

July 10, 2015

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
100 Dexter Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing this letter on behalf of the Pelly Place Association, petitioning the Board to reject the Supplemental Use Guidelines proposed by the Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff.

The Pelly Place Association was formed in 1986. Composed of the residents of a West Seattle neighborhood, the purpose of the Association was to protect Pelly Place, a wooded ravine in an environmentally sensitive area, from private real estate development.

The concerted efforts of the Association led to the inclusion of Pelly Place in the City's first Open Spaces measure put before the Seattle electorate in 1989 and the subsequent acquisition of an additional parcel as part of the King County Conservation Futures Fund Bond Issue of 1994.

Now once again, nearly 30 years after our association was formed, we find our city's natural areas and greenspaces under threat of a different kind of development: unspecified "new uses" that would include mountain bike, rope, and "challenge" courses, ziplines, and other so-called "recreational" activities. These activities are incompatible with the purpose of our natural areas, greenbelts and open spaces.

"Greenspaces Policy" as codified in the Seattle City Council's Resolution 28653 in 1993 identifies the purposes for which these lands are to be dedicated:

The purpose of a greenspaces designation is to establish priority areas for preservation to: 1) help preserve natural landscape and habitat for wildlife, 2) provide natural buffers between land uses of different intensity or areas of distinct character or identity, 3) help mitigate the effects of noise and air pollution, and 4) help reduce the necessity for constructed storm water systems and 5) help preserve the quality of natural drainage systems and enhance the stability of the land. Greenspaces, with their natural environmental character, **will only be used for low impact activities and will complement the City's parks and recreation system where open space may be used in a more active manner. (Emphasis added.)**

The proposed Supplemental Use Guidelines fly in the face of the City Council's Resolutions 27852 (1988) and 28653 (1993), which created the Open Spaces program, not to mention Seattle Parks and Recreation's own Best Management Practices for Natural Areas (2005). In light of this consistent history of articulated policy, it is virtually inconceivable that Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff would recommend their adoption.

We believe that appropriate "recreational activities" are those involved with environmental education, watershed preservation, forest restoration, and stewardship, as defined for natural areas and greenbelts in Seattle Parks and Recreation's own Classification System of January 8, 2015, p. 7.

For example, in 2003 members of the Pelly Place community worked alongside Earth Corps volunteers to remove invasive species in accordance with the Pelly Place Ravine Restoration Project for which the Association received a Small and Simple Matching Fund grant in 1996. And in 2009, students from Gatewood Elementary School and Chief Sealth International High School

accompanied Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai on a day of cleanup and tree planting in the ravine. Art Wolfe, the renowned nature photographer and a decades-long resident of Pelly Place and founding member of the Association, has documented this extraordinary visit:

<http://artwolfe.photoshelter.com/gallery/BLOG-Pelly-Place-EEAW-Award/G0000RFHCwyBR3kM>

<http://artwolfe.com/2011/03/21/4020/>

These are the “passive” recreational uses that Seattle’s Open Spaces policies originally envisioned and should encourage. As noted by Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle’s population is projected to grow significantly in coming years; it is our belief that these passive uses will become even more critical, precious and valued under such a scenario and that we should prioritize protection of natural areas and greenbelts as sanctuaries and refuges for natural habitat, wildlife, and people, alike.

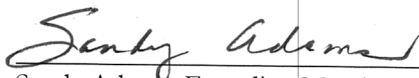
Our neighborhood organization is but one of many throughout the city that have worked assiduously to protect a precious resource for current and future generations. Other individuals and community groups have spoken and written letters in opposition to the Supplemental Use Guidelines. Specifically, we would like it noted for the record that we wholeheartedly endorse the letter written by John Barber, Chair of the Leschi Parks and Greenspace Committee and former Park Board member.

Wangari Maathai was fond of telling the Tale of the Hummingbird—a tiny creature that worked furiously to put out a raging forest fire drop by drop while other, much larger animals watched in disbelief. When asked why she, such a small bird, was working to extinguish the fire, she replied, “I am doing what I can.”

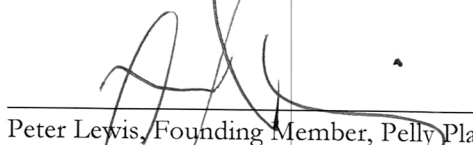
Although we acknowledge that Pelly Place Natural Area is the smallest of the City’s designated Natural Areas and would probably not be affected by the implementation of the proposed guidelines, we are concerned about the broader principle at stake: we have worked—and will continue working—tirelessly to preserve our precious and imperiled Open Spaces, Natural Areas and Greenbelts. We will do the best we can.

We urge the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners to reject the Supplemental Use Guidelines proposed by the Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff.

Sincerely yours,



Sandy Adams, Founding Member, Pelly Place Association
sadamsws@gmail.com



Peter Lewis, Founding Member, Pelly Place Association
peterlewis9@comcast.net

Pelly Place Association members in opposition to the proposed Supplemental Use Guidelines:

Linda Rivaldi

John Turiano

Robert A. Swisberg

Kate Stannard

Kurt Schaefer

Fred Pot

Ann Pot-Staton

Trihigh Tucker

Travis Osborne

Linda Rivaldi

John Turiano

Robert A. Swisberg

Kate Stannard

Kurt Schaefer

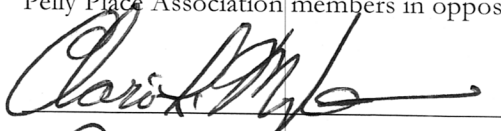
Fred Pot

Ann Pot-Staton

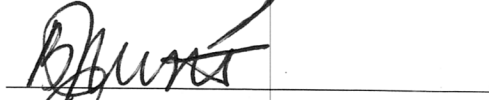
Trihigh Tucker

Travis Osborne

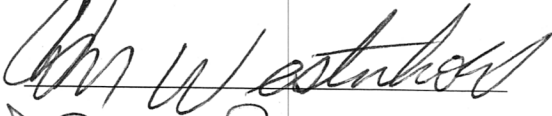
Pelly Place Association members in opposition to the proposed Supplemental Use Guidelines:



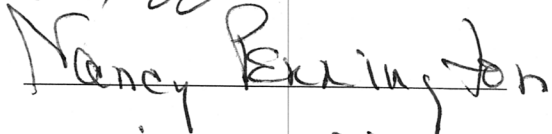
CLARE MAYBEE



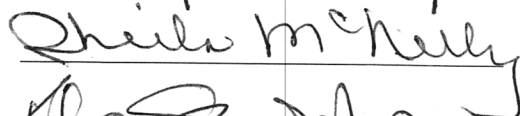
BARB AMO



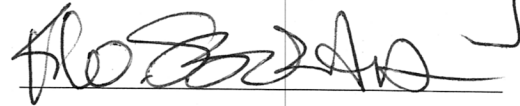
DAN WESTERHOLD



NANCY PENNINGTON



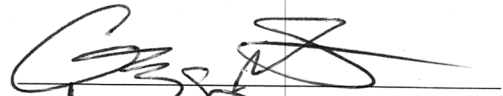
SHEILA ^{MCNELLY} ~~McNELLY~~



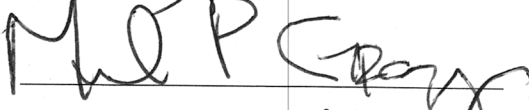
KAT SZOBOTA

Monica Skov

MONICA SKOV



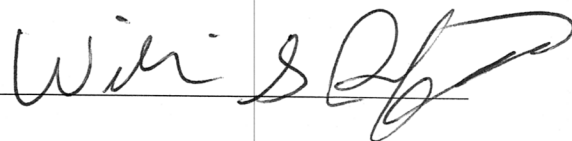
GREG SKOV



MIKE GRANICK



BRETT MILLER



BILL ROSENFELD