

Parks and Recreation Superintendent's Report
Seattle City Council Parks and Seattle Center Committee
Thursday, May 20, 2010

Parks Leadership. On April 28 Mayor McGinn named me Acting Superintendent, and I appointed Eric Friedli to be Acting Deputy Superintendent. You've seen Eric's work and you know he is capable, competent, well-respected in Parks, and I believe his presence in this position will provide a welcome sense of calm and continuity.

I've identified five overarching priorities for this time of change:

- Resolve workplaces issues and conflicts early.
- Avoid negative attention.
- Think and act strategically.
- Support the Mayor and work to strengthen our working relationship.

Now on to more routine items . . .

Walk Bike, Ride Initiative. Community meetings are scheduled at five community centers: May 26 at Yesler (televised), June 1 at Bitter Lake, June 7 at Van Asselt, and June 14 at Delridge. Each meeting is scheduled for 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Heroic save. A Parks employee, Ron White, was on the way to a job when he noticed a vehicle driving erratically northbound on Aurora Avenue. He realized that it would soon cross the Aurora Bridge and might cross over the center line and endanger people. Ron pulled his Parks truck alongside the vehicle, honked his horn and flashed his lights, and edged the car safely off to the side of the road. He was able to get the attention of the driver, a young woman experiencing some sort of difficulty, and get her to stop. When Ron asked if she was okay, she said "I am a diabetic." Another car stopped and called 911 while Ron helped the woman. Paramedics arrived and treated the woman, who had lost consciousness. Ron saved her from further injury and possible injury to others.

WRPA Awards. Seattle Parks and Recreation won three awards from the Washington Recreation and Parks Association this year: Kathy Whitman won the Professional Citation of Merit award, a lifetime award for her career accomplishments. The wetlands/ballfield project at Magnuson Park won the Best Park Design Award, and the Youth and Adult Programs award went to

our own Seattle Conservation Corps.

Golf RFP. The Request for Proposals for the management of Seattle's four municipal public golf courses is moving forward. Parks held the pre-proposal conference on April 29 at West Seattle Golf Course. Notification letters and emails were sent to more than 40 golf management companies to increase interest and attract proposals.

Volunteers. In 2009, 45,548 individual volunteers donated a total of 326,760 hours. That number is an increase of 64,000 hours over 2008`.

Building 41 at Magnuson. The comment period on the environmental review for the demolition of this building ended on Wednesday, May 12. We received no comments. We are scheduling a special meeting of the Magnuson Park Advisory Committee (MPAC) to discuss the project. We expect to have legislation to the Council by June 3. The demolition is to make way for the development of Seattle Sports Courts' indoor tennis court project, which is on track to begin construction later this year.

Park Board. The Park Board made a final recommendation to staff to look into new revenue sources, which could either be an operations and maintenance levy or a Metropolitan Parks District.

Tree Trimming Permit Moratorium. Parks is imposing a moratorium on tree trimming permits until Parks tree trimming policy is reviewed by the City Council's Tree Commission. We will do a full briefing for to the Board of Park Commissioners on May 27 on the Tree Management, Maintenance, Pruning and/or Removal Policy.

Sand Point District – Sign Code Overlay. Parks staff have been working on a Sand Point Sign Overlay to allow signs for the growing number of commercial tenants at Magnuson Park. This legislation will consist of amendments to the City's Sign Code, which is part of the Land Use Code. Staff have made presentations to the MPAC. Before the end of May the Department of Planning and Development will issue an environmental determination on the proposed legislation, which will include a two-week appeal period. After the appeal period ends, we will send legislation through the Mayor's Office for your consideration.

Budget. We submitted our Budget Issue Papers to the budget office on Monday. We are having regular meetings with the Mayor and his staff, and they are being hands-on about our budget. We are working with them to minimize the impacts on public programs and services in the budget reductions we face.

Public nudity. A person who writes to us regularly to ask that we designate a clothing-optional beach came to the Park Board last week to repeat his request. The Board told him it has no intention of designating a beach for that use. I am meeting with him next week to make it clear the answer is no.

P-patches. We are working closely with DON to address equity and access issues

Strategic Action Plan. In anticipation of upcoming budget reductions, we are changing our approach to the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan.

Bell Street Park.

Overflowing trash cans. We had publicity about overflowing trashcans at parks during the Mother's Day weekend, which coincided with: 1) a furlough day and 2) the first really good/beautiful weather weekend of the year. This also happened just days before we started our seasonal crews, which we bring on from mid-May through the end of September. We are working on a plan to ensure park maintenance coverage during our next furlough day, which is Friday, May 28 – the day before Memorial Day weekend.