

Nancy -

At the meeting last Tuesday at City Hall,. I asked for more time for the Bellevue community to consider and comment on

- 1, the actual need for more paved parking
- 2, the actual need for increased structures
- 3, the location of the maintenance area
- 4, the data that justify them
- 5, the costs to the community to build and to maintain them.

Projecting future costs to taxpayers is difficult, but we certainly want at least an estimate of costs to the COB Parks Department (item 5). Those data are relevant. The Parks Department already has other facilities for teaching and for meetings that seems to render more building superfluous. E.g., for teaching children about gardening and natural history, the new Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center, the McDowell House, Kelsey Creek Barn and Farm House, Winters House as well as the adjacent Bellevue School District Hq, and W.I.S.C. facilities. Some would also be appropriate for the various garden meetings.

The current maintenance area could be relocated in the southern part of the Loop Trail, rather than at the former Dewey home. Such a staging area would disturb the BBG less, both ecologically and esthetically than the Dewey home: It is nearer the areas it would serve, thus leaving less of a footprint and disturbing visitors less, and remnants of old concrete foundations already occupy that location. There used to be an old cistern nearby, and the area has not recovered from its former uses.

Finally, justification for more paved parking space seems largely to be the Garden d'Lights display. That occurs during the early darkness of December. Visitors come to experience the Garden d'Lights in the early darkness, and not to visit the garden per se, or the woodland trails. And they drive to the BBG. At other times, the existing parking places appear to be adequate. When filled to capacity as for Garden d'Lights, motorized visitors seem not to mind using the sports fields/playground parking.

I suggest that the Garden d'Lights display has outgrown the BBG and fits appropriately in Bellevue's Downtown Park. Simultaneously with all the other seasonal attractions, the storefronts and the drummers, Garden d'Lights would be convenient to Bellevue Square, and its parking facilities and other attractions.

So really all reduce my questions refer to the actual data on which the proposed alternatives rest. And interpreting any data requires certain assumptions. For example, special interest groups identified special needs that seem justifiable to them.

Assume, however, that beautiful gardens and woodland trails attract most of the visitors -- and surely the most frequent visitors --- to BBG: They like it as it is. Adding pavements and buildings appears unattractive to the community visiting the BBG most.

Assume further, that the rapid encroachment of the steel and concrete and glass of the downtown highrises will increase community appreciation for the space and peace and beauty of the gardens and woods of the BBG. The community surely will treasure the existing features more and more as Bellevue urbanizes. Its future value is hard to quantify, but the desire to protect those attractive attributes surely dominates much of the discussion of the Master Plan Update.

Please forward these comments to Parks Board members, Director Patrick Foran, and Glenn Kost.

Thank you for your help.

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