

May 8, 2014

Magnolia Historical Society Response to letter written by Friends of  
Discovery Park February 23, 2014  
Letter of Support - Privatization Process  
Re: Privatization and Historic Guideline Process - Fort Lawton Historic  
District

Mayor Ed Murray

Cc:

Christopher Williams, Director Parks and Recreation  
Bernie Matsuno, Director Department of Neighborhoods  
Sally Bagshaw, Seattle City Council, Parks Committee Chair  
Karen Gordon, City Preservation Officer  
Diane Sugimura, Department of Development and Planning  
Dear Mayor Murray:

The Magnolia Historical Society Board agrees with the letter below and would like to go on record as supporting the ideas expressed. We are in favor of continuing the process of privatization, as stated it was not our first choice; but, we have long and faithfully participated in the process, have confidence in it and do not see any reason to stop progress or in taking any legal recourse to do so.

It remains an utmost desire of ours to work with the developer to insure the Historic Guidelines and the Discovery Park Master Plan of solitude and tranquility continue at these residences.

(signed)

Jeff Cunningham

President, Magnolia Historical Society

April 1, 2014

Response to letter written by Friends of Discovery Park  
Re: Privatization and Historic Guideline Process - Fort Lawton Historic District

Mayor Ed Murray

Cc:

Christopher Williams, Director Parks and Recreation  
Bernie Matsuno, Director Department of Neighborhoods  
Sally Bagshaw, Seattle City Council, Parks Committee Chair  
Karen Gordon, City Preservation Officer

Dear Mayor Murray:

I am writing to correct the record.

The letter written by Julia N Allen, February 23, 2014, on behalf of Friends of Discovery Park has just come to my attention. While the privatization of the historic homes at Fort Lawton was not the first choice for many of us during the long time-period that this was transpiring, it became abundantly clear: that though Friends hoped to change the course of this, they were unsuccessful. They were unable to pull together the parties and the money to stop the privatization for many reasons: the economy downturn being one of the realities. The section of the letter that most concerned me, as a participant in the Historic Guideline Process, is the claim:

"But in the end, all of our comments and requests went unheeded by the Department of Neighborhoods and the Landmarks Preservation Board. They never even acknowledged the unique location of this Landmark District completely surrounded by City parkland, and they did nothing to protect the Park from adverse influences by the occupants of the private in-holdings. Instead they claimed there was no difference between the Harvard-Belmont Historic District on Capitol Hill and the Fort Lawton Historic District in Discovery Park."

This is simply not true. Friends of Discovery Park were a consistent and outspoken partner in the process. Their suggestions were certainly heard, considered, and many were incorporated into the Final Guidelines. The Park was constantly on all of our minds throughout the process as was the intent to protect the Park from resident's behaviors that would interfere with the Park's Master Plan of quiet and solitude; and, preserve the history of these homes.

There have been residents living in the homes decades longer than the Park's existence. There already existed a Historic District within the Park (that is not well-maintained and that remains a concern and an issue of the Magnolia Historical Society). And, you should rest assured: the Guidelines were fairly arrived at and represent a good set of restrictions that, in my mind, will not allow change to houses, the Park or its use in any significantly adverse way. The integrity of the Master Plan was upheld by the Guidelines.

Further, her statement below is problematic:

"Now the properties are going to be sold to a private developer who has plans to subdivide them into 22 individual lots. That will be 22 different owners with their 22 different ideas and interpretations and their 22 different adversarial attorneys :( :( :( No one can seriously dismiss the detrimental impact this will have on Discovery Park."

Again, this is untrue. The division comes as a natural part of setting up private residences. These private residences will be formed into a Home Owner's Association in which the Guidelines will be part of the leading principles and conditions of living there; limiting litigation on issues and upholding the principles of the protections they set up. It is my sincere hope that as we enter the reality of the privatization of the property the groups that have been involved and have interest in history, preservation and Discovery Park will continue to work together to make this a most positive collaboration that preserves history, respects the Master Plan of Discovery Park and ushers in a new era with grace.

Sincerely,

Monica Wooton  
Past-President of the Magnolia Historical Society, Participant in Fort  
Lawton Historic Guidelines  
Process