

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2014

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

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<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Barbara Wright
Brice Maryman
Tom Tierney, Chair
Yazmin Mehdi, Vice Chair
Lydia Albert

Excused:

Antoinette Angulo
Diana Kincaid

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Tierney called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Commissioner Maryman moves to approve the consent items, Commissioner Wright seconds and the consent items are approved. Commissioner Tierney reviews the Agenda and reminds the room that the oral requests portion of the meeting is only for items that have not been heard during a public hearing.

To hear and view the full meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=6517>

Oral Communication from the Audience

Toni Imfeld, steward of the Magnolia Manor Off-Leash Area (OLA) expresses her concern with the Magnolia Manor Opportunity Fund design. The proposed design decreases the footprint of the OLA. She shares with the Park Board that when the park was originally designed; Parks staff had told them they could not afford to have a dog park of the size requested so the community agreed to raise the money. The community raised the money for the current footprint. Parks agreed to give them the extra space. The opportunity fund is cutting that down. Toni feels their needs to be more public process.

Superintendent's Report

Green Seattle Day – 700 volunteers at 120 park locations across the city and over 30,000 plants planted. There was a great turnout and a wonderful example of community engagement.

Cascade Bicycle Club – There will be a celebration to welcome Cascade Bicycle Club to their new offices at Magnuson Park in Building 11 on Saturday, November 15 from 10-12pm.

Magnuson Park Radiological Clean-up –The Navy, Department of Ecology, and the Department of Health have been great partners in the Magnuson Park Radiological Clean-up. The Navy is responsible for environmental remediation – they are taking appropriate steps to clean up the park. However, to go the extra mile, Seattle Parks and Recreation will pay a consultant with a Geiger to perform a site survey and check for radiation. Parks staff are currently develop a scope of work. Because of construction and the wetlands development, soils have been removed and turned over. This radiological testing will cost \$50-90,000. The work will start in January 2015.

Commissioner Maryman asks whether Parks will perform testing prior to any future capital projects at Magnuson? Acting Superintendent Williams replies that it will depend on how this first testing goes.

Cheasty PAT – Both sides have come together for discussion and the temperature is coming down. Council approved a perimeter loop trail; but the PAT express concerns about humans and bikes sharing the same trail. The next meeting will be on November 20 – the focus of the conversation will be design; 30-40 people show up at these meetings. The December 11 meeting may be delayed until after the environmental study is done in January. There will be at least 2 meetings after that followed by returning to the City Council with a plan.

Planning Commission – Parks would like the Board of Park Commissioners to work more closely with the Planning Commission on the Park portion of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Parks staff will brief the Park Board at the December meeting of the Park Board. Acting Superintendent distributes a letter inviting the Planning Commission to attend the January 22 Park Board meeting for a briefing and discussion about the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Seattle Management Association – These awards recognize the stellar work that city employees do. This year Seattle Parks and Recreation had 4 employees receive awards and 3 received honorable mentions. Chukundi Salisbury won for his work developing the Green Seattle Partnership that connects youth with ecological restoration work. Jodi Sinclair – recognized for environmental stewardship – she is the toxics coordinator and has been working closely with the Navy, Department of Health and Department of Ecology at Magnuson; Dan Johnson was recognized in his role as Director of Parks as Public Servant of the year – Dan is a beacon of encouragement and hope for his employees. Susan Golub received the award for Leadership; she is highly respected by her peers and she produces a lot of work in a short period.

Honorable mentions went to: Victoria Schoenberg for her work managing downtown parks, Patti Petesch – in her role with the victim support team for Seattle Police Department, and Kathleen O'Connor – who works in the Planning and Development division. They make a difference in the lives of people who work here every day.

Commissioner Tierney congratulates the staff for all their hard work.

Denny Awards – This award recognizes and formalizes gratitude to Seattle Parks and Recreation volunteers. The Denny Awards have been happening since 2003.

The winners this year are:

- Rich Appleton for his work at Nora Woods;

- Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing Center Advisory Council for their work, they completed the largest neighborhood matching project to construct the beautiful second floor of the Rowing and Sailing Center;
- Homeless Place of Remembrance – They have a lot of courage there and they have a graceful level of activism; raising awareness of plight of homelessness;
- Clarke Gray – Vendor/operator from Green Lake Rowing and Sailing Center- operates the rowing and sailing center but goes over and beyond his job;
- Samuel Bradley, a teen, who contributes his own time to the Special Populations program and has been doing that for a number of years;
- Superintendent Ken Bounds for his leadership on the Prop 1 campaign;
- Special recognition to Jen Sonnichsen Parker and Klindt Parker
- Park Legacy Committee

Transition to a new Superintendent – Parks staff are figuring out how to bring the new Superintendent on board – partnership luncheon, park tours; there is a lot of internal planning happening. Acting Superintendent Williams spoke with the Seattle Parks Foundation about their involvement. The new Superintendent is not expected to start until January. Acting Superintendent Williams requests the Park Board think about how they would like the new Superintendent to connect with the Park Board while keeping it transparent and open to the public.

Play equipment at children’s garden – There are rules regarding how we manage risk and new equipment in a park – 1) the play equipment needs to be approved by a certified landscape architect 2) physical changes to a park is done in consultation with a park design professional. SPR does not want to create risks/liability issues. A landscape architect determined the swing did not meet standards. The message that did not get conveyed to the community was the myriad of alternative designs SPR provided. SPR loves the playground and the population so they will make it right.

Housing Grant received at Sand Point – there is a plan to reuse Building 25 for affordable/market rate housing; a \$9million grant from a state agency to renovate it.

Tom congratulates staff for all the hard work they do.

Discussion and Vote on Magnolia Manor Off-Leash Area

Presented by Leah Tivoli and Rick Nishi, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Rick Nishi, reviewed the design options for the opportunity fund at Magnolia Manor Park. Magnolia Manor first received funding through the Parks and Greenspaces Levy in 2012; this funding created the off-leash area and the p-patch. The 2nd round through the Parks and Greenspaces levy has \$8million for 2012-2013 that will go towards 12 – 14 projects. These projects went through the levy oversight process so it was very transparent in terms of criteria. Susan Casey and Friends of Magnolia Manor Park have been very involved during the process.

Four elements were identified – ADA and upgrades to the p-patch; pathway connecting the OLA to the P-Patch; and the flat and level landscape in the north side. Parks staff went through a public involvement process; performed site analysis and information gathering with public; and shared the conceptual drawings with the public. The 3rd meeting was held on November 5th at which time Parks

staff offered refined conceptual drawings. Mr. Nishi notes that over 50% of input received at that meeting was about the OLA and the impact to the neighborhood.

The OLA was presented to the Park Board on October 23. The new design calls for improvements to the p-patch; greater views and furniture; and moving the fences to allow for more room in the park. The design reduces the OLA enough to help the overall circulation to the park; allows for better entrance to the park and connects walkways to other parts of the park. The new design also creates more of a flat space on the north side for open space use. They will be adding landscaping to the North side to create additional buffering for the residences.

When staff sat down to talk about the proposed design changes; one sentiment expressed repeatedly by the neighbors was that the park felt it had only one use; taking parts of fence down allows more utilization of the park and the entrance is not as overwhelmed by the dog park. Commissioner Wright feels the sidewalk on the north side should be closer to the fence to allow for more usable space. She feels the OLA overwhelms the space.

Commissioner Wright and Commissioner Maryman really like the proposed design improvements for the park. Commissioner Wright wonders if perhaps the vote should be postponed until after the Opportunity fund process is over. Rick Nishi states that the next public meeting has not been scheduled for the Opportunity Fund.

Leah Tivoli, Sustainable Operations Manager at Seattle Parks and Recreation, says she has been working closely with Planning and Development regarding this project. The process has been very thoughtful to maintain the goals of the Opportunity Fund while also dealing with some of the issues expressed during the OLA pilot process. Through feedback in both processes, they heard the need to: open up the park to other uses; plant buffer to be less loud; talked about changing location of entrances to the OLA to make it better for non-dog users; Put a shelter in the OLA for people in the rain. They are trying to bring different interests together into one park.

The OLA stewards are working to discourage demand barking – provide better signage; a very accessible OLA means it is closer to road and residences, the Stewards will work on signage that tries to generate more empathy; encouraging “vocal” dogs’ owners to find OLAs that are more secluded.

Acting Superintendent Williams mentions the possibility of creating a site agreement with OLA stewards; develop a contractual agreement that creates a neighborly feeling between the people. He cites Woodland Park OLA agreement in which the stewards were obligated to water the park to address a dust issue. Parks could sit down with a site steward to be responsive to the site.

Commissioner Albert wonders if the hours of the OLA be negotiated. Leah says there are 2 sets of hours; 4-11 or 6-10. Commissioner Albert feels having more and better signage about park expectations that comes from the OLA community that says, “there is a community who lives here and everyone needs to get along.”

Commissioner Wright thinks OLAs are fabulous and clearly needed and she knows that area is not served. She does not support the OLA being a negative for the neighbors, or overwhelming the park. She makes a proposal to change the hours and to have better signage, and create an agreement with the stewards. She feels the pathway on the North side of the park dissects the usable space.

Commissioner Maryman makes a Motion to approve the OLA at Magnolia Manor with the condition that there will be a site agreement between site stewards and SPR; site hours are changed to reflect the communities wishes; signage plan to address issues such as park hours, noise and community expectations.

Commissioner Mehdi adds a friendly amendment to consider hours that work for the neighborhood; work with the community to figure out those hours and create dialogue. The motion is approved unanimously.

Parks Classification Policy

Presented by Susanne Rockwell, Strategic Advisor

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

Recommend to the Superintendent adoption of the updated Park Classification System Policy.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the updated Park Classification System Policy (Policy 060 P5.11.1), to better align with the Parks Legacy Plan, use definitions and inclusion of property acquired since the Policy was adopted in 2009.

Proposed classification categories to replace the existing system are as follows:

Existing Categories

1. Triangles/Circles/Square
2. Pocket Park
3. Neighborhood Park
4. Community Park
5. Downtown Park
6. Recreation Area
7. Natural Area/Greenbelt
8. Boulevards/Green Streets/Trails
9. Special Use Park

Proposed Categories

1. Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
2. Neighborhood Parks
3. Community Parks
4. Downtown Parks
5. Regional Parks
6. Special-Use Parks/Specialty Gardens
7. Greenbelts/Natural Areas
8. Boulevards/Green Streets/Greenways

Policy Description and Background (please see attached spreadsheet and redlined policy for more detail)

The purpose of the Park Classification System Policy is to establish a method for classifying the parks in Seattle Parks and Recreation. The categories are driven by park use, purpose, general size, attributes, natural assets, and physical environment. The system provides a general guideline for development options through the desired and optional assets and programmatic opportunities associated with each category.

During the development of the Parks Legacy Plan, Parks determined that some of the parks classifications did not work well for planning and analysis purposes. The categories and parks assigned to them were modified during the plan's development but the Parks Classification Policy was not updated. The proposed changes reflect the consolidation or

expansion of certain categories with the park properties as appropriate. Additionally, the park classification categories are also used for reporting purposes in other City policy documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan and in reports generated by the Trust for Public Land.

Key Policy Issues: WHATS NEW/DIFFERENT/CHANGED (please refer to the attached spreadsheet for specific details)

1. The 'Triangles/Circles/Squares' and 'Pocket Park' categories have been consolidated into the new category of 'Mini Parks/Pocket Parks' to reduce the number of categories.
2. Key elements of the Recreation area classification can be found in 'Neighborhood Parks', 'Community Parks' and 'Regional Parks' categories; as a result 'Recreation Area' as a distinct category has been eliminated in the proposed policy and recreation elements have been added into the optional assets section for the Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks categories.
3. The creation of a new 'Regional Parks' category captures some of Parks' largest landholdings, often serving broader citywide recreation needs. Many of these parks have historic or landmarked significance and/or large natural areas of undeveloped land. These parks tend to be destinations, often generate tourism, and have views or water access. Examples include: Gas Works Park, Discovery Park, Warren G. Magnuson Park, Lincoln Park and Green Lake Park. Parks with the attributes described above were reclassified from 'Community Park', 'Downtown Park', 'Natural Area', 'Recreation Area', and 'Special Use' categories.
4. The properties listed in the City's 1993 Greenspaces Policy (Resolution 28653) remain in the 'Greenbelts/Natural Area' category, along with an additional 17 new properties. While the 'Greenbelts/Natural Area' definition has not changed from the 2009 Parks Classification Policy, 14 properties were reclassified from Greenbelts to other categories better align their uses and attributes:
 1. 3001 E Madison - Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
 2. Bellevue Place – Boulevards/Green Streets/Greenways
 3. Camp Long - Special-Use Parks/Specialty Gardens
 4. Carkeek Park - Community Parks
 5. Crown Hill Glen - Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
 6. Discovery Park - Regional Parks
 7. Golden Gardens Park - Regional Parks
 8. Hamilton Viewpoint Park - Neighborhood Parks
 9. Madrona Park - Community Parks
 10. Seward Park - Regional Parks
 11. Sunset Place - Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
 12. Taejon Park – Neighborhood Parks
 13. Washington Park and Arboretum - Special-Use Parks/Specialty Gardens
 14. Westcrest Park - Community Parks
5. 'Special-Use Parks' category has been expanded to include 'Specialty Gardens'. This category refers generally to stand-alone parks that are designed to serve one particular use. Examples include: Camp Long, Woodland Park Zoo, West Seattle Stadium, and Kubota Gardens.

Public involvement process

As the proposed changes are not extensive and the use of this policy is primarily for planning and administrative purposes we have not planned an extensive public involvement process. We will provide a four-week comment period and a public hearing before the Board of Park Commissioners makes its recommendation.

The tentative schedule is as follows:

- November 13 – Park Board briefing
- December 9 - Deadline for written comments
- December 11 - Park Board public hearing, discussion and possible vote
- Mid-December - Parks Superintendent makes decision on proposed policy changes

Additional Information

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Attachments

Park Classification Policy showing proposed changes (Policy 060-P 5.11.1)
 Spreadsheet showing park classifications

Website

http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/policy/parks_classification_policy.pdf

Discussion

Parks Legacy Plan brought to our attention that Parks are not classified in terms of best fit for use and assets and demand for space. Key policy issues: streamline categories – increase consistency with use. Recreation category was removed because it’s a capital asset and we find them in neighborhood parks, regional parks, etc. so Parks repopulated them through other categories. Regional parks are managed in a different way. The definition of a natural area has not changed. 14 parks moved out of greenspace and natural areas into other classifications.

Next steps, talk about it and field questions. December 11 Board of Park Commissioners meeting, there will be a public hearing; Parks will be taking public comments until 2 days before the Park Board meeting.

Acting Superintendent Williams says there are 2 changes that may catch people’s attention: regional park category and the parks that are being moved out of the Greenbelts/Natural Areas categories.

Commissioner Maryman agrees the natural areas reclassification would make some people nervous. Acting Superintendent Williams responds that the definition was not changed in the policy.

Commissioner Mehdi voices concerns about the regional parks because people do like to consider them neighborhood parks. Susanne clarifies the classification system is used as a management tool; helps to develop best management practices – level and intensity of maintenance and attention. As SPR moves into a performance management system, they are thinking strategically about how employees spend their time; a mechanism by which Parks can be consistent. For example, staff would measure maintenance on Lincoln Park differently than a natural area.

Commissioner Maryman wonders if the new classification system is linked to the City’s Comprehensive Plan; Parks in higher density areas, regardless of size will get more use and require more maintenance.

Expanded special use park to include specialty gardens. Susanne cites the Washington Park Arboretum which has a regional draw and a special use component. It is managed much differently

and the struggle sometimes is getting parks to fit into categories. Commissioner Edmiston suggests using tags instead of dividing parks by classification and operations. Commissioner Mehdi states the policy is more of a management tool and that putting parks into categories may give the category more weight than intended; putting labels on Parks may be a hot button for some people.

Commissioner Tierney sums it up by saying there are many approaches to this. The park board is being asked to make a recommendation regarding the policy.

Old/New Business

Acting Superintendent Williams gives the Park Board a budget update– There have been a couple of issues that resulted in green sheets – when Councilmembers feel strongly about an issue they give these.

A Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) to refine acquisition strategy as it relates to city surplus property.

Alum treatment at Green Lake – SPR has \$1.5 million in 2016; we have \$300,000 for next year – studies need to be done to figure out how much is needed and there are 6-12 months of planning with marine ecologists. Even if we had the funding, there is a process. Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) funding will be provided until there is a plan for Green Lake.

Burke Gilman – Cliff Mass wrote a blog regarding root heaves in the Burke Gilman trails. These areas require repair. SDOT, King County, UW and Parks own bits of the Burke Gilman. This would require several million dollars. What can be reallocated to study the needs for the Burke Gilman? There is \$2 million available in CIP. Acting Superintendent Williams thinks Parks will get a SLI on what they will do for the Burke-Gilman trail. Needs are constantly going to be re-prioritizing the CIP.

Budget will be done by Nov 20.

Partnership Committee Work Plan – Commissioner Wright hands out draft work plan.

Draft work plan talks about the goal: focuses on the incredible partners we already have and creating new partnerships.

The Partnership Committee will review SPR's Partnership Policy and bring back their feedback regarding how they feel parks partnership policy could be amended. There was a report last year where partners were interviewed and the committee feels that feedback has been incorporated.

Quarterly meetings with all major partners – look at having a meeting in mid-February with the new Superintendent and major partners – will work to figure out with partners what those agendas should be. The collaboration will start with Associated Recreation Council and Seattle Parks Foundation. Hoping to reach shared vision of how those relationships could be strengthened.

New partnerships – help us realize Parks Legacy Plan; partnerships based on technical expertise in other areas to provide volunteer support to make the department more successful.

Acting Superintendent Williams found Partnership Committee very useful when Parks met with the YMCA for partnership discussion; helpful to have Commissioners speaking on Parks' behalf in some of these meetings.

Letter to the Planning Commission: The present park board members agree to sign the letter to invite the planning commission

Mayor's emergency taskforce on Unsheltered homelessness– Commissioner Albert completed first meeting with them; she wasn't the only voice for. Dan Johnson interested in looking into what opportunities need to be considered; are there community centers that can be utilized? People sleep in parks every night and she wonders what Parks can do to better support people going through this period of their life. Many people on the taskforce were eager to see how Parks could help. What role can Parks feasibly take? Commissioner Albert suggests a briefing on what Parks is capable of doing. What else could/would Parks be willing to take on? Does the department participate in one night count? Commissioner Tierney thanks her for representing the board on this taskforce.

Commissioner Mehdi moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Maryman seconds and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:30 p.m.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____

Tom Tierney, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners