

Minutes
Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee
March 26, 2007

Committee Members Present: Doug Dunham, Chair, Neal Adams, Gwen Colwell, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Jeff Hou, Cheryl Klinker, Joyce Moty, Alec Stephens

Staff: B.J. Brooks, Interim Superintendent; Susan Golub, Joelle Ligon, Michael Shiosaki
Environmental Programs Team: Royal Alley-Barnes, Becca Fong, Kathie Huus, Mark Mead, Patti Petesch, Robert Warner

Committee Business: The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes from the February 26, 2007 meeting, as amended.

The Committee unanimously elected Joyce Moty as the new Vice-chair of the Committee.

After accepting the position as Vice-chair, Ms. Moty raised the issue of Wallingford Park and the potential of a renovation project at the adjacent Hamilton Middle School having an impact on the Park. Ms. Moty expressed concern because part of Wallingford Park was improved with Pro Parks Levy funds, and if there were to be impacts from the renovation project, the District should be responsible for compensating the City and the Park. Ms. Moty requested a briefing on this issue at the next Oversight Committee meeting.

Superintendent Brooks responded that the aspect of the renovation project that would have an impact on the Park is the locating of heat tanks underground and construction staging while the renovation is underway. Staff is reviewing the project to assess impacts on Wallingford Park. Michael Shiosaki informed the Committee that the location where the renovation is occurring will have an impact on the Wallingford Playfield and that the Pro Parks project improved the children's play area that is in another part of the Park. Staff will provide the Committee with more information at the April 23 meeting.

Public Comments: **Lex Voorhoeve**, a member of the Carkeek Park Advisory Council spoke to the Committee about the possibility of transferring the Crown Hill School Levy project to Viewlands Elementary, if the Crown Hill project cannot proceed. Mr. Voorhoeve first thanked the Committee for the Pro Parks projects that have improved Carkeek. Regarding Viewlands, he stated that if the Levy project cannot be accomplished at Crown Hill Elementary (because of a School District decision to sell the property), Viewlands would be a good alternative. Viewlands is closing in June, but the District has decided to retain the property.

Mr. Voorhoeve stated that Viewlands is a good location for a Pro Parks project because it is adjacent to Carkeek Park and could provide scarce flat land for Carkeek. He noted that there has been a lot of new development in the area and cited the good synergy that

would occur with a park project at the school site. He asked what supporters of this proposal could do regarding the process of deciding where the Pro Parks project will be.

Doug Dunham responded that Parks is waiting to learn of the District's decision regarding Crown Hill School, and that the Committee should not be making any recommendations until after the District's announcement.

Translation Services: Alec Stephens praised Parks and gave kudos to staff regarding the public notice for a meeting regarding Pro Parks acquisition in the International District. The flyer was translated into seven languages, providing excellent service to the community. Joelle Ligon noted that Donald Harris and Catherine Anstett deserve the praise, as they were responsible for the translation effort.

Annual Newsletter: Joelle Ligon showed the Committee a mock-up of the Pro Parks Levy Annual Newsletter. The newsletter includes updates for projects completed in 2006 and articles on environmental stewardship, recreation programs, enhanced maintenance, land acquisition and the zoo. Parks partnership with the Seattle Parks Foundation is highlighted.

The newsletter will be published in late April and will be sent to the 12,600 name Levy mailing list, as well as distribution through community centers, pools and libraries. It will be available on the Parks web page. Ms. Ligon asked Committee members to get any comments/edits they may have to her by April 2.

Environmental Programming: Royal Alley-Barnes, Parks Resources Manager, began the briefing on the Pro Parks funded environmental programs by introducing the environmental team. A power point presentation accompanied the briefing, highlighting activities in five program areas:

- Environmental Stewardship;
- Naturalist Program;
- Tree Maintenance;
- Natural Area Crew; and
- Landscape and Athletic Fields.

Resource conservation is a goal of the Environmental Stewardship Unit. Accomplishments include a 21% reduction citywide in paper use, and the hiring of a Utility Conservation Manager to help Parks track and analyze utility costs, investments, and consumption patterns, with the goal of reducing usage and costs. Battery and electronics recycling programs are in place, and the Environmental Stewardship Unit developed nine Best Management Practices for more responsible management of landscapes and natural areas. The Environmental Learning Centers at Carkeek and Seward Parks focus on education and outreach with programs for children and families.

Doug Dunham asked Ms. Barnes about trees that died at the Ravenna Creek Daylighting project. Ms. Barnes responded that the project contractor is responsible for the trees for one year and has been notified that he has to remove and replace the failed trees.

Mark Mead, Parks Senior Urban Forester, talked about the Tree Maintenance Program and the Natural Area Crew. He noted that, before the Pro Parks Levy, tree stewardship was sorely limited and there was no stewardship of natural areas. It is estimated that Park trees provide over \$18 million in water quality, air cleaning, and aesthetic value to Seattle each year.

Tree Crew accomplishments with Levy funding include:

- Completing 4,597 Work Orders out of 4,863, a 48% increase;
- 3,900 trees pruned, 1,500 trees removed and 320 stumps ground;
- Inspection and pruning of **all** trees in 65 Parks (never done before); and
- Levy Tree Crew played significant role in storm response.

Natural Area Crew accomplishments include:

- Completing 390 of 425 Work Orders (91%);
- 6,200 volunteers performing over 24,500 hours at 820 events in 185 parks;
- Restoring over 20.6 acres of land; and
- Planting and caring for over 12,500 trees and plants.

Jeff Hou asked about the Natural Area Crew's participation in the clean-up on encampments, inquiring whether people were forced out of the encampments. Mark responded that through an agreement with the police, approved by City ordinance, 24 hour notice is provided before an area is cleaned up and information is given as to safe locations for people to move to.

Doug Dunham asked whether the Mayor's two for one tree replacement policy was funded. Mr. Mead said that \$250,000 is provided in 2007 for tree replacement in developed parks. Terry Holme asked what requirements contractors have to replace plantings that fail – what is the “extended warranty?” Mr. Mead replied that plants and trees need to live for one year – after that they become Parks responsibility.

Becca Fong briefed the Committee about the Landscape and Athletic Fields Levy program. The program provides:

- Enhanced maintenance for high visibility areas (e.g. Community Centers, Regional and Destination Parks);
- Renovation and improvement of areas requiring a high level of maintenance; and
- Improvements that increase the horticultural value of the landscape.

For athletic fields the funding provides enhanced turf care during the growing season and turf repair and renovation throughout the year on heavily used fields. Volunteer projects have helped renovate trails and restore habitat while providing fun, learning opportunities.

Robert Warner, accompanied by program participant Nicolas Vasquez, spoke about the Outdoor Opportunities (O2) Program. The program, part of the Environmental Stewardship unit, provides weekly workshops for teens at Golden Gardens and Seward

Park, as well as service projects every month and monthly overnight trips. O2 provides environmental programs in community centers and activities at Parks day camp programs, reaching approximately 1,500 participants each year, at no cost. The focus is to use outdoor recreation as an environmental education tool.

Mr. Vasquez, a Franklin High School student, stated he was learning about the environment and leadership skills through O2. He thanked the Committee for the opportunities O2 provided.

Neal Adams asked how the program reached such high levels of participation from people of color (80%). Mr. Warner responded that the people who run the program are passionate about what they do and they go to schools to reach out to students. Mr. Vasquez said he learned about the program when Mr. Warner came to school, and he liked that the program was free. He noted that he will attend an Outward Bound program in June, through O2 sponsorship.

Mr. Harper asked if O2 sponsored ski trips. Mr. Warner said that they have had snowboarding outings. Patti Petesch, manager of Parks Environmental Stewardship Unit, noted that a Parks ski trip took place through the Late Night Recreation program and the Department's Health and Fitness Coordinator. She stated that Mr. Warner was instrumental in putting the O2 program together and raising funds.

Terry Holme asked how the program would be sustained when the Pro Parks Levy is ended. Mr. Warner stated that General Fund money would be needed, that it is too difficult to run the program and raise enough funding for it each year.

Dexter Pit Project

Don Harper asked how the Dexter Pit Pro Parks project became an artist-led project. He noted that people in the community are concerned over the fact that the project is being managed differently from other Levy projects. Mr. Holme commented that he recalled a presentation from Carolyn Law in which she stated that Dexter would be an art-focused project, and that the Oversight Committee was not involved in that decision. Mr. Dunham remarked that he remembered hearing at an earlier briefing about concentrating Levy art funds in a few parks, and not spreading out the 1% for Art funds across all projects. Mr. Stephens asked for clarity over the issue of what a park project is and what an art project is. He asked whether the art detracted from the site being a park, and whether parks public involvement process is being followed. Staff will report back to the Committee on this project at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

