to two of the concerts each year. Paid attendance is limited to 3,800.

Conservation outside the walls:

Conservation of species is a key to modern zoos. Woodland Park Zoo supports 38 conservation programs in 30 different countries, with focus on Africa, Asia-Pacific and the Pacific Northwest. These programs have been instrumental in reintroducing several species to the wild, including Western Pond Turtles and Silver Spot Butterflies.

But many people are not aware of the contributions of this and other zoos to field conservation projects around the globe.

Lisa Dabek, the zoo's field conservation director, has just returned from two months in Papua New Guinea, where she has been surveying sites and conducting research on tree kangaroos—a smaller relative of the familiar Australian kangaroos. The program she founded, the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program, involves a community-based approach, involving the local residents in decision-making and focusing on saving habitat in the mountain rain forests of Papua New Guinea's Huon Peninsula. Recently, the program was awarded a \$300,000 grant over the next two years from Conservation International and was instrumental in setting aside 150,000 acres of forest habitat for protecting wildlife.

Dr. Darin Collins, the zoo's director of animal health, or chief veterinarian, has just returned from Indonesia where he spent the last 16 months on sabbatical investigating and tracking the causes of bird flu (avian influenza). The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has developed guidelines for AZA-accredited zoos to follow for monitoring and protecting their avian collections. Zoos also follow routine preventative measures to protect the health of their collections.

Dr. Collins directs the Indonesian Veterinary Training Program, which focuses on sharing knowledge with medical professionals. That led to his participation in this program to study the causes of avian influenza, and how to control it and prevent outbreaks. It is a crucial component of controlling the spread of avian flu because this research is conducted in the part of the world with the highest incidence of human cases.

The zoo is also very conscious of being a good citizen locally. Since 1990, water use at the zoo has been cut in half, from 17 million cubic feet annually to 8.6 million. More than 4000 trees have been planted, the zoo moved to 100 percent recycled paper for office use, and it participates in a variety of recycling and waste-reduction programs. Last year, for example, the zoo recycled more than 100 yards of bailing twine. In 2007 the food concessionaire at the zoo switched to using all corn-based biodegradable utensils, plates and cups.

The zoo is a member of the mayor's Climate Partnership and this year participated in the Green Fest at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center and hosted Eco Weekend 2008 on the zoo grounds. It is also a sponsor of the Parks Department's Healthy Parks Initiative. Zoo staff received an award from Commuter Challenge, based on results of the last two-year Commute Trip Reduction study. Staff cut their single occupancy vehicle commutes by 14 percent over the two-year study period.

Capital projects:

-- Flamingo Exhibit Opens

The new exhibit of Chilean Flamingos opened May 24th with a flock of 27 flamingos and offers a snapshot into the natural world of these hardy, social birds of South America. Their range extends from an elevation of more than 15,000 feet in the high mountain plateau to lowland saline estuaries, and the zoo's exhibit emulates the coastal salt marshes and estuaries of the temperate forest zone in Chile – specifically, the island of Chiloe where the flamingos find winter refuge. (Another Chiloe species – pudu, the world's second smallest deer -- are exhibited nearby.) These are one of four species of New World flamingos.

Interactive features allow kids to play and learn, exploring life-sized Chilean “flamingo nests,” simulated child-proof eggs, and a bas relief-sculpture of a flamingo head and neck to touch and see how flamingos eat. It has already proven to be a very popular exhibit.

The world’s population of Chilean flamingos is estimated at no more than 200,000. Hunting, loss of eggs from poachers, mining practices, habitat destruction and other causes are contributing to the concerns about survival of these birds. This exhibit – which is spectacular because of the bright pink birds – is an excellent example of how zoos are helping maintain the biodiversity of the planet through awareness, education and inspiring action.

-- Penguin Exhibit to open next year

A new exhibit for penguins is scheduled to open next May and be the keystone for the zoo’s 2009 Summer Experience. A very successful groundbreaking was held in July and was attended by Mayor Greg Nickels, Council member Tom Rasmussen, and other dignitaries.

The new exhibit – for Humboldt Penguins -- will replace an old exhibit built in 1947 for sea lions. The new exhibit will include a number of viewing experiences to see penguins in a naturalistic setting, including nesting burrows and tidal zones.

Humboldt penguins, native to Chile and Peru, are one of the most endangered of the 19 penguin species. They are victim to decades of over fishing the penguin’s main prey – anchovies – and over harvesting of the bird guano where they traditionally nest. The total wild population is now estimated at fewer than 12,000.

Woodland Park Zoo’s exhibit will replicate Punta San Juan, Peru, home to about half of Peru’s penguins. In addition to its ability to educate about penguins, their habitat and their status, the exhibit features some cutting-edge environmental design. Instead of filling and refilling the penguin pool, it will be filled only once, then natural systems will be used to filter and reuse the water, saving about 3 million gallons of water and 75 million BTUs of power each year. Penguins like their pool between 50 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and this exhibit will use a geothermal system to heat and cool it.

-- West Entry

The zoo applied last month for permits to build a new West Entry. This entry is a part of the zoo’s Long-Range Physical Development Plan adopted by the City Council in 2004 after five years of public outreach and hearings. The entry is to be located about a block north of the current West Entry, at North 55th Street and Phinney Avenue Northwest.

It will replace the current West and North entrances and provide a significantly improved guest experience.

On crowded days, zoo attendees can wait in line for half an hour or longer. New ticket windows and processing at this gate will reduce the time to five minutes. In addition, the entry will be further off of Phinney Avenue, providing added safety from the street traffic on crowded days. This project responds directly to zoo guests, who have said in surveys that they are concerned about safety issues near Phinney Avenue.

Inside the gate, the entry will have guest services including stroller and wheelchair rental, and a zoo store. Outside, it will provide added amenities both for zoo patrons and the Phinney neighbors with a coffee cart, restroom facilities, and a landscaped path connecting the north and west neighborhoods that border the zoo.

The zoo is involved in a very aggressive outreach program to meet with neighboring areas and address any concerns they may have about the new entry. Construction is scheduled to begin next year, with opening in time for the summer season in 2010.

Animals:

Additions to and changes in the collection are a daily and dynamic part of the zoo.

Helen, a 3-year-old snow leopard, went on display last month in time for Snow Leopard Day, August 23rd. The zoo hopes to have a breeding recommendation in 2009 for this female and the male acquired from the Los Angeles Zoo earlier this year.

Other recent acquisitions include a pair of Chiloee wigeons; a male coendu, or prehensile-tailed porcupine. A male DeBrazza's guenon arrived from San Diego Zoo on May 20th. Plans for introducing this male with our remaining female are underway.

The zoo also added eight Panamanian golden frogs, a highly endangered species and one of particular focus during 2008 Year of the Frog. Three Katahdin sheep were acquired for the Family Farm exhibit.

Many of the new arrivals get here the old fashioned way: they are born here, including a male pudu, and Egyptian tortoises.

However, the entire staff was saddened late last month when Chai, an Asian elephant, miscarried. The zoo staff was cautiously optimistic Chai was pregnant after insemination because of her blood tests but had not been able to see a fetus on ultrasound. The keeper staff was waiting for November for another attempt at viewing via ultrasound when the miscarriage occurred.

A Grant's gazelle, which lived in the African savanna with other species, died from head injuries apparently caused by one of the other animals in the exhibit. T.C., a 14-year-old male patas monkey, was humanely euthanized due to a decline in his health caused by congestive heart failure. The death came just days after another patas monkey, Fiona, successfully recovered from a high-tech, sound-wave treatment used to blast kidney stones.

As a matter of transparency, the zoo immediately makes public deaths and other serious health issues for many of the larger species in the collection.

The elephant issue is a constant focus at the zoo. A small group of activists in Seattle is actively engaged in a campaign to get this and other zoos to send their elephants to a sanctuary in Tennessee. They have questioned whether Chai should have been inseminated in the first place.

Zoo staff and other medical experts are still investigating why Chai miscarried. It is not uncommon for mammals to miscarry, especially in the first trimester. She currently is healthy and doing well.

But the role of this zoo and other AZA-accredited zoos in the preservation of both Asian and African elephants is crucial for their species. Woodland Park participates with other zoos in North America in a species survival program in which experts from around the continent conduct in a very scientific way a rigorous regime concerning which animals should reproduce, with the goal of keeping endangered species alive and with diverse genetic makeup. Woodland Park also supports field conservation programs for elephants in Africa and Asia. Offering zoo guests the opportunity to see and interact with these highly endangered species is instrumental in education and in inspiring people to act in a way that enables their preservation.

The other issue that had been in the news about the zoo in the past year was over a parking structure to be built on the west side off of Phinney Avenue. The parking garage received a unanimous approval vote by the City Council. The zoo has not yet decided how to proceed after the permit for the garage was turned down by a hearing examiner, other than the decision not to take the case forward in Superior Court. The long-range plan for the zoo still calls for a long-term solution to parking because of crowded conditions on more than 100 days a year.

Board Discussion

Ms. Jensen introduced herself and stated that she is here to present the Zoo's annual briefing to the Board of Park Commissioners. She next gave a Powerpoint presentation, followed by a number of questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Adams:

He thanked Ms. Jensen for the briefing, which he found very helpful. He asked that in future reports, Zoo staff give more information on long-term conservation goals and whether those goals are being met.

Commissioner Larsen:

She stated that she loves the Zoo and noted there is a huge increase in the tree canopy from the photos taken in 1950 and those taken in 2008. She thanked the Zoo for the Maasai Warrior program and mentioned that the Maasai leader of the program, Kakuda, has become an inspiration to his colleagues and she thinks that is a great relationship for the Zoo. Ms. Jensen agreed and stated that three groups of Zoo docents were so inspired by him that they recently visited the town where he lives in Kenya.

Commissioner Ramels:

The Board has heard comments about the adequacy of the elephant habitat. Ms. Jensen discussed the diversity of the habitat at the exhibit, how the animals use it, and how they perceive the physical arrangement of the space. There are lots of different areas in the habitat, and she noted that the elephant staff are very good. Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels on whether Zoo staff would like for the exhibit to be larger, Ms. Jensen answered that it would; however, a larger space wouldn't necessarily change the behavior of the elephants.

Commissioner Barber:

He submitted an extensive list of questions earlier this week and Zoo staff are working on the responses. He stated that he found the briefing enlightening. He asked about the Zoo's performance measures targets and how does the Zoo know if it is meeting both. Ms. Jensen noted that fundraising is a big element and is one reason the City turned management of the Zoo over to the Zoo Society. People give more to the Society, with a high percentage of Woodland Park Zoo's funding being donated by philanthropists. She noted that Woodland Park Zoo is generally recognized as one of the top ten Zoos in the country. The Zoo Society Board receives many public comments and the Zoo receives many additional guest comments. She will send a summary of the west entry comments to the Park Board.

Commissioner Barber commented that he has heard four areas of concern: (1) animals; (2) public involvement policy; (3) trees; and the west entry. In response to the animal concern Ms. Jensen noted that many animals are outside during daylight hours and many stay out 24 hours a day in summer months. Referring to herpes in elephants, Ms. Jensen stated that it is still unknown how the disease transmits from one elephant to another; it is a poorly understood area. She noted that humans generally have 7-9 types of herpes, which can lie dormant throughout their lifetime. One theory holds that elephants are born with one or more types of herpes. Hansa, the Zoo's 6-year-old elephant who died in June 2007, had a type of herpes that was previously unknown.

Due to time restraints, the Chair asked Commissioners to submit any additional questions in writing to Ms. Jensen and the Zoo staff. Both the questions and the Zoo's responses will be added to the minutes for public review.

Ms. Jensen will present a separate briefing to the Board on the west entry. Commissioners thanked her for tonight's briefing.

Briefing: Wildlife Sanctuary Policy

Rebecca Salinas, Seattle Parks' Partnership Director, briefed the Board on the Department's Sanctuary Policy, which is being developed. Commissioners also received a written briefing, included in the minutes. The Board will hold a public hearing on this policy at its September 25 meeting and discuss the policy and make a recommendation to the Superintendent at its October 9 meeting.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

This is the second briefing to the Board on a proposed Wildlife Sanctuary Policy for Seattle Parks and Recreation owned property.

Project Description and Background

There is a significant amount of City legislation, best management practices manuals, and policy documents that provide guidance for creating and managing natural areas, urban forests and aquatic habitats. A Wildlife Sanctuary status would place more focused attention to preserving and nurturing wildlife within our urban environment by bringing together maintenance practices, educational opportunities and volunteer efforts.

The best protection for the greatest numbers of plant and animal species is to protect the environment in which they live. And, as various species of animals require differing habitats in which to live, and differing habitats can support a variety of wildlife, the policy calls for a site-specific plan to be developed for each designated Wildlife Sanctuary for approval by the Superintendent.

Site-specific plans would be grounded in scientific research and aligned with current local and state habitat protection and management policies, best practices, legislation and planning guidelines. Plans would include strategies for monitoring the plan and evaluating the status of the Wildlife Sanctuary - the health of the habitat and the well-being of the animals.

The Superintendent may establish additional restrictions, levels of protection or other actions he determines are necessary in order to protect, restore or enhance the Wildlife Sanctuary.

Public Involvement Process

The Park Board will conduct a public hearing on the proposed policy at the September 25, 2008 meeting.

The policy was developed in response to a request made by Heron Habitat Helpers to designate Kiwanis Ravine as a Wildlife Refuge. Many Parks and Recreation Departments across the country are implementing similar Wildlife Sanctuary designations in response to community requests.

Protecting wildlife in Seattle parks and minimizing the effects of humans and their activities on wildlife, is a priority for Parks and is an Action Strategy in the department's Strategic Action Plan.

Environmental Sustainability

With the department managing about 6,200 acres of land within Seattle, the policy will help continue and increase wildlife habitat protection and enhancement efforts by bringing together best management practices, environmental education and volunteer involvement. Wildlife sanctuaries will enhance collaborative planning and maintenance practices across department divisions, as well as, between Parks and other departments.

Budget

As Wildlife Sanctuaries are designated there will be signs made and installed to identify and control the use of the area. However, it is currently anticipated that these and other costs will be supported by current resources.

Schedule

The Park Board will be making a recommendation to the Superintendent on October 9, 2008. If the policy is approved, department staff will develop a form to be used for the nomination of Wildlife Sanctuaries. Information regarding the Wildlife Sanctuary policy and nomination process will be placed on the Department's website and disseminated to a variety of stakeholders.

Additional Information

For more information contact Rebecca Salinas, Partnerships Manager, 684-7279; or rebecca.salinas@seattle.gov.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Kostka stated that she has a conflict with this issue and will recuse [i.e., to withdraw from a position of judging so as to avoid any semblance of partiality or bias] herself from the briefing, public hearing, discussion, and Board recommendation. She then joined the audience for the remainder of this topic.

Commissioner Adams asked about the project description and for a few examples. Ms. Salinas answered that the Department has an urban wildlife and management plan that has been updated and has a marine policy. The City's Department of Planning and Development has a rule to protect critical areas of the city. These policies and rules give a foundation for the wildlife sanctuary policy.

Commissioner Barber asked if Foster Island [in the Washington Park Arboretum] would be protected under this policy. Barb DeCaro, from the Department's Natural Resources Unit and manages the Department's best practices policies, answered that it isn't; however, it has another level of protection. Commissioner Barber asked if the Department is requesting a recommendation from the Board to approve the policy and Ms. Salinas answered yes. Commissioner Ramels asked if this policy would correlate with the Department's vegetation management plans and Ms. Salinas stated that the policy states this.

Commissioner Larsen asked if neighborhood or other advocacy groups may nominate areas as sanctuaries. Ms. Salinas answered that some areas have been nominated from the public and some by the Department. Staff will go on a case-by-case application and will have the science and expertise behind the determination. Commissioner Larsen asked how the Department will advertise the policy and the nomination process. Ms. Salinas responded that the Department plans to post it on its website and send notice of application to all interested groups.

Ms. Salinas noted that there is enough interest in the policy that it was included in the Department's five-year Strategic Action Plan. Commissioner Barber observed that many of the Department's vegetation management plans are contracted out to landscape companies who aren't as focused on wildlife sanctuaries. Deputy Superintendent Williams added that the vegetation management plan for each site may have different goals. Commissioner Barber urged that the Department look for opportunities to apply the policy and prioritize the sites in order of need. Ms. DeCaro responded that staff are already discussing this. Commissioner Barber added that the wildlife sanctuaries can also be used for educational purposes.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Salinas and Ms. DeCaro for the briefing. The Board will hold a public hearing on this at its September 25 meeting, followed by a discussion and recommendation to the Superintendent at its October 9 meeting.

Briefing: Waterski Events at Green Lake Park

Paula Hoff, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, answered questions from the Board on whether to discontinue the policy of allowing waterski events at Green Lake Park. The Board received a briefing paper from Ms. Hoff prior to the meeting, included in these minutes.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

We are seeking a recommendation on whether waterskiing events are appropriate at Green Lake. There will be a public hearing before the Board of Park Commissioners September 25, 2008 and a discussion and recommendation October 9, 2008.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends amending the Supplemental Use Management Guidelines for Green Lake Park to remove authorization of waterskiing tournaments.

Project Description and Background

In the Supplemental Use Management Guidelines for Green Lake Park, waterski events are permitted no more than two days per year and not in June, July, and August.

Seattle Parks and Recreation's Use Guidelines were developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s to supplement the Park Code (Seattle Municipal Code-SMC Title 18). They were intended to establish practices to minimize adverse impacts of activities on park grounds and facilities and on the surrounding environment. In the Guidelines, Seattle Parks and Recreation identified community impacts and developed policies to manage specific activities such as special events, identified parties responsible for reviewing and managing proposed activities, and developed procedures for scheduling events. Supplemental guidelines were also developed for 11 parks to more specifically address the unique characteristics of these parks and their adjacent communities. The existing Guidelines for Green Lake Park make these specifications.

Waterskiing tournaments are:

- Limited to two days per year;
- Prohibited during the peak-use summer months of June, July, and August; and
- Permitted only between noon and 6 p.m. for noise control.

We have not been able to verify exactly when waterski events were first authorized at Green Lake, but Parks staff recall waterskiing events on Green Lake for the last 25 years.

When the Supplemental Use Guidelines for Green Lake were revised in 1987, they banned power boat and model boat racing on Green Lake as uses incompatible for such a small lake in an urban environment. The only 1987 revision related to waterskiing events at Green Lake was that the two days of annual events no longer needed to be on consecutive days.

The Lake Sammamish Ski Club events at Green Lake occur on Memorial Day and Labor Day. These are days when the Green Lake Small Craft Center is closed, so none of its boats are on the lake to pose conflicts. The tournaments are one-day events, sometimes with an additional day reserved for set-up. Usually the tournaments have about 75 participants aside from the spectators. The ski course is set up for the skiers to go from the Small Craft Center, around Duck Island, and back to the Small Craft Center. They have been asked to adjust their direction of travel to lessen their impact on the nesting grebes, and our event scheduling staff report that the ski club has complied. The tournaments employ amplified sound only for announcements.

The speaker system is directed inward to the lake to lessen the impact on lake neighbors. This event is used to showcase waterskiing to those who may have no other exposure to the sport.

The website of the Lake Sammamish Waterski Club says "LSWSC members share the common goal of promoting the safety and enjoyment of water sports. The club has a rich and interesting history, dating back to 1956 when the first slalom course was installed on Lake Sammamish, just east of Seattle, Washington. The LSWSC has definitely evolved and grown over the years, and today has one of the largest active memberships of any ski club in the country."

Revenue generated from the waterski events at Green Lake is approximately \$900 per event, this includes commercial banner fees, electrical hook-up charges, booth fees, and a \$10.00/hour use fee. The fall event will only bring in \$240 because it is being done all in one day.

Issues

Several larger lakes in the area might be more appropriate for activities that use power boats reaching high speeds. For comparison purposes: Lake Washington has a surface area of 21,500 acres; Lake Sammamish 4,897 acres; Lake Union 580 acres; and Green Lake 259 acres.

Some individuals have argued, through written and verbal complaints to the Department, that the wakes of the power boats used during ski events have a negative impact on the lake's shoreline. They cite that the resulting waves create more erosion because they are high, frequent, and come from unusual directions. There has also been concern about negative effects on the nests of pied-bill grebes in the water lilies along the lake's northwestern shore.

A primary question for consideration is what value this event brings to Seattle and the Green Lake community. It is not apparent that Seattle residents are significant participants in the event or that they turn out in large attendance. This activity is quite different from all of Green Lake Park's other activities. All other motor boat activity on the lake has been banned (except for safety boats and maintenance activities). As noted above, there are other options for this activity nearby that are more conducive to the noise and environmental impacts created from operating speedboats. Given recent complaints, this is an appropriate time to reassess the advisability of continuing waterskiing events on the lake.

Additional Information

If you have questions or would like more information on waterski events at Green Lake, please contact Paula Hoff at paula.hoff@seattle.gov or 206-615-0368.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Ramels asked if the Lake Sammamish Waterski Club holds any events at Lake Sammamish. Members of the Club answered that they waterski on Lake Sammamish; however, they use private lakes for tournaments as these need to be on controlled water with no other motorized uses going on at the same time.

Commissioner Ranade noted that the Waterski Club uses Green Lake only two days each year and asked what problems this causes. Ms. Hoff answered that waterskiing is no longer an appropriate use at this site. Deputy Superintendent Williams added that the Department has changed its environmental practices a great deal over the past 30 years [the number of years that the Waterski Club has been using Green Lake]. Many events that used to be held there are no longer allowed, as the values have changed. Commissioner Ranade asked if there have been any complaints from the public and Ms. Hoff answered yes.

Commissioner Larsen asked if an Environmental Impact Statement is needed for a holistic assessment to make this a long-term management plan. Ms. Hoff noted that pied bill grebes, which nest on the lake and are

impacted, are not on the endangered list and are not protected. Commissioner Kostka noted that Duck Island, located in Green Lake, is a protected wildlife area and Deputy Superintendent Williams agreed that it is. [In 1956 the State Wildlife Commission renamed the island "Waldo J. Dahl Game Reserve (aka Duck Island)" and it is off limits to humans.]

Commissioner Ramels asked if there are other boating uses on Green Lake and Ms. Hoff answered that there are non-motorized uses.

Commissioners next asked several questions for staff to provide answers by the September 25 public hearing:

Commissioner Adams: what is the worst that could happen if the two days of motorized boat use continues?

Commissioner Ramels: how did the Lake Sammamish Waterski Club receive this special dispensation?

Commissioner Kostka: how many of the participants live in Seattle?

Responding to a question from Commissioner Kostka about how much income is received, Ms. Hoff answered that Seattle Parks is paid \$240 for each day of use. Commissioner Ranade asked if this covers the costs and Ms. Hoff answered that it does, as no Seattle Parks staff assist with the event.

Commissioner Ranade referred to the Club's request that the Board delay its public hearing and discussion and recommendation. He will discuss this with the Superintendent and the Club will be advised of the decision. Ms. Edwards-Beuton added that the Club can only provide information to the Board if it is allowed to work with Parks staff.

The Board will hold a public hearing on the policy at its September 25 meeting, followed by a discussion and recommendation to the Superintendent at its October 9 meeting. The Board thanked Ms. Hoff for the briefing.

Old/New Business

Pro Parks Levy Fund Balance: Commissioner Ramels asked for a brief report from the Superintendent on the amount of funds remaining in the Pro Parks Levy Fund and how those funds will be used.

Jimi Hendrix/Colman Park: Commissioners asked about recent correspondence to the Board from the Jimi Hendrix Foundation regarding Colman Park. The Board's coordinator will forward the correspondence to the Deputy Superintendent, who noted that Seattle Parks currently has an agreement with the African-American Museum, which is located at Colman Park.

Flo Ware Outdoor Concert: Commissioner Barber announced that Flo Ware Park, where he is a frequent volunteer, will have its final 2008 outdoor concert on Saturday, September 27, noon-5:00 pm.

Brown Bag with Councilmember Rasmussen: Commissioners are scheduled to meet with Councilmember Rasmussen, Chair of the Seattle Parks and Seattle Center Committee, on September 12, 11:30-1:00 pm. Deputy Superintendent Williams will also be at the meeting. There are two agenda items that Commissioners requested for discussion: the Board's role in reviewing Seattle Parks' contracts and the pool feasibility study.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Amit Ranade, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____