



Minutes

Joint Board of Park Commissioners/Park District Oversight Committee

Via WebEx

Thursday, March 11, 2021

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

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting is called to order at 6:35pm and the Board members introduce themselves. Commissioner McCaffrey calls the meeting to order at 6:34pm. She acknowledges that we are on traditional land of the Coast Salish people. The board members and staff introduce themselves.

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Aguirre toured Little Brook Park with the community and they are working with the community and local building owners to mitigate the issues. The Commissioners are appreciative of his follow-up.
- Seattle Parks and Recreation divisions have been focused on getting ready for the spring and summer when there will be a huge influx of people returning to our parks, facilities and programs.
- SPR Executive Team and other staff met on Monday, March 8 in a Reopening Summit to discuss and prepare to welcome back Seattle residents and visitors in a safe and welcoming way.
- The purpose of the Summit was to:
 - Review the context of the continuing pandemic and changes that are coming with vaccinations and loosening guidelines from the State and City
 - Discuss and make decisions about re-opening priorities and timelines; spray parks, swim beaches, athletic field scheduling, etc.
 - Provide reopening guidance on staffing, the Park Ambassador Program, Clean Seattle Initiative, and other programs and activities
 - Prioritize our offerings to serve BIPOC and other underrepresented communities
 - Focus on services provided in outdoor spaces this spring and summer
 - Acknowledge the high expectations of the public for clean, safe and welcoming parks and programs
 - Stress the importance of clear and transparent communication to the public and our staff about these expectations and what we will and will not be able to provide

- Confirm that we will continue to monitor our parks for crowding and public health compliance; data collection still crucial in this effort
- Directors and staff did a deeper dive on a number of selected topics including:
 - Park reseeded
 - Park Ambassador Program
 - Athletic field scheduling and event permitting
 - Greater access to outdoor recreation
 - Summer services
 - SPR hopes to have fields and facilities ready by Mother's Day
- Bottom line considerations:
 - Equity is always topmost in our planning and service delivery
 - Public recreation should happen mostly outdoors during the pandemic
 - Resources should be deployed and prioritized in ways that reflect these values
 - Decisions and actions need to be interconnected
 - Finances are tight; significant revenue impacts and hiring freeze means less staff and fewer resources.

Clean Cities – March 1-7

- 153,000 lbs. of trash collected from 73 encampment trash pick-up locations, RV sites, other city locations
- 10,700 discarded needles collected
- In February 2021, more than 800,000 pounds of trash collected overall
- SPR Maintenance Jamborees continue, this week: Denny, Oxbow Parks

Facilities, Maintenance, Planning and Development Division is ramping up to Welcome Back Seattle through these actions:

- Plumbers are getting ahead of the game by turning on water in all the parks.
- Staff doing play equipment audits
- Graffiti removal is at an all-time high.
- The custodial and enhanced cleaning crews continue to sanitize facilities in response to COVID and in preparation of opening facilities, e.g. Japanese Garden.
- Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project is in construction.
- Spruce St Mini Park Play Area PDD hosted an online meeting on Feb 27 for the community to learn about the project, meet the design team, provide input on the preferred schematic design and review the three play equipment options
- Synthetic Turf Replacements: The projects at Mickey Merriam Playfields #6, 7, and 9 at Magnuson Park are complete and open. SPR Planning and Development Division is working to replace the aging synthetic turf with new state-of-the-art synthetic turf systems at six playfields throughout Seattle
- S Lake Union CC: Online Open House (March 11- March 31) will launch this week on March 16 with an online meeting. Located at corner of Mercer and Dexter, the center

will be private-public partnership operated by SPR but sited on ground floor of private development.

- Freeway Park Improvements Project: Staff and the design team presented the project to Design Commission. Project includes improvements to accessibility, infrastructure, lighting, wayfinding, irrigation and drainage, a restored comfort station
- Denny Park: After the recent encampment removal our grounds maintenance and facilities maintenance continue to restore the park, including graffiti removal, electrical repairs, irrigation activation. SPR plans to activate the park with new bistro furniture, a concierge, some games, music, etc.

Finance and Administration

- The Japanese Garden opened on Saturday, March 6, with 320 people in attendance; on March 7, the Shinto blessing of the garden was streamed.
- Reopening planning: developing reopening plan for athletics, Amy Yee Tennis Center, specialty gardens, and event scheduling
- Launched virtual picnic lottery for 2021-22 picnic season
- SPR's Contracts office will begin issuing activity use for recreational businesses offering classes in City parks.

Recreation

- Vaccination Rollout: Childcare workers now eligible to receive vaccine; staff have been reaching out and supporting our childcare providers in this effort
- Staff working on reopening programs and activities with emphasis on outdoor activities (such as Rec N the Streets and some pools), park activation, staffing
- Teen Hubs: Miller Teen Hub closes on March 12. Staff have been redeployed to existing Teen Hubs
- City extending childcare copay relief (50%) through June

The commissioners ask if there are volunteer opportunities for teens to assist with park restoration. Superintendent Aguirre mentions Darryl Cook is the Volunteer Coordinator and they are looking to revamp their volunteer program to maximize involvement and efficiency.

Briefing: Strategic Plan Focus and CAPRA Accreditation

- SPR seeks to design and execute their work in a way that is collaborative, effective, and efficient.
- Work process to center on recognizing and meeting needs of the underserved and harmed, share power with community members and frontline staff, and support organizational innovation.

- SPR recognizes that given the parallel crises Seattle faces, there are fewer resources, and SPR must be clear and transparent with staff and community about the scope of focus in the coming years.
- To do this well, SPR will move away from silos in projects, programs, tools and workflows and create an interdisciplinary approach that saves material resources and labor.

SPR will work collaboratively with this group to create infrastructure and support needed to lean into SPR's goal of being the most equitable, effective, and efficient organization it can be.

SPR will leverage the Strategic Plan, which determines the work we prioritize and CAPRA, which influences the approach to this work to elevate our commitment to Anti-racism and anti-oppression by:

- ensuring it is a driver in prioritization and embedding it in the way the department operates.
- SPR will build relationship and trust with the communities they serve through:
- Offering clear and transparent processes
- visible and high-level accountability
- Especially, since we are operating with limited resources and historic challenges
- Staff time is also a non-renewable and limited resource. This approach attempts to make efficient use of staff time, existing structure and processes.

Why do this work now? SPR has an opportunity in 2021 to pilot a new approach to create dedicated cross-divisional space to frame strategic management and align work, goals and performance across functions.

- SPR will become an Anti-Racist organization, through changing policies/rules, services, and programs to strengthen access for marginalized communities.
- Address the global environmental crisis and lack of environmental justice. SPR will work to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and promote a healthy environment for all.
- SPR needs to do their part to protect staff and communities facing public health crisis, working to address the physical isolation, emotional isolation, and limited access to recreational activities that disproportionately threaten health of people in marginalized communities.
- SPR needs to responsibly manage limited public resources. SPR will reimagine programs and service levels to ensure they feasibly support the financial health of communities in need.

The strategic plan and CAPRA are interdependent. The strategic plan includes a strategy to become CAPRA certified and the CAPRA process requires a strategic plan. The current strategic plan is not

compliant with CAPRA. The strategic plan shall be reviewed annually. The goals and objectives of the plan shall be measurable to demonstrate progress and results.

Strategic Plan focus provides the opportunity to meet the CAPRA standard and focus department work for the next 3-5 years.

National Recreation & Park Association's CAPRA explained:

Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)

Key Process Characteristics

- Inventory and Gap Analysis
- Agency compliance with 142 of 154 the CAPRA standards*
- Review and/or revision of plans, policies, procedures, processes, services, and performance tools for compliance
- 24 months to become compliant

Leverage CAPRA Standards to vision of Healthy Environment, Healthy Strong Communities and Organizational Excellence. Require relationships with communities and decolonize the work.

In 2020 work to complete equity analysis for each line of business incl deep dive of historical harm to communities, looking at current state and applying this to future work and setting some accountability measure to ensure SPR is achieving goal of mitigating and undoing harm. Inventory plans and policies to see which plans meet CAPRA currently and which will need to be update.

Jesús says CAPRA is the national standard for Parks and Recreation agencies. This is exciting because SPR wants to lead with equity in our work and undo harm and create a more equitable institution. Jesús thanks Shanyanika and Selena for their work.

2020-2032 Strategic Plan Overview

- In 2018 and 2019 SPR staff did extensive internal and external engagement to develop a long-term Strategic Plan to guide our work from 2020-2032. This effort engaged over 10,000 people through a mix of methods. The plan identified 40 strategies to guide the work over the next 12 years, organized around SPR's vision (Healthy, Healthy, Strong) with additional focus on Organizational Excellence.
- The plan introduced the departmental Pathway to Equity work and clearly articulated SPR's commitment to dismantling white supremacy culture and was finalized in March 2020, right before the shift to mission-essential functions. SPR feels it is now time to reexamine this plan within the current context.
- The long-range Strategic Plan was always imagined to be a living, iterative document, and so this year SPR will start that iteration by revisiting the commitments made and do some focusing work. This work will involve reengaging with the community to understand how

their needs have changed (and are continuing to change), and to focus in on some near-term actions SPR can take to support pandemic recovery, particular in the BIPOC community, in the next 3-5 years.

2021 Strategic Planning Work Products

- Specific products coming out of this work will be:
 - Short-term action steps and SMART goals related to a subset of those 40 Strategic Plan strategies
 - A decentralized engagement strategy that will build on existing staff relationships in community and redefine what “engagement” means in SPR (this work will also be complemented by some centralized engagement efforts)
 - A set of funding priorities for the next Park District cycle, formal planning which will start in early 2022

Strategic Plan Focus Framework

- The framework will echo the organization of the current Strategic Plan, drilling down a bit deeper and encouraging staff to reflect on lessons learned over the past year that may shift emphasis in the near term.
- The coordination team will be designing exercises to walk through these questions with staff and community and provide other supports to facilitate these conversations and prioritization process.
- SPR staff will start by looking how the context of these parallel crises have changed the assumptions, with a focus on the impact for BIPOC residents in particular. Which disparities have grown, which inequities have been exacerbated?
- SPR will look at what they can do about that by cataloging what impact they have, and what are their primary levers of change to support communities in response to these crises?
- With the benefit of that context, SPR will overlay the existing Strategic Plan strategies to determine which of them can help drive toward the wanted impact, and merit a deeper dive.
- SPR staff will identify a set of SMART goals/action steps on a 3-5-year time horizon for each focus strategy.
 - Each action step must include clear equity impact and pathway to equity connection.
 - Action steps should reference affected lines of business and impact on associated performance measures.
 - Steps should identify funding needs and actions within current resources

SPR Lines of Business

- Many of you will recall that throughout 2019 the budget, policy, and performance teams helped develop a new framework for reporting on their work to help paint a more comprehensive picture of how funding supports services - lines of business. They are updating these with 2021 budget numbers now and will share later this year.

- Shifting their reporting on Park District funding away from “initiatives” in the first cycle toward these more comprehensive Lines of Business, as many initiatives represent just a fraction of the overall funding supporting a particular set of services.

Engagement Approach

- Lead with anti-racism.
- Intentionality and accountability: Make it clear who SPR is trying to reach, and focus engagement on actions/changes on which SPR can follow through (moving beyond “big picture” to specifics)
- Openness to change: Adopt a genuine position of openness to change, honesty, and transparency about what SPR is able to do and won’t do
- Build on existing community connections: Recognize the deep connections/relationships SPR staff across lines of business already have in community and design engagement approaches around these
- Decentralized and inclusive, train the trainer: Leverage program staff as ambassadors and engagers with support / templates / framework provided by back-of-house staff (Communications, Policy)
- Support & expectations: Position staff for success by providing needed supports (technical assistance, recognition, funding, etc.)

Coordinated Project Timeline

This work is organized into 3 phases:

- In Phase 1 (through May), SPR will build on equity analysis work by conducting some community engagement mapping to identify existing points of connection, conducting an internal focus exercise on the Strategic Plan to begin identifying which areas may be most fruitful for a deeper dive, and develop an engagement strategy (decentralized with centralized supports)
- Phase 2, SPR staff will go out to community and start that engagement (with staff in the lead), with ongoing synthesis, processing, and refinement – shifting inquiry in response to what staff are hearing, initiate process to prioritize strategies for action planning that staff think will resonate most
- In Phase 3, take stock of all the engagement results and shift into action planning in earnest, identifying measurable goals for the next 3-5 years – pushing toward a December deadline for publication and pivoting to Park District planning
- Be ready for Park District Planning in 2022

Next Steps and Board Touchpoints

Phase 1 Preparation:

- Staff are organizing into workgroups around our lines of business, standing up those spaces, finding ways to collaborate
- Coordination team developing trainings, supports, engagement strategy, collateral

- Line of Business workgroups to launch internal staff engagement, equity analysis, engagement mapping & planning

Staff will return to PDOC & Park Board at May 6 joint meeting to:

- Conduct Strategic Plan Focus Exercise
- Discuss engagement plan PDOC & Park Board roles
- Review updated timeline

Discussion

Commissioner Watts feels it's important to get staff alignment internally and answering why they are doing it, in DEI work (Diversity Equity and Inclusion). What will this phase look like? Will there be mutual awareness with performance measures for staff? Shanyanika says leadership is in community of practice to do deep internal work on personal and interpersonal level. Change team is active in setting up trainings for staff. There will be SMART goals through strategic plan.

Superintendent Aguirre says SPR is using LEAP – Leadership, Expectation and Accountability Plan; to help build SPR leadership build DEI awareness and capacity to lead organization through the process towards an anti-racist organization.

Commissioner Vu notices Shanyanika and Selena are using multiple terms – DEI, anti-racism and decolonization - that have very different definitions to her, and she wonders what they mean? What does anti-racism and decolonization work look like for a land-owning agency and their status as an institution? Superintendent Aguirre says SPR is grappling with this because this work is on such a varied spectrum with staff. Internally, SPR is having tough discussions and the goal is to be an organization that is anti-racist while recognizing the work is ongoing. SPR staff want to be co-creators on this vision and create space for community voices to ensure SPR is centering voices and sharing power.

The commissioners comment that this is an impressive organizational undertaking and very thoughtful. Shanyanika replies that it is important to set aspirational goals and looking forward to working with boards on this work.

Commissioner Watts says having some inter-agency coordination for this work. Selena and Shanyanika are collaborating with a city-wide community engagement effort to ensure SPR doesn't over-tax the residents of Seattle – coordinating and leveraging engagement opportunities. Planning and Facilities are working with OPCD on climate justice issues and developing equity focus metrics and policy governance.

OH and OED work in community – link between green gentrification and displacement; people do not want their parks to be renovated because it will increase property taxes. Will there be anti-displacement strategies through SPR?

Commissioner McCaffrey would like SPR staff to articulate more tangible results from a different status quo as a result of this work. Shanyanika says she understands the request, it's difficult because so much of the work will be prescribed by people. There are standards for levels of service – ensure aligning with goal of being anti-racist; and review all policies to ensure they are not perpetuating historical harm and create barriers to access. Commissioner McCaffrey would like the language and how this work will manifest to people outside of this sphere.

Superintendent Aguirre says the CAPRA accreditation will allow SPR to examine everything SPR does.

Commissioner Byers questions the term anti-racism in lieu of something more idealistic. Shanyanika says SPR is making sure that racial identity or other identity does not determine your access to the system. Superintendent Aguirre adds that as an institution that plays a role that have resulted in institutional racism, SPR has to be deliberate in undoing the system. Selena adds that SPR needs to balance tactics with visionary language, recognizing where the organization is and where it is heading, this language is a tool for this task. Commissioner Byers agrees.

Commissioner Hundley warns that accreditations sometimes fail because their work is not properly funded.

>>>American Recovery Act – Citywide coordination briefing about the federal money and how it will be spent to make the city the best it can be. Superintendent Aguirre says SPR staff will see if they can get a representative from another city agency to come and present to the boards.

Update and Discussion: Park Board and PDOC Consolidation

Overarching Objectives

Address concerns regarding:

- Ambiguity and overlap of efforts in communicating information and in discussions that occur in separate, parallel meetings.
- Confusion and frustration from members of the public on lack of clarity on how or whether they should engage with the Board, PDOC or both on issues.
- Uncertainty among Board and PDOC members on their respective and collective roles in advising the City on policies and funding.
- Efficient use of time and expertise of Board/PDOC members and SPR staff

Summary of SPR Board Consolidation Proposal

Discussed at January 28 Joint Park Board/PDOC Meeting

- Create a Joint Board of Park Commissioners that acts as one body and includes the PDOC responsibilities laid out in the Interlocal Agreement
- 15 board members with 3-year staggered terms (excepted Get Engaged)
- All appointments are confirmed by the City Council.
- Committees would be identified and selected by the Board (not legislated)

Items to be addressed legislatively:

- Board makeup & positions
- Member & chair appointment and confirmation procedures
- Frequency of meetings
- Term length

Paula reviews the possible combined Board membership.

Boards feedback

- Equitable representation
- A strong committee structure that reports back to the Board/Committee
- Collaboration with other City Boards and Commissions
- Fill gaps in ethnicity, expertise and geographic representation
- Robust onboarding and orientation for Board/Committee members
- Clarity on how positions are selected and appointed

Park Board and PDOC members are on board (ha!) with consolidation. They appreciate staff efforts and should get moving combining the boards as soon as possible.

Retreat in October to discuss housekeeping items like what items the board votes on, etc...
Commissioner Herrera volunteers to assist with keeping this moving forward.

SPR can start the recruitment process, but staff wanted to ensure the Board was amenable to the change in board composition.

Old/New Business

Commissioner McCaffrey reviews the upcoming meeting calendar.

Commissioner Farmer asks about the SEPA legislation for Tiny House Villages. Rachel says she looked it up and staff will find out from DM Sixkiller's office.

Boards will celebrate the retiring commissioner on 3/25.

Superintendent Aguirre says he has deep appreciation for SPR staff. They really stepped up and he is so appreciative of SPR employees for all the work they have been doing. He is really proud of this team.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:30pm.