



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE
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May 18, 2006

TO: IAC Members and Designees
FROM: Marguerite Austin, Recreational Grants Program
SUBJECT: King County's "Sixty Acres South" – Conversion Issues

SUMMARY

At the April meeting, several members of the public asked IAC to intervene in King County's plan to convert a park that currently is used mainly by rocketry and model plane enthusiasts to one that is leased by a local soccer association. King County has withdrawn its request to convert the park so there is no current action before the board; however this memo provides background on the issue and describes IAC's authority for future action.

BACKGROUND

In 1968, King County received a \$750,000 grant to purchase a number of properties along the Sammamish River for development of a regional trail. In all, King County purchased 500 acres through this grant, with some properties being linear and others being larger parcels for trailheads and parks. The property in question is called 60 Acres South, and is a larger parcel.

In September 2004, King County presented a multi-site conversion request. The County Parks and Recreation Department had recently changed its focus from providing parks in urban areas to providing a few, regional-scale parks and trails. The County proposed to replace some of the original 500 acres with land in areas that matched its new direction and that had unmet recreational needs.

The conversion request involved transfer of about 34.25 acres of 60 Acres South to the Lake Washington Soccer Association, a nonprofit organization, for the purpose of developing soccer fields. The County planned to reserve a trail easement so it could continue to operate the Sammamish River Trail.



To streamline some of the administrative work needed for the multi-site conversion, IAC and the County packaged several proposed conversion sites and their replacements together as part of one request. The request also included delegating authority to the Director to oversee the administrative tasks required for implementation. IAC approved the conversion request in Resolution #2004-32 (September 2004).

Following the September 2004 meeting, IAC staff notified the County of the conversion package approval and has sent reminders of documentation that remains outstanding. King County's lead staff in assisting with the conversion package no longer works for the county so little work has been done to finalize the outstanding conversions.

MOST RECENT ACTION

Recent action by King County to implement the approved conversion resulted in a flurry of interest in the 60 Acres South site. In February 2006, IAC received several requests to rescind the conversion approval so that the current recreational uses would be allowed to continue. On March 31, 2006, King County asked IAC staff to remove 60 Acres South from the conversion package. The County indicated it will continue ownership of the property and is committed to ensuring the park remains available for recreational use per the terms of the IAC agreement.

FUTURE BOARD ACTION

While King County has withdrawn its request, its plan for the site may include a lease to a soccer association, a use that likely would displace the current users. If King County enters into a long-term lease or use agreement with a private entity to develop or manage the property, IAC staff has asked to review the terms of that agreement to ensure it complies with the IAC Project Agreement and other applicable policies.

The IAC's role will be to ensure that the site is available for recreation but IAC cannot direct the County to operate it for any particular form of recreation. IAC staff has encouraged concerned recreationists to work with the County to resolve their concerns.