

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday
January 13, 2009
6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue City Hall
Bellevue, Washington

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Keeney, Vice-Chair Bennett, Boardmembers George¹, Karle², LaPine, Robinson

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT: Boardmember Roland

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Councilmember Chelminiak

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Shelley Brittingham, Pam Fehrman, Patrick Foran, Nancy Harvey, Glenn Kost, Terry Smith, Jon Wilson

OTHERS PRESENT: Paula Melby, Court Olson, Colleen Pana, Johnny Randigar, Walter Scott, Amanda Watson, Mary Worley, Bellevue Youth Theatre representatives

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Keeney at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Vice-Chair Bennett and second by Boardmember Robinson to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Vice-Chair Bennett and second by Boardmember Robinson to approve the November 13, 2008 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Parks & Community Services Board. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

¹ Arrived at 6:06 p.m.

² Departed at 7:28 p.m.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Colleen Pana, 4045 – 134th Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA

Ms. Pana is a Boardmember for SPLASH. SPLASH supports the use of the Eastgate Area property for an aquatic facility. If this property is not deemed appropriate, SPLASH encourages Boardmembers to find a suitable location for an aquatic facility.

Mary Worley, 17135 NE 5th Street, Bellevue, WA

Ms. Worley expressed her concern with the Eastgate Area planning process. She feels the process is turning into an opposition-type process. There is anxiety among community members about the proposed alternatives, in particular the multi-use field aspect of the plan. Ms. Worley requested further information about the plans for Eastgate, in particular the survey feedback. She also suggested more dialogue take place with community members to discuss further likes/dislikes about the alternatives.

5. CHAIR COMMUNICATION:

Chair Keeney welcomed newly appointed Boardmember Matt LaPine to the Board.

6. BOARD COMMUNICATION:

Boardmember Karle questioned why the Mercer Slough Education Center was listed on the National Council of Mayors Association Mainstreet Economic Recovery Report, while other infrastructure projects were not. Councilmember Chelminiak clarified that the projects listed on the report needed to be 120-day shovel ready. He added that there are other projects currently being considered.

7. CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

Councilmember Chelminiak reported that the financing plan for Bel-Red is moving forward. There has been some resistance on specific issues related to private financing. However, progress is being made.

Council is also working on preparing input for Sound Transit. Councilmember Chelminiak noted that there are some concerns with the alignments (i.e., large segments above grade). He added that there are positive and negative impacts on the parks system throughout the proposed Sound Transit routes.

Mr. Foran noted that the City Council is currently working on a tremendous amount of projects, including:

- The levy implementation plan.
- The Aquatic Center Study.
- The Surrey Downs Master Plan.

8. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

A. Eastgate Area Properties Master Plan

Ms. Fehrman explained that the City-owned, Eastgate Area Properties are made up of three parcels totaling 27.5 acres. The largest of the three parcels (14.55 acres) was purchased from The Boeing Company in 2003. This parcel is a relatively flat open field that was previously operated as an open municipal landfill from 1951 to 1964. The purchase and sale agreement for the property, with Boeing, provided that the City would share in the development and costs of the shared access road to benefit both the private office development and the future park facility. In addition, in the purchase and sale agreement, there was an agreement to build 105 parking spaces on the adjacent private development for which the City would have priority use. All proposed alternatives and concepts recognize the 105 dedicated parking spaces.

The Master Plan will help provide the long-range shared vision for the Eastgate Area Properties. It will also help create a long-term development plan, assist with phased implementation, and provide planning level cost estimates.

Ms. Fehrman discussed the Master Plan process and timelines. There have been three community workshops (May, July, November 2008), along with other Board and Council meetings. As the Parks Levy passed, the goal is to design, permit, and construct the first phase of development. The design and permit process is expected to take two to three years due to the land fill, ground and storm water issues, etc.

Some of the initial preferences derived from the first workshop, online survey, and emails include:

- Walking on trails
- Athletic fields
- Off-leash dog area
- Swim, aquatic facility
- Playground and picnicking
- Observe nature and wildlife
- Leave it alone/save the meadow

Based upon the community input, five alternatives were compiled (A through E). Ms. Fehrman summarized the characteristics and features of each alternative. The most preferred alternatives were C and E. On the contrary, Alternatives C, E, and A were the least preferred alternatives. Alternatives B, D, and A had the fewest objections.

The areas of community agreement include:

- Picnic facilities
- Children's play area(s)
- Maintain/enhance trails and connections
- Limit vehicle access to 160th

- Utilize existing parking if possible
- Maintain residential buffers
- Provide restroom(s)/site furnishings
- Environmentally responsible (protect and enhance: woods, water quantity/quality, landfill BMP)

Some of the major unresolved issues include:

- Neighborhood park vs. community park
- Sport fields—complex/quantity/lights
- Off-leash dog facility
- Extent of preservation (woods and wildlife; meadow)
- Indoor recreation building

Recognizing the park and open space value to the City, the Council purchased the properties with the intent to develop community park facilities. However, neighborhood groups oppose sport fields, especially lit synthetic surface sport fields due to the potential traffic noise and light impacts to the neighborhood. The Eastgate Area Property is the only undeveloped park-owned site able to support lighting for ballfields. In addition, prior to purchasing the property, there were engineering studies for illumination, noise, and traffic that indicated that the development of lighted sports fields on the site could be completed with a minimum of impact to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The single most requested type of field has been Little League baseball, specifically a complex. Ms. Fehrman discussed the field demands for sport fields. There are two soccer fields that will benefit from the Park levy (Newport Hills Park and Wilburton Community Park).

Many concerns have been expressed about the current conditions and quantity of off-leash dog areas in Bellevue. An off-leash facility study is underway. Although incomplete, the study identifies the City as providing a moderate level of service based on the population and will recommend two to four additional, geographically distributed off-leash areas. Ms. Fehrman discussed the characteristics of current facilities. Robinswood Park has potential capacity to offer improved and expanded off-leash facilities without displacing other uses in the park. Locating two off-leash facilities (Robinswood Park and Eastgate Area Properties) within 1,300 feet of each other is not ideal when contemplating equitable distribution of services community-wide.

A petition to “Save the Meadow” was signed by 242 Eastgate neighbors. The Save the Meadow group desires that a minimum of 10 acres be kept as a general use/meadow only area; 4.5 acres maximum for multi-use recreation; and 13 acres to be left naturally wooded and preserved, specifically for the neighborhood use.

Ms. Fehrman summarized Alternatives A, B, and C. In all of the alternatives, a minimum 100 ft. mature, wooded buffer to the northwest residential areas is incorporated.

The indoor recreational facility concept was discussed. The City has been approached in the past by several groups that represent various sports ventures requesting City participation to create

major indoor recreational facilities. No formal proposals, commitments or relationships have been established. Staff and the design team have approached the indoor facility from a site carrying capacity perspective, attempting to establish parameters for placement and approximate size, as opposed to specific program options. Any further developments would not occur until Council endorsed a public or private partnership and/or City funding became available.

Ms. Fehrman noted that there is an aquatics center feasibility study in progress. The City continues to work on the study aimed at determining the feasibility and cost of constructing a major community aquatic center in Bellevue. The Eastgate Area Properties is one of several sites being considered. It was noted that while the site could support an aquatics facility 50% larger than Bellevue's existing facility, the mid-range (70,000 sq ft) aquatic facility being studied would prohibit most other active program uses on site.

Survey feedback to-date indicates that Alternative B, with alterations, is the most supported.

The concept of keeping the meadow area to promote animal wildlife was discussed. Ms. Fehrman discussed the challenges of maintaining a proper meadow due to the property characteristics (i.e., landfill area). A true meadow area cannot withstand a significant amount of traffic.

When discussing the multi-use field concept, Mr. Kost clarified that only synthetic turf could feasibly support this type of high use, not natural grass.

Boardmember LaPine questioned if the 2003 Open Space System Plan facts and figures are still accurate. If so, he pointed out that the NRPA standard for neighborhood and mini parks is exceeded by nearly double in the Eastgate area.

Boardmember Comments:

Boardmember Karle:

- Supports Alternative B.
- Need results of off-leash dog area study and direction from Council regarding an aquatic center before moving forward.

Vice-Chair Bennett:

- Supports Alternative B.
- Would like off-leash areas further explored at Robinswood rather than the Eastgate property.
- An aquatics center can go elsewhere.
- Like sports fields and road to picnic area.

Chair Keeney:

- The property is a community park not a neighborhood park. All citizens' opinions need to be taken into consideration.
- Supports Alternative B.

- Would like to consider a recreational building on the property.
- Synthetic fields with lighting are a necessity.
- Maximize access to the woodland area.
- Need further direction on the off-leash study. An off-leash dog area would be okay in either Robinswood or the Eastgate site.

Boardmember George:

- Robinswood Park already supports many of the concepts listed in Alternative B (i.e., lighted sports fields, trails, kids camps, etc.). Alternative B duplicates Robinswood services.
- Favors a recreational building.
- Need to improve the Robinswood dog area or move it to a different location. Does not make sense to have dog areas at both Robinswood and Eastgate. The parks are too close in proximity.
- Need further clarification about the community's vision for the meadow area. Is Alternative B consistent with the "Save the Meadow" vision?
- Explore option of converting Robinswood dog area to lighted sports fields, then use Eastgate as a dog area.

Boardmember Robinson:

- Need to improve Robinswood dog area.
- Supports Alternative B with a recreational building where the off-leash area is proposed.
- Envisions a grassy knoll around the perimeter of the ball fields.

Boardmember LaPine:

- Favors a recreational building with accessible parking (see Alternative D).
- Favors passive use areas (i.e., walking trails, picnicking, etc.).
- Supports lighted sports fields, since the property was originally purchased with the intention of developing lighted sports fields.
- No amplified sound systems.
- Develop the park as a City park, not a neighborhood park.
- Need further information about the off-leash study before making a decision.

Boardmembers expressed their appreciation to staff for the tremendous amount of outreach efforts that have been conducted for the Eastgate property.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Foran discussed the shelters that were operated during the December snow storm.

10. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Boardmember committee/liaison reports

Chair Keeney reported that the Meydenbauer Bay Steering Committee meetings have been postponed due to the environmental impact study that is being conducted.

11. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Future agenda items

None.

12. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:

A. CIP Project Report

B. Email from and response to Kathleen Ponto re Northwest Arts Center programming

C. Email from John Chao re Eastgate Area Properties

D. Letter from Robin Savage re Meydenbauer Bay Park Plan

E. Letter from and response to Ruth Chaus re BBG

F. Email from Dean Claussen re tree removal

13. INFORMATION:

A. List of upcoming Parks special events

B. February 10 – next scheduled Park Board meeting

14. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Amanda Watson, 12432 SE 25th Place, Bellevue, WA

On behalf of the Bellevue Youth Theatre, Ms. Watson thanked Boardmembers for their support of the program.

Johnny Randigar, 16243 NE 3rd Street, Bellevue, WA

On behalf of Bellevue Youth Theatre, Mr. Randigar invited Boardmembers to the first ever performance of “EWOG.”

Motion by Vice-Chair Bennett and second by Boardmember Robinson to extend the meeting until 8:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Court Olson, 15817 SE 26th Street, Bellevue, WA

Mr. Olson expressed his concern with the significant amount of wildlife habitat in the Northwest woods at the Eastgate Area Properties. He added that the picnic areas proposed in the Alternatives are the most intrusive to the habitat. In addition, Mr. Olson is concerned about park lighting and amplification.

Mr. Olson is very concerned about wildlife preservation and global warming. He urged Boardmembers to preserve the trees throughout the Eastgate Area Properties.

Motion by Vice-Chair Bennett and second by Boardmember Robinson to extend the meeting until 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Paula Melby, 12806 SE 20th Pl., Bellevue, WA

Ms. Melby requested that Boardmembers continue to explore options with the Bellevue School District regarding the use of their sports fields.

Mary Worley, 17135 NE 5th Street, Bellevue, WA

Ms. Worley discussed the high demands of sports fields throughout the community (i.e., five football teams sharing one field for practice) and encouraged Boardmembers to add further fields to meet the needs of community members.

Walter Scott, 400 – 112th Ave. NE, #230, Bellevue, WA

Mr. Scott is President of the Bellevue West Little League. Mr. Scott has connected with the Bellevue Thunderbirds LL, Bellevue East LL, BB&GC (approximately 2,500 families encompassed). The organizations favor Alternative E, which proposes three ballparks. In the spirit of compromise, the organizations would accept Alternative B. However, request that the turf not cover the end field due to safety concerns. The organizations also request that the proper amenities be included (i.e., bleachers, backstops, bases, etc.). The main priority of the organizations is to locate further working fields.

15. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Vice-Chair Bennett and second by Boardmember George to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).