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NEWSPAPER SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT PORTLAND, OREGON

City Club of Portland

BULLETIN

Portland, Oregon

Vol. 58, No. 55

Benson Hotel, Mayfair Room

12:00 Noon

Friday, May 19, 1978

THE SPEAKER:

EUGENE J. McCARTHY

THE TOPIC:

WHY JIMMY CARTER IS IN TROUBLE

A national political columnist recently expressed the view that President Carter "has helped put together the coalition that is out to beat him." Such observations have prompted speculation that the President will face a serious challenge in the 1980 primaries.

Eugene McCarthy, former U.S. Senator, sought the presidential nomination in 1968 and 1976. He now resides in Washington, D.C., is a columnist for the *Washington Star*, and an author and lecturer. From both experience in national politics, and his current vantage point, McCarthy provides a special perspective on the problems facing the Carter administration.

Printed herein for discussion and action on Friday, May 19, 1978:

**REPORT ON
PARK IMPROVEMENT SPECIAL LEVY
(City of Portland Measure No. 51)**

NOTE: The meeting will begin promptly at 12:20 with discussion of the Park Levy report.

"To inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse in them a realization of the obligation of citizenship."

PROPOSED FOR MEMBERSHIP

If no objections are received by the Executive Secretary prior to June 2, 1978, the following applicants will be accepted for membership:

Diane C. Gomez, Vice President, Area Manager, Equitable Savings & Loan. Sponsored by John Mason.

Paul Olson, Manager, Energy Conservation, Neil Kelly Co. Sponsored by Thelma Lester.

Robert W. Gable, Vice President, McIntosh & Gable, Inc., Real Estate Development. Sponsored by Sue McGrath.

Maxine Thompson, Assistant to the Director, Oregon Dept. of Economic Development. Sponsored by Roger Eiss.

Helen Williams, Bookkeeper, Mainlander Services. Sponsored by Paul Trimble.

Donald G. McIntosh, Real Estate Broker, McIntosh & Gable, Inc. Sponsored by Sue McGrath.

Jeannette R. Egger, Management and Personnel Consultant. Sponsored by Donald W. Williams.

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

Robert L. Wolf, Deputy District Attorney, Multnomah County. Sponsored by Bruce E. Speidel.

Barbara Woodford, Congressional Staff Assistant to Les AuCoin. Sponsored by Barbara Mathews.

Muriel L. Bussman, R.N., Safety Coordinator, Providence Hospital. Sponsored by John W. Bussman, M.D.

Joseph C. Schreiber II, Assoc. Director, Trusts & Bequests, Lewis & Clark College. Sponsored by P. S. McAllister.

CITY CLUB OF PORTLAND BULLETIN

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**VOTE MAY 23**

Following is a summary of committee reports on May ballot measures, with the committee recommendation and the Club vote, as of the preparation of this publication.

State Measures**#1 HOME RULE COUNTY INITIATIVE-REFERENDUM REQUIREMENTS**

Committee Majority	NO
Committee Minority	YES
Club Vote	YES

#2 OPEN MEETING RULES FOR LEGISLATURE

No recommendation

#3 HOUSING BONDS FOR LOW INCOME ELDERLY

Committee	YES
Club Vote	YES

#4 DOMESTIC WATER FUND CREATED

Committee	NO
Club Vote	NO

#5 HIGHWAY REPAIR PRIORITY, GAS TAX INCREASE

Committee	YES
Club Vote	YES

#6 REORGANIZE METROPOLITAN SERVICE DISTRICT, ABOLISH CRAG

Committee Majority	YES
Committee Minority	NO
Club Vote	YES

City of Portland**#51 PARK IMPROVEMENT SPECIAL LEVY**

Committee	YES
Club Vote	—

PROGRAM MAY 26

John A. Linehan, Jr., U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone, West Africa, will discuss the Carter administration policy toward southern Africa. This program is provided as a response to the December 1977 speech to the City Club by John Burns.

Members are urged to keep the City Club staff posted on any changes in home or business phone or address, as well as occupation. Phone 228-7231.

REPORT ON
PARK IMPROVEMENT SPECIAL LEVY
(City of Portland Measure No. 51)

Purpose: Directs a continuing six year special tax levy within the City of Portland of \$3,290,000 per year (\$19,740,000 over the six year period), outside constitutional limitations for park capital improvement and land acquisition purposes, beginning with fiscal year 1978-79.

To the Board of Governors,
 The City Club of Portland:

I. INTRODUCTION

The Measure is for a six-year special levy of \$3,290,000 per year for a total of \$19,740,000. The Measure provides that the revenue shall be placed in a "City of Portland Parks Improvement Fund" to be expended for one or more of the following purposes:

"... park capital improvement and land acquisition, costs for covered swimming pools, joint school-park projects, major recreation facilities and neighborhood and community park improvements and other expenses connected therewith."

II. HISTORY AND SCOPE OF THE PROPOSAL

A. Chronology of the Levy Measure

On July 30, 1976, the Park Bureau presented to the City Council a summary of city park needs to be funded by a contemplated special levy. Costs were projected for (1) improvements to existing facilities, (2) capital improvements and (3) maintenance in the total sum of \$29.9 million. That summary was based on the Park Bureau's review of numerous requests for park improvements received over the prior five year period from neighborhood associations, a wide variety of citizen groups and Park Bureau advisory boards, as well as from responses to a Bureau letter-questionnaire sent to all school principals.

The City Council questioned the adequacy of policy guidelines as well as the magnitude of the proposal, and directed the Bureau to reassess needs and present a pared down recommendation.

As a result of its reassessment, the Park Bureau deleted several large capital improvements. Among projects discarded or cut back were those identified for Civic Stadium (\$670,000), a major west-side recreation center (\$4,000,000), a performing arts center (\$5,000,000), and Couch community center in the northwest (\$1,000,000). The current proposal proceeds from this reassessment.

B. Projected Use of Levy Proceeds

The "Parks and Recreation Six Year Capital Improvement Program, 1978-1984," dated January 12, 1978, summarizes the proposed expenditure of levy funds should the Measure pass.

The proposal is for expenditures in four categories:

	<i>Levy</i>	<i>Matching (State/Federal)</i>
(1) Aquatics	\$ 9,550,000	
(2) Major Recreation Facilities	4,815,000	\$ 150,000
(3) Neighborhood and Community Park Improvements	4,625,000	4,625,000
(4) Administrative	750,000	
TOTALS	\$19,740,000	\$4,775,000

Specific projects within each of these major categories include the following:

The Aquatics Program

Indoor pools are proposed for the following schools:

Buckman or Washington	\$2,575,000
Franklin	1,225,000
Kennedy or Adams	1,700,000
Lincoln	1,450,000
Madison	1,400,000
Wilson (cover existing pool)	1,200,000

\$9,550,000

Major Recreation Facilities

New community centers are proposed for:

Southwest	\$1,550,000
Westmoreland	1,550,000
Kennedy/Adams	880,000

These buildings will contain gyms, locker rooms, meeting spaces, and kitchens. Sites have not been selected although negotiations are underway between the Bureau and School District No. 1 for possible acquisition of surplus school buildings to house the new centers.

Theater improvements also are proposed for Washington Park, to be funded by \$150,000 from the levy and \$150,000 from a federal grant.

Additionally, the levy allocates \$110,000 for a Performing Arts Learning Facility (at a site to be selected) and \$475,000 for the Children's Museum.

Neighborhood and Community Park Improvements

Four projects are identified for completion in 1979-81, including park developments at Brooklyn School, King School, Chapman School and Hosford-Abernathy Park, totaling \$1.2 million in levy funds. These projects are specially scheduled because of the current availability of \$1.2 million in state/federal matching funds which could be lost by delay.

The balance of this category of major expenditure (\$3.4 million) is nominated in the Bureau proposal as "Neighborhood Park/Playground Development," a term which (under Bureau "needs" documents) appears to comprehend:

- Underground sprinkling systems,
- Park lighting,
- Restrooms,
- Recreation shelters,
- Tennis court lighting,
- Softball field lighting and improvements,
- Wading pools, play equipment and picnic tables.

Administrative, Maintenance and Operating Expenses

The underlying Bureau proposal budgets \$750,000 for administration of levy programs, but does not otherwise provide funding for fixed costs after the life of the levy. As a matter of fact, full implementation of the six-year proposed improvement schedule, according to the Park Bureau, will result in an "annual budget impact for maintenance and operations" of \$1.8 million, "which is equal to \$1.1 million in current dollars." This increment will necessarily require funding from whatever revenues are then available.

Cost Summary

It is estimated that the levy will cost property owners \$.54 per \$1,000 of assessed value per year. This approximates \$16.20 annually for a \$30,000 house, or about \$100 for the six year life of the levy.

III. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE MEASURE

(1) Additional capital funds are sorely needed for the development and rehabilitation of Portland's park and recreation system. This Measure provides such new funding.

(2) The Measure is well-planned and researched; it proceeds from thoughtful consideration of community needs as expressed by a broad segment of Portland's citizenry.

(3) The Measure is economic and efficient; it will provide seed money to attract federal and state matching dollars and to promote cooperative programs between the Park Bureau and School District No. 1.

IV. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE MEASURE

(1) Property taxes are too high as it is. If parks need improvement the money should come from the City's general budget.

(2) The Park Bureau proposal, however well done, is not part of the Measure, thus voters have no guarantee of what they are buying.

(3) The Measure does not provide for incremental operating and maintenance costs generated by the levy's capital projects. Such costs will have to be budgeted from the general fund when the levy period is over.

V. DISCUSSION

This Committee has recently concluded a long-range study on Portland Parks (soon to be published); a summary of pertinent conclusions follows:

(1) A quality park and recreation system is essential to community well-being and vigor;

(2) Portland has ample parkland in the aggregate, but a serious mal-distribution among neighborhoods;

(3) Community centers are appreciated and heavily used facilities serving as important focal points of neighborhood cohesion; it is a concept which deserves expansion into areas not now served;

(4) Optimum and efficient development of park and recreation programs requires much closer cooperation between park and school governing bodies than has been the rule in the past;

(5) User fees and non-resident fees have not been used to optimum effect; both should be expanded to augment traditional park funding sources.

We offer this summary to support our general conclusion that the money sought by this Measure is needed. We do not necessarily agree with each specific item of expenditure proposed but do believe that the proposal proceeded from thoughtful and attentive inquiry of citizens' desires and that such inquiries will continue, hopefully resulting in a consensus for expenditure.

The plight of the property taxpayer needs little elucidation from us. It has been the subject of continuing legislative ferment during every session of the Oregon legislature in recent memory. We can say this: Portlanders have not been pressed to support their parks. In fact, there has been no major capital improvement in our park system for 25 years. In our long range study, we encountered the argument that earmarked trust funds are anathema and that public projects should compete with one another during annual budget reviews. Perhaps this is so. In a real sense, however, this levy is a competition for funding: the people are being asked to debate the wisdom of a major parks improvement program. Should the Measure fail, there would be justification for the Council to consider such expenditures as unwanted.

By the same token, voters should be aware that there is no legal requirement that levy dollars be spent on the specific projects proposed or according to the chronology as proposed by the Bureau; the 1978-84 program referred to above is not part of the Measure. This does not disturb the Committee. Park needs are being continuously up-

dated and refined. We believe the Bureau and Council are generally committed to the Bureau's 1978-84 program; but it is only good sense to permit leeway if new information indicates desired changes. If the Measure passes, we strongly suggest that the Park Bureau conduct a continuing review of the proposals, with a wide range of input from citizen groups and the School Board.

On the issue of unfunded incremental financial burden, the picture is not as bleak as it might seem. We believe proper steps have been taken, or will be taken, to alleviate the projected overburden. First, some projects (notably underground sprinkling) are specifically designed to reduce current and future maintenance expenses. Second, renewed interest in cooperative school/city ventures argues well for a substantial and more equitable redistribution of administrative and operating expenses from park to school budgets. Third, projected expenses for pools and community centers (about two-thirds of proposed levy expenditures) should result in facilities ideally suited to create user fees, a potential source of revenue which we believe has been too-long neglected and deserving of new policy consideration by the Council. We have so concluded in our long-range study.

Community Centers and Other Major Projects

Community centers have been an extremely successful part of the Park Bureau's programs for many years. The levy proposal recognizes that certain neighborhoods have no center, or an existing facility (e.g., Sellwood) which is outdated and inadequate. With the recent advent of closer cooperation between the School District and the Park Bureau in the After School Program and in other areas, some of the deficiencies of the community center concept have been ameliorated. Even so, community centers are crowded, citizens are turned away, and programs suffer. Capital improvements in the form of new centers, or, as recommended in the Bureau proposal, remodeling of existing publicly owned buildings would permit more citizens to participate and would allow improved programs.

In like manner, proposed expenditures to increase the utility and effectiveness of the Washington Park summer theater (stage, lighting and sound systems) and the Children's Museum (larger, improved quarters) reflect public acceptance of appreciated parks programming. Such projects create civic pride as well as enjoyable leisure time outlets.

Indoor Pools

Because of the magnitude of expenditure (nearly one-half of the levy), the aquatics program may be the most controversial part of the Bureau proposal. Two reasons are advanced for its emphasis:

(1) All citizens should know how to swim for safety and for attainment of a lifetime recreational and fitness activity.

(2) Portland's indoor recreational opportunities—particularly swimming—suffer greatly in comparison with contiguous suburban communities.

For the first reason, School District No. 1 has committed itself to making swimming instruction a part of the Physical Education curricula. To implement this, the School District promises to provide staff and support for teaching swimming to all grade school students. Further, the School District expects to have a high school competitive swimming program.

Second, progressive suburban communities (both governing bodies and citizenry) have concluded that aquatics facilities are an expected municipal service. Portland now has three indoor pools: Buckman, Columbia, and Couch. In contrast, Portland is virtually surrounded by communities with full swimming programs.

In the course of our investigations we have interviewed representatives of some of the suburban pool operations. We found that the pools are extensively used. The Oswego pool, for example, runs a 17-hour day, 5:30 a.m., to 10:30 p.m. There is much adult usage. School children are given lessons in the third, sixth and ninth grades. Fees for recreation swimming and lessons are expected to cover the cost of lifeguards and instructions.

We conclude, on the basis of the experience in the environs around Portland, that a pool facility at *each* Portland high school would not be too many.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Committee has identified no organized opposition to the Measure. Based on our discussion above, we conclude that the levy is a well conceived and conscientious effort to cure many present park and recreation deficiencies, an effort which deserves citizen support. The underlying spending proposal, while not binding upon the City Council, appears to be a consensus of community desire and one which most probably will be implemented if the Measure passes. Council commitment to citizen input and cooperation with the School District are positive signs that levy dollars will be spent with optimum efficiency.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Your Committee recommends that the City Club favor a "YES" vote on City Ballot Measure No. 51 at the May 23, 1978 election.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert L. Furniss

Brent Norman

Bruce E. Speidel

Jenny Steward,

Lloyd W. Weisensee, *Chairman*

Approved by the Research Board April 27, 1978 for transmittal to the Board of Governors. Received by the Board of Governors May 1, 1978 and approved for publication and distribution to the membership for discussion and action on May 19, 1978.

APPENDIX A**PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

Gregory Baldwin, Planner, School District No. 1
Richard Curtis, Director, Lake Oswego Pool
Frank Ivancie, Commissioner, City of Portland
Tim Nolan, Director of Park Planning, City of Portland
Mary Pedersen, Director, Office of Neighborhood Associations, City of Portland
Mildred Schwab, Commissioner, City of Portland
Ross Walker, Community Relations Coordinator, Portland Park Bureau