

Minutes
2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee
August 24, 2009

Committee Members Present: Doug Dunham, Chair, Bruce Bentley, Bill Brosseau, Dennis Canty, Don Harper, Shanon Kearney, Cheryl Klinker, Joyce Moty, Beth Purcell, Pete Spalding

Staff: Jerry Asp, Susan Golub, Chip Nevins, Rick Nishi, Terry Roche, Michael Shiosaki, Kevin Stoops

Committee Business The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes, as amended, from the July 27, 2009 meeting.

Public Comments

Stacey Gianas: Ms. Gianas lives in the University District and is trying to start a community garden. Her group has a three year lease on property which they hope will be bought for open space and garden use. The property is located at 5520 University Way NE.

Martin Powers: Mr. Powers is a Wallingford resident trying to get new playground equipment at Gas Works Park. He is interested in moving the Gas Works Park project up sooner in the Levy schedule. Michael Shiosaki noted that the project is a couple of years from staging.

Pro Parks Levy Balances

Kevin Stoops reported that most Pro Parks Levy projects have been completed, with some still on-going. Interest earnings for the Levy have exceeded expectations: there is \$5.221 million in excess interest savings. Part of this amount is committed to two allocations:

- \$996,000 is designated for the contracting cost allocation; and
- \$3,035,000 has previously been allocated to the Ballard (9th & 70th), Crown Hill, Denny Triangle, International District and University District acquisitions.

Contracting cost allocation is a required fee Parks pays to the Department of Executive Administration for the review of plans and oversight of the bidding process and contracts. The interest account balance, minus the two commitments, is \$1,220,000.

One challenge facing the Department is the funding for the Delridge skatepark. Parks and Recreation is recommending using \$500,000 from Pro Parks Levy interest earnings to fund the Delridge Skateboard Park. Previously the Oversight Committee recommended moving \$250,000 in Levy funding from the Myrtle skatepark to Delridge. The remainder of the funding for Delridge was to come from savings from other projects funded by the Cumulative Reserve Subfund (CRS), the City's capital budget fund. This funding plan was recommended by the Skateboard Park Advisory Committee, as well as the Oversight Committee. However, Real Estate Excise Tax (REIT) collections have been significantly lower than expected, and REIT is the source of the CRS. The Department of Finance is collecting *all* project savings to cover previously committed capital and maintenance obligations; therefore, Parks cannot use the CRS for the Delridge skatepark.

Pete Spalding asked whether there were impediments to using the Pro Parks money because the Delridge skatepark is not a Pro Parks Levy project, and also questioned whether City Council action was needed. Mr. Stoops responded that the \$1.2 million is in the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund category, so it can be used for any new project or an existing Opportunity Fund project. Within the category of existing Opportunity Fund projects, the West Seattle Junction project is the only remaining unfinished project. The allocation of the Pro Parks funds to Delridge will require approval by the City Council.

Bruce Bentley asked whether \$500,000 was enough funding for the project. Mr. Stoops responded that the total project budget is \$750,000, with \$250,000 coming from transferring 2008 Levy funds from the Myrtle skatepark to Delridge, and the remaining \$500,000 of the budget coming from Pro Parks interest earnings. Originally Parks included the total \$750,000 in the 2009 budget, but the funding was cut by the City Council in response to the economic downturn.

Cheryl Klinker asked about other sites that previously have been mentioned by staff as being in need of additional funding, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Brighton Science Park, and Meadowbrook Playfield. Did we satisfy citizen demands at these parks? Mr. Stoops responded that Pro Parks Opportunity Fund money cannot be used for projects named in the Pro Parks Levy that have been completed. It could only be used on a discrete second phase of a project that would be considered a separate Opportunity Fund project.

Don Harper noted that a few years ago Parks moved \$900,000 to construct the fifth playfield at Magnuson Park. Why was this funding not used for a field at Meadowbrook? Mr. Stoops responded that Levy categories have ceilings. When the funding was allocated to the Magnuson field it was within the spending ceiling of the Levy project, and the fifth field was specifically described in the Levy. The Meadowbrook field would have been a new Opportunity Fund project.

Joyce Moty stated she served on the Citywide Skatepark Plan Task Force. She wants to speak in favor of skaters and the Delridge skatepark. Kids need a place to skate and there needs to be better equity for skaters, as we have plentiful basketball courts and ballfields. Skaters tend to be individuals, not team sport athletes.

Pete Spalding noted he attended the Delridge skatepark community meetings and the community is very supportive. The neighbors on surrounding streets are very supportive and are working on selecting an artist to create a project that will be compatible with the skatepark.

Don Harper stated he fought for a skatepark at the Seattle Center and was very angry with the City for not supporting skaters after eliminating the old Center skatepark. His concern is that staff is presenting only one option. What other opportunities are out there; for example, an additional field at Meadowbrook? The Oversight Committee should have other options to compare Delridge skatepark to.

Mr. Shiosaki responded that the Pro Parks Levy description of the scope of the Meadowbrook project did not name three fields. The scope was to improve the fields. The project was built to the budget defined in the Levy. In contrast, the Magnuson scope was described in the Levy as “Improve five fields.”

Responding to a question from Beth Purcell, Mr. Stoops stated the \$966,000 contracting cost allocation is for projects built between 2005 and 2010, and that all project budgets include a CCA amount.

Ms. Purcell noted that the Junction Plaza is a Pro Parks Levy project that is in need of additional funds, as significant money was spent before the design was completed. Ms. Purcell is on the Board of the Seattle Parks Foundation which has supported the Junction Plaza project. Mr. Stoops responded that money was spent on property clean-up and schematic design. There was a lot of pressure from the community to clean up the site. Also, the original citizens group working on the project ran out of steam, so extra fundraising didn’t happen.

Doug Dunham stated the Committee already recommended spending \$250,000 on the Delridge skatepark (from the Myrtle project), so shouldn’t the Committee go all the way and finish the project and not leave the \$250,000 hanging out there?

Mr. Harper suggested waiting until the first round of Opportunity Fund allocations from the new Levy.

Mr. Canty asked about the funding for Crown Hill and whether the \$1 million Crown Hill allocation adds to the interest earnings fund. Mr. Stoops responded that yes, Crown Hill is double funded – with allocations in both the 2000 Pro Parks Levy and 2008 Parks Levy. The project is being designed to the original Pro Parks budget, so the 2008 Levy money is available. There are also surplus funds in the greenspace category which would be transferred to the Opportunity Fund if it is not spend on greenspace projects.

Motion: Mr. Spalding moved the Committee recommend allocating \$500,000 from the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund to the Delridge Skatepark project.

Cheryl Klinker asked whether additional surplus funds could be allocated to the Junction Plaza project. Mr. Stoops responded yes; other Opportunity Fund projects are completed, so the Junction Plaza could be a candidate for additional funds. Another Opportunity Fund project that was in need was the Amy Yee Tennis Center; the community raised money to complete the scope of the project that could not be met within the Opportunity Fund allocation.

Ms. Purcell stated she agreed with Don Harper that the Committee needs more information on other projects – a comprehensive list of incomplete projects. Mr. Dunham stated there are two categories of projects: those completed but at a lower scope, and those totally completed.

Mr. Shiosaki noted that community fundraising was intended to be part of Opportunity Fund projects. Mr. Stoops noted that the Cumulative Reserve Subfund, which was originally intended to fund the Delridge skatepark, bailed out three Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund projects:

\$790,000 from the CRS was spent on Caesar Chavez Park, Mount Baker Ridge, and the Amy Yee Tennis Center.

Vote on the Motion: The motion to recommend allocating \$500,000 from the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund to the Delridge Skatepark project was approved: six in favor, two opposed, and two abstentions.

Acquisition Project Update

Chip Nevins reported that three acquisitions closed in July. One of the purchases is in the University District at University Heights School. Levy funds purchased the southeast half of the south parking lot. The rest of the property was bought by a non-profit community group that is using the school building. The site Parks and Recreation purchased is the site of the farmers' market and the park development will be compatible with the market. Funding to purchase the property came from the Levy, the City and State grants.

Two other purchases were greenspace properties that were in foreclosure. One is in the Mee Kwa Mooks Natural Area which continues protection of the hillside. Parks tried to purchase this property in the mid-1990's but could not reach agreement with the property owner. The purchase price was two-thirds of the price that this property sold for two years ago.

Another greenspace purchase was in the Duwamish Head Greenbelt near the West Seattle Bridge. Staff are negotiating with additional property owners in this area. In the greenspace category, staff has been able to move quickly because there is a blanket authority to buy within the designated green areas and staff know the priorities from past work.

In the Urban Parks category, appraisals are underway for properties in Lake City, Capitol Hill and First Hill. Mr. Nevins is meeting with community groups in all the urban villages to identify priority properties. Staff are finding that in the urban areas, despite the economic downturn, owners are asking for more than the value of the property, making it hard to negotiate a purchase price. Unlike the greenspace purchases, City Council authorization is needed for each acquisition. In addition, staff have flexibility to offer ten percent over the appraised value; beyond ten percent, City Council authorization is required.

Dennis Canty asked whether the City Council could help speed up the acquisition process and provide more flexibility by authorizing purchases in the urban villages, the same as purchases are authorized in greenspaces. Mr. Nevins said the difficulty and difference is that the urban villages don't have acquisition properties identified in advance.

Opportunity Fund Timeline

Kevin Stoops walked the Committee through a proposed timeline for the Levy Opportunity Fund (see Attachment A). The proposal is similar the Pro Parks Levy second round process and reflects comments made by the Oversight Committee at their June and July meetings. The initial proposal is intended to be one page; the full application would be about four pages.

Motion: Cheryl Klinker moved to approve the proposed Opportunity Fund Timeline (Attachment A).

Vote on the Motion: The motion was unanimously approved.

Opportunity Fund Criteria

The Committee discussed forming a subcommittee to work on Opportunity Fund criteria. The subcommittee will meet twice in September, before bringing a recommendation to the full Committee. An additional meeting will be held in October to formulate a final recommendation.

Michael Shiosaki handed out copies of the Opportunity Fund criteria that were used in the two Opportunity Fund rounds of the Pro Parks Levy. He noted that a difference with the new Levy is that Opportunity Funds *can* be spent on named Levy projects; in the Pro Parks Levy, funds were restricted to new projects. The Pro Parks Levy focused the Opportunity Fund on urban villages and neighborhood revitalization areas.

Doug Dunham asked whether timing would be a problem if the Committee wants to front-load (start quickly) the Opportunity Fund development projects, because so many other Levy projects were front-loaded. Mr. Stoops responded that projects would have to be staged, spread out over a period of time.

Don Harper asked what is considered a public review process, as referenced in the new Levy language. Mr. Shiosaki said that could be interpreted as a project that is part of a neighborhood plan or, if a new idea, there is public involvement and public support. Ms. Purcell said there was identified community support for each of the named projects included in the Levy.

Shanon Kearney asked whether the scoring system used in the earlier Opportunity Fund rounds was helpful for the Committee. Joyce Moty responded that it was.

Dennis Canty noted that the criteria reference the Gap Analysis and wondered if this was still relevant and available for the Committee to review. Mr. Shiosaki said the Gap Analysis was originally completed in 2000 and was updated in 2006. It is still very relevant for acquisitions and a presentation can be made at a future meeting.

Ms. Purcell asked about the timing of Mr. Nevins' outreach to community groups for acquisitions in urban villages. How will this outreach dovetail with Opportunity Fund timing? She noted it is important to reach all groups before the Opportunity Fund deadline.

Cheryl Klinker stated she likes the idea of having a specific amount designated for acquisition, as was done with the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund, and would like a higher, rather than lower, amount for acquisition in order to take advantage of the good market.

Mr. Spalding asked whether funds would be available from Levy collections for the Opportunity Fund, since so many development projects were front-loaded. Mr. Stoops responded that there is the ability to borrow money if necessary.

Mr. Harper expressed a concern about moving too fast and not getting good community input. Mr. Spalding responded that there are lots of projects that didn't get included in the Levy that wanted in – approximately 600. Proponents of these projects are ready – they are chomping at the bit.

Mr. Stoops and Mr. Shiosaki noted that public outreach for the Levy started in May with four public open houses. The next media information campaign will occur after the criteria are developed.

Committee Business

The next meeting of the Oversight Committee will be *Tuesday*, September 29.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Attachment A Opportunity Fund Timeline

Date/Timeframe	Action
July 2009	OC approval of timeline and approach
September 2009	Staff develops draft criteria in consort with OC subcommittee
October 2009	Criteria reviewed/refined by subcommittee and OC
November 2009	Public hearing on criteria held by OC (early Nov)
November 2009	Criteria adopted by OC at regular meeting
November 2009	Staff mail/e-mail criteria and announce workshops
January 2010	Staff conducts outreach, hold four workshops for potential proposers
February 2010	Project proposals due February 1, 2010
February 2010	OC reviews and approves staff screening of proposals
March 2010	Staff conducts outreach and provides technical assistance on proposals
April 2010	Project applications due April 2, 2010
April 2010	Staff reviews and follow-ups over intense 3 week period
April 2010	Staff forward initial listing/reviews to OC
May 2010	Project presentations by proponents at <u>two</u> OC meetings during May
June 2010	OC site tours of proposal sites (early June)
June 2010	OC agrees on initial prioritization of project proposals
July 2010	OC holds hearing on prioritization
August 2010	OC votes on final slate of recommendations
September 2010	Department forwards recommendations to Mayor and Council
December 2010	Council approval
January 2011	Project implementation: acquisition, design and construction to follow