

Minutes
Skateboard Park Advisory Committee
Steering Subcommittee
July 16, 2007

Committee Members Present: Ryan Barth, Chair, Matthew Lee Johnston, Keith Strobel, Dan Hughes
Guests: Tony Davies, Morris Wainwright, Marianne Powell, Stuart Haury, Molly Hanson

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

Public Comment

Molly Hanson: Ms. Hanson represents the Crown Hill Neighbors Association. She announced an upcoming community meeting on July 18 to address the Seattle School Districts action to surplus Crown Hill School. The community hopes to be able to buy the building and preserve the open space at the site. There is funding in the Pro Parks Levy to develop the open space and the design that was developed during the Levy community design process includes a skatespot. The Levy work was put on hold when the School District announced its decision to sell the property. Ryan responded that he plans to have a table at the July 18 event, providing skateboarding information.

Stuart Haury: Mr. Haury is a graphic designer who has done a skatepark project for a design class. He is interested in getting more involved in Seattle skatepark activities.

Deputy Superintendent Presentation – Transition of SPAC to a “Friends of” Group

Christopher Williams, Interim Deputy Superintendent, spoke to SPAC about the idea of changing SPAC from an advisory group to a Friends of Skateparks organization. He first complimented SPAC on the good work that has been accomplished. Mr. Williams was involved in the creation of the original Ballard Bowl when he served as Parks’ North District Manager. He appreciates the direction regarding skateparks the skating community has provided, especially helping move the city to recognize skateboarding as a healthy, legitimate sport. The Citywide Skatepark Plan is the culmination of this work. Mr. Williams noted that skateboarding, BMX bike riding and other generation X sports are here to stay and the City has some catching up to do in serving citizens who enjoy these sports.

Mr. Williams noted that skateparks can be located on non-Parks property, and the importance of the SPAC working with other agencies, such as the School District, is one reason to change the relationship between the SPAC and Parks. Parks can only respond to issues on Parks sites, so there may be some advantages to the skateboarders to work with Parks as a “Friends of” group, and work with non-Parks agencies as a separate advocacy organization.

Mr. Williams proposed developing a formal “Friends of” agreement, starting with standard language Parks uses with many organizations. One advantage of becoming a Friends group is that fiscal sponsorship through the Associate Recreation Council (ARC) is possible. The Friends contract will specify what activities are conducted as a Parks entity and would make clear that non-Park related activities are conducted outside of the Friends of Skateparks group. Parks will continue to staff the group, attending quarterly meetings, and will have a staff liaison for skatepark issues.

Regarding developing additional skateparks in Seattle, Mr. Williams stated he would like Parks to be more opportunistic regarding including skate features in new or redeveloped parks. He will work with Parks project managers and to develop standard skate features that could become integral aspects of project development. Ryan remarked that Mr. Williams approach is exactly what SPAC would like to

see. He gave the example of Ercolini Park development, noting that a heads-up to SPAC to get involved early in project development is important.

Matt asked why Mr. Williams was encouraging SPAC to get involved with the School District now, when the City just approved a Skatepark Plan with 27 sites. Mr. Williams responded that there is no funding for the Plan. The Department will try to move skateparks forward through the Capitol Improvement Program, but funding is limited. Partners can bring in money and expand possibilities.

Matt asked what restrictions there would be with the transition to a Friends group. Mr. Williams responded that this has been a proven method for parks support organizations, as it provides a framework for expectations, and can be helpful with grant applications and funding requests. Ryan suggested folding the Friends of the Ballard Skatepark into the overall Friends of Skatepark organization.

Both Matt and Ryan questioned Mr. Williams about the Parks budget and what might be in the 2008 budget for skateparks. Matt wants to see Parks become more of a funding advocate for skatepark funding within the Executive side of City government. Mr. Williams responded that Parks 2008 budget has been sent to the Mayor, and Parks is not able to talk about it until it becomes public in September. He talked about the limits on new funding for skateparks, as the CIP is meant for maintenance of existing structures. But he noted that if new park standards can be developed that include skate features as a regular aspect of park development, skateparks can be created when play areas are renovated. His purpose is to institutionalize the Skatepark Plan into Parks redevelopment projects. Ryan noted that the new Ella Bailey Park in Magnolia is a perfect example of this, as skateable terrain was included in the new Park's design.

Project Updates

Citywide Skatepark Plan – Ryan described the next step for the skate community is to influence the 2008 budget so that skateparks in the Plan can get funding.

River City Skatepark – the project got a Department of Neighborhoods grant and is working on getting the necessary permits. Some design re-working is underway so that there are some elements appropriate for beginning skaters, and some added street skating area. Matt stated that for River City, as for all new skateparks, it is important to think about potential users and tailor the design to the users.

Lower Woodland Skatepark – The opponents of the skatepark have filed another appeal, this coming after the City won at the Hearing Examiner and in District Court.

Seattle Center Skatepark – Ryan reported that there have been lots of meetings in the last couple of weeks because the Center has to come up with a site by July 18. Sites that have been evaluated include a location on 1st Avenue North that was not qualified; a site on Mercer Street which would be next to the new location for Teatro Zinzani; and the Broad Street green which, while appealing to skaters, has been opposed as a skatepark site by the Center and the Experience Music Project.

The latest potential location is the courtyard near the Alki Room. The area can accommodate a 6,600 square foot skatepark, which is smaller than the old one. However, the Vera Project is located adjacent which would be a good fit. It is Ryan's opinion that the courtyard location is the best alternative that will come from the Seattle Center, and the skate community needs to come together in support.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.