



# Minutes

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Via WebEx

Thursday, March 10, 2022

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

## Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Akita calls the meeting to Order at 6:30pm.

Pasqual Contreras is serving in a citywide position and introduces himself. He is a project manager at the UW and he's excited to be on the Board.

The board introduce themselves. Commissioner Akita asks for approval of the consent items: the February 24, 2022 meeting notes and the March 10, 2022 Agenda. Commissioner Hundley moves, Commissioner McCaffrey seconds; the motion to approve the consent items carries.

## Public Comment

- Deb Barker – West Seattle resident and member of Save the Stone cottage. She reminds the Board about the history of the Save the Stone Cottage and their efforts to preserve and move it. Historic Seattle has become their fiscal sponsor and they moved the Stone Cottage to a Port of Seattle property and are paying rent. Saturday there will be a viewing sponsored by Historic Seattle. They are still looking for a forever home for the Stone Cottage.
- Roisin Huang – Parent, PTA president for Emerson Elementary. She asks SPR to fix the broken play structure at Hutchison Park playground, which is used by Emerson Elementary for recess. This playground broke two times in the last 15 months. They want a functioning playground.
- Charlie McGrady – Lives adjacent to Jefferson Golf Course. He is opposed to expanding the two holes on the golf course which will result in 120 vertical feet of netting. He would like to collaborate with SPR on a solution.
- Tim Motzer – Lake City resident and Park District advocate; Tim provides background and information to the Board about Park District Funding. He encourages a line item for Community Center projects and raising the taxing rate to \$.33.

- Elizabeth Riggs – When she came to Seattle she had a lot of mobility issues and started walking in the pool. Evans Pool returned her life to her and she loves this pool. She knows the pool needs to be replaced. She would like the Board to prioritize renovating the Green Lake Pool and Community Center.
- Stewart Bowerman – Rainier Beach Safety Coordinator – The playground at Hutchinson Park needs to be replaced. He conducted surveys of users and highlighted information for the board members, which were emailed to the board members earlier today.
- Trip Allen – He is disappointed that SPR is considering not allowing wheels on the inner path at Green Lake.
- Peter Breyfogle– thanks SPR for the maintenance on the Burke-Gilman trail. He has concerns about slide area and erosion control.
- Susan Helf – Supports the renovation of Green Lake Pool. She wants support for the Lake City Community Center too.
- Sylvie Reynolds – She opposes banning wheels on the inner loop at Green Lake

Acting Superintendent Williams responds to public comment:

- Green Lake – This is a temporary restriction on wheels on the inner loop. There will be a briefing in June to get an update; but the no wheels will continue until then.
- Susan and Ellen - He appreciate the advocacy by the Evans pool folks and encourages them to keep advocating.
- Tim Motzer – Acting Superintendent Williams had discussions today about the spending plan. At the beginning of immersive discussions about Park District funding.
- Hutchinson Playground - Rachel to send Acting Superintendent Williams and Andy Sheffer an email to discuss next steps and contact the public commenters.
- Deb Barker – SPR property team is understaffed, but they are in the process of hiring a new property manager and may take some time to get geared up.

Thanks everyone for their testimony as it is a way to steward our parks and recreation system.

## **Superintendent's Report**

- Mask Mandate Ending: Beginning Monday, April 4, we will be lifting the indoor mask mandate for people entering our recreation facilities and participating in our programs. After April 4, masks will be optional. This decision aligns with Seattle-King County Public Health and the Governor Jay Inslee's Office. Throughout the pandemic we've learned that when we follow Public Health guidance our team is more successful in communicating COVID restrictions to the public and we are able to provide the safest environment possible for all.
- Vaccine mandate update: Also in keeping with Public Health, on March 1, SPR stopped checking vaccination status for visitors to our indoor facilities. Initial reports from frontline staff indicate things are going well.

- Japanese Garden open: The Japanese Garden in the Washington Park Arboretum opened for the season on March 1. Walk-up visitors are welcome, but reservations are recommended for Saturdays and Sundays.
- Greater & Greener conference planning: In June 2024, the City of Seattle and the City Parks Alliance will be hosting the biennial Greater & Greener conference, attended by more than 1,000 urban parks and recreation professionals and community partners from around the country and the world. This is a chance for Seattle and SPR to shine and show off our beautiful city and parks and recreation system.

## Recreation

- Hope for Youth Grants: We recently announced the availability for grants for programs that serve youth age 11 to 19. Eligible nonprofit agencies can apply for grants up to \$3,500. Applications are due by the end of March. To learn more, go to [seattlepark.gosmart.org/](http://seattlepark.gosmart.org/).
- Community Learning Centers: A quick shout-out to Seattle Parks and Recreation's Community Learning Centers or CLCs, a great partnership between the department and the School District. You may not know it, but CLCs serve roughly 2,000 middle and elementary school students each year. Based out of Seattle Public School sites, CLC programs are offered during after school, lunchtime and school breaks (Mid-Winter, Spring and Summer). Programs provide a variety of academic, enrichment, recreational, culturally specific and family engagement events and activities, developed in collaboration with school staff, school-based partners, and other community based organizations catering to the unique dynamics and needs of each schools' community. For more information visit our website [www.seattle.gov/parks](http://www.seattle.gov/parks) and search for "community learning centers."
- Seal Sitter Signs: We have begun the replacement of three interpretive Seal Sitter signs that were old and damaged. These signs were provided by the Seal Sitters organization. Two are located at Lincoln Park and the other at Alki. The signs inform people about the harbor seals they might see resting or warming up on the shores of our parks and beaches and ask onlookers to keep their distance and leave them alone.

## Planning, Development and Maintenance

- King County grants: We learned this week King County will be receiving more than \$3 million in awards from its Parks Levy to our capital projects, including:
  - Burke Gilman Playground Renovation (Eli's Park Project) - \$500,000
  - Colman Pool Renovation - \$1,800,000
  - Medgar Evers Pool Structural Study - \$90,000
  - North Rainier Land-banked Site Development - \$500,000
  - South Park Playfield Renovation - \$500,000
  - Colonnade Mountain Bike Park Upgrade - \$120,000
- Bradner Gardens Play Area: A project to improve the play area in Bradner Gardens Park in SE Seattle was recently completed. This was a collaboration between the community and SPR, including our metal shop, carpenters, and Seattle Conservation Corps. The tractor engine block was carved by community member Chris Vondrasek who carved the first one 20 years ago.

## **Park District Background and Planning Context**

Acting Deputy Superintendent Finnegan lets the Board know that they will have homework over the next several weeks to review through the materials provided to the Board on the website accessible [here](#).

### Planning Context

Interactive map that allows you to click into all the parks and layer it with other criteria.

Overview of SPR – thinking about system as a whole and how to set the system up for longevity.

Ongoing Engagement – Selena summarizes the Biennial statistically-valid survey. They did more sampling in disadvantaged census tracts and looked at parks and recreation uses over time. Representative of city of Seattle, as a whole.

Selena reviews the background of the Park District.

Strategic Plan is a long-range plan that provides a high-level vision of how the department will define its work over the next 13 years.

2019 Engagement effort to ask big picture questions. Met with joint boards, staff engagement, social media strategy, citywide survey, looked at national trends, listening sessions with partner organizations.

### Results of 2019 Engagement Outcomes

- Support growth and density
- Making parks safer
- Responding to homeless crisis
- Improving community engagement

Healthy People, Healthy Environment, Strong Communities, and Organizational Excellence The Strategic Plan is split between four sections, each of which is organized around a piece of our vision: healthy people, healthy environment, and strong communities, and a fourth priority that transcends all our work: organizational excellence.

- Our priorities in support of Health People focus on our role in supporting the well-being of our community through our parks, programs, and services, including providing equitable programs, maintaining high-quality public spaces, prioritizing accessibility, and reimagining our recreation facilities.
- Our Healthy Environment priorities focus on responsibly stewarding natural resources, reducing carbon emissions, restoring urban forests, and increasing equitable access to parks and nature.
- Our Strong Communities priorities include providing childcare and enrichment opportunities, supporting community-driven programs and events, reducing service barriers, improving park safety, and leveraging our partnerships.

- Finally, our Organizational Excellence priorities include conducting rigorous equity analysis, challenging the status quo, investing in staff, updating our systems, and engaging with communities we serve.

#### 2022-2024 Action plan – companion plan to Strategic Plan

Identifies 24 actions and detail SPR's commitment to implementation of a subset of the 40 Strategic Plan strategies over the next 3 years.

#### 2021 Engagement Approach:

SPR engaged again to ask community members if/how those priorities may have shifted due to the 4 parallel crises Seattle was facing:

- Reckoning with racism and other inequities many in our city face,
- Public Health & Well-Being
- Economic Recovery
- Climate Change

and to dive more deeply with communities most impacted by these parallel crises.

#### Engagement Prioritization & Audience

Broken into 3 tiers of priority audiences –

- Tier 1 – high touch engagement strategies
- Tier 2 – current program participants – mid-touch; surveys
- Tier 3 – highly organized and partnered with SPR for 4 years or more;

#### What they heard:

1. Increase community engagement staffing and focus on building **meaningful relationships with BIPOC community**
2. Address **impacts of homelessness** in parks
3. Prioritize investments in the **urban canopy as a climate change mitigation** strategy; think long-range (70-100 years)
4. Improve **recycling and composting** infrastructure
5. Hire **staff from within communities** we serve
6. Improve **wayfinding** and signage, including **honoring Black and Indigenous history and language access**
7. **Reduce barriers to partnering** with SPR (e.g., volunteer activities, small/WMBE business permits, event scheduling)
8. Prioritize recreation services on **weekday evenings and weekends**
9. Clarify pathways to implement **community-identified priorities**; train staff in **co-design** practices
10. Increase **access to food and urban agriculture** opportunities
11. Bolster **environmental education** to build real-world connections to climate and nature
12. Increase **SPR security presence** at parks and in facilities
13. Improving **marketing** to increase community awareness of SPR offerings
14. Restore and increase access to **pools** and aquatics programming
15. Maximize **pedestrian usability of trails** and natural spaces

## Action Plan Commitments

### Healthy People

- Expand access to well-maintained facilities and amenities
- Enhance cultural relevance of programs, focusing on community need and language access

### Healthy Environment

- Build climate resiliency through increasing tree canopy and electrifying facilities
- Responsibly steward natural resources by innovating landscape management and diverting waste
- Connect people to nature through outdoor learning, green job training and trails.

### Strong Communities

- Increase resources supporting community-led programming and community-initiated projects
- Restore access to safe park spaces through encampment response, security and activation and public restroom availability.

### Organizational Excellence

- Improve accountability, transparency and equity in service delivery and reporting
- Recruit, train, and develop a representative workforce
- Tackle challenges through a citywide, partnership-based approach

## Section 2:

### Park District 101

- Seattle voters established in 2014 as an ongoing funding source (exists in perpetuity, unlike levies) to maintain, operate, and improve parks, community centers, pools, and other recreation facilities and programs
- Independent taxing entity with borders matching the city of Seattle
- Resources are legally restricted to parks and recreation purposes
- Governed by an Interlocal Agreement with several key provisions:
  - Outlined Park District Board (City Council) governing responsibility
  - Established six-year planning cycles
  - Established roles for a community advisory board (BPRC)
  - Established minimum City General Fund commitment to SPR
  - Requires annual, mid-cycle, and cycle-end reports

### Cycle 1: Operating Investment Highlights

- Created Third Shift allowing overnight maintenance at SPR facilities to avoid program disruption
- Established community-based Art in the Park, Get Moving and Recreation for All programs serving more than 50,000 participants
- Created and fully supports recreation scholarship fund supporting nearly \$1M of increased program access
- Fully funds programs for older adults, people with disabilities, and teens

- Supports free drop-in basketball, tot gyms, and other programs
- Doubles peak season cleaning of restrooms at 41 park sites
- Supports partnerships with community organizations to activate downtown parks
- Supports Animal Shelter partnership to patrol parks to educate and cite dog owners per the City's leash, scoop laws

#### Cycle 1: Capital Investment Highlights

- More than 540 acres of city's forests enrolled in restoration program
- Completed 120+ major maintenance projects on park facilities including play areas, pools, playfields and more
- Performed structural and system upgrades at six community centers
- Completed 5 of 14 "land-banked" park development projects (4 additional underway)
- Purchased 18 properties totaling more than 9 acres
- Awarded \$7+M in grants for community-based projects through the Major Project Challenge Fund
- Completed 21 City P-Patch improvement projects
- Provided Aquarium and Zoo major maintenance support

#### Approach to Cycle 2

Shanyanika reviews the prioritization process overview. The subcommittees of the BPRC will meet regularly to review and prioritize the lines of business. They will hear from community and subject matter experts.

There is a poll coming out on March 11 to find out board members subcommittee preferences. Deadline for responding is March 18.

#### Community Feedback Opportunities

*To support BPRC in reviewing Park District proposal packages, SPR is seeking additional feedback from Seattle residents:*

##### **March 25:**

- Website with proposals and survey questions will go live.
- Format will be simple and accessible.
- Website will remain active through the BPRC review period.
- SPR will provide BPRC with regular updates on the surveyed feedback.

##### **April 14:**

- Community will be invited to join sub-committees at BPRC meeting (*still in design*)

##### **Ongoing:**

- Community members welcome to share thoughts at any time to [PDPlanning@seattle.gov](mailto:PDPlanning@seattle.gov)
- SPR staff will monitor, respond, and share inquiries with BPRC

## Old/New Business

- Electing new Co-Chairs – Commissioner Akita says it has been a great pleasure to work in this role. Adopted a co-chair model to share the load. It has been great to share the role and participate in Executive Committee sessions together. We are proposing to continue this model. Commissioner Akita nominates Jessica Farmer to remain for continuity and Marlon Herrera to co-chair.  
Commissioner Hundley moves, Commissioner Stafford seconds; and the Board unanimously votes to approve the election of Commissioners Herrera and Farmer as the new co-chairs for the next year.
- The Commissioners decide to stay virtual until June.

There being no other business, Commissioner Akita adjourns at 8:25pm.