

From: [Sarah Fletcher](#)
To: [Doris Cassan](#)
Cc: [Dan Thompson](#); [Council](#); [Parks & Rec Commission](#); [Jessi Bon](#); [Ryan Daly](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Ashley Hay](#); [Ray Akers](#); [aql1@cornell.edu](#); [Ira Appelman](#); [Matthew Goldbach](#); [Lloyd Gilman](#); [Elizabeth Buckley](#); [Bob Harper](#); [Cary Zwingle](#); [Traci Granbois](#); [Mike Cero](#); [Gary Robinson](#); [Dwight Schaeffer](#); [Rob Dunbabin](#); [Robin Russell](#); [Susan Lund](#); [Thomas Acker](#); [Tom Acker](#); [Gary Robinson](#); [John Hall](#); [Olivia Lippens](#); [Dave Oberg](#); [Robert Medved](#); [Mark Coen](#); [John](#); [jkennedy59@me.com](#); [Morrene Jacobson](#); [Joy Matsuura](#); [lsarchin@aol.com](#); [Meg Lippert](#); [Lou Glatz](#); [Lori Robinson](#); [Ryan Rahlfs](#); [Rebecca Wilson](#)
Subject: Re: Parks Zone/February 8 Joint Planning Commission--Parks Commission Meeting.
Date: Thursday, January 25, 2024 7:47:43 PM

Hello, I agree. You can blame Jessi Bon, staff and the city council. And as for that PROS Plan, it seems like that was just for us to receive grants. And as for making out that the community plays an important part, they couldn't care less what we have to say.

"05 Mar 2021

Beaches! Trails! Pickleball! The **community plays an important role** in the planning process- sharing your vision for the parks and recreation system and identifying priorities for future programs and investments. We want to hear about your ideas on a range of parks topics, including waterfront parks, trails, and balancing park uses."

The City of Mercer Island is restarting our Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan planning. The PROS Plan is a six-year guide and strategic plan for managing and enhancing parks, open space, trails, recreation and arts opportunities. The community plays a key role in the planning process, expressing what recreational opportunities the City should offer in our parks and identifying priorities for future programs and investments."

What future programs and investments were they talking about?

And actually, it seems staff and the City Council, they are all to blame because they are the ones who asked for The Comprehensive Plan to be updated with this stupid zone in that it states: "City Council added creation of a new Parks Zone to the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update scope of work with Resolution No. 1621."

"The City of Mercer Island is updating its Comprehensive Plan as part of the periodic review required by the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA). **The City Council added creation of a new Parks Zone to the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update scope of work with Resolution No. 1621.** This update, including the new Parks Zone, is expected to be adopted before the GMA deadline at the end of 2024. WHAT IS THE PARKS ZONE? The Parks Zone would be a new zoning district in the City. This zone would establish specific land use regulations for development within the zone. As drafted, only city-owned, -leased, or -managed land would be eligible for designation under the Parks Zone. The intent of regulating land use in these designated parks

It is staff who put the language in the drafts. Council don't put the language in their documents, they are never told the implications of what their votes mean. They should be asking those questions. Had staff not put this language in, neither the Parks Commission, the Planning Commission and Council would not have known anything about these things and we could have all relaxed. But no, we can't, not with what they have on the agenda. This is what they have:

"The following land uses are proposed to be allowed in the Parks Zone; any use not listed in the regulations would be prohibited: Recreational uses. Recreational facilities. Agricultural activities for educational or recreational purposes, such as community gardens. Government offices and government services. Public parking, parking structures, and underground parking. Temporary uses and structures, including farmer's markets and special events, authorized by the City Manager or designee. Transit stops. Public art. Signs. Wireless communications facilities. Utilities. Utilities must be placed underground whenever feasible."

I just hope they take all of it out except for the farmer's market and special events and recreational purposes with a definition of which recreational purposes. That is good enough. We all have PTSD from that whole MICA fight and Tully's Mainstreet fight.

And I don't see anything about making the parks toxic-free zones. Why do you think there is no mention of not allowing toxics invasives in the parks? Wouldn't people want to know that they can walk around the parks knowing that they are toxic-free?

Sarah Fletcher

On Thu, Jan 25, 2024 at 7:14 PM dc [dollarseattle.com](mailto:dc@dollarseattle.com) <dc@dollarseattle.com> wrote:

This is so, so disappointing. Would the Parks Levy have passed if this type of conversations had been out in the open. I think not. I know I would have not done so. Thank you guys/gals for continuing to be are eyes and ears. Really appreciate it. dc

From: Dan Thompson <danielphompson@hotmail.com>

Date: Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 2:06 PM

To: council@mercergov.org <council@mercergov.org>

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Subject: Parks Zone/February 8 Joint Planning Commission--Parks Commission Meeting.

Hello, I watched the parks commission and planning commission meetings on the new parks zone. I think the planning commission is not well suited to this issue. I and others complained about the short notice the parks commission was given to review the draft zone. **Thank you to Mayor Nice for scheduling a joint parks-planning commission meeting on Feb. 8 that should be in person. The parks commission should really be driving this debate. This is NOT a development debate. It is how to prohibit as much as possible development in our parks.**

I have tried to copy some of the citizens who have worked so hard over the last 15 years to protect and preserve our parks.

For *many* years I have told councils and city managers that parks should *always* be a win. When parks are not a "win" it gets ugly. Probably the smartest thing Jessi did after the acrimonious Aubrey Davis Park Master Plan process was to form the parks commission. The parks commission gets it: they represent the parks, and the citizens, and not the city or council.

Here are the basic issues for the joint meeting:

1. Which parks are placed into the parks zone. IMO if it has "park" in the name it needs to go into the zone or this process will look phony, and any park not included will create suspicion the council plans to develop that "park".

2. The USES allowed should be the same as today: only *park-related development or uses are allowed*, and to many extents the PROS plan reflects this. Ideally, we can move YFS to a new city hall, or allow a conditional use permit for *existing* non-park related uses. We do it all the time. Instead the city is trying to tailor the regulatory limits and uses in the zone to accommodate a few non-conforming conditional uses.

3. The regulatory limits must reflect the surrounding zone unless they are less in the new parks zone. Nearly every park sits in the residential zone. The mistake Ryan and the city make is requesting greater a regulatory limit for height (35') when the height limit is 30' under the RDS, and not understanding there are regulatory limits for GFAR, yard setbacks, impervious surface limits, and so on for any zone.

4. NO NEW NET IMPERVIOUS SURFACE LIMITS. This has been a central tenant at the parks commission and is the most important factor that serves as a safeguard for all the other factors, as even the CPD recognizes. The problem is the planning doesn't understand this, the decades long history of this concept, and how central this issue was to the PROS plan that the planning commission members never participated in.

5. THERE MUST BE A HEIGHTENED STANDARD FOR THE COUNCIL TO CHANGE THE USE OR ZONING OF ANY PARK IN THE ZONE. The whole motivation of a parks zone is due to past councils trying to change the zoning or use of our parks (including this council). If we create a parks zone but allow this or a future council to rezone our parks simply based

on a majority vote we haven't protected any park by this zone. It will be a Trojan Horse. This is why some citizens wanted a municipal trust for our parks. My suggestion is a VOTE OF THE CITIZENS is required before the use or zoning of a park in the zone is changed.

If I could only get numbers 4 and 5 it would be a great start This parks zone was promised to be in good faith and legitimate during the campaign to renew the parks levy and increase it, and the city and council need to be honest and act in good faith during this process.

Let the parks commission lead.

Thank you.

Daniel Thompson

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