



Skate Park Advisory Committee

City of Seattle

Duty now for the future!

To: Michael McGinn, Seattle Mayor
Christopher Williams, Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) Superintendent
Sally Bagshaw and Richard Conlin, Seattle City Councilmembers
Cc: Kevin Stoops, Susan Golub, and Kelly Davidson, Parks
Matthew Johnston and Scott Shinn, Parks Skate Park Advisory Committee (SPAC)
From: Ryan Barth, Chairperson SPAC
RE: Roxhill Skatepark – Donation Letter of Concern and Recommendations
Date: June 20, 2011

The SPAC is writing you today to express our concern with Parks continued progress towards awarding California Skateparks a “sole source” design contract for the Roxhill Skatepark, as a result of the donation made by the Dyrdek Foundation. The donation includes free skatepark design services by California Skateparks for the Roxhill Skatepark, which already includes a fully funded design and construction budget based on approval of the Parks For All Levy passed by Seattle voters.

The SPAC is very happy that the Parks Superintendent and Mayor have come out so strongly in favor of skateparks as a result of the Dyrdek Foundations donation offer in May 2011. We also feel very fortunate that the Dyrdek Foundation recognized Seattle for being a leader in skatepark planning and funding, and wanted to contribute finances to help further our leadership. However, we are disappointed that neither the Parks Superintendent nor the Mayor made any attempt to consult with the SPAC to evaluate the terms and affects of the donation, especially given the SPAC was the lead stakeholder group responsible for evaluating and lobbying for funding of this skatepark. Although we have supported Parks on skatepark issues for eight years and are clearly the primary stakeholder and resource on these issues, we only learned that the Parks Superintendent and Mayor were going to accept the donation without these necessary consultations and evaluations one day in advance of the donation offer. Had we been consulted, we would have shared with you several concerns based on our knowledge of skatepark issues in this region and nationally. These important concerns are summarized below and identify why the donation does not provide a true benefit to Seattle or the skaters that will use this skatepark. Our desire is to raise these concerns proactively to attempt to ensure the best possible skatepark design is developed for this project.

1. Seattle Parks has an established objective design selection process and this donation undermines that objectives process.

The existing Seattle Parks skatepark design selection process includes a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for consultant services. The RFQ summarizes the skatepark project location and schedule, the budget and scope of requested services, the requirements for

consultant qualifications, the selection process, and the RFQ rating criteria. The RFQ states that the consultant responses will be evaluated by a Consultant Evaluation Committee that will include a cross-section of individuals, including, but not limited to, City of Seattle staff, Parks staff, and community representatives. The RFQ further states that these individuals will rank the consultant responses based on evaluation of the following five consultant submittals:

- Letter of interest showing the passion and creativity of the consultant
- Summary of the project team demonstrating the consultant team has the necessary expertise
- Summary of project examples showing the consultant team has the necessary experience
- Description of consultants recommendations for the skatepark design at the identified location to show their team is creative and passionate about this project
- A set of construction documents and specifications from a similar project to show the consultant has the demonstrated ability to produce construction documents suitable for public bid

The unconditional approval of the Dyrdek Foundation design services donation does not allow the above established objective review and rating process to occur. Therefore, Parks and Seattle skateboarders are unable to evaluate California Skateparks passion and creativity, expertise, experience, and demonstrated ability to produce construction documents suitable for public bid. The SPAC spent considerable time and energy lobbying for identification and procurement of funding for this skatepark and finds it unacceptable that a donation will eliminate our ability to ensure the best possible designer is chosen for this project. For example, what leverage does Parks and/or the SPAC have to ensure California Skateparks is creative and passionate about making this the best possible skatepark since they are not getting paid for their services? The SPAC urges Parks that this donation, and future similar donations for design services where funding is already procured, be evaluated using the above criteria and that the donation should only be accepted if the consultant exceeds a pre-defined rating threshold.

2. The savings resulting from the donated design services are not guaranteed to result in a better skatepark.

During the acceptance of the donation, the Mayor stated that an amount equal to the donation would be removed from the existing funding for the skatepark, and placed back into the Parks For All Levy general fund to support other projects. If this is true, the SPAC is even more concerned that the donation was unconditionally accepted because Seattle is truly not receiving any benefit from the donation, which is unfair due to the substantial amount of work and lobbying completed by advocates, community members, and skateboarders, went into acquiring the existing funding for the project. In addition, if true the Dyrdek Foundation would be very disappointed to learn that their donation did not result in additional skateable terrain or improvements to the already funded Roxhill Skatepark. If the Mayors statement was misspoken and the design savings were maintained for this project, there is no means to identify how much of the savings would result in an improved skatepark because the savings would be directly linked to the construction bids (i.e., if the construction bids are above the engineers estimate for the design, the design savings would be used to cover the construction cost increase).

3. California Skateparks submitted a response to the Roxhill Skatepark RFQ and the objective Consultant Evaluation Committee rated them lowest

During the initial round of ratings by the Consultant Evaluation Committee appointed by Parks as a part of the selection process for the Roxhill Skatepark, California Skateparks was rated the lowest of all received consultants, with only one vote by any Committee member. The

Committee was composed a Parks planner, two Parks landscape architects, the Chair of the Judkins Park Oversight Committee, a member of the Westwood Neighborhood Council, and a member of the SPAC. The SPAC representative found that the California Skateparks submission lacked detail, site awareness, and inspiration. These objective evaluations by a wide range of participants (skaters and non-skaters) clearly show that California Skateparks would not be selected as the designer for this skatepark in the absence of the donated services. Therefore, acceptance of this donation results in the selection of a sub-standard design consultant for this project.

4. In exchange for the donation we are relinquishing a considerable amount of control and input on what kind of skatepark goes into this site.

California Skateparks does not design the kind of skatepark that will work best at this site. The Roxhill Skatepark requires a custom design due to the site's unique restrictions. The site is inhabited with mature trees, and therefore requires a non-contiguous design that incorporates these trees. The SPAC has researched California Skatepark designs throughout the country and feels that they are not a good fit for this unique site because they generally design skateparks with large, open footprints and limited site constraints. A large, open street plaza at this site would require the removal of many, if not all, of the trees. The SPAC does not support the removal of mature trees to build skateparks. At this site, the SPAC advocates for the selection of other skatepark designers that have a documented portfolio that includes the integration of creative non-contiguous designs that account for constraints such as trees. For example, another consultant that responded to the RFQ is from this area, has constructed a number of non-contiguous designs both in Washington State and nationally, and was rated very high by the Consultant Evaluation Committee.

5. It's not clear that the skateboarders will realize any benefit from this donation.

The SPAC would like to emphasize that this skatepark project is fully funded so a donation is not necessary/warranted for this project unless there is a clearly identified benefit to be gained by the donation. We are unable to identify sufficient benefits to outweigh the above identified concerns. In exchange for accepting this donation on our behalf without consulting us first, we are effectively being forced to inherit the lowest rated design consultant (by Parks own selection process), with an increased risk of building a lower quality skatepark for the site or the community that will be using it.

Again, the SPAC appreciates the supportive spirit behind the Mayor's and Parks Superintendent acceptance of the donation. However, we hope that the concerns raised above will lead to rejection of the donation and the selection of the best designer identified by the Parks appointed Consultant Selection Committee. As time permits, please let me know how Parks will proceed with selection of the design consultant for the Roxhill Skatepark taking into account the above raised concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further.