

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2014

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Antoinette Angulo
Diana Kincaid
Yazmin Mehdi, Vice Chair
Mazohra Thami
Tom Tierney, Chair
Bob Edmiston

Excused:

Barbara Wright
Brice Maryman

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Christopher Williams, Superintendent
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator
Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Tierney calls the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

To hear and view the full meeting, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591331>

Oral Requests from the Audience

Patricia Naumann lives 2 blocks east of Cheasty Greenspace. She shows a map of Jefferson and Cheasty to demonstrate the amount of park space on Beacon Hill that is exclusive use. She expresses discontentment that the neighbors were not more engaged before Parks consented to a bike trail pilot.

Superintendent's Report

Cheasty Greenspace: Superintendent Williams follows up the discussion about Cheasty. He thanks Commissioners Tierney and Kincaid for attending a meeting with some of the Cheasty neighbors. They toured the greenspace, visited a house at the bottom of the greenspace that had some slide damage and sat down with some of the neighbors to get a better grasp of the issues. The neighbors feel they were not included in the conversation about the pilot project and do not feel proper outreach occurred. Superintendent Williams and the Park Board Commissioners restated their actions regarding the pilot project. The neighbors are concerned about the proposed trail being exclusive use to mountain biking; the Superintendent allayed their fears by clarifying that no design plans have been approved and Parks will not move forward with the pilot project without much more community involvement. Superintendent Williams committed to the Cheasty neighbors that he will meet with the Pro-Cheasty Mountain bike community and remind them of the public process. After, Parks will

convene a joint meeting with local neighbors and the pro mountain bike people to have a discussion regarding the bike pilot and look to moving forward.

Commissioner Kincaid feels the discussion was productive. Commissioner Tierney says that it is a good idea to step back and remember the process the Board of Park Commissioners went through to arrive at the decision to have a pilot project and work with the communities to get everyone on the same page. Commissioner Mehdi adds how important it is to manage people's expectations and be clear about what Parks is willing to do.

City Neighborhood Council Meeting: Ben Noble led a discussion of the city's budget priorities and Superintendent Williams spoke to Park's priorities.

Willie Austin Fitness Zone Dedication: The community honored Willie Austin of the Austin Foundation with a dedication of the fitness room at Garfield Community Center, now entitled The Willie Austin Play 60 Fitness Zone.

Santos Rodriguez Play Area: El Centro de la Raza opened their new playground with a dedication to Santos Rodriguez. Santos Rodriguez was an 11-year old boy who was caught stealing and placed in handcuffs in the back of a police car. The arresting officer proceeded to shoot and kill Santos. This boy and his story are important reminders of a struggle for social justice that exists today.

Ballot measure: Wednesday, the Mayor signed the legislation to have the ballot measure on the August ballot. He talked about his own experiences growing up and the impact of parks and community centers. The Mayor also mentioned the Inter-Local Agreement (ILA). The ILA would be signed into legislation should the August ballot measure pass; the ILA is an agreement between the City and the Metropolitan Park District (MPD) that would create parameters for how the MPD would be operated; it also expressly states that the MPD would be subject to the same local, state and federal laws.

Approval of Consent Items

Commissioner Tierney asks for approval of the Agenda and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence. The Commissioners approve the consent items.

Update: Ethics and Elections

Wayne Barnett came in February to discuss the dos and don'ts for the Commissioners while the ballot measure was going through the vetting process with Seattle City Council. At this point, the ethics rules have changed because the ballot measure will be on the August ballot. Mr. Barnett stresses that no public resources may be used in advocating for or against the ballot measure. Commissioners are not to advocate on city time or using city facilities. The Park Commissioners may not discuss at Park Board meetings strategies on how to get the ballot measure passed. When discussing the ballot measure with friends or members of the public, the commissioners need to be sure people know that they are speaking as private citizens and not as members of the Board of Park Commissioners.

Mr. Barnett feels, in their capacity as Park Board Commissioners, they should not discuss or answer questions regarding the ballot measure. A good rule of thumb is: if you had not done it before, do not start now. Commissioner Tierney wonders if there is a difference between education and advocacy. Mr. Barnett replies the difference is a line of sand on a windy day.

Commissioner Mehdi asks if they are allowed to correct someone saying something inaccurate at the pulpit at a Park Board meeting. Mr. Barnett consents but adds that they need to be very cautious. If Commissioners are

calling to speak with staff, the Commissioners need to clarify under which role they are calling so that staff know what they can or cannot say.

Annual Report: Associated Recreation Council

Bill Keller, Executive Director of the Associated Recreation Council shows the Commissioners the ARC website. ARC was the brainchild of Dave Towne who put the non-profit partnership in place, because of budget cuts, to sustain operations of community centers. All fees stay with ARC instead of being put back into the general fund. ARC employs 1100 people. The partnership between Parks and ARC is strong with ARC financially sustaining Park's community center operations through the hard budget times. In 2009, ARC gross revenue was \$9.8million and they gave \$2.3million in partnership support. Mr. Keller emphasizes ARC's mission is to keep community centers active and thriving. ARC has seen an increase in participation in their school-aged care every year; from 1290 kids in 2009 to 1557 in 2013. They are a big service provider for before and after school care.

ARC is working on their Legacy Plan. They have had net gains for operations every year except 2009. They organized a steering committee to build a sustainable future for ARC and create more opportunity and more access. They want to put to work their retained earnings. They will be hiring a consultant to do a Gap analysis to figure out where there is need for more funding. Many Parks programs have come to the ARC board to ask for funding. This is what they think the funding will look like, again fulfilling their mission for more access and opportunity.

The groups to come and present to the ARC Board:

Presenters

Aquatics; Learn to Swim Scholarship Program – Kathy Whitman, Aquatics Manager
Basketball/Youth Sports – Frank Cammarano
Environmental Learning Centers – Rebecca Karlsen
Geo Tiers/Community Centers – Dave Gilbertson
Small Craft programs – Jason Frisk
Japanese Garden – Doug Critchfield
Lifelong Recreation & Special Programs – Brenda Kramer
Scholarships Process/Recreation & School Age Care – Lori Chisholm & Michele Finnegan
Youth & Teen Programs – Nicole Franklin, Lakema Bell & Ron Mirabueno

Through their persuasive presentations, the board suggested the following funding levels:

Staff -

- \$24,000 a year for Small Craft Center Staff
- \$35,000 a year for Environmental Learning Centers Staff
- \$87,360 a year for Recreation Tech Staff

Scholarships –

- \$465,000 a year for Recreation Scholarships
- \$230,000 a year for "Learn to Swim" program
- \$Variable a year for Recreation Sports Scholarships
 - Youth Sports Scholarships – 1,483 participants - \$75k
 - Officials Training – 27 days - \$4,117
 - Summer Camps equipment/ supplies - \$30,120

- Coaches/ Youth Mentoring Project - \$28,700
- Coaches Education Program - \$13,000
- Boys Volleyball League - \$18,120
- Futsall League - \$7,344

Opportunity –

- Lifelong Recreation - \$100,000 a year (?)
- Teen Programs – 3-year funding tier
- ARC opportunity fund – grant for those looking to offer programming in their communities

At this point Mr. Keller concludes his presentation and opens up the floor for questions and comments. Superintendent takes this opportunity to applaud the partnership and the level of volunteerism that keeps ARC so successful. He credits Dave Towne for having this idea and bringing it to fruition. Superintendent Williams articulates that Mr. Keller is wonderful to work with; he is humble, has a big heart, and cares so much about the kids. It is possible to change the life of a kid just by having the doors open and Mr. Keller really walks the talk.

Commissioner Mehdi suggests that ARC ask for funding to scholarships during the online registration process. Mr. Keller replies by saying that ARC is the best kept secret in Seattle and they do not really have a brand. Commissioner Angulo feels that the relationship between ARC and Seattle Parks and Recreation is an excellent model of a public/private partnership; their missions are in alignment.

Commissioner Kincaid wonders how many more could be served if the centers were open longer. Mr. Keller responds there are different community needs at different times of the day so it is hard to say how many are turned away when the doors are locked. He recounts when he started working for ARC, community centers were open from 9am to 9pm. Geo tiers are driven by capital to fund not to serve; he hopes that as the financial situation improves for the city, this paradigm will shift.

Update: Seattle Parks and Recreation Budget

Michele Finnegan is the new Finance Director. She has worn many hats for Parks, including Human Resources Director and Recreation Director. Michele reviews the budget process:

- Parks submits budget issues to Budget Office in mid-May and a draft budget in early July
- Budget refinements done July-August
- Mayor submits budget to City Council in late September
- Council reviews the Mayor's budget proposal from late September through mid-November
- Council adopts the budget in late November

Finance is in the midst of 2015-2016 budget discussions.

Michele explains the city budget is \$4.4billion with a total General fund budget of \$1billion and Seattle Parks and Recreation receives \$89million in general fund support, which equals approximately 9%. Seattle Parks and Recreation's total operating budget is \$135million a year; \$89million comes from the general fund while the remaining \$46million comes from other support, such as levies, fees, grants and real estate excise tax.

Parks did not receive any cuts in the 2014 budget. Parks sought to maintain current programming service levels, protect access to facilities, enhance security in downtown parks, and maintain assets.

Modest changes include:

- Additional Park Rangers to Improve Safety – sustains mid-year 2013 add of two additional Park Rangers in center city parks.
- Transition to an electronic key card system to improve facility security.

- Address federal grant dollars no longer available for Seattle Conservation Corps support services (\$180K)

Capital Improvement:

- Parks' estimated 6 year CIP – Totals \$110 million with \$37 million designated for 2014
 - Building Renovations and Infrastructure - \$10.8 million
 - Debt Service and Contract Obligation - \$9.9 million
 - Includes \$5.6 in newly issued Bonds for Golf
 - Neighborhood Parks and Projects- \$6.7 million
 - Forest Restoration - \$2.3 million
 - Acquisition - \$1.7 million

Commissioner Kincaid mentions that Parks seems to take a bigger hit during hard financial times than other departments and Michele says yes. When the federal government could no longer give money to local social services the city had to step up and increase their general fund in order to keep those services going.

Commissioner Mehdi asks about changes to the budget. Superintendent Williams says if the ballot measure does not pass; community center operations will be threatened and will need funding to keep them open. Michele adds that Finance is creating 2 separate budgets – 1 for each scenario. The 2008 Parks and Greenspaces Levy ends at the end of 2014 and there will be an impact on project management staff because their paid by the job.

Commissioner Tierney asks what Parks is doing to collaborate with other departments. Superintendent Williams responds that Parks partners with Human Services Department (HSD) to provide outreach in parks to homeless and disenfranchised. Parks also has working relationships with SPU litter and garbage collection, and contributing to community with storm water credits. Department of Neighborhoods (DON) houses some of their local offices in community centers. Parks works with all departments throughout the budget cycle. Commissioner Tierney thinks it is great to know collaboration is happening.

There is a cone of silence surrounding the 2015-2016 budget. Parks will not share any information until the Mayor gives the budget to the City Council, which is the right time for the Commissioners to provide input.

Old/New Business

The City Council is convening neighborhood budget meetings on a range of subjects. Unfortunately, the one for Parks is being held during this meeting.

Commissioner Edmiston states that the Park Board creates unconscious biases because of where and when the meetings are held and suggests that the Commissioners go out to different communities to hear from them. Superintendent Williams agrees this is a good idea; he suggests hosting at other community centers or gathering places. Commissioner Tierney says joining other community meetings is great. Parks staff, along with the executive committee will plan and schedule. The current location works for big citywide issues but is not as convenient for most Seattle residents.

Committees: The Executive Committee decided they would wait for Parks staff to present a white paper at the June 12 meeting regarding the future of urban parks because this will give the commissioners a better understanding of the decision drivers. Park Board will wait on request for interest in until they have a full array of committees.

Commissioner Kincaid moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Mehdi seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:20 pm.

APPROVED: Yazmin Mehdi, Vice Chair DATE 05/22/14
for Tom Tierney, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners