

Summary of Public Meeting
Regarding the 12th Avenue Urban Village acquisition project
Wycoff Auditorium, Seattle University
January 29, 2007

The meeting began at 7 pm, and was facilitated by Donald Harris, manager of Property and Acquisition Services for Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Approximately 40 citizens attended, including local residents, owners of nearby Haitian, Ethiopian and Vietnamese restaurants and businesses, Seattle University students and staff, representatives of nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood, and representatives of the Squire Park Community Council and the 12th Avenue Stewardship Group. In addition, City staff representing Parks, Department of Neighborhoods, Office of Housing, and Seattle Police also attended.

Donald Harris provided background on the project, including:

- High rate of residential growth in the 12th Avenue Urban Village
- Lack of parks and open space
- Community-initiated project to acquire land for a new park through the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund. The City has obtained a matching grant for acquisition from the King County Conservation Futures Levy, so that approximately \$1,050,000 is available for park acquisition.
- Parks participated in two meetings held in 2006 by the neighborhood stewardship group, and worked with this group to identify potential sites for acquisition

Bill Blair, Seattle Parks open space planner, reviewed a dozen properties that had been suggested and considered for Park acquisition. He also described criteria that Parks considers in evaluating properties for acquisition for new neighborhood parks, including good sun exposure, “eyes on the park,” site area of approximately 10,000 square feet, and willing sellers.

Donald Harris said that timing, location, or willingness to sell were issues with all of the considered sites with the exception of two properties owned by the City of Seattle under the jurisdiction of Fleets and Facilities, are shown on the map below.:

- Property A: on the northeast corner of 12th and Jefferson (about 9,800 square feet)
- Property B: at 12th and E. James Court (about 7,300 square feet).

As noted in the meeting flier, Harris said that Parks acquisition staff were recommending the property at 12th and Jefferson for a new neighborhood park. Its size, location, visibility, and good sun exposure were factors in making this recommendation.

He also said that the northern property (at James Court) was being considered by the City’s Office of Housing for “workforce” housing with possible retail uses on the ground floor. Harris noted that the City is in litigation regarding the two properties, but that the City is optimistic that the resolution of the legal issues will result in the availability of the properties for park or other purposes.

Harris led a question and answer period, and then took comments from meeting participants. He clarified that no decision had yet been made, and that this public meeting was being held to gather community input and help guide the next steps. Fliers had been distributed throughout the neighborhood so that everyone would have a chance to comment.

Comments and questions included:

- Business owners and residents expressed significant concern about crime in the immediate area. They cited noise and drug dealing, particularly at 12th and Jefferson as compared to 12th and James Court. Others said a park wouldn't attract additional problems; the problems are already there.
- One business owner said there are problems related to drug dealing at the bus stop on the corner of Jefferson and 12th.
- In response to a question, Harris said that he was not aware of land-use restrictions that might affect nearby businesses due to the presence of a new park.
- Affordable housing is a priority for residents of the neighborhood.
- Several citizens said that parking is important in the neighborhood, but Harris pointed out that there is no scenario in which parking would continue as a long-term use on either property A or B.
- Other participants said parking would not be a good use for the sites.
- One citizen noted the lack of open space in the neighborhood, which he felt needs a larger, more significant park than either site. Harris agreed that Parks would "love to get" a larger site, but clarified the currently available funding and timing.
- A citizen asked if Parks is considering a structure on the new park site, as was discussed at earlier stewardship group meetings. Harris said that a building is not within the budget available for this project, and that programming, maintenance and other costs associated with a building would be an issue for Parks. Several citizens said the existing structure at the James Court site is not salvageable.
- A citizen noted that Parks has concession agreements with organizations that operate buildings in other parks, such as Pratt.
- Citizens identified several properties that have recently come on the market and might be available for Parks purchase, including properties at 13th and Jefferson and at 13th between Cherry and Columbia. Harris said acquisition staff will look into these potential sites.

A citizen pointed out that the sale proceeds from Properties A and B had previously been targeted by the City for improvements in the 12th Avenue neighborhood. Therefore, the combination of proceeds from the sale of both properties could provide significantly more funding for a new park than is being discussed at the meeting. Harris said that Parks will research that possibility, and whether a portion of the potential sale proceeds have already been spent or earmarked for street improvements or other non-park purposes. He also clarified that if one or both of the sites is sold for affordable "workforce housing" it would likely be sold at a discounted price, below market value.

Donald Harris summarized the comments at the meeting as follows:

- While the Parks acquisition staff recommendation was to purchase the larger property at 12th and Jefferson, more support was expressed at the meeting for the site at 12th and James Court. This northern site was described at the meeting as being less risky in terms

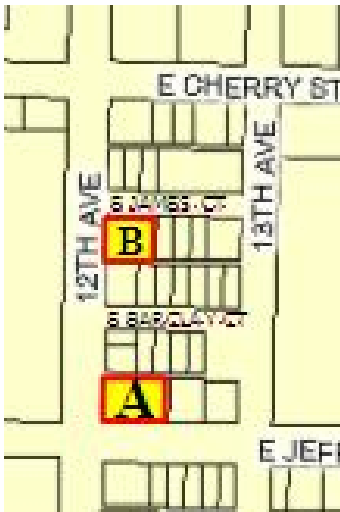
of the issues that were raised, such as crime and noise. There was general recognition at the meeting about the growth in the neighborhood and the need for a park.

- Parks staff will write a summary of the meeting, post it on the website, and get back to those who attended the meeting about the next steps in the process.

Parks committed to the following next steps in this process:

- Of the City-owned Properties A and B, Parks will focus on property B at 12th and James for a potential new park, rather than Property A at 12th and Jefferson.
- City and Parks staff will follow up on the citizen comment and research the potential use of future sale proceeds of Properties A and B for park acquisition in the 12th Avenue neighborhood.
- Parks acquisition staff will research the additional properties that citizens identified that have recently come on the market.

Note: While this summary conveys the factual content of the views expressed at the meeting, it cannot convey the depth of emotion that many participants expressed in their comments, particularly regarding issues of crime and noise in the 12th and Jefferson vicinity.



Notes drafted by Catherine Anstett, Seattle Parks, 2/12/07