



Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle 98109

Thursday, November 14, 2019

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Commissioners:

Andréa Akita, Vice Chair

Dennis Cook

Marlon Herrera

William Lowe, Chair

Eliza Ramsey

Tom Byers

Jessica Farmer

Evan Hundley

Kelly McCaffrey

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Akita calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Commissioner McCaffrey moves to approve the minutes and Commissioner Cook seconds; the consent items are approved.

Public Comment

Jean Amick – 79-year old granny who bikes her class 3 e-bike all around the city. The state law is unenforceable; speed limits are best. She does not like the idea of being a scofflaw because she has a class 3 e-bike.

Superintendent's Update

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Mercer Mega Block – This project will consist of three towers on Mercer Street. It will have affordable housing and include a 30,000 foot community center. South Lake Community Council expressed concerns about using Transfer Development Right (TDR) funding (a local credit in exchange for exceeding statutory height limit) to be used for recreation/transportation purposes. They wanted a community center in this building. SPR will attend a community meeting. There are no plans to develop this building into a community center. Superintendent Aguirre will share the budget and scope for the new community center project. \$12mil budget; 9mil in TDR; the community feels it is their money. SPR will not develop the community center without the funding.

Part of the TDR ordinance lists what the money can be used for without City Council action.

Park Rangers – This program was launched back in 2008-9; to provide safety, security and activation. The park ranger have a difficult time because they do not have enforcement capabilities, but there is a public expectation for enforcement. SPR would like to include funding in the Park District for a study. For example, San Francisco has 180 park rangers. There is a big push to have a more comprehensive strategy for security when Waterfront Park opens.

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

Saeco Ferry – Saeco approached SPR about a ferry from Renton to South Lake Union Park. SPR wrote a recommendation not supportive of a ferry operation at South Lake Union Park. SPR received RCO grants for the Park and they prohibit commercial uses on park land. Commissioner Hundley is glad SPR made this decision.

Colman Park – SPR staff conducted a walkthrough with Colman Park community. SPR willing to work with community about which trees are planted in certain locations. The group seems to still want an immediate view; SPR is not willing to risk the stability.

Golf program stabilization - \$12.3million outpaced last years' performance; great weather; top tracer installed at a couple of clubhouses- Jefferson and Interbay; allows someone to track the flight of their ball. Food and beverage service increased.

SPR staff moving from the International District to a new location on Elliott.

SPR received a letter from the Urban Forestry Commission regarding Green Seattle Partnership funding. The UFC is alleging SPR is not on track for restoration goal in 2025. 2018-19 budget process – general funded programs moved to Park District; replaced \$800,000 in capital dollars for GSP with Park District funds. SPR is gathering internal intelligence to dissect what happened during the budget process and to ensure delivery of completion. Much of the remaining land for restoration is vertical slopes. No repercussion for missing the deadline but it bolsters the effort to meet that deadline.

Amy Yee Tennis Center – Commissioner Hundley asked Deputy Superintendent Williams a question about funding for the renovation of the Tennis Center. He will get back to Evan about that.

Multi-use trail pilot project – Overview of staff recommendation

Presented by Todd Burley, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Todd reviews the pilot project:

- 5 trails chosen that have multiple owners
- Set speed limit
- Allow class 1&2 e-bikes
- Posted education signs – working with SDOT for signage

- The pilot lasted a year; 9500 user counts, 5 visits on 3 trails
- Learned that there are primarily bikes on the trails; average speeds were under 15mph;
- Online survey and intercept surveys showed in general people feel fairly safe on the trails.
- Broad support for allowing e-bikes and a 15-mph speed limit

Todd would like to amend the Bicycle Use Policy – relates mostly to soft surface trails; amend to add speed limit; add e-bike definitions and certain responsibilities.

Recommendation 1 to support the amended Bicycle Use Policy

Multi-Use Trail Policy - Allow personal mobility devices with 750 watt or less with 20-mph speed governors; prohibit internal combustion engines; defines various e-assist devices and clarifies responsibilities.

Recommendation 2 to support the new Multi-Use Trail Policy.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation - greatest need is improved etiquette.

Next steps – Finalize policy documents followed by a Park Board recommendation; Superintendent decision; and, initiation of new policies.

From research, the scooters and bike shares are capped below the limits; they have geofencing technology; at certain times they can set speeds in certain zones or define parking in certain areas.

SPR has been working with emerging mobility team at SDOT. SPR is involved with the contracts in terms of where bikes get parked.

Commissioner Cook says this will not be enforced; Todd says they are focusing on education.

SPR relies a lot on socially normative rules, they comply when people bring behavior to their attention.

SDOT committed to put speed limit signs up on the trail. Using data points to improve people's perception of safety.

Todd will do outreach with community members after tonight to get their feedback before the meeting on 12/12.

Is there plans to track this data moving forward?

The Board had brought up choke points on trails. Todd responds that if it is safer to go lower, the Superintendent has a right to lower speed limits in certain areas.

SDOT did a Trail Improvement Plan; making the trails safer is being done.

Presentation: Preparing for Winter Weather

Katie Gray, Deputy Director of Recreation Division; Patrick Merriam, Interim Parks and Environment Division Director; and Kelli Koontz, Interim Human Resources Director

Background – SPR received a call from the Deputy Mayor at 8pm on Thursday; the City worried about the homeless population and asked SPR to operate shelters for families and children. At 7am the next morning, SPR was told they had to set up 2 emergency shelters. SPR set them up at Garfield and Bitter Lake. 25% staff were absent. The shelters quickly became low-barrier shelters; regardless of state of mind or condition, people deserve to come in from the snow. SPR staff was not trained for this population.

Deputy Superintendent Williams reviews the Mission and Vision with emphasis on providing “resiliency and recovery as part of the City’s Emergency Response Plan.”

Feb 2019 SPR Response – overview

- Major snowstorm
- Mayor declaration of civil emergency
- Setup and operation of 2 shelters open 24 hours/day, 7 days/week: **SPR saved lives!**
- Snow clearance and removal; de-icing; in partnership w/SDOT, Seattle Public Schools, other public agencies
- Garbage collection support: in partnership with Seattle Public Utilities
- Downed tree response

Garfield CC Shelter

- Opened Feb. 8 and operated through Feb. 22, 24/7, 384 total hours
- Avg. # of people: 95/day
- Set-up included delivering cots, blankets, food
- SPR offered 3 meals per day – 4,380 total meals; showers, towels, personal hygiene products; custodial & maintenance support
- Staff worked 12-hour shifts
- Community donations of clothes, blankets, etc.

Bitter Lake CC Shelter

- Opened Monday, Feb. 11 and operated through Feb. 19, 24/7, 216 total hours
- Avg. # of people: 25/day
- Set-up and operations similar to Garfield
- For both sites, shelter closure required demobilization--including, cot and debris removal, cleaning and sanitizing, transportation for shelter residents

Any community center can be used as an emergency shelter. SPR use the American Red Cross spacing matrix; volunteers are equally impacted so SPR relies on staff.

SPR staff faced hostility, were assaulted. Some people were in various states of drug use.

Deputy Superintendent Williams praises the staff for their work during the storm. At the end of the day, in an emergency, people want to help each other.

Snow and ice removal – As snow accumulated, SPR crews shifted focus from clearing park walkways and sidewalks to supporting SDOT, citywide emergency response.

This included clearing:

- Roads and bike lanes

- Library parking lots
- ADA pathways
- Entryways and walkways
- Storm drains
- Sidewalks near schools so SPS could re-open (shoveled 3-block radius around 11 schools)

When partnering with other departments, SPR goes to a 24-7 operations. SDOT plowed and SPR focused on pedestrian routes.

Improving SPR response – SPR has had several staff retreats and information gathering sessions to debrief their experience and help develop new protocols for shelter operations.

- After-action evaluation: In March, dozens of staff members involved in winter weather response debriefed and discussed: what went well, what could be improved
- In June, focus groups refined suggestions
- Over summer, we developed protocols, which led to action plans

Moving Forward

- Set up Incident Command Structure to lead and guide future responses - created a system to allow for less thinking but more responsiveness.
- Established emergency communications system: conference calls, group texts among key staff
- Met with HSD, SDOT, Office of Emergency Management and other partners
- Reminded SPR staff of basic expectations during emergency
- Developed departmental action plans for sheltering, snow removal, overall response

Shelter Planning

- Plan to open 2 “low-barrier” shelters as in 2019
- Developed comprehensive “Sheltering Field Guide and Plan”
- Staff training continues
- Plans for staffing, staff scheduling, coordination with HSD, food/meals, supplies, rules, hygiene, security, pets, intake & data collection

Examples of key decisions/actions:

- Pre-packaged food
- 24 hr. armed security
- HSD staff person assigned to shelter
- Shelter rules – behavior expectations
- Shelter registration process - Spr will modify the registration process to the population they are serving.
- Staff safety plan
- Shelter operations schedule (meals, showers, lights on-off)
- Decommission process

Katie has developed a field guide for frontline staff that will help provide consistent operations and expectations for staff. American Red Cross has a 90-page field guide; SPR will address signage; rules; and, protocol for excluding someone.

Staff are being trained in shelter management, aggressive behavior, stop the bleed; and, blood-borne pathogens. Staff scheduling with a ratio of 1 to 15. Staff will rely on pre-packaged food; staff went above and beyond last year preparing three hot meals a day.

Security issues – SPR will hire armed security and the Human Services Department will have a staff person assigned to each shelter.

Decommission process – SPR staff had big feelings about sending these people out on the streets when the shelters were closing. They are working on a process to deal with ensuring the shelter residents have a place to go.

Department Operations –

Set up Department Operations Center (DOC): snow removal headquarters, dispatching, communications, meeting place

Team Approach

- SDOT Assistance Team to Report to SDOT Charles St. Facility: focus on ADA ramps, crosswalks, overpasses, bike lanes, Burke-Gilman Trail
- SPR District Team: shelter sites, garbage dumpster sites, parking lots, park priority sites, libraries, schools, sidewalks around schools

Snow Removal/Shelter Support

- Encampment Team: will handle pick-up and delivery of donations
- Landscape Crews: snow removal at south-end community centers
- Tree Crew: removal of downed trees, limbs
- Employee sheltering: possible overnight shelters for staff

Sheltering employees for overnight so they can stay at work

Shelter preparation –

- Shelter preparation: cleaning, keys for staff, generator testing, building systems check, storage and staging of supplies and equipment, help Recreation with food shopping, delivery; shelter setup
- Shelter operation: 24-hour custodial coverage (4- to 12-hour shifts); shops on standby
- Snow removal preparation: storage and staging of supplies, specialized equipment (e.g., snow blowers)

When the call comes in, the crews will deliver cached supplies that will go to all areas of the city; dog crates; cots, etc...

Crews will purchase food and deliver; custodians will help set up shelters; layout plans done and will meet standards; there will be 2 custodians at each shelter. Shops will have vehicles chained up at Densmore and Westbridge.

Demobilization plan – custodial crew will clear all occupants. SPR staff will bring in dogs to smell for bedbugs. Then, a 2-day disinfect program and open to the public.

Employee Considerations

Payment and Labor Issues

- Compensation - making sure people are paid for the job spec their current responsibilities are asking of them.
- Union bargaining agreements

Employee Training & Wellness

Training opportunities include:

- Mental Health First Aid
- Management of Aggressive Behavior
- Shelter Training
- De-Escalation 101
- First Aid & Blood Born Pathogens
- Food Handling
- Employee Wellness
- Employee Assistance Program support if needed
- 1:1 counseling available

Shelter for staff

For staff who need to stay closer to shelters/work locations due to transportation, long shifts, other reasons, SPR is exploring 2-3 locations to set up a temporary housing arrangement.

Amenities needed:

- Kitchen area
- Restroom/showering facilities

Locations identified are Densmore Admin. Bldg., Jefferson Horticulture Bldg. and Jefferson Lawn Bowling Clubhouse

The Board thanks SPR staff for their hard work. They are complimentary about how thoughtful staff were in putting this together.

Maintenance crews who work cleaning encampments get a 10% increase due to the unordinary work.

Who pays for all of this? Mayor issues an Executive Order. They spend city resources on food and other essential supplies. When the Governor and Feds declare an emergency – SPR can submit a FEMA reimbursement.

Recommendations from other sheltering plans to divide by gender, if requested.

Old/New Business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:23pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____

William Lowe, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners