

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
May 11, 2017

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**Board of Park Commissioners**

Present:

Andréa Akita  
Tom Byers, Chair  
Dennis Cook  
Marlon Herrera  
Evan Hundley  
William Lowe, Vice Chair  
Kelly McCaffrey  
Barbara Wright

Excused:

Marty Bluewater

**Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff**

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent  
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Byers calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Switching order to put draft statement at the front of the meeting to leave time for edits and getting signatures. Commissioner Hundley moves and Commissioner Lowe seconds; the agenda is approved unanimously, as amended.

**Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

Margy Bresslour – Colman Park Restoration Project – In December, the group met with SPR staff who advised them that they were putting the project on hold for 6-9 months to hire a consultant to evaluate the slope. SPR staff attended an Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting in March 2017, at which time, SPR staff misrepresented the project. Colman Park Restoration Project members attended a recent Urban Forestry Commission meeting and the UFC was impressed. This is an Olmsted park and it is deserving of the restoration.

Linda Finney - The Colman Park Restoration Project has received a tremendous amount of support from the public, such as: Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks, Mt. Baker, Friends of Colman Park, P-Patch, and GSP stewards.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Colman Park – Deputy Superintendent mentions SPR and the Park Board discuss how to close the loop with testimony that comes before the Board of Park Commissioners. SPR staff will provide a response as soon as possible.

SPR has designated viewpoints. Official viewpoints constitute a type of park use – new viewpoints need to come before the Park Board.

Colman Park has a historic view on 31st Ave So. It was part of the 1910 Olmsted plan but was never adopted by the Board as an official viewpoint. SPR does not cut trees to create views; they create view windows through pruning.

This group proposed a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP); this contained the removal of several trees at Colman Park – about 200 trees in Phase I of this plan. Through Seattle Department of Constructions and Inspections; require a permit if working on critical slopes, which would undermine the work of the GSP and destabilize the slope.

Viewpoints are difficult to maintain and are typically on steep slopes.

SPR has hired a consultant to do an analysis of the slope for the VMP to help find a compromise between the neighborhood group and SPR. Recommendations by first part of next week. They are bringing in an unbiased 3rd party to help find middle ground.

SPR will return to the community group with a compromised solution.

The community is also working with David Graves to discuss the process of asking the Park Board to consider a formal viewpoint in this area.

Deputy Superintendent Williams states part of the issue is the fundamental difference in the interpretation of restoration. Big Leaf Maples are considered invasive but they are performing an ecological function in holding up the slopes. Marge states they hired a Geotech consultant who felt the removal of these trees would not pose significant risk.

Marge says the trees on the top have been topped for years; the trees are damaged and unsustainable. They want to replant to make it a beautiful park with beautiful views.

Green Lake Community Center – SPR staff finalized the scope of work. They will perform a walkthrough of the 7 other community centers that need renovations.

## **Statement regarding community center maintenance**

The commissioners discuss and edit the statement regarding Green Lake Community Center and Evans Pool.

Commissioner Wright makes a motion to remove the words about “privatization” of the Green Lake facilities. Instead it would read: “We are aware that the mere mention of partnerships raises concerns and fears that it could result in reduced access, higher fees, and other negative results.” This is passed unanimously.

Because the statement discusses partnerships, the Board digress into a brief discussion regarding the Partnership work SPR is doing. At the April 27 Park Board meeting, Victoria Schoenburg, briefed the Board on the partnership policy and the work her team will be undertaking. She will return to the Board after more partnership work has been done.

Commissioner Wright mentions that many partners feel that they are more like contractors instead of a partnership of equals. Jesus agrees and says one of the goals of the new partnership team will be to evaluate partnerships to ensure the department, the public and the partners have equal

Commissioner Lowe says the letter is regarding the Green Lake Community Center and Evans Pool and feels the Board needs to stay on that topic without going into details about the Park District.

Commissioner Lowe moves to send this statement. Commissioner Wright thanks Commissioner Byers for spearheading this effort.

The Board discuss to whom they would like the statement to be sent: Post it on the website; share with Green Lake community; the Seattle Times, to the Mayor and City Council, and email it to everyone who emailed the Board, with a cover letter that the board has taken this action and it is attached.

The Board unanimously approve the statement, as written.

## **Discussion: Healthy Environment Action Agenda**

*Presented by Christopher Williams and Paula Hoff, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

Purpose –

- Guide employee perspective
- Support continuous improvement
- Meet/ or exceed the public expectation in 4 domain areas
- Position SPR to be seen locally and nationally as an environmental leader
- Become the city’s platform for resiliency
- Use pressures to drive change

Values – People recognize SPR across the country for its’ innovation. Deputy Superintendent Williams states the department intends to apply gentle relentless pressure to the workforce to continue moving the environmental agenda forward.

- Become a national example
- Use innovation/pilot projects
- Lead by example
- Practice continuous improvement
- Focus on a few domains
- Become the resiliency platform for the city
- Employ life cycle cost assessment to reduce our foot print – assess equipment and materials used
- Earn our environmental credentials daily
- Re-focus the culture of the organization
- Deliver on public expectations

Channel global, national, local environmental challenges into a response at the local level.

Environmental Challenges for Seattle Parks and Recreation -

As developers, how does the department do work that is not overtly in conflict with the environmental ethic the department is putting forward. Mitigate impacts of density through stewardship. Achieve these goals through performance-driven, reportable work.

- Walk our talk
- Foster increased awareness within the organization
- Put best practices to work
- Create public awareness and opportunities for volunteer stewardship
- Mitigate the impacts of density through stewardship
- Demonstrate environmentally friendly practices
- Foster increased stewardship opportunities for youth
- Achieve this in a performance driven, reportable manner

Environmental ethic to frame continuous improvement; using the plan it> Do it> Check that it works> Act to improve performance

Thread for the environmental work that touches all of the other parts of work in a way that takes into consideration race and social justice imperatives.

Internal –

- Employee driven
- Business practices
- Products and equipment
- Making it real for the people that do the work
- Increased peer accountability and reward
- Establish environmental goals for each work unit

External – Engage youth and broader public

- Increased opportunities for volunteer stewardship
- Demonstration projects
- Adopt-a- park
- Increased opportunities for environmental learning for youth
- Race and social justice

Communication – this work needs to be broadly publicized; the public should be well informed of the new and innovative work SPR does to combat climate change.

- Communicate environmental goals on a regular basis
- Develop a quarterly healthy environment score-card
- Develop SPR environmental web-page
- Hold an annual parks and environment stakeholders meeting
- Provide data-driven reporting

SPR environmental framework – Example: Using electric battery-powered blowers instead of gasoline; foster and foment engagement and interest of employees. Allow more opportunities for increased stewardship.

The Board and SPR staff agree their involvement is crucial during the entire process.

SPR will launch an environmental scorecard website to track progress.

Paula adds they will be creating broad goals to elevate visibility and identify SPR actions and community

Consultant put together a survey and distributed it to the entire staff.

SPR formed a team to move the environmental agenda forward: HEAT – Healthy Environment Action Team who will share and guide implementation of action agenda with other staff. These people are identified internal champions with environmental work; they will continue to weave this through every aspect of SPR.

Staff retreat – SPR staff who will advocate environmental work will take place most of the day on June 7. Invites commissioners to attend.

Develop a message and strategy in environmental leadership and stewardship.

What can SPR do more of to be seen as an environmental leader? Commissioner feedback:

- How can we truly be environmental leaders? Barbara would like it worded this way.
- Use teaching moments
- Start with the low hanging fruit.

- Have visuals of the scorecard information.
- Highlight what is not there yet.

What can SPR do less of to be seen as an environmental leader?

Are there new opportunities or new areas of focus that would support our efforts to become an environmental leader?

Partner with some of the big leaders in the area. Tom can set us up with them and they may be able to let us know about things we haven't yet thought of. Have them at the retreat to give input on what we can do.

What should SPR do to ensure good communication with the public in this area?

How do you get the information out to the users that don't know it? We tend to get it out to those who are already in the know. SPR does a lot more than realized.

What messages should be emphasized to the SPR workforce?

How do you make sure that everything that comes out of the retreat is shared and followed up on?

Acknowledge state of crisis is great messaging; lots of nonprofits to partner with; holistic strategies as a citywide effort and not just SPR.

The Board looks forward to seeing how it continues to move forward.

### **Briefing: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Pilot Program**

*Presented by Joelle Hammerstad, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

65% of carbon emissions in Seattle is from vehicles, especially now that Seattle City Light has become a carbon neutral utility. By fueling vehicles by locally sourced renewable energy the city is keeping the money at home.

The pilot, in partnership with Seattle City Light (SCL) would be to put electric vehicle charging stations in 2-4 locations in parking lots throughout the city. SCL will pay for installation and maintenance; SPR is ready to support them.

According to the Law department, parking is an amenity so does not have I-42 issues. (Initiative 42 is a city law that does not allow park property to be used for non-park uses). SPR will work with site managers if appropriate to determine the best locations. SCL will be responsible for operations and maintenance. Joelle adds she has an electric vehicle and it is difficult to find EV charging when out and about. People will be more inclined to consider purchasing electric vehicles if they are not concerned with running out of power -- range anxiety.

How should we structure pilot partnership?

- Memorandum of Understanding – This would spell out terms and specify each parties' partnership responsibilities. Any money from SPR would be for project management.

Or

- Concession contract – This would allow SPU to collect income from the total sales from charging station either through a flat rate from parking spot or for the actual charge. It would increase the cost for public if they did it this way.

SCL couldn't make it to the meeting. Joelle offers to bring technical questions to SCL and respond to the Board.

The Boards comments and questions:

Revenue estimate?

Schedule: Now through July – come up with consultant and identify potential sites.

Commissioners express concern about parking issue and I-42; what is the going rate?  
Free charging for cars?

Flat rate of \$2 or \$3

Joelle responds that having SCL as a concessionaire helps with the seeming conflict of charging a fee for something that isn't park related on SPR property because it aligns with our Healthy Environment Action Agenda and may encourage the purchase and use of electric vehicles.

Criteria for charging station locations? Is there a need somewhere that can be identified?  
Factors:

- Proximity to a transformer; have to be close enough to someplace on the grid where you can pull off enough electricity
- Visibility – have to be able to see it
- Space – They take about 3 spots to do 2 charging stations; fast charge is uncommon; not a single 1 in West Seattle. Not as many in SE Seattle as North of Ship Canal.

Questions from the Board -

- Duration of the pilot?
- Too far ahead of our time? Is there a demographic for it? Is there enough of a demand for a year-long pilot project.

Drive Clean Seattle Initiative – This pilot is to create scaffolding so people feel comfortable enough to buy electric vehicles; this initiative goal is 5-fold electric

vehicle ownership. Joelle recognizes there are economic barriers. There are already phone applications around that one can use to find charging stations.

Fast charge is more expensive and is not healthy for the battery.

Location ideas? Benefits and challenges?

The Commissioners express fear of unintended consequences to allowing this in the parks. Jesus reminds the commissioner that this is a pilot.

Does SPR manage its' own fleet? Drive Clean Seattle Initiative has an internal goal to reduce emissions from the municipal fleet by 2025. When SPR replaces a vehicle, they trade in for electric vehicles.

Consider the Transportation Master Plan for locations; not in urban villages because public should be encouraged to take public transportation.

Providing access especially if using in existing parking lots. Jefferson Park already has Low Emission Vehicles parking spots as part of LEED certification. It would be important to ensure that electric vehicles would be used in those spots.

How to ensure people aren't sitting in those spaces and then moving on?

Commissioner Wright says she is more comfortable putting charging stations on other city properties.

Leverage other city departments to put in these charging stations.

### **Operating Principles and Core Values**

*Facilitated by Tom Byers, Chair*

Operating principles and core values:

- 1) Protect the Metropolitan Park District (MPD) – always have something on the agenda regarding the MPD and take quick action when needed;
- 2) Public conversations about the Park District Oversight Committee and how this body influences;
- 3) Form a committee to look for ways to keep up with growing city with openspace acquisitions; through bonding? Development fees? Philanthropy? To ensure healthy places available to everybody



## Healthy people

- 1) More liaisons in schools; go to assemblies; fliers at schools – starting with elementary schools; get more activity from youth in programs
- 2) Ensuring access for all people – equity and social justice issues; combined with access – sustainability for programs – safe, operating places; accessibility – being able to hear from the public – space, place and time
- 3) Increase access and use of current infrastructure; feedback loop on what programs are well attended and which aren't.
- 4) Identify areas where activities are culturally relevant; meeting communities at their meetings to discuss what they want. Outreach!
- 5) Strategic alignment with school district and public health; focus on same community and not double up efforts
- 6) Board focus on strategies that make active recreation accessible and affordable, beginning with youth.

## Healthy environment

- 1) Greenspaces – provide environmental service- protecting greenspaces and what additional greenspaces will we provide for community
- 2) Next 100 years of park system – climate resilience and deepening disparities; find points to coalesce around – work against catastrophic future we may be seeing.
- 3) Lessen carbon footprint; meet using technology.
- 4) SPR become a leader in alleviating climate change
- 5) Increasing opportunities and participation in environmental learning and stewardship with communities of color
- 6) Getting into each other's neighborhoods; having quarterly meetings elsewhere; talking with individuals.
- 7) Every middle and high school has an environmental club – they love competitions; example: design sustainability for your neighborhood park.
- 8) Partnerships with schools – transit service to parks; partner with Metro; proactive with access issues to parks. Subsidize bus service to Parks?

## Stronger communities

- 1) Parks plays a role of drawing people to communities; participation and programs bring communities together.
- 2) Every grade had a park project when he taught school; community service hours for middle school and high schoolers.
- 3) Breakfast group board – mentor youth; went to Mt. Baker rowing; many people had not been to the Space Needle in years; no one has been to his house, but he's never invited us; or lack of initiative by boundaries

- 4) Parks being at the table and leading around equitable sustainable development; know SPR plays critical role in all of the Healthy Environment, Healthy People, and Strong Communities; how do we leverage space, land, buildings and including affordable housing; using development to pay for parks
- 5) Community groups and safe neighborhoods for all. Working with SPD – figure out a way to keep kids occupied; summer is coming and school is letting out. A sustainable solution for keeping kids busy during the summer.
- 6) Board be more accessible to the public. Our set up is not inclusive at all. Partnering with nonprofits and meeting people. Example: Coffee with Sally and Sally?
- 7) Expand SPR system open space to deal with increased growth and density

Use this to create themes to make agendas going forward.

>>>Examining Operating Principles at next meeting.

Commissioner Byers asks the Board to write down their thoughts and get them to Rachel so they are clear and they can start identifying themes to craft an agenda that reflects the work.

**Old/New Business**

**There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:47pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Byers, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners