

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
May 26, 2016

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***Board of Park Commissioners***

Present:

Evan Hundley  
William Lowe  
Kelly McCaffrey  
Barbara Wright, Vice Chair

Excused:

Tom Byers, Chair  
Marty Bluewater  
Dennis Cook  
Michael Padilla

***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff***

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent  
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at the Garfield Teen Life Center, 428 23rd Avenue. Commissioner Wright calls the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

The intimate nature of the meeting, Commissioner Wright has the Park Board introduce themselves. The audience does the same.

Commissioner Wright asks for Approval of the Consent Items: Commissioner Hundley moves and Commissioner Lowe seconds; the May 26 Agenda, April 14 minutes and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence are approved.

**Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

Peter Donahue –Peter appreciates the teen summer programs, both of his kids were Seattle Parks and Recreation attendees. Peter is a member of Green Seattle Partnership doing forest restoration at Mt. Baker Forest. The 34th Street Homeowners Association came in with a permit to do pruning and said the trees were blocking their views. He says there are problems with the permit. The current staff is insufficient to manage all of the volunteers. They are understaffed and unable to keep up with demand. With so many projects and volunteers, he feels SPR should look into hiring more management and oversight.

Superintendent Aguirre responds to Mr. Donahue’s concerns – SPR is reviewing the Tree Pruning Policies to make sure GSP and the Pruning Policy are not at odds. SPR does not want to undermine the great work performed by the GSP. The Park District has \$2.7million for GSP

efforts and Seattle Parks and Recreation relies on and appreciate the service. The GSP Q1 report shows 364 volunteer events this year so far involving 5000 volunteers, and added 22.4 acres of parkland into a phase of restoration.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Presented by Superintendent Aguirre, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Aquatics team is up and running. SPR is ready for summer; the Recreation Division is a well-oiled machine. Two beaches will open this weekend. June 25 all aquatic facilities will open.

Google Trekker – SPR has contracted with Google Trekker to map out our parks. SPR staff volunteer to carry a 50 pound backpack with cameras that take pictures every 2 seconds.

Artworks at Cal Anderson – Great collaboration at the Reservoir Gatehouse between the between the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Public Utilities, and Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Historic Preservation Program. Kids from Washington Middle School created art that will be hung in the windows of the Gatehouse until December.

Greenwood Acquisition – SPR staff had the opportunity to purchase the last inholding to Greenwood Park with remaining 2008 Levy funding.

Planning and Development Division is working on the design plans to renovate Victor Steinbreuck Park – they held an online open house to provide feedback, talked to people at the park. SPR staff are working diligently to connect to the communities so the design reflects their interests.

The Walt Disney Company and the National Recreation and Park Association \$20,000 Grant awarded to restoration for Camp Long. The grant will improve access to outdoor recreation to underserved youth in South Seattle.

### **Briefing and Discussion: Customer Service Improvements for Community Centers**

*Presented by Kelly Guy and Katie Gray, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

#### **Briefing Paper**

Date: May 26, 2016  
To: Board of Park Commissioners  
From: Kelly Guy, Recreation Division Director  
Re: Recreation Customer Service Improvements / Summer Employment

The purpose of this presentation is to:

1. Update members on the customer service improvements implemented thus far, including internal and external opportunities to increase positive customer experiences.
2. Provide you an update on how your internal summer youth employment opportunities align with the Mayor's overall Youth Employment Initiative.

### **Customer Service Improvements:**

We are developing innovative partnerships to meet the needs of diverse communities, particularly our growing immigrant and refugee population. These partnerships have resulted in more positive and meaningful interactions with the public, benefiting both Recreation staff and program participants.

### **Customer Service Improvement Categories:**

- Partnership Opportunities
- Neighborhood House (NH)
- Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Job Shadow program
- Community Engagement Ambassadors
- Scholarship Nights
- Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs (OIRA)
- Enhanced Clean Crew

Some questions we are looking for feedback on are:

- What is most important to you when visiting a community center?
- Are there any specific customer service standards you would recommend?
- Have you been to community center facilities in other jurisdictions where the customer service was exceptional? If so, what set them apart?

### **Summer Youth Employment:**

SPR is investing in programs and partnerships that enhance employment opportunities for our youth. Exposing youth to their first jobs can provide much needed income for a single parent/grandparent raising their grandchildren, spark an interest in a child that is at risk of going down the wrong path, and plant the seeds for a lifetime of community service.

### **Summer Youth Employment**

- Internal Programs (YESL)
- Mayors Youth Employment Initiative

## **Discussion**

Kelly Guy, Director of the Recreation Division at Seattle Parks and Recreation discusses the importance of customer service in community service. SPR is working to engage with communities to ensure a positive experience and create an ongoing dialogue regarding program relevancy. SPR is a leader in working with young people; Jesús' son worked in one of Ron Mirabueno's programs – planning the design of a skate site in Lake City.

Kelly will come back in July to report on the results of the Recreation Scholarships and Recreation For All after the data has been analyzed.

This presentation is relevant to Investment Initiatives regarding Customer Service (3.1) and increased Preventative Maintenance (2.1)

Partnership – Seattle Parks and Recreation participated in two partnership opportunities that created the space for better customer service and community engagement at the community centers.

Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) created a job shadowing opportunity at High Point, Yesler Terrace, and Rainier Vista. They served as Community Engagement Ambassadors, and they were asked to interpret and determine the needs of the community. They paid the residents \$15.00 for 150 hours. There were four participants in the program. Center Coordinators reported the residents came with computer skills and ready to engage.

Unfortunately, SPR was not able to transition these into full-time employment because they did not meet minimum requirements. 6 centers are signed up to do this program again. Kelly would like to figure out a way to help them attain the minimum qualifications.

Neighborhood House partnership – This was a 2-year pilot program that ended in 2015. Be Active Together program – helped develop programs at High Point and Yesler to reach community and have programming that was relevant to them.

2nd year, SPR added an outreach worker; hired folks from community to engage with people in community and at the centers. Neighborhood House supplemented program costs, reduced fees. One of the programs was a Zumba class for women and attendance was great. They offered field trips for seniors, but supplemented cost so the participants paid only \$5.

The programs were successful; reached more community members and there was better communication, but the money ran out and SPR feels they would like to continue this program but internally. SPR is hiring outreach workers for each geographic district and then two floaters. The opportunity to have community dialogue is a big priority for the department.

The commissioners ask Kelly to elaborate on the job requirements and minimum qualification disconnect for those that were serving in the Community Engagement Ambassador program. She explains they lacked the relevant experience and formal education – High School diploma, for example. They have the skills but not the minimum requirements. This is a city personnel issue. Kelly suggests the city create a policy that allows apprenticeships for people programs instead of trades only. The more data collected that shows these programs are working, the easier it will be to move the idea forward.

The Commissioners ask if high school kids could work as interpreters for volunteer hours. Kelly states the minimum age for interpreters is 18 years old, based on the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

There are apprenticeship programs in the city – look at those; they have a robust educational component.

The commissioners wonder how Park District money is applied to these programs.

- \$2.6 million for community centers; using some of that to improve customer service and outreach.
- Get Moving and Recreation For All funding provides more hours for staff.
- The partnership with Neighborhood House was an expensive model that was not sustainable.

- SPR will receive the other \$1.3million dollars from the City Council once the Department develops a Strategic Plan.

The need for Community Engagement Ambassadors could be expansive if the program expanded department wide, including the Planning and Development Division.

Other programs SPR is ready to offer are in partnership with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

- Citizenship Corner – A place in the community centers at which one could practice the naturalization quizzes and events to explain the naturalization process.
- Language kiosk – Technology to allow translation services between community center staff and the public.
- Vital documents – A matrix for staff to use that helps them find interpretation services and includes demographic and language needs for each neighborhood – this would eventually transition to SPR's Communication Team.

Regarding Scholarships: Goal is to have 20 events by year-end. So far, Recreation staff have met with community and had 12 events – resource fairs, shelter visits, and scholarships nights.

These events have staff on-site to help people go through the application process. Staff served 221 participants, 1191 households applied, and 2307 individuals. Kelly is excited to return in June to give a more robust report on spending.

Initiative 2.1 – Increased Preventative Maintenance - Enhanced cleaning crew working with 3rd shift to bring enhanced maintenance to community centers has resulted in approximately 7 closure days saved!!

This is an important part of customer service because when your building looks good, people feel welcome.

The most popular scholarship programs are the childcare programs, youth recreation and after school programs. Although, there has been an increase in the number of seniors applying.

ARC and SPR scholarship money - each Advisory Council decides how much they set aside for scholarships. Most SPR scholarships only pay 80%; the Advisory Council can close the gap to pay the 20%. SPR is working with ARC on having the same standards throughout the city.

Jesús met with the ARC Board in January to discuss goals. It would be great to conglomerate Advisory Council funds into one pot of money. This idea still in the preliminary stages. William suggests incorporating this topic into a General Meeting at which all Advisory Councils are present. The Advisory Councils are stewards of the money for the benefit of the citizenry. He feels talking openly about it at a General Meeting would allow everyone to see the overlying benefit to the city. It could take away adversarial attitudes and issues.

Front line staff at Community Centers have developed a secret shopper model for assessing customer service.

## **Briefing and Discussion: Summer Youth Employment Update**

*Presented by Kelly Guy and Ron Mirabueno, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

### **Presentation and Discussion**

Kelly introduces the topic of Youth Employment. The Mayor's goal is to have 4000 youth employment opportunities throughout all City departments. Programs are either stipend or hourly based. The Mayor's goal is to have all youth employment under one department. Develop a continuum of job development service. Human Services Department (HSD) is leading the charge to systematize the Mayor's vision for this program.

SPR serves kids ranging in age from 13-19 and have 575 participants in the Recreation division; that number could increase to 800 if it was department-wide. 4 staff working with 575 youth. HSD has 20 staff working with 150 participants. All other city departments have a total of 1875 in youth employment programs. Ron's group has done a great job with engaged Service Learning Programs.

They have milestones and clear objectives for youth employment outcomes. SPR is concentrating their efforts on 13-15 year olds. Teaching them pre-employment skills, such as resume building, how to dress, talking with potential employers.

SPR's youth employment are project based activities, these kids would then be eligible for youth employment through other agencies because they would acquire the skills necessary through this program.

Ron and his team do a GREAT job. Tiffany Washington is Youth and Family Services Director at HSD. Kelly is working with her for a reallocation of resources to reflect the amount of kids served.

Kids from SPR are well-prepared for other youth employment opportunities.

Ron Mirabueno is the Youth Employment and Service Learning Program Coordinator.

SPR is in a unique position because people engaged in programs since they were little and are a part of the community.

#### Youth Employment and Service Learning

- YESL organizes and implements workforce preparedness and leadership programs throughout the city of Seattle.
- Programs are multi-week, are project based and combines skill development and service to community.
- Programs are outcome driven and have adopted the Youth Program Quality Initiative and the Results Framework as part of the continuous improvement process.

- Programs provide stipends and for some projects, a combination of a stipend and service hours for school graduation requirements.
- YESL leverages partnerships with other interdepartmental units, community based organizations, youth serving agencies and the school district for project development and program outreach purposes.
- The youth receive stipends and volunteer hours, necessary for high school graduation.

Ron invites the Park Board to come out and see the youth "at work".

His staff work with youth 12-21 years old, and special needs programs in the following programs that occur during both the summer and school year.

- Summer of Service - approximately 60 middle school youth per 6-week session.
- Youth Engaged in Service – approximately 60 middle school/high school participants in the summer and 70 during the school year
- Student Teen Employment Preparation program – 70 high school - up to 21year olds (with Individual Education Plan), in summer and school year; numbers in school year has been improving and consistent.
- Teen Intern Program (TIP) – (high school) 20 youth during school year
- 206FWD – (high school) youth identify projects and implement
- Able Teens – (high school and transition) 12 youth – vocational and life skills for youth and young adultswith special needs

The Approach - Facilitate personal growth, inspire community engagement, and introduce workforce preparedness skills

Youth Program Quality Intervention (initiative 3.3: Better Programs for Young People) - Continuous program feedback – based on observations and interactions between program facilitators and youth. Common language for assessing how adults structure their interactions with young people. All the youth employment programs have scored above the national average, based on external and internal assessments. This feedback framework helps staff stay true to consistent interactions with youth.

Results framework – establish language that is youth friendly and observable.

- Develop skills necessary for successfully living and working within diverse communities with an equity perspective.
- Be confident in their ability to impact their communities and have the skills to do so.
- Develop soft skills required for workforce preparedness.

Project development focuses on result frameworks. The result framework breaks down into statements of observable behavior.

Participant feedback: Adults develop projects too much for youth; not enough youth design elements. Work to develop personal plans and steps for follow through.

Reflection journals provide information on what the participants gained from program – most feel they were able to get to know their community, learned accountability and responsibility.

Summer of Service - Lost most youth before orientation; look at program structure and communication process – 6-week long summer program might be too long for the younger kids and competes with summer vacation plans.

For YESL and STEP - Completion rates are above 90% and more people apply than can participate.

- Balance of gender
- Demographics is very diverse; does not reflect Seattle population
- Work hard to have a diverse group and it is shown in the data.

Spectrum of programs and projects

- Grow food, cook, and feed community;
- YESL – Created a compost and waste reduction program – they created an event about compost and waste reduction at which they educated the community
- Trails restoration project in West Duwamish greenbelt.
- Development project – video about stereotypes within schools – ran activities, showed video and did small group discussions

The Youth Employment team do many teambuilding activities, like the Camp Long ropes course. These types of events present dynamics that need attention or bring people together.

Opportunities for innovation and growth

- Creating more intentional tiered pathways for young people to gain work and life skills and commensurate stipend/pay scales
- Every youth employment program model implements structured feedback process for participants
- Universal baseline data tracking system and information sharing between programs
- Develop a young professional web-based network similar to Linked In for youth
- Create youth employment hubs with dedicated staff at Teen Life Centers
- Mentoring/job shadowing program similar to that in Seattle Parks and Recreation but for youth
- Cultural Competence training mandatory for all youth participants in youth employment programs
- ORCA cards for youth participants

The Youth Employment programs are marketed through community learning centers and school district administrators and counselors – both middle and high school.

Figure out a way to find out who was affected by doing these programs. Long-term tracking and getting stories from past graduates. What do people walk away with – emphasize for data

Link with continuum of programs; track the kids – could be a public health survey – to keep track of these youth and health, relationships, etc..

Catching kids early and having the door open to them through various times in their lives establishes daily interactions and an ongoing partnership with community.

Staff spend much time doing research, speaking to community and working with partners (ie faith-based organizations, non-profits) to create relevant projects for the participants. Racial equity has grown immensely as a subject young people want to explore.

Limited because of staff - can only run one program at a time.

Youth participatory action research – youth led community engagement>project develop >report on it.

Jesús suggests having program participants come to a Park Board meeting to talk about their activities.

Great work!

### **Old/New Business**

Briefing for the Board about the Park District – the programs are complicated; so creative and sophisticated.

The Commissioners attended a retreat in April. The discussions and outcomes were great. They really bonded.

Barbara reviews the Committee Assignments:

- Commissioner Hundley – Executive Committee
- Commissioner Bluewater will participate on the Building 2 RFP panel
- Commissioner Cook – Park Naming Committee
- Commissioner McCaffrey – District Oversight Committee
- Commissioner Cook – Associated Recreation Council
- Commissioner Wright - Partnership Alliance and Executive Committee

**Commissioner Hundley moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Lowe seconds, and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:15 pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Barbara Wright, Vice Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners