



Minutes

Joint Board of Park Commissioners/Park District Oversight Committee

Via WebEx (Please see the video [here](#))

Thursday, June 10, 2021

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

Welcome and Introductions

Kelly calls the meeting to order and provides instructions to the Board and the public. The Board and staff introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Tim Motzer – Asks for support from the Boards for Lake City Community Center funding with the Park District Board (Seattle City Council).

Cesar Garcia – Lake City Collective member providing update regarding Little Brook Park. They have been activating the park and partnering with SDOT for a Stay Healthy street. Improving relationships with neighbors and their dogs has resulted in less waste in the park.

Diane Morrison – Volunteer Park was renamed in 1901 in tribute to the soldiers of the Spanish American War, it perpetuates a terrible lie and an offensive reminder of imperialism. The park should be renamed.

Larry Hubbell – Friends of Arboretum Creek – Alder and Alley creeks located uphill from the Arboretum Creek are diverted into the sewer overflow. This project would allow these creeks to flow naturally into Arboretum Creek. He would like their advocacy for funding.

Elizabeth Riggs – SPR staff are saying it will cost \$4-5million more to complete design for the eventual replacement of the Green Lake Community Center. She thanks the Board for their support and advocacy in the past.

Superintendent's Report

Deputy Superintendent responds to public comment:

- Regarding renaming Volunteer Park – SPR doesn't have a process for this but will look into it.
- Arboretum Creek – Encourages his group to show up in the fall during budget season to advocate for this project.

- Green Lake Community Center – SPR will continue to seek ways to fund more of the design process.
- Lake City/Park District funding – Decisionmakers will decide what the rate is based on cost and budget. The economy is hard for a lot of people and raising rates may not be a popular thing to do.

Department Updates

- Welcome Back Seattle: Summer approaches, and SPR is ready!
- 2022 budget submission on June 2
- Seattle ranked in Top 10 in national index of 100 largest park systems in the nation
- Federal “Rescue Plan” funding supports SPR childcare, park activation, wading pools, park and facility maintenance
 - \$1M pending for childcare support including scholarships
 - \$400K for wading pools.
 - \$1.25M for enhanced maintenance services at parks, community centers, and other parks facilities that are expected to see heavy use in spring, summer, and early fall.
 - \$500,000 to support expanded activation at parks that builds community by providing cultural and recreational activities
- Golden Gardens trees
 - 2 trees were topped near Golden Gardens off-leash area in May. Without permits. This is illegal.
 - The case was reported to SPD and is under investigation

Clean Cities Initiative

- In May 2021, SPR crews removed 355,000 lbs. of trash
- 3,270 needles removed
- Trash removed from 127 encampment sites
- Eight park “jamborees” at West Seattle Stadium, Green Lake, Kinnear, Myrtle Edwards, Homer Harris, Mapes Creek, Carkeek and Herrings House parks

Parks and Environment Division

- Summer Prep: Parks and Environment Division staff continue to prepare for peak summer season. All parks with recently removed previous encampments were “held” including: Denny, Miller, Cal Anderson, Albert Davis, Gilman, and University Playground.

Planning, Development & Maintenance

- Loyal Heights Play Area renovated and open to the public
- Occidental Square Pavilion ribbon cutting
- Schmitz Park Blvd. restoration begins
- Lakeridge Playfield/Play Area construction under way
- Aquatic weed control on Lake Washington

Recreation

- Welcome Back Seattle Grants -The Welcome Back Seattle grants closed on May 21st and SPR had 75 applications. This program has \$300,000 to allocate and SPR will likely fund between 30-35 awardees. The grants fund culturally relevant programs focused on physical fitness, mental wellness, wealth building, and community healing with an emphasis on BIPOC communities. For the last two weeks SPR had a panel of 5 community members, representing the Muslim, African American, Latino, Pilipino, and LGBTQ communities working on evaluating these applications. We look forward to announcing the awardees in the coming weeks.
- Lifelong Recreation Fit Kits Photo - The Lifelong Recreation team recently distributed 50 "Fit Kits" designed to meet older East African community members' expressed needs.

Finance and Administration

- SPR to waive fees for performance art in selected parks
 - Applications are based on a first come, first served process, on a rolling calendar. To qualify, applicants must be willing to meet the requirements for the fees to be waived. Requirements, in addition to the above, include: open to the public, no amplified sound, no money collection, providing event insurance and committing to do outreach to the neighborhood the event is hosted in.
 - This opportunity is open to new permittees that host their event in one of seventeen (17) Seattle parks with amphitheater-style set ups. Parks include: 6th Ave NW Pocket, A.B. Ernst, Cesar Chavez, Commodore, Counterbalance, Daejeon, Dr. Blanche Lavizzo, Dr. Jose Rizal, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Civil Rights Memorial, Dragonfly Pavilion in Longfellow Creek Greenspace, First Hill, Fremont Peak, Greenwood, Jimi Hendrix, Magnuson, Othello, or Solstice.
- Innovation in contracts: 'Pop-up picnic' businesses receive permits
 - During the pandemic, entrepreneurs identified new, inventive, and creative business opportunities to encourage ways for people to be together outside.
 - As a result, SPR began to receive requests for permits from small business owners seeking to operate pop up picnics in various parks. CASO responded quickly by creating an experimental commercial use pilot to allow this type of activity while charging a reasonable fee and ensuring park rules and procedures are followed.
 - Within the first few weeks, 3 WMBE pop up picnic businesses have received permits to operate in a total of 7 park locations earning SPR \$3,900 in revenue. More pop-up picnic businesses are expected to seek permits.

Policy, Performance, Property

- Duwamish Waterway Park interdepartmental acquisition near completion
 - SPR and the Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) have partnered to complete an inter-departmental property acquisition in the South Park community. With SPR as lead, the City has reached agreement with a property

- owner where the City will acquire a nearly one-acre parcel of property adjacent to Duwamish Waterway Park on the Duwamish River.
- With expected funding from multiple grant sources, the property will offer a combination of expanded recreational space, waterfront access and a site for a range of potential future community-serving facilities, including, potentially, community meeting space. Next steps are to complete due diligence and seek City Council approval of the purchase transaction this summer.
- Once the property acquisition is finalized, OPCD will continue its community-based planning process, partnering with SPR, which will culminate in identifying the different functions and facilities to be developed on the property (park and other) in the future.
- City Council committee approves Woodland Park land swap with SDOT
- Golf rounds and revenue up compared to 2020 AND 2019
 - Year to date, more than 103,400 rounds of golf have been played, more than double that of 2020's 47,565 (closed for 40 days), and just over 27,000 more rounds than 2019, which was a full year equivalent. Corresponding revenue also increased. May finished with 32,936 rounds played, up from 22,221 in 2020 and 29,564 in 2019.

Recreation Summer Preview: Teen Hub Learning/CLC – Learning in a Pandemic

Cynthia Etelamaki, Recreation Coordinator

Damien Hicks, Community Learning Center Manager

Justin Cutler, Recreation Division Director

Background

- The Covid-19 pandemic continues to require rapid, innovative responses to meet the needs of our communities.
- For teens, this included a holistic focus on academic supports, social-emotional health and interaction, and opportunities to safely participate in recreation activities.

Community Learning Centers

- About 20 years done combination of lunch-time and after-school academic programming; designed for elementary and middle school at 6 locations.
- Provide academic support in math and literacy
- College and career exploration
- Cultural and gender identified mentoring
- Social-emotional skill building
- Recreation!
- Shifted into virtual programming – served 2200+ students and over 7300 program hours

Pandemic Response

- Rapid development of online curriculum
- Connectedness to teens and families of support – serving some students for the first time
- Distribution of supplies and materials to families in need

What's next?

- Hybrid – virtual and in-person at 5 schools – 452 students for the summer
- Exploring hybrid school-year programming
- Researching online platforms so there are more opportunities to serve those who cannot stay after school.

Teen hubs – Overview

- SPR, DEEL, & SPS began meeting in early July to discuss opportunities to support SPS students
- Standing up teen hubs required rapid innovation within 4 weeks. 8 hub sites opened in September.
- Hubs provide a safe space for teens to access the internet and academic support, participate in enrichment and recreation activities and access healthy meals and socialize safely.
- DEEL provided significant financial support and partnership.
- Partnered with many organizations to provide enrichment opportunities.

Key Lessons learned

- Continuous improvement efforts necessary as public health and safety guidance shifted
- Rec programs were a draw for teens – and dedicated funds to develop engaging programs/partnerships is critical
- Hubs reached teens who had not previously come to a teen center – creating opportunity to stay connected post-pandemic
- Close collaboration with SPS and ongoing staff training is critical to support students especially those with IEPs.

Teen Hubs – Students & staff experience

- A survey was given by the City's Office of Innovation & Performance:
- Majority of students really enjoyed the Teen hub program and felt cared for by staff.
- They had a quiet and calm place to learn
- Time with peers was very important and helped them feel less disconnected during the pandemic.
- Top reasons they came to the hub was for help with school, fun with peers, and access to food.

Preview: Summer 2021

- Plan for a dynamic 2021 Summer in the face of many unknowns, prioritizing equity, access, health & safety, and capacity.
- Justin reviews all of the programs through indoor, outdoor and virtual programming.
- Opening 8 summer beaches, spray parks, some of the wading pools and the 2 outdoor pools.
- Use equity index to prioritize locations for services.
- Continuing regular programs (childcare, CLCs, showers, beaches)

- Re-opening programs that were paused (drop-in fitness, pools)
- Carry forward innovation that started during the pandemic (RNTS, virtual programming, Teen Hubs)

SPR Recreation Division is hiring! Spread the word!

Discussion

The Board expresses much gratitude for the work the Recreation staff are doing to bring stability and opportunities for kids.

The CLCs saw a slight decline for some of the kids during the virtual programming. However, there was also an increase with students who attended virtually.

Specialized Recreation saw a much broader audience and an increase in participation due to barriers for accessing the services in person.

Presentation: Draft Seattle Park District Cycle-End Report Outline and Findings

- Staff are working on the draft report.
- Overview of Park District, the funding initiatives. The report provides high level budget review and capital/operating budgets.
- Carryforward into 2021 and beyond – big initiatives for projects underway or major maintenance projects. The dollars are programmed out despite having not yet been spent. Expect to have project implemented by 2022.

Lessons learned:

- Park District model has proven critical for building resiliency in SPR operations.
- Stability and flexibility against unprecedented uncertainty.
- Clearer community oversight
- Centering equity in community-facing investments
- Reporting to inform planning

Presentation: Draft Planning, Development, and Maintenance Division Evaluation

In order to make the Park District successful, there was language baked into the Inter-Local Agreement to create a continuous feedback loop. Thus far, SPR has sought out evaluations of Parks maintenance, community center operations, and Planning, Development, and Maintenance Division evaluation. Andy Sheffer, Division Director will provide a summary of the results and action steps.

Evaluating process from project creation to delivery.

- Framing all work around asset management
- Making real-time adjustments
- Operational shifts continue to align with practices in industry and adapt with socio-economic environment

Asset life cycle – Planning

- Assess conditions – empowering frontline staff to be the eyes on the ground
- Develop class-specific plans
- Plan CIP

Project prioritization – this allowed them to re-prioritize quickly when the pandemic hit.

- Equity
- Safety
- Condition
- Efficiency
- Regulatory

Findings & implementation progress

- Division org and structure streamline functions and add oversight
- Roles and responsibilities – clarifying staff; adjustments to billability; recruitment, training
- Project mgmt. tools and systems – streamlining processes and maintaining them.
- Review and accountability – automated workflow
- Public engagement & Transparency – focus on high quality communication with community

Framework for response – People, process, and technology – leading with equity

Evaluation response: people

- Increase staff capacity
- Recruit women and BIPOC
- Implement deputy director role
- Prioritize process improvements
- Invest in professional development

Evaluation Response: Process

- Reorganize with accountability focus
- Implement stage gating process – evaluates key factors and important milestones in a project.
- Stand up stage gate oversight committee – reviews scope, schedule and budget
- Work unit shifts:
 - Integrate facilities management
 - Establish construction management unit – oversight of public works contracts
 - Focus planning unit on asset management – not engaging as much in individual project planning.

Stage Gates: AMWO system – automatic work orders generated on a routine basis to support warranties and extend life of assets.

RACI

- Responsible: team member who does the work to complete the task
- Accountable: person who delegates work and provides final review on a task or deliverable before it is deemed complete
- Consulted: people who provide input on a deliverable based on the impact on their work or their domain of expertise
- Informed: people who need to be kept in the loop on project progress, typically at project milestones.

Evaluation Response: Technology

- Transition project management system
- Paperless
- Update standards – adapt to climate change, use of bluebeam to automate design process
- Increase decision-making transparency – sharing information and sharing power

Draft recommendations

- 34 recommendations in report
- 21 fully implemented
- 8 in progress
- 2 for consideration in next Park District Cycle
- 3 not in SPRs purview

Deputy Superintendent Williams thanks Andy and team for their increased responsiveness; team pivots on a dime; increased accountability and transparency.

Sean asks about communities that do not have assets for PDM to manage if there is a focus on asset management. Andy says the projects that are funded were based on equity. Equitable services on maintenance happens daily.

Old/New Business

Kelly reviews the summer meeting schedule. There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:25pm.