

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
February 23, 2017

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>  
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at  
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

**Board of Park Commissioners**

Present:

Andréa Akita  
Dennis Cook  
Marlon Herrera  
Evan Hundley  
William Lowe, Vice Chair  
Kelly McCaffrey

Excused:

Marty Bluewater  
Tom Byers, Chair  
Barbara Wright

**Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff**

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Wright calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. She reviews the Agenda and the Commissioners introduce themselves.

**Presentation: John C. Little Award**

*Presented by Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation*

Superintendent Aguirre introduces John Hasslinger, this years recipient of the John C. Little Award. John is a Team Development Leader at Hiawatha Community Center.

This is the 16th year of giving this award to a Seattle Parks and Recreation employee who exemplifies service to youth and community. John C. Little was committed to the growth of young people.

John has a passion for and a dedication to youth. He creates lasting community partners in Seattle to enable him to better serve those in his community. John connects youth to skills for employment; he has created classes for youth to empower them for future jobs.

John gets youth involved in citywide Seattle Parks and Recreation events. He is recognized by his colleagues for his teamwork and attitude. He is always giving credit to his coworkers and is very humble about his work. John is a trusted mentor.

John says this is a tremendous honor. John C. Little was an amazing man and he loves working for an organization that lives those values every day. The youth are the future. He's proud of his work at Seattle Parks and Recreation. John thanks the Little family.

Stephanie, granddaughter of John C. Little, speaks to John and the Board about how John is a beacon of light for the kids at Hiawatha and guiding them and seeing them through seen and unseen dangers by giving them love and compassion when they need support and strength.

William Lowe says John Little put his signature on everything. He would smile and talk with everyone. He would be proud that this award continues the award.

### **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

Randall Urmston – Randall opposes Seattle Asian Art Museum (SAAM) expansion without public input. This violates I-42; an initiative that prevents non-park and recreation use of park property. SPR requested a legal opinion and the opinion says the museum conforms. At the previous meeting, Deputy Superintendent Williams said the expansion could be grandfathered. He used the bathhouses as an example, but the bathhouses are integral to the parks and are not a precedent for expansion. Randall says this goes against the Comprehensive Plan. He quotes op-ed from the Seattle Times that said museum lovers and park lovers are one and the same.

Eliza Davidson - Thanks Commissioners on behalf of SPR and residents who cherish health and recreation opportunities they bring. She encourages the Commissioners to ask the Superintendent to address issues he raised with SAAM in early January. The irregularities in financing, process, taking of park land and a national landmark. SPR is irresponsible to give away park land to a non-owning tenant who has self-interest and not the interests of the public. Supporters miss the point because there is a great need for green space.

William Bakamis – He opposes the expansion of the SAAM. It was supposed to be a renovation project and now it is more expensive and will expand into the park. Private funds have been promised and the public is paying \$60million for this expansion. Expansion revenues will not cover additional operating costs and result in \$80,000 deficit. SAAM is not providing increased public benefit.

Joyce Moty - Fuller Garden Court, inside SAAM, is described as a dead end. SAM says the eastside of museum is a deadzone and needs activation. The new design converts the beautiful Garden Court into a hallway. Museums have controlled lighting and focus

intention of viewer on the art. The new design creates one new gallery out of 2000 square feet; new glass lobby would allow views of the park. She questions whether this would be an opportunity to rent space for parties. We cannot afford to lose capacity to nature. Protect Volunteer Park.

Jonathan Mark - Deputy Superintendent Williams said 2 weeks ago that he was going to meet with SAM about the expansion project and he is curious whether they answered his questions. He asks the Commissioners to follow up.

Carol Binder – She was contracted to work through the public process with SAM. She has great amount of experience and she wanted to introduce herself to the department and the public.

Jerry Calhoun – His first job was with SPR in 1963, working at Colman Park. He lives on Capitol Hill above the Blaine stairs. The Streissguth Gardens are his neighbors and with certain care, he would be allowed to prune trees. Currently, SPR has a moratorium on pruning trees and found there was no exceptions. He would like to understand why this is happening and how to get permission to have his trees pruned.

Ginny Allemann – She opposes the SAAM expansion. Volunteer Park is beautiful and openspace needs to be fought for by Seattle Parks And Recreation. The process was flawed, the public was not involved from the beginning. The public was supportive of the rebuild but not an expansion.

### **Presentation: Seattle Parks and Recreation 2016 Accomplishments**

*Presented by Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation*

Superintendent Aguirre reviews this year's accomplishments by the numbers:

- 24 major projects completed in the Park District
- 120 projects to be completed in first 6 years and SPR is on target
- \$570,000 grant funds – Park District to get people engaged
- \$2.5 million in Park District opportunity funds
- 4 Tiny Trees preschool programs in SPR parks
- 3rd shift crew as part of the Park District - allows the department to work on preventative maintenance and limit facility closures and results in overnight transformations of community centers.
- 27 additional facilities were maintained.
- 7300 trees planted by G volunteers; 67 acres of invasive plants and 122 acres weeded
- 130 events at downtown parks - innovative partners to activate and manage downtown parks.
- 230,000 hours of field time scheduled in athletic fields
- 5700 permits for events
- 61 average days to complete an Human Resources process

- 684 – number of staff who participated in professional development needs survey, which gives the department great data on which to build.
- 11 actual pieces of legislation that went through council last year
- 35,093 – number of paychecks processed by accounting
- 22,681 - payments made to vendors
- 50,000+ - Explore More followers!
- 100 press releases about SPR news and events
- 80 participants in the Conservation Corps, which helps homeless/formerly homeless with job training and engaging in community.
- 25 removal of encroachments
- 1500 scholarship programs
- 40,000 meals given during the Summer Lunch Program

### **Superintendent's Report**

Green Lake Community Center - In Community Center Strategic Plan, it suggested soliciting partnerships, especially for significant capital needs. The Park District allots \$4 million per year for 8 community centers. The total estimate for repairing/renovating all 8 centers is \$62million. SPR is engaging in a long-term plan to figure out solutions. Superintendent Aguirre uses Green Lake Community Center as an example, it will cost approximately \$26-30million to replace it. He feels this is an opportunity to discuss this with the community.

Storm clean-up - 3rd week of responding to tree failures and water saturation. The tree crew are doing a great job!

### **Update: Seattle Asian Art Museum Proposed Expansion**

*Presented by Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation*

In January, Superintendent Aguirre asked SAM to pause their work until questions could be addressed. He feels confident in the reasons for their expansion. I-42 has come up several times as an issue. In the Superintendent's view the museum is a park and recreation use. He asked for a legal opinion and it concurred with SPR opinion. He agrees the public benefit needs to be transparent. The new operating agreement will make sure to articulate public benefit and ensure compliance, and increase free admissions days. He feels encouraged by SAM's approach. SPR has notified SAM they could continue to do their work. SAM is closing the museum at the end of the month and working with Landmarks and Zoning. They will be presenting to the Landmarks Board tomorrow.

The Commissioners wonder how they to weigh in since they have not been asked to vote. Superintendent Aguirre says the Board can provide recommendations, questions, comments.

Scope - SAM has presented their designs and the project to the Park Board before and they could return to show their progress.

Clarification: Amount of public dollars and source - \$19million from the City and the total project cost is \$49million.

### **Presentation: Seattle Parks and Recreation Work Plan**

*Presented by Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation*

Work plans are a statutory requirement from the Growth Management Act Of 1996 to ensure transparent communication with the public about how tax payer dollars are used.

Work accomplished in 2016:

- Completed 24 development projects funded by the District
- Allocated over \$570K in Grants (Get Moving, Recreation for All, Arts in the Park)
- Launched new Asset Management Work-order System
- Launched Major Project Challenge Fund, allocated \$2.5 million
- Continuing Partnership with DSA at West Lake and Occidental Parks
- Finalized People, Dogs and Parks Plan

This presentation is to provide information and methodology to developing a work plan.

Work plan priorities established by the mayor:

- Safe city
- Affordable - expensive place to live and threatens the diversity of the city;
- Vibrant city - providing recreation choices;
- Interconnected – a commitment to multi-modal transportation system
- City that fosters innovation - age old intractable problems and use creativity and innovation to deal with issues.

SPR priorities and visions

- Effective and efficient operations – making sure the taxpayers are getting their money's worth;
- Healthy people - parks and recreation is where people go to get healthy. Improving health through removing barriers to access. SPR eliminated drop-in fees
- Healthy environment - acknowledges SPR has stewardship of 11% of Seattle openspace. SPR has a basic environmental responsibility – this year will launch a new agenda to shape healthy environment
- Strong Communities - Provide opportunities for social connectedness; strategic initiative to provide capacity for those who may not have outlets
- Equity – A screen to use to ensure everyone has access and become more meaningful and relevant to underrepresented populations.

Alignment of SPR and Mayor's goals - connecting goals and priorities with resources and planning documents.

Mayor asks department heads to describe how work will align with the Mayor's priorities. This holds the Superintendent accountable to the Mayor, with clear measurable outcomes.

The work plans fall into 2 categories:

- Planning initiatives - update process, policy updates, forward leaning work of organization.
- Operating initiatives - helps SPR function better; improve processes and operating efficiencies.

Work Plan Statistics

- 12-page spreadsheet
- 56 discreet work plan items
- 21 planning initiatives
- 16 potential Park Board Agenda Items
- 9 work-plan items require either Mayor or Council Approval
- 33 work-plan lead staff
- Assume 5 additional employees touch the work plan item
- 165 employees
- Assume each employee spend 20 hours
- Conservatively 3300 hours

Transformation projects - to change culture of the department to build capacity and support the workforce.

Summit Reimplementation - reimplementing accounting program; moving towards realtime accounting system.

Operating Initiatives – The work of the organization; including, preventative maintenance, implementing the department reorganization which realigns the custodial workforce and centralizes them to increase efficiency. SPR staff will be working on a Grounds Maintenance Business Plan – there was an audit conducted and it was largely favorable.

CW reviews the work plan spreadsheet. The priorities are color coded based on how ready they are for Council review. It is updated every 6 weeks. There is an outcome measurement to allow the department to become more fluent about outcomes and things they can measure.

Commissioner asks given the State of Emergency from the Mayor's office, is this part of the SPR work plan?

Superintendent Aguirre mentions, as part of the Mayor's efforts to address homelessness issue, SPR staff have been helping at the Emergency Operation Center; all agencies are there. There is no new money being added for this work but the department is standing up new teams; this may have an impact on how work is prioritized. SPR needs to be responsive to unsafe encampments.

Item number 22b on the SPR work plan is the implementation of MDAR, the removal of encampments and homeless stuff.

Superintendent Aguirre will continue to update the Board on the Work Plan progress during super's report.

The 2017 SPR work plan acts as a guide for the Park Board to use going forward.

**Old/New Business**

**There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:07pm.**

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

Tom Byers, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners