

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
May 25, 2017

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Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Andréa Akita
Tom Byers, Chair
Marlon Herrera
Evan Hundley
William Lowe, Vice Chair
Kelly McCaffrey

Excused:

Marty Bluewater
Dennis Cook
Barbara Wright

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent
Paula Hoff, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at the Woodland Park Zoo, Center for Wildlife Conservation. Commissioner Byers calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Commissioner Byers calls for approval of the March 9 meeting minutes and the Agenda; the commissioners approve the consent items.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

Tim Motzer – In regards to Park District Funding – the restrictions prevent the Board from completing their judiciary responsibility of renovating and replacing community centers. The plans say the costs exceed the funds in the Park District budget, so the funding for community centers scheduled for replacement was reduced. Tim would like SPR to look at increased funds from the Citywide growth that should be available for spending.

Joyce Moty – Colman Park Vista – presented photos to commissioners. Neighbors are trying to restore viewpoint. The Big Leaf Maples make for an unhealthy mature forest.

We can either replace them today, or later. The community wants to restore the slope and get some views.

Jeannine Hunter – Mt. Baker – Colman Park Vista Viewpoint Project – Olmsted vision wanted the view to be maintained. This is not for our views, the community had SPR support and then stopped the process to have further discussions. She has been helping with the native restoration of the park and the project has support of all of the Coleman Park restoration group. Why would they support if it threatened restoration?

Alise Erickson – Mt. Baker – used to walk along the boulevard and look at the beautiful view of the cascades and Mercer Island. SPR allowed this park to be overgrown and volunteers have stepped in to help. The view is now blocked and it makes them sad to see what has happened to the viewpoint on 31st. Every person should be able to enjoy the view. Site coordinator for the p-patch says the trees cause it to be an unsafe place to garden.

Margy Bresslour – Thought this was going to be a collaboration with SPR. The community would like to work with them and figure out concerns together. They would have liked to see the consultant scope of work. Geotech and arborist were hired to evaluate slope and vegetation and said the trees on the slope were unhealthy. They were going to restore the slope, and SPR is offering only two narrow framed views.

Evan Wright – Colman Park Vista – The narrative that this is for views is not true. Hundreds of individuals and organizations all support this project. Parks did the clear cutting over decades and then neglected it.

Eve McClure – Colman Park Vista – In 1986 she was involved in taking the park back from gang activity. They did the restoration to make it a better place. The community goals are being misinterpreted by SPR. Would like to see SPR reopen communication that they closed with us last August. Duplication of the two grants they had and then duplicated their work. It makes no sense to us.

Mary Ann Ward – Sail Sandpoint – Had over 2,000 kids come through our program. Scholarship recipients went to a large number of these kids. They are working out of a 1932 boathouse. Sail Sandpoint took out a loan to abate the lead paint. Please add the boathouse to the inventory list for restoration.

Nanette Martin - Colman Park Project – We chose a home near a park but we discovered the lack of restoration led to an unsafe and uninhabitable area. It does not create an environment that we would like our child to go and play.

In reference to the Park District spending, Deputy Superintendent Williams states that the Park District plan was rigid so that SPR could be overly conservative with the first 6 years of spending. That meant that there was not a lot of flexibility from what was in

the agreement. They are developing a plan to assess the plan for recreation facilities based on the demand study. Lake City will be included as one the 6 centers in need of a lot of funding.

Colman Park viewpoint – SPR wants to find middle ground and meet the community halfway. There is no pretext to block or stop this project. SPR may need to look at modifying the current Vegetation Management Plan. Look at how make changes that are mutually acceptable and work within the statutory requirements. SPR is a few months out before bringing this back to the Board for a briefing and recommendation. SPR consultant report will be made available to the public by June 5th. Park Board would like a copy of the report as well.

Superintendent's Report

Letters from Denny Blaine Park – complaints about public nudity, litter and garbage, drinking, etc. and the impacts on the neighborhood. Community was outraged about behaviors and it has a big impact on the local neighbors. SPR did an emergency hours change to limit the hours and assign staff to the park a few days a week to deal with illegal and nuisance behavior in the park. SPR has a site meeting the week of June 5th.

SPR hired a healthy environment and sustainability consultant – Todd Burley – he will take the lead in driving our environmental initiative.

Bicycle Sunday - On Sunday, May 21 we kicked off our Bicycle Sundays series. On select Sundays from May through September, a portion of Lake Washington Boulevard will be closed to motorized vehicles from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. We invite everyone in the community to bike, jog or stroll along the boulevard between the Seward Park entrance and Mount Baker Park's beach during these times.

Summer Aquatics – Summer is nearly here and our Aquatics programs will be ready to serve the public.

- Mounger Pool opened on time on May 13
- Colman Pool will open on May 27
- Beaches – two sites scheduled to open on May 27; other locations open on June 24 through late August or early Sept.
- Spray Parks – Open on May 27 through Sept. 4
- Wading Pools – Open on June 24 through late August or early Sept.

Lake Washington beaches closure for Milfoil treatments - Lake Washington beaches closed May 31 – June 2 for Milfoil treatments. With permitting from Washington State Dept. of Ecology, SPR will be using aquatic herbicides to systemically control aquatic weeds. The goal is to improve water quality by managing the invasive milfoil at Seattle's freshwater beaches, swim areas, moorages, and high-use recreation sites. The first treatment is scheduled to happen Wednesday, May 31. All Lake Washington beaches will be closed May 31 through June 2.

Junior rowers advance to Nationals - SPR Junior Rowers Advance to Nationals! After months of hard work and three days of intense competition at the U.S. Rowing NW Youth Championships, Green Lake and Mount Baker Junior Rowers qualified for U.S. Rowing Nationals in multiple events. Nationals will be in Florida in early June. The team success has been a focus of group fund-raising for the past several months. The cost of the trip has been reduced to \$195 per athlete and advisory council scholarships are available to those who may need more assistance.

SPS Bell Times - SPS will be changing bell times for the 2017-2018 school year. Considering this, we reached out to SPS to confirm if any changes are necessary to our swim times and athletic field use schedules. SPS did not respond to us about their needs, and we are currently moving forward with the same swim and athletic field use schedule as last year.

Ft. Lawton Environmental Impact Statement – SPR is working with Office of Housing to develop a plan for reuse of Ft. Lawton. We have to go through this process, however you must identify all the potential uses of the land. Athletic Fields appear in the EIS, because that could be a use. We have not had any internal discussions about that particular use, but we have to include them all in the study.

Presentation: Woodland Park Zoo Report

Presented by Alejandro Grajal, Executive Director, Woodland Park Zoo

This is a world class destination that manages complex conservation projects in over 22 countries and provides educational opportunities for children all over the world.

Presentation on WPZ highlights.

Park District funding highlights:

- Capital assets and guest experiences
- Enhancing animal exhibits
- Increasing safety for guests and staff
- Stewarding park facilities
- Performed a facility conditions assessment
- Allows us to strategize our budget

Briefing and Discussion: 2017 Parks and Open Space Plan

Presented by Susanne Rockwell, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Used to be known as the Development Plan and Gap Analysis. The intent of the plan is to compete for state grants with the Recreation and Conservation Office and leverage our funds for playfield improvements, acquisition and aquatics. The components of the plan are dictated by the state. Goals and policies, demographic information, recreational

trends, needs analysis, walkability analysis, target goals for facilities, long-term acquisition strategy and capital projects that will be prioritized over the next 6 years.

This plan allows us to augment the budget for things SPR hasn't quite been able to fund. This is a bridge fund, it allows SPR to move between a quantitative plan to a qualitative plan. SPR staff made changes to the walkability analysis in response to comments received from the Board in November, the Planning Commission, and community meetings. Staff heard loud and clear that residents want more socioeconomic statistics and created a map to reflect that data.

Staff looked at topography and transit. Over 94% of our housing is within a 10-minute walk to a park. 77% of housing units are within a 5-minute walk. SPR is focusing on gap areas for the acquisition strategy. They are no longer pursuing acquisition of property in the downtown core; it is too cost prohibitive. SPR will look at partnering in spaces to provide recreation. SPR will need to acquire at least 40 acres of land to reach our long-term acquisition goals, which could be anything from a pocket park to greenspaces.

Susanne will return on June 8 for a public hearing and will come before the Board on June 22 for a discussion and vote.

Commissioner Lowe asks if SPR has a plan for maintaining the new acquisitions. Susanne responds that some of the development projects are for land-banked sites that SPR already owns. It is a combined system as we move forward. Do not want the open spaces to become a stop gap for temporary and long-term camping. This ties in with all of our other plans and links them together on the same platform.

Commissioner Akita appreciates all of the work that went into this. She asks how the department can front load acquisition funding while it is still affordable. Is there a way to use development rights? Through the Park District funding, SPR has an acquisition budget of \$2 million each year. SPR want to try to leverage that with Conservation Futures Tax and other programs the mitigate the impacts of development. They still need more creativity and innovation to leverage the funds and create more buying capacity.

The board members support banking land while it is affordable to do so. Commissioner Lowe would like to see more of an emphasis on balancing maintenance.

Commissioner Herrera would like the department to explore more opportunities to have Transfer Develop Rights and Impact Fees to have developers pay more in the public realm.

Commissioner Byers would like Council to realize the value that is there in the Park District Funding and encourage them to address this issue. The Board may need to weigh in on this issue and encourage Councilmembers to address this need.

Commissioner Byers wants to hear SPR is involved and has a voice in the work that Department of Construction and Inspection (SDCI) is doing to ensure there is open space in development plans. Deputy Superintendent Williams indicates that SPR is on a committee that is looking at this issue and various departments in the City are working together to look at big civic projects to green the city more than it is.

Commissioner Byers would like an assessment of the department on the Park District Funding issue. SPR can invite Ben Noble to a meeting to discuss this and strategize.

Discussion: Role of the Board/Strategic Issues

Facilitated by Tom Byers

Commissioner Lowe notices that the Board seems to be in agreement on the three items. Commissioner Byers put together an emerging themes one-pager for discussion.

Commissioner Lowe would like us to move this up on the agenda at the next meeting after the Superintendent's Report. Commissioner Herrera proposes looking for small actions the Board can take immediately to move some of these forward. Another layer may be quick wins and immediate actions.

Homework is to weave into the matrix Commissioner Lowe's and Commissioner Bluewater's contributions. See if this expressing of the emerging themes is reflective of what we stated. What are two or three specific actions the Board could take within a one-year timeline to move forward in this thinking. The Park Board likes the way the meetings are flowing where SPR can address the comments at the same meeting they hear them. It helps make sure constituents know that they are heard.

Old/New Business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:35pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Tom Byers, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners