

RENTON PLANNING COMMISSION
Revised Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2011
6:00 p.m.

Renton City Hall
Conferecing Center

Planning Commissioners Present: Michael Chen, Michael Drollinger, Ray Giometti, Gwendolyn High, Michael O'Halloran, Nancy Osborn, Kevin Poole, Ed Prince, Martin Regge

Parks Commissioners Present: Cynthia Burns, Al Dieckman, Mike O'Donin, Larry Reymann, Tim Searning, Troy Wigestrang

City Staff Present: Chip Vincent, Planning Director; Terry Higashiyama, Community Services Administrator; Leslie Betlach, Parks Planning & Natural Resources Director; Vanessa Dolbee, Senior Planner; Judith Subia, Administrative Secretary

Guests: Kim Unti, Jennifer Schmitz, Paige Seligman, Jesse Wolf, Irina Mironyuk

1. CALL TO ORDER: Commission Chair Prince called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL: Commission Secretary O'Halloran called roll. All Commissioners present.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The Minutes of January 5, 2011 were approved as written.
4. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED: None
5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None
6. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: None
7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:
 - Chip discussed the draft 2011 Work Program and asked the Commission to review the list to see if there are items they would like added and the priority of each item. The Work Program will be discussed at our next meeting. Also on the agenda for the next meeting is the City Center Community Plan.
 - The public comment period for the Quendall Terminals DEIS has been extended to February 9, 2011.
8. JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION & PARKS COMMISSION MEETING:
Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Natural Resources Plan Presentation

RENTON. AHEAD OF THE CURVE

City of
Renton
Community & Economic Development



Introductions for Board Members in attendance:

Parks Commission

Cynthia Burns
Al Dieckman
Mike O'Donin
Larry Reymann, Steering Committee Member,
Environmental Focus Group
Tim Searing, Steering Committee Member
Troy Wigstrand

Planning Commission

Michael Chen
Michael Drollinger
Ray Giometti
Gwendolyn High, Steering Committee Member
Michael O'Halloran
Nancy Osborn
Kevin Poole
Ed Prince
Martin Regge

Planning for Parks, Recreation, and Natural Areas

Ryan Mottau and Lauren Schmitt, MIG ("the Consultant"), gave a presentation regarding the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan. They described the Plan, the planning process, and the roles of both Commissions.

Following is a summary of questions raised and general comments:

The Parks Commission wanted to know whether natural resources included public right-of-ways, or just parks and facilities. The number of trees given was for park lands, it did not include right-of-ways. It was noted however, that the City also maintains the right-of-ways.

The City and Consultant have been engaged through the public process with the School District, County, State, and other agencies. With respect to the Renton School District, the overall Capital Program and specific uses back and forth have been primary topics (in addition to the Lindbergh Pool and the IKEA Performing Arts Center).

It was noted by the Planning Commission that in 2010 the City took over storm drainage systems from King County. The storm drainage systems were designed to be Park Open Space that doubles as storm retention, and the Planning Commission wanted to know if this is being considered. The Interdepartmental Team is pulling this together and discussing. In addition, this document is a living document and can be changed, and can accommodate annual updates.

The Plan will provide flexibility to adjust to changes.

The Parks Commission wanted to know what Boeing would like to see out of this plan. Boeing's primary interests are; adapting to major campus changes, getting people in and out, people cutting through their properties off bike trails, etc. Interesting opportunities for the employee health opportunities, like providing information as to what destinations are within a mile of their facilities, and how to get to Coulon easily for lunch. They are thinking about their relationship with the City and they are definitely aware of their place in the community. Boeing's needs are very specific to their own facilities regarding mass transit.

The Planning Commission noted that there was a lot of strong and vocal support for enhanced and additional skate parks, and that it wasn't just young men that were interested; it includes those who want a safe environment for their children.

One thing that had not been heard is the passion that is out there about the Lindbergh Pool. The Consultant noted there were a number of comments through the on-line questionnaire, and that there is a lot of interest in an all-year facility at the Community Center, and in how to maintain the facilities that are already out there. That is an on-going interest and has been raised pretty strongly in the Community.

The Consultant noted that one of the key assessment items is called an Access Analysis which looks at building a network with access points onto your trails system and onto your park system, and from the street networks.

The Parks Commission noted a goal of most cities is walkable neighborhoods. And, the Planning Commission expanded by saying at the south-end of Union Avenue in the Highlands one could walk to the Maplewood Golf Course, if you could get down there. It was unfortunate that King County sold off a tax lot and it is now completely closed off. Tax lots should be identified for future connections for acquisition.

The Parks Commission noted that back in 1978 and 1993 people would drive to the park. But now with both parents working, it takes too long. The needs to have things within proximity have become much more important.

The Consultant raised a second topic that there are the basic amenities that are spread out throughout the system, and there are also some things that there may be at one location (or a small group of them), but not something provided everywhere throughout the City.

The Planning Commission noted the Coalcreek Y (formerly YMCA) has some good examples and it would be good to look at membership strengths and weaknesses, and see a Y-type facility located here in the lowlands. The Y-type facility would be a huge draw and very successful. Or construct an in-door pool next to the Community Center.

The Parks Commission noted the City has resources that have become more than they were originally intended, they are now regional instead of City facilities. This creates a different problem.

It was noted that one of the things that is very popular and the community desperately wants are Pea Patches. This is an opportunity to reconnect to the past and connect with the community (this can be a cross generational and community bonding place). One or two for each planning area would be a good goal. An example could be New Holly Park in Seattle where Pea Patches exist within a utility right-of-way.

Suggestions from the Boards included:

The old library could be turned into an interactive environmental center. School children could take field trips and it is a perfect place to have salmon information. The point was made for the City to not release the land to a private party.

The Consultant stated that two things we heard from the staff this afternoon; one a sports complex, the second was really more about the capacity of the system. Some people are drawn to sites because they can access long distance bike rides or mountain biking. It may be useful to look at the amenities to occur in a more organized fashion and reduce some of the "pounding" on those precious resources.

Something like Star Fire in the Highlands area would be fabulous. The importance of having a nearby facility for kids to go to after school, and during summer is crucial. Walk ability is essential. Locating facilities in high density areas is important for youth.

The Commissions also noted that annexations should be considered due to the impacts of recent annexations and the City should evaluate how park acreage standards are established.

Recreation Programming

The Parks Commission noted that they would like to see programs for more age groups, and ways for people to interact closer to home; community building is important. It was noted that Renton does an excellent job programming, but that the age of the facilities may limit programming. The older facilities do not have the flexibility for programming. The Parks Commission suggested that another community center that is updated up on the hill would be a definite asset.

The Parks Commission noted the Neighborhood Program builds the community.

The Parks Commission noted the draw that softball complexes have and the positive economic impact. Facilities for tournaments are important and shared across jurisdictions.

It was noted that the School Lunch Programs that operate in City facilities cannot be overlooked.

There was a brief discussion on recreation program revenue services with Leslie Betlach explaining that Recreation Division is currently going through a cost recovery analysis and that the Maplewood Golf Course is an enterprise fund. The Parks Commission also noted that staff completes a comparison analysis on some of the different programs with the other cities and keeps tabs on costs for what is marketable.

The Commissions supported being flexible is paramount; flexible and fluid to be current with recreation programming and educational opportunities. Building facilities need to be flexible and capital investments need to be thoughtful and considerate to allow for flexibility for changing the building facility over time and accommodating trends of recreational opportunities. Cross generational programming and facilities is important. And, it would be nice to have cross generational programming at facilities throughout the city rather than focus types of recreation into specific areas.

Natural Resources

The Planning Commission noted that within the last five years the Salmon Program in the Renton School District was eliminated. It was suggested that it is a hole that needs to be plugged. The downtown Library would be a place to have that kind of opportunity.

Both Commissions noted that natural resources are the City's future and past. There are historical resources (the former Narco Brick Plant for example) and environmental resources (the City Aquifer) that need to be acknowledged and celebrated.

Both Commissions acknowledge the importance and value of the forest canopy as it pertains to storm water management, air quality, and economic value and felt education opportunities are important and should be encouraged. In addition, more and more people are seeking out adult educational opportunities for how to manage their own landscape more naturally.

The Planning Commission wanted to ensure opportunities are not denied to people who are handicapped.

The Parks Commission noted the City does not have a universal access playground and that it would be something that would be good.

The Consultant briefed the Commissions on Green Infrastructure and Grey Infrastructure giving examples of both and explained how they can be integrated into a parks system. The consultant asked the Commissioners to be thinking about how these fit into the "Parks" system. To note ideas or dislikes, or maybe snap pictures of things they find interesting and share these ideas at future meetings.

Community Input

There have been numerous opportunities for the public input. They include stakeholder interviews, focus groups, community interactive workshops, a community questionnaire, and a project website.

Assessing Community Needs

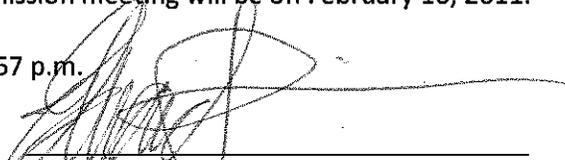
Public input provides a basis for current/desired use, satisfaction, and preliminary priority. Questions asked to assess community needs include: Which recreation opportunities should be provided close to home? When evaluating the need for other types of recreation facilities, how do we balance quality versus quantity? Which outcomes are we trying to achieve with our recreation programming? When looking at programming decision, what additional factors should also be considered? Why are we protecting natural resources within our system of parks and open spaces? The Commissioners were asked how they should consider green infrastructure in the context of parks and open spaces and when and how grey infrastructure could be acceptable within a park or open space. The Commissioners were also asked to look at ideas of what they want and do not want within the park system.

Next Steps

The Steering Committee will meet on February 22. There will be a Committee of the Whole briefing on March 28, and a Visioning Workshop on March 29.

10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS: The next Commission meeting will be on February 16, 2011.

11. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.



Ed Prince, Chair

ABSENT

Michael O'Halloran, Secretary