

Bridlemile Neighborhood Association Board  
c/o SWNI  
7688 SW Capitol Highway  
Portland, OR 97219

March 23, 2000

Dear Commissioner Jim Francesconi, Director Charles Jordan, Nancy Gronowski, Vista Soccer Association members, Wendy Kent, Mr. and Mrs. King, and other concerned neighbors:

The Bridlemile Neighborhood Association Board recognizes that Albert Kelly Park and Thomas Park are City parks, not just neighborhood parks. That the Vista Soccer Association represents a group of citizens, who have the right to ask the neighborhood at large to consider allowing an additional usage be accommodated at these parks; and that the neighborhood has the right to ask, and the City the duty to make sure, that doing so will not adversely affect existing usages or have other adverse effects.

#### ALBERT KELLY PARK

**RUNOFF** According to the engineers hired by the Vista Soccer Association the proposed playfield design will, when the field becomes saturated, direct water to the west and southwest corners of the play area. While this will help those directly to the south of the playfield, those south of the west end are likely to see increased water flows where there is already existing runoff problems.

Proper plantings to the southwest, and along the south side of the entire field area, could help mitigate runoff and improve its quality. The Bridlemile Stream Stewards has expressed willingness to help with the design and implementation of such plantings.

If despite the plantings and other improvements to mitigate drainage, runoff does increase for any of the neighbors the Board would like to see that the proposed plan include a guarantee that the problem will be taken care of, and by whom (City, playfield engineers, Vista Soccer Association?). An insurance policy might be able to cover any such unforeseen expenses.

Whether or not the play areas are developed, the Board hopes that the neighbors, Parks Bureau, and the Bridlemile Stream Stewards will look further into the possible benefits that additional plantings along the south side of Kelly Park might bring to solving the water problems there. And that the City install a grating that will not clog up so easily during rain events at the existing culvert. Even though the culvert belongs to the neighbors the source of the water is from a watershed that is both public and private.

**MULTI-USE** After a rain the new level play area will not dry out as quickly as the current slope, thus making that area less available for other uses during the wet season. This could also delay the first mowing of the area, again taking away from existing off season use. Currently in the wet season people take their dogs there to play frisbee, fetch, on most any day when it is not raining heavily; if the soil were to remain saturated longer it would deteriorate more quickly as we see

happening now at the large play field.

Regarding the loss of quiet places during soccer season. Even when both areas are in play, there are plenty of other areas at the park, treed and open, where people can find quiet, and a quiet view.

Otherwise in the Board's opinion, the proposed level play area adds to multi-use, not subtracts from it, as many of the neighbors contend.

**QUALITY of the FIELD** The Board recommends that soil amendments be added so that a better quality of turf can be grown. The compacted clay soil without such amendments, together with the soil staying saturated longer, will result in a rapid deterioration of the play surface and a loss of use in the wet season. A friable soil blend will facilitate storm water better than compacted clay.

**TRAFFIC and PARKING** The Board acknowledges that this change will result in more traffic in the area, especially on Mitchell. The Board has two concerns: Will the increased number of cars, parked or doing drop-offs, on Mitchell during soccer practice leave sufficient access for fire or other emergency vehicles? Will the other additional uses the new play field enables, e.g. frisbee, lacrosse, etc., result in too much traffic on that street?

**FULL CAPACITY USE of EXISTING FIELD** Regarding whether or not the existing field is used to full capacity; the Board has heard from neighbors around the existing field that although there may be less use on Fridays and Mondays, the field is indeed used almost all of the days available. Also some have expressed concern that actual full use might damage the field.

Others have asked whether or not the need for more practice fields could be met by simply extending the season, by starting it earlier in the year, or perhaps even having two seasons?

## THOMAS PARK

**RUNOFF** The leveling of the play area there will cause more runoff into the creek. The Board would like to see a plan to address this, perhaps planting and bio-swale could be used to detain runoff. The Bridlemile Stream Stewards has expressed willingness to help with the design and implementation of such plantings.

**TRAFFIC and PARKING** Traffic is the number one concern the Board has heard from neighbors in that area. People are worried that someone will be hurt because of the speed of traffic in the area. Nancy Gronowski has stated that they will work with Transportation "if" problems arise. The neighbors are saying there already "is" a problem. The proposal should mention what kinds of solutions may be used, e.g. speed bumps, additional signage, diagonal parking, etc.

**WALK TO PARK** Neighbors have made the claim that the city promised them that Thomas Park would not be a drive-to park, but a walk-to park. If the neighbors have evidence of this promise, they should present it to the City, and the City should reply.

## PROCESS and NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

This experience has shown the benefits neighborhood involvement can bring. The neighbors represented by the Vista Soccer Association have committed and spent their own money and time to try to improve soccer facilities in the area through these proposals. The neighbors who live in the immediate vicinity of the parks have provided history and additional specific information regarding the water runoff and other existing problems, as well as potential new problems at the sites, which have led to better proposals for each site. The Bridlemile Stream Stewards have provided numerous suggestions (and offered to help implement them) which could further help mitigate the problems raised by the proposals.

Although current regulations did not require the notification of neighborhood regarding proposals of this scope; we hope that the level of concern raised and the benefits that involving all neighbors from the neighborhood (not just those represented by the Soccer Association) have brought, will result in a change to that policy. The Board feels strongly that if the neighborhood had been notified earlier, perhaps at the time when the Vista Soccer Association proposal began to be considered seriously by the City, doing so would have resulted in a much less divisive and polarized discussion. The SWNI Parks Committee has suggested that any change that involves a permit (e.g. the grading permits required in the current proposals) would be a better criteria to trigger neighborhood notification.

The SWNI Parks Committee reports that new regulations are about to adopted which ask each neighborhood to create a vision of how each of their parks should be used and developed in the coming years. We look forward to the opportunity this will provide for neighborhoods to work more closely with the City on Parks issues.

### Bridlemile Neighborhood Association Board

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