



Minutes

Joint Board of Park Commissioners/Park District Oversight Committee

Via WebEx

Tuesday, May 28, 2020

6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Jessica welcomes people to the meeting of the Joint Board of Park Commissioners and Park District Oversight Committee. She calls the meeting to order at 6:35pm. The Board introduces themselves.

Public Comment

Susan Helf – Green Lake Advisory Council, transferred money from SPR to General Fund; money earmarked to repair community centers; done with no notice or community discussion. Is this legal?

Deputy Superintendent Williams responds that it is legal and there will be a public process during City Council deliberation. He would love to speak with her more about this off-line.

Philip Weiss – He inquired about why SPR refused a restroom facility on the Roanoke Lid in design now. SPR staff said they had maintenance concerns and there are public facilities within ½ mile. 1/3 of a mile is the nearest restrooms and that is a long way to go; SPR has to change their policy to put in a restroom with each new project, especially if another agency is paying for it.

Deputy Superintendent Williams says he will look into it. Paula to follow up.

Domingo Barron – Georgetown, oldest community in Seattle; growing community with no amenities; no after-school activities 8 months out of the year. Georgetown could really use a community center.

John Chin – SPR is allowing cutting on steep slopes in West Seattle. It violates the Environmentally Critical Areas ordinance and city policy. Why is this allowed?

Deputy Superintendent Williams responds that he's right about the Environmentally Critical Areas; honoring historical view easements but not creating new ones.

Superintendent's Update

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Cal Anderson Park – ongoing protests; has been closed since end of June but still camping happening. SPR staff conducted 4 to 5 clean-ups. Management is considering the big picture of how to provide the best parks and recreation during a pandemic and civil unrest.

City Council proposing to eliminate the navigation team – encampment removal/clean up. This will have impacts on the department. Moratorium on encampment removals across the city.

Park District funding has been helpful. Park District was always intended to supplement not to supplant general fund. Other park and recreation departments are cutting staff because they do not have the funding to pay staff.

Pier 58 – waterline failure resulted in a 13” shift in the pier. The pier is old and many of the pilings are rotting. The pier is to be removed in the next 90 days. It will cost between \$4-\$5 million. SDOT will expedite permits.

Telecommuting – City employees will continue working from home through January 8, 2021.

Public Engagement process for Cal Anderson – continue to engage community to reimagine Cal Anderson. Andy will discuss this in more detail later.

Recreation programming – 20 summer childcare sites underway. School/fall registration to begin soon. Boat ramps and 5 lifeguarded beaches are open. Street Team engaging youth to prevent violence.

Park Closing times – encourage people to leave parks earlier. Modified hours at major parks to close at 9pm until September. Website will reflect correct operating hours.

Water safety campaign – working with King County to get the word out about being safe in and around water.

Commissioner Byers questions the parking lot closures on Lake Washington Boulevard, leaving access to those who live nearby.

Presentation & Discussion: Park District Legislation Overview

Michele Finnegan, Policy Director, Seattle Parks and Recreation

2020 Park District Budget Revisions

- Seattle Park District Board to adopt Park District 2020 realignment adopted in SPR’s budget by City Council

Delay to Six-Year Funding Cycle

- Revise ILA to enable a one-year delay to funding cycle in emergency circumstances
- *“The Park District Board may delay the start of a new six-year planning cycle by one year by resolution with a 3/4 vote in the event of a natural disaster, exigent economic circumstances, or other emergency as determined by the Park District Board and instead approve an interim annual budget for the Seattle Park District . . .”*

- Trigger this delay for 2021 through resolution, resulting in an annual Park District budget (to be proposed with SPR's biennial budget in September).

Mayor forecasted 2020 revenue decreasing. \$300 million revenue gap for 2021 for the city; many budget conversations to come.

Feedback to CM Juarez is welcome.

Presentation: Keeping Parks Open Initiative

Rachel Schulkin, Communications Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Allowing access to open space while not avoiding crowding. Defining Metrics to determine how things are going and the best ways to move forward.

The Social Distancing Ambassadors are divided into subgroups:

- Data monitoring group – collect data hourly throughout shift; info re crowding, numbers; uses and comments.
- Policies and Communications – changes in parks rules, signage for expectations and our efforts to keep people safe.
- Physical Barriers – closures of amenities and one-way paths
- Community Education – most supportive to employees they are a welcoming presence in the park; providing them with masks and outdoor activity risk matrix.
- Community intervention – support SDA need to make a judgment call about whether SPD is called or how to handle larger groups.
- Park Activation – providing activities that are socially distanced in nature. Sanitizing between use and a positive activity.
- IDT – how can they support? SDOT is providing support; but we are talking with the Library and Fire to see if they have ideas.
- Pilots and partnerships – pursue ideas for partnerships; Youth Art with social justice messaging in parks. Signage has seen much vandalism and hopefully people will take more care and notice for these messages.
- Meet weekly and data led. Mayor's Office is supportive.

Presentation & Discussion: Cal Anderson Park Planning Process

Andy Sheffer, Planning & Development Director, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Rico Quirindongo, Architect, DLR Group

The 2020 Cal Anderson Park Project (convened by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)) is planning an outreach process to receive and address potential design and programming interventions to Cal

Anderson Park. There is a need/opportunity, right now, to address how these issues play out at Cal Anderson Park.

This process was deemed necessary in the advent of all the ideas being proposed to the department after CHOP. Some of these ideas have already taken on a physical manifestation in the park. We do not intend to rethink the entire park; but we need to think about how the entire park functions in order to consider the subtlest interventions. We do not intend to crowd the park with new elements as that would interfere with the functionality of existing elements. We also tend to shy away from the term “memorialize” because parks are living, growing, and constantly changing in the ways that they are used by the public. For instance, an intervention like a piece of art may pay tribute to an event but it would also serve another meaning to the beholder.

Rico Quirindongo, design consultant, reviews the public process they will go through:

1st Mtg: Frame topic – Inspiration for change

- Vision, History of Park: Design, Culture, and Use
- Ideation

2nd Mtg: Inventory, Synthesis, and prioritization

- Site Analysis: Opportunities and Constraints
- Design considerations, Space Diagramming and Programming

3rd Mtg: Implementation/Piloting

- Roadmap for immediate action items/ pilot projects and longer-term interventions

Support for Community Initiative

Art: During the Capitol Hill Organized Protest/Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, there was an exhibition of artwork invested in by the community both in the park and the public right of way, as a celebration of culture and art. SPR looking for ways to honor these works within the park.

Garden: A garden space that creates access for BIPOC gardeners and educates the greater Seattle community on food justice and land sovereignty.

Community Corner: Community circles allow a way for people to congregate and share their ideas. This was an integral part of the CHOP/CHAZ community experience.

Besides the online meetings, Rico and his team will be at Cal Anderson talking with the people who live and work near there to ensure a wide spectrum of feedback is received.

Next 2 sessions planned for September 9 and 10.

Commissioner Byers asks about the years long efforts to memorialize the AIDS epidemic within the LGBTQIA+ Community at Cal Anderson. Andy says all stakeholders are involved in this process and the programming will probably change more than the design.

Commissioner Sivarajan asks with what other BIPOC groups have they communicated? Rico does not have a list yet but they are working on it.

Commissioner Cook asks about coordination with Bobby Morris playfield. Andy responds that the community seems to love that playfield and plays an important function.

Commissioner McBride mentions that Cal Anderson is an Olmsted Park and there is plenty of space to recognize and respect many different contexts.

Presentation & Discussion: Summer Childcare Overview

Justin Cutler, Recreation Division Director, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Lori Chisholm, Out of School Time Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

SPR Recreation division is ramping down their shelters as they prepare to ramp up the childcare centers. Thanks the staff for their hard work.

- A great partnership with Associated Recreation Council for providing programming for the kids in our community.

Overview –

In the spring, SPR offered emergency childcare at 5 locations. SPR recognize fears and concerns of staff and families. Learned a lot during the spring and this informed the summer programs.

- 20 Locations – 424 slots
 - Averaged 75% enrollment
 - Fee: \$240/week/child
 - Up to 90% scholarship
- Safety Protocols & Planning – monitor CDC and King County Public Health guidance
- Priority Registration
 - Essential Worker Families
 - Scholarship Qualified

Stayed the same:

- Commitment and Dedication of Staff
- Focus on quality
- Creating a safe and welcoming environment for children
- Supporting children holistically

Different:

- Cost to Operate/Financial Impacts
- Significantly reduced capacity

- On-line registration/payment
- Implementing and Following COVID-19 guidelines: Governor, CDC, DOH, PHSKC, DCYF
- Cohort groupings of participants
- Communication Coordination
- Response to impacts of exposures/confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Modification of Activities
- Staff experience
- Evolving and Dynamic Situation

Lessons Learned

- Rapid and Clear Communication is Critical
- Health and Safety First
- Program Financial Sustainability vs. Affordability
- Evolving and Dynamic Environment
- Demand for Service
- Parent concerns for children's health and safety
- Flexibility for families
- Can change daily/weekly based on family situation
- Community COVID-19 rates
- Program Closure impacts

Fall Childcare Plan approved by Mayor

- 20 Locations
- Available slots – 558
- Scholarships available up to 90%
- Registration Opens – Tuesday, August 25
- Emphasis on children furthest from education justice and scholarship eligible families
- Enrollment Options: 2-day, 3-day, 5-day for Monthly Sessions
- Monthly Average Cost: \$1695/month/child – full time, Daily value = \$90.64
- Program closed: Holidays, December 28-31 and April 12-16
- Uncertainty of Demand
- Financial Sustainability
- Supports for remote learning – SPR staff are not trained educators; but SPR wants to support students' academic success for students doing remote learning.

SPR staff will offer middle/high school hubs to provide wrap-around services, meals, mentoring, and social/emotional support.

Deputy Superintendent Williams says providing care to kids is very high risk and requires much flexibility and adaptations. Lori Chisolm and her team are the best.

The Board commends the recreation staff and doing such a great job to support young people and families.

Old/New Business

Future meeting schedule – Michele suggests the September 29th because the Mayor's budget will be available to discuss. Larger group retreat in October.

September 8 Park District Board meeting – Commissioner Byers wants to know what happened to the letter they wrote to the Mayor and Councilmember Juarez. Commissioner Farmer suggests they send the letter to the City Council.

There being no other business, the meeting is adjourned at 8:35pm.