

Minutes
Skateboard Park Advisory Committee
March 12, 2007

Committee Members Present: John Carr, Scott Shinn, Keith Strobel, Ryan Barth, Matthew Lee Johnston, Dan Hughes

Guests: Tony Davies, Craig Martin, Kate Martin

Staff: Susan Golub

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved.

Public Comments:

Kate reported that a Lake City business owner would like to help build a skatedot and graffiti wall at Lake City Playground and will follow up on emerging details.

Citywide Skatepark Plan:

John reviewed details of the process thus far and the impending vote on the Citywide Skatepark Plan. Discussion ensued regarding the Mayoral and Council processes for the evolution of the plan thus far, the plan's role in the city's future development of skateparks, funding issues related to the implementation of the skatepark plan, and the likelihood that the plan will pass. The next City Council Parks Education Libraries and Labor Committee meeting will be in April. John and Susan will continue to follow up on issues related to skatepark budgeting moving forward.

River City Skatepark

Matt and Keith discussed the current state of the site, design and build, and the project schedule. An element that had been previously constructed has been removed as it did not work with the overall plan for the site.

Lower Woodland

Susan reviewed the current state of the Lower Woodland skatepark, noted that the construction bid has been awarded to T.F. Salhi and that construction will begin in April/May. Discussion ensued regarding the timeline for the Kent skatepark, past Salhi projects, the likelihood that the project will be completed on time, penalties for not delivering on the final deadline, and consequences for rushing the project. Matt expressed concerns that the project will be rushed and emphasized the need for this contractor to take their time building the skatepark under careful oversight from Wally Hollyday. Susan noted that the IAC grant dollars will be used for the overall construction project.

SeaSk8 (Seattle Center Skatepark)

John reviewed the process thus far and explained that the Broad Street Green East is SPAC's preferred alternative for the SeaSk8 relocation. Ryan provided details about the site and the SPAC's advocacy for a linear skatepark configuration instead of a square one that would eliminate existing trees. Matt expressed concerns that the selection of a piece of green space would be a deal breaker because it would

pit the skatepark agenda against the green space agenda. Ryan explained that any site on the Seattle Center is difficult to build on and that the Broad Street Green East site is as good a compromise as any. Craig noted that the skatepark would help to beautify that area. Scott noted that issues related to the drainage on the site would also be addressed in the creation of a skatepark there. Ryan noted that the presence of non-skateable media (i.e., cobblestone walkways) around the skatepark would help to enhance the workability of the space. Kate noted that the Century 21 committee had released an initial draft of the green space plan for the Center.

Ryan underscored the importance of building relationships with all parties involved in the design of the Seattle Center within the context of the Century 21 planning process. Additional discussion ensued regarding the potential for graffiti in the skatepark, the design features of “hiding spaces” like bowls, presence of lights and security cameras in the skatepark as crime deterrents, the relatively low success of security cameras at the Burien skatepark, and the existing presence of security staff in the Seattle Center that could be used to help monitor bad behavior in the replacement skatepark. Dan suggested that the park should be lit 24 hours a day. Scott noted the need for aesthetics, materials such as granite, design integration with the existing Seattle Center landscape and the potential integration of the Sister City flag pavilion within the skatepark.

Ballard Graffiti and Maintenance

Scott reported that the Ballard News Tribune ran an article about graffiti at the Ballard Commons Park this week. A ladder is under construction by Parks to resolve the “confined space” issues identified earlier. He reported that union contracts pose issues in training volunteers to remove graffiti and that the paperwork is in progress for registering a volunteer leader for the Friends of the Ballard Bowl maintenance organization. The next meeting for this group should occur within the next couple months at the Ballard Library regarding the scope and goals of the group moving forward.

Myrtle Reservoir

John reported that the Myrtle Reservoir site in West Seattle is undergoing Master Planning now. Because the Citywide Skatepark Plan has not yet been passed, the Myrtle Reservoir Master Plan may not include a skatepark. He noted that local residents are very concerned about a skatepark in their neighborhood and have made these concerns known to the Myrtle Reservoir project planner. Matt noted that the High Point site, which some in the neighborhood are proposing, is less than optimal and that West Seattle suffers from a lack of quality locations under the Citywide Skatepark Plan. Additional discussion ensued regarding the next steps for this process. Kate noted that the senior population in West Seattle might be a good resource to tap for advocates. Matt noted that several West Seattle residents and business owners might be available to attend meetings and help make a difference and will follow up directly with them.

Regional Skateparks

Dan reported that the Kent III skatepark will be done in April and that other non skate-related amenities are also under construction at this time. Keith reported that another Bellevue skatepark is currently under design.

Skatepark Recipe

Ryan reviewed the process to-date, noted that the current status of the project is that we have a SPAC logo, and that Matt is currently working with other web designers on an overall concept for a web site at www.seattleskateparks.org. Dan reviewed the status of photos from his collection that would pertain to the final design, including Marginal Way and Ballard. Discussion ensued regarding the process moving forward, integration of the final version of the skatepark plan into the web site, overall flow of the web site, ownership of information resources, style of the web site, programming practices, political consensus-building processes, processes that would rally and organize advocates around individual skate spots, the extensibility of the forum, and the delineation between the functions that occur in SPAC meetings and those that would occur on the web site.

SPAC Outreach and SPAC Vision, Part II

Ryan noted the importance of outreach on MySpace and connection with youth. Matt noted the frequent turnover of skate advocates who attend meetings and then fade away. Ryan and John noted the upcoming passage of the skatepark plan and how this might help boost membership and change the overall role of the SPAC moving forward. Matt countered that history has shown that skateparks take a long time to build and that there is a necessary political function of the SPAC, but that the people who have stayed on it would have stayed anyway, and that the real incentive for meeting attendance is getting skateparks built. Keith underscored this point.

Ryan countered that youth outreach is key and that it is important to build a network of kids who will participate in the process. Matt countered that websites like SPS and Sleestak are better for getting kids out to meetings than a SPAC process, or that simply posting flyers in a skate shop would do a better job. Ryan countered that this process will not be meaningful unless people are involved, and that this committee is necessarily an advisory board. Matt countered that this committee isn't very exciting and no one wants to come to meetings here. Ryan countered that more communication about meetings would help get people involved in the process. Matt countered that they'd rather go to a skatepark and talk about it while skating. John and Susan noted that it is the key events like the October 2006 Youthquake meeting that really bring people out to the meetings, or contemporary controversies such as the BMX policy, and that the focus of this committee should be on topics such as these.

Matt noted that there is a function for mechanisms outside the system and a separate function for mechanisms inside the system. Ryan agreed that there are a variety of functions for the SPAC to serve, and a variety of mechanisms for outreach. Keith noted that the SPAC has accomplished a number of items, and Dan underscored this point. Tony analogized between the SPAC process and the process of turning a container ship, where 700 miles before the ship is going to turn, people make decisions about the ship turning, and then it happens in 700 miles, and contrasted this to a process like building the Marginal Way skatepark, where stuff just gets done. Craig and Tony underscored the importance of obtaining information about skateparks in Seattle from the verbal process of participating in SPAC meetings, and that this experience is distinct from reading about it on a web site or web forum. John noted that the www.seattleskateparks.org web site will help distill the information about the process into a palatable format for broader consumption, and that there might also be a way to help notify people about the process via business cards. Ryan and Tony also reiterated that the MySpace approach might also be viable. Matt reiterated that people don't get excited about meetings, and especially not about meetings where you learn about more meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10.

Next Meeting and Change to Regular Meeting Schedule

The next meeting will occur on Monday, May 14 at 100 Dexter Ave. Full SPAC meetings will now meet on the Second Monday of odd-numbered months. SPAC Steering Subcommittee meetings will meet on the Second Monday of even-numbered months at off-site locations to be announced by the Chair.