

Nearby residents try to help park

■ SCOBERT PARK:

Committee met to decide future of beleaguered park

By Christian Hill
Community Reporter

Seventeen concerned community members met on Tuesday night to begin solving some of the problems which plague the partially-closed Scobert Park in the Whitaker neighborhood.

The vegetated portion of the park was temporarily closed because some people were trampling on the vegetation, and because others were participating in illegal activity there, such as drug use and disorderly conduct, said Bob Hamitt, lead staff member of the Scobert Park Advisory Committee. The public can still utilize the open-air portion of the park, he said.

"Scobert Park has taken a much different atmosphere," said committee member Doug Ebbitt. "The trouble that's been going on is threatening to destroy it."

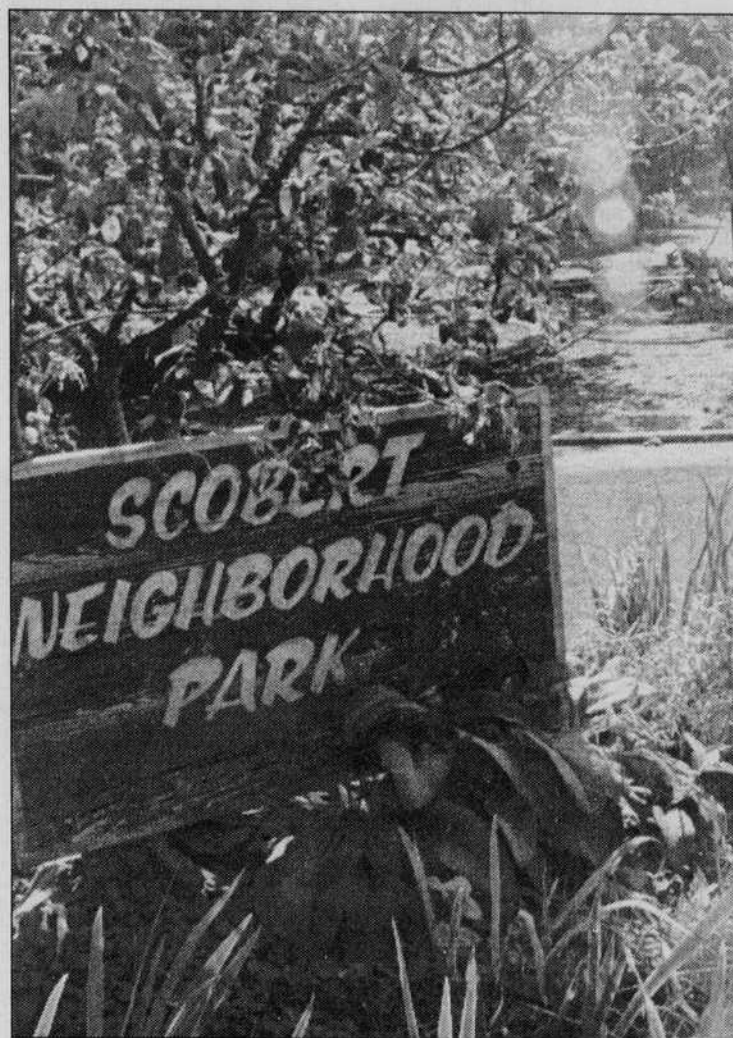
The Eugene Department of Public Works selected this department advisory committee to accomplish two goals; it will work to provide a park which is both safe and useful to community members. The committee can reach these goals by discussing and reaching decisions on such topics as desired park usage, park hours, lighting, landscaping and community policing strategies.

The committee has tentatively closed Scobert Park until Feb. 1, 1997 to make such recommendations to the departments of public safety and public works. From there, the two departments can take those decisions and enact policy.

"We will take your recommendations seriously and implement what we can," Hamitt said to the assembled committee.

However, he explained, not all of the committee's final recommendations may be enacted into future policy because of various legal or financial issues.

Committee member Susan Detroy said she joined the commit-



MATHEW STIFFLER/Emerald

Whitaker's Scobert Park was partially closed by the city until Feb. 1.

tee because she was frustrated by the park's problems. She said she was wary about the effectiveness such a committee can have on this large problem.

Member Jim Reed said he would like to see law enforcement resources present before drug problems arise in the park and surrounding neighborhood.

Member Cheryl Reinhart said she was concerned that almost half of the members were homeowners. She said she wished there was a greater proportion of "houseless" citizens, such as renters and people in shelters.

In response, Richard Filloy, a

landlord in the neighborhood, said he has talked to many of his renters about the park.

"We, too, are concerned about people spending their afternoons drunk and disorderly in the park," he said.

The committee will meet every Tuesday from 7 to 9 p.m. at the City of Eugene Public Works Maintenance Division at 1820 Roosevelt Blvd.

"The people who come in from outside areas should know who we are and what we stand for," said Catherine Davenport, who said she's lived in the Whitaker neighborhood for 54 years.



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