

Minutes
Skateboard Park Advisory Committee
January 8, 2007

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

Guests: Jane Rowley, Craig Martin, Brian Turner (The Stranger), Lisa Matchette (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

Staff: Susan Golub

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Overview: John Carr provided an overview of the differences between the SPAC and the Task Force, and reviewed the SPAC process.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved.

SeaSk8 Replacement: John reviewed the process leading up to the recent demolition of the SeaSk8 skatepark at the Seattle Center, and the language in the Lot 2 sale agreement regarding the replacement of SeaSk8. Matt reviewed the history of the relocation effort, including initial efforts to relocate the skatepark at 545 Elliott Avenue, and concerns of the SPAC about keeping the skatepark in a central location that is accessible to children. He noted that the City Council agreed with these concerns, and recently decided to move the skatepark to the Seattle Center campus.

Scott and Susan reviewed the skateboard siting study conducted by the New Ventures group. John noted that a budget proviso was passed by the City Council that places a hold on a portion of the Center's budget until a site on the Center campus for the skatepark has been identified. The Center is to report to the Council by March 1. Several SPAC members expressed their disappointment about not knowing when the demolition of the old skatepark was to occur. In addition, there was consensus among members about the importance of being involved in the Center's siting process. Matt commented that the inherent problem is that the location, design and build of the skatepark are essential to a successful skatepark, and that a properly located, designed and built replacement skatepark will help to mitigate the concerns the Center has about a skatepark on their campus. Susan commented that Ned Dunn, Seattle Center staff, contacted her earlier in the day and expressed his intent to involve skateboarders in the review process to be undertaken by Seattle Center. She will pass the SPAC comments back to Ned.

Matt reviewed details of a meeting between Matt, John, Scott, David Della, Tatsuo Nakata, Scott MacColl, and Seattle Center staff last summer. Scott commented that there have been huge advances in skatepark site selection, design and build practices during the last 7 years, and that the relocated skatepark will be able to take advantage of them. John reviewed the concept of a skate plaza. Scott commented that DC Shoes and the Rob Dyrdek Foundation have an active program to build skate plazas in central locations. John talked about the current illegality of skateboarding at Seattle Center and commented that a skatepark will provide an alternative to skating in illegal public spaces, and called for work between skate advocates and Seattle Center staff on the relocation skatepark. Dan commented that skaters will skate in Seattle Center anyway, and that a

skatepark on the campus will provide an incentive to skate in an appropriate area. Matt commented that the Seattle Center has historically shown a cutting-edge awareness towards doing the right thing with skateparks, and that this would help maintain that tradition.

Dan mentioned that the memorial aspect of the previous skatepark should be preserved in the replacement skatepark. Keith asked about the March 1st deadline for specifying a new skatepark site and plans for the process from there, and expressed concerns about the lack of input from the skate community regarding location, design and build details.

Scott asked Lisa Machette about the Gates Foundations' involvement with the process thus far. Lisa expressed surprise that the skateboarding community had not been aware of the impending demolition. Susan commented that Seattle Parks did not have advance knowledge about the demolition of the skatepark on January 3, 2007.

SPAC Chair Nominations: Matt nominated Scott, who declined and called for the creation of a SPAC Secretary position, and then volunteered for it. Scott nominated Ryan for the position of Chair. Additional consideration and review regarding the new Chair will occur at the next meeting on February 12.

Feature Discussion – SPAC Visioning Process: John reiterated the need to define and amplify the purpose and vision for the SPAC, and asked Susan what Parks gets by having a skateboard advisory committee. Susan commented that two recent examples of input that the SPAC has provided are the BMX policy for skateparks and the Lower Woodland skatepark location and design. She noted that all Parks citizen committees are advisory in nature, and that some advisory groups do not have a staff liaison assigned to them.

John expressed concerns that many citizen volunteers have burnt out on the SPAC process. He listed his concerns and expressed disappointment that SPAC has not been more effective in changing Parks policies and getting skateparks built.

Matt indicated a personal willingness to continue working with this process as long as something happens and things get done, and expressed concerns that volunteer effort is being wasted. Susan indicated a willingness to have an annual budget discussion as part of SPAC business in the future, and that this discussion should coincide with the City Council's budget process. The May meeting would be the appropriate point to enter the discussion, as this is the time that the Mayor's budget is being prepared.

Scott asked about the differences between the soon to be adopted Citywide Skatepark Plan and the existing Skatepark Policy. Susan explained that the Citywide Skatepark Plan will be similar to the Joint Athletics Facilities Development Program (for reference, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/meetings/jafdp/jafdp.htm>) in that it will be a guide to Parks for future skatepark development, much as the JAFDP guides athletic field projects.

Keith suggested committee members should come to the next meeting with specific questions about the purpose and vision of the SPAC.

Citywide Skatepark Plan: John reviewed details of the recent Board of Park Commissioners and City Council Parks Education, Libraries and Labor Committee briefings. Susan noted that the Park Board will review and provide final recommendations on the skatepark plan this Thursday that PELL will likely review and provide recommendations in February, with the full City Council to review it shortly thereafter.

Lower Woodland: John noted that the Lower Woodland Neighborhood Association has again appealed the Declaration of Non-significance for the skatepark to King County Superior Court, requested to Susan that Parks continue to move forward with the project in the absence of an injunction, and that follow-up communication with the Seattle Parks legal department be initiated by Susan at this time on behalf of the SPAC. Keith commented on the importance of continuing the planning process for the skatepark in terms of the money spent on design, location, and construction thus far. Additional discussion ensued regarding the city's standing for filing civil counter suit to recover public funds lost through delay of the process by this series of appeals, and subsequent inflation costs of construction materials.

Graffiti: Scott noted that the most recent graffiti removal at the Ballard Bowl involved sandblasting. Jane noted that a lot of sand was left over. Susan will follow up with Chris Reed on the graffiti removal process for skateparks.

Ballard Maintenance, Vandalism and Design Issues: Scott noted that the next Friends of the Ballard Bowl meeting will occur in February, and that design issues are not open to question per the maintenance department.

“Build Your Own Skatepark” recipe: Scott finished content updates provided by Ryan and John today. The content is ready for final review and approval. Matt will follow up with Matt Glenovitch and other resources on graphic and web design issues. Matt has registered www.seattleskateparks.org to host the final skatepark recipe.

Future Meetings: The visioning process and discussion will continue at the February meeting. March will be planning for the skate law summit. Discussion ensued regarding the scope of the legal summit and the need to make skateboarding legal in Seattle, both in and out of Seattle Parks' property.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.