

Laurelhurst Community Club

Serving 2800 Households and Businesses in Seattle's Laurelhurst Neighborhood

November 11, 2005

Kate Lloyd
4303 NE 35th Street
Seattle, Washington 98105

RE: Waterway No. 1

Dear Kate,

Thanks for your message of November 7th regarding improvements to Waterway No. 1. As you know, there are two separate issues with this site. There is the design project that is currently underway and there is the question of private uses along the boundaries of the property.

Community involvement in planning for Waterway No. 1. In regard to the design project, there was a neighborhood meeting, which you attended on September 15, where consensus was reached on a number of improvements our neighbors would like to see at the waterway. The neighbors also agreed that improvements should be implemented in phases starting at the water's edge with large rock steps to improve safety and access.

As you are aware, the rocks were installed on November 4th. They are slip-resistant granite and they blend in nicely with the rest of the bulkhead. Shredded wood chips have been delivered to the site to protect the disturbed soil areas. This process was coordinated by Shane DeWald, the City's landscape architect who got the installation approved through the Department of Planning and Development and obtained a Shoreline Master Plan/SEPA exemption based on the limited scope of the project.

Shane is now working on a draft design for the upland portion of the waterway. This design is to be strictly based on the consensus reached at the September 15 meeting and will include a drought-tolerant landscape area with a path and benches, a large lawn area next to the basketball court, a refurbished basketball court, and a planted parking strip. When available, the design will be distributed to the neighbors for comment. These comments will be incorporated into the final design. The project will, as noted above, be phased and the timing of the phases will depend on getting funding. The funds already made available will not complete the entire project.

As mentioned at the design meeting, stewardship groups will be formed to address various phases of the project. This is going to be another great opportunity for neighbors to be involved. It was agreed at the meeting that specialty stewardships would work best: landscaping, grass maintenance, and basketball court improvements.

Private use of public property. The issue of property boundaries is entirely separate from the design project. As you may know, private leasing of public property is common. Both adjacent property owners have Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) regulatory permits authorizing the private use of portions of Waterway Number 1. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) acknowledges the SDOT permits and, additionally, has the authority to negotiate proprietary fees with the property owners if the uses are consistent with DNR regulations, which they appear to be.

The Laurelhurst Community Club has a policy of supporting incentives that minimize the private use of public property. In light of this policy we have been working for several years with SDOT and DNR to get the private uses of public property at Waterway Number 1 properly permitted, which has not happened until recently. The permit fees alone may prove to be enough incentive for the adjacent neighbors to remove their encroachments in part or in full. Coupled with the DNR proprietary permit fees, reduction or removal seems quite likely.

It is the intention of the Laurelhurst Community Club under its current policy, which was established while you were on the board of trustees, to allow the adjacent neighbors to respond to the increased fees. The current board members will be reviewing policies and issues relating to the waterways and shoreline street ends in the neighborhood over the next several months. All of these shoreline public access areas involve private use of the public property by adjacent property owners.

Dock issues. In regard to the dock, this is a question to ask of the Department of Planning and Development as that office permitted the dock and the pilings. As you may recall, when the dock was originally rebuilt and permitted, it was not built as a floating dock as required by regulations. Modifications were made and the dock was moved.

At the time the dock was rebuilt for the third time and permitted by DPD, LCC was told that the new dock would extend 12 feet into the public waterway. LCC was not aware that large boats would be parked on the waterway side of the dock, nor were we aware that pilings would be installed even further into the waterway. As you know, the location where boats currently park and the pilings interfere with launching non-motorized boats.

LCC has been in touch with the new owners of the property to discuss the possibility of removing the pilings and having them park their boat on the other side of the dock (necessitating removal of the boat lift that is located on that side of the dock). The new owners seem receptive to this possibility but have not had an opportunity to deal with it as they have not yet moved into their home.

Waterway No. 1 project management. LCC is extremely fortunate to have Liz Ogden as the lead on Waterway #1 issues. She has successfully worked with SDOT on the six shoreline street ends in the neighborhood, continues to monitor these issues and report to the board, and represents LCC on Friends of Shoreline Street Ends. She also coordinated the community process in development of the North Laurelhurst Transportation Master Plan.

Years ago, Liz volunteered to take on the issue of waterways in the neighborhood for LCC. Without dissent, LCC accepted Liz's offer to coordinate waterway issues. LCC appreciates Liz's consistent conscientious work and the expertise she has developed and continues to share with the board.

I hope that we have answered your questions. We have an extremely full November agenda, but neighbors are always welcome to address the board during the "calls and concerns" portion of the agenda in case you would like to join us.

Sincerely,

Jeannie

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cc: Senator Ken Jacobsen, Rex Thompson, Department of Natural Resources