

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2014

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
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Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Diana Kincaid
Bob Edmiston
Brice Maryman
Tom Tierney, Chair
Lydia Albert
Yazmin Mehdi, Vice Chair

Excused:

Antoinette Angulo
Barbara Wright

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Tierney calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Deputy Superintendent Friedli introduces the new Get Engaged member to the Board of Park Commissioners, Lydia Albert. She was confirmed by the City Council to serve as the 9th member of the Park Board from the Get Engaged program. Each year, 1 Park Board commissioner comes through the Get Engaged program, coordinated by Metrocenter YMCA. Lydia is excited to be here. She has experience working with parks programs. She completed a VISTA National Service year with United Way of King County, leveraging partnerships between Seattle Parks and area nonprofits. Her work included expanding the City of Seattle's summer sack lunch program in playgrounds across the city, and working with Rainier Valley Eats food security projects at community centers and parks. After completing her service term, she stayed with United Way as volunteer coordinator for the Free Tax Prep Campaign, whose drop-in sites at libraries and community centers brought \$24 million in tax refunds to low income families in 2014.

Commissioner Albert is honored and thrilled to be a part of the Board of Park Commissioners, to learn more about a completely different angle of what parks does for the city, and add her voice and experience. Commissioner Tierney welcomes her to the Board.

Commissioner Tierney asks for approval of the Consent Items, which includes the Agenda and the revisions to the January 9 meeting minutes, the June 12 and July 24 meeting minutes. Commissioner Maryman moves and Commissioner Kincaid seconds. Commissioner Mehdi abstains from voting on the July 24 minutes since she did not attend. The consent items are approved.

Oral Requests and Communications from the Audience

Gary Gaffner – Former President of the Discovery Park Advisory Council – Gary feels he was wrong about the Park District; he said figuring out whether the Parks district was difficult because blogs and comments in the media are skewed. People felt the City Council having totalitarian authority over parks was worrying and the audit function was not perceived as strong. He advised the Discovery Park Advisory Council to abort Proposition 1. He sees now that would have raised havoc but he felt that they should have put something on the ballot that more people would have supported.

Mark Ostrow – Seattle Neighborhood Greenways – Wanted to introduce himself and discuss the change proposed for Queen Anne Boulevard. SDOT has proposed addressing a particular intersection as part of their safe routes to school; really long crossing distances for kids to get to school; SDOT's proposal makes it more park like and easier for kids to cross and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways is in favor of the proposal. He requests the Park Board to be in favor of it too.

Superintendent's Report

Cheasty Project Advisory Team will serve as a bike and pedestrian trail project advisory team. There has been so much interest and pros and cons. Parks sent out a notice inviting people to submit letters of interest and background information and have received about 40 applications. Staff have been reviewing application materials to ensure a balance of people in support and opposition to the project. Parks has contracted with consultant Margaret Norton-Arnold. The first meeting will be on October 2nd; the focus will be to bring people up to speed on where the project is. Commissioner Tierney will present and Acting Superintendent Williams will be there to give background. They will discuss ground rules. 2nd meeting, the PAT will brainstorm ideas for pilot project and come up with evaluation criteria; 3rd meeting the PAT will work on a preliminary design; 4th meeting the PAT will have a wrap up discussion. This is an advisory team so the purpose is to help put together a proposal for the pilot.

Greenlake Concession – The concession contracts are 5-10 years long; paddleboats/concessions contracts are set to expire. Parks went through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process; received responses and determined what company would get the contract. The person who wasn't picked is challenging the decision. Parks will either reevaluate or do another RFP process. This should take about 30-45 days to go through this process. This has happened before so Parks has a fairly well-proscribed method. The commissioners ask if users will see a break in service; Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli says there shouldn't be but it will depend on if it can get finished in time. That concession is year round.

Magnolia manor Off-leash Area (OLA) – Established a year and a half ago as a pilot project and committed to go through a review process; will do a little more community outreach before bringing it to the Park Board. Parks hoped to have a public hearing at the next meeting but want to make sure Parks staff have done due diligence. Lower Kinnear OLA will move forward next meeting.

Downtown Activation – A team of people has been working on activating downtown parks for several years; Parks is looking for a management structure that works for all downtown parks. Parks has created a unit to put activation/maintenance together and will soon add rangers to that unit to create a more cohesive team and support each other a little bit better.

Superintendent search – Acting Superintendent Williams is not going to take the job as Superintendent; Kate Joncas, Deputy Mayor is coordinating the process of finding another candidate. Kate came out to meet with the Executive Team to discuss the qualifications the management team is looking for and will convene meetings with other staff. The Mayor's office is putting together a search committee and a Citizen's Advisory Committee to ascertain what the community is looking for and will coordinate with search firm. The new Superintendent

will be on board at the beginning of next year. Commissioner Tierney states that Acting Superintendent Williams has done a fabulous job. He will continue within the department as Deputy Superintendent and Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli will return to his previous position.

Park District implementation process – City Council will don their Park District hats and convene to adopt Bi-laws, Charter, create a schedule of meeting dates and accept the Inter-Local Agreement. The Bi-Laws and Charter are fairly standard; copied from the Transportation District.

Oversight Committee – The Park District Oversight Committee will have 4 members from the Park Board, 4 from other city commissions/boards, 7 individuals representing one from each of the council districts. Notices will go out, a committee will review the applicants, Councilmembers Godden and Bagshaw will review. Interviews will be held in October/November with the hope of starting meetings in January.

Asset management work order system – With the new Park District, the bulk of funding will go toward major maintenance. Parks is spending 2015 creating an Asset Management Work Order system; they will issue a Request for Proposal in November; the hope is that it will be fully developed by 2016.

Community Center Strategic plan – In the process of developing the Community Center Strategic Plan and hope to have something complete by end of this year.

Invest initiatives: 2015 spending plan and city council proposal reflects Parks priorities well. Eric reviews the investment initiatives for 2015 that can be found [here](#).

Commissioner Maryman asks about the smoking ban. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli says Parks staff are still working internally and it may be at the next meeting but the formal proposal will probably be in October or November. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli emphasizes that when the proposal comes out Parks wants to have as many questions answered as possible, such as: How will it be enforced? How will it work with other policies?

Annual Report: Seattle Parks Foundation

Presented by Becca Aue, Seattle Parks Foundation

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli introduces the Seattle Parks Foundation (SPF). SPF has been a great partner over the years; they deserve a lot of kudos for stepping up and putting together the initial analysis, background and the level of support during the campaign.

Ms Aue thanks the Park Board, as individuals, for their vision and leadership during the Proposition 1 campaign; August 5 was an historical moment in Seattle and it has left an indelible mark on the city. Seattle will have the best park system in the country!

SPF was established in 1999 as an independent non-profit to build and sustain parks; integrate public space and advocate for public space. They have 5.2 full-time employees; SPF has donated \$36million over the years.

Accomplishments: SPF has been hard at work with marketing and communications; rebrand parks – LOVE PARKS logo; distributed 2500 Love Parks t-shirts. They have a strong social media presence thanks to Kelly Huang. They launched a new website making it easier for people to find out volunteer information, how to donate and read about current SPF projects. SPF also rebranded the newsletter; it now highlights partners working in public spaces and tells stories about why public parks are relevant.

SPF had a representative on the Legacy Committee working to create the Legacy Plan.

Stewardship – Provided 17 community groups with fiscal scholarships.

Cheasty Love Parks day – 158 volunteers came and removed invasive plants.

Capital and Planning projects:

- Rainier Beach Farm and Wetlands: Seattle Tilth operates it. There is a financial goal of \$2.4 million to renovate the farm and its programs. They have raised \$2.16 million and the Friends group raised about \$1.15million on their own. There is a community barbecue fundraiser coming up.
- South Park Greenspaces – This is a very important neighborhood to work in; less greenspace and tree canopy than anywhere in the city and a lower life expectancy by 7 years. Yet, there are more kids per capita than any other neighborhood. SPF completed South Park Greenspace plan and they identified 10 sites; targeted ongoing effort, which will cost between \$12-17million.
- Fitness zones: 7 throughout the city with adult exercise equipment. SPF raising funds for implementing more fitness zones in more parks.
- Lake to Bay Trail – SPF has conceptual plans for this throughout the city – won design excellence award through Seattle Design Commission. Iconic connections and it is leveraging many private partners.
- Pioneer square parks: Redesign Occidental park – to make it more welcoming. The goal is to revitalize and connect all downtown parks. They had a crowdfunding campaign to raise money to fix pergola in record time.
- The crowdfunding effort was in conjunction with Uptown Alliance and they raised \$25,000 in a couple of weeks.
- Stim Bullitt Excellence Fund: honors his commitment to building and sustaining great public spaces; in its first year it awarded 500,000 to community park projects.

What's next?

SPF will continue with its mission to make parks more relevant and meaningful to all people. The needs are changing; Rainier Beach Urban Farm is a great example because its focus is to feed and educate an entire community. SPF is trying new things like pilot projects; cannot be afraid to break out of status quo and try new things. SPF will continue to try to strike a balance between competing needs.

SPF will work to develop and foster more Public/Private partnerships to leverage resources and enhance public programs with deep community engagement. SPF is working to make better connections between parks and access to parks through partnerships with other organizations and government agencies.

Commissioner Maryman states he is ex officio on the SPF board; one of the drums he beats at the Park Board meetings is to create a network of open spaces – conveners who bring together various departments and public/private institutions; no other actor can play this role. Commissioner Maryman wants Ms Aue to know the Park Board is here as a resource.

In regards to Proposition 1, Commissioner Maryman states SPF put a lot of their credibility on the line; he wonders what the role of the foundation will be in the implementation of the measure for which SPF advocated? Ms Aue says we need to think about what measures success when comprising those measures: for example, accessibility to parks via transit or trails; connectivity is key – Olmsteds had that dream in 1903. Ms Aue feels there are many opportunities to get people involved through economic development – work with under-privileged youth to maintain greenspaces. Get creative and create jobs.

Commissioner Kincaid suggests SPF looks at regional parks – connecting them and tying them into the system as a whole. She mentions there is very little park space in the University District. Commissioner Kincaid also feels appreciative for the work done on Proposition 1.

Commissioner Mehdi thinks the work they are doing is exciting; curious about the health impact assessment – Ms Aue states it was funded by the EPA and Commissioner Mehdi wonders how to apply those health assessments elsewhere. She is curious about how SPF will be helpful to the Park Board and SPR regarding research and development; keeping better track of what's trending.

Commissioner Kincaid adds she is glad they are working with South Park community. Ms Aue says they identified 10 sites by community, including greenways. There is a fitness zone scheduled to be installed at the South Park Community Center, although it will take a little while because grounds comes after the building improvements.

Annual Briefing: Capital Projects

Presented by Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Michael Shiosaki is Director of the Planning and Development Division for Seattle Parks and Recreation.

There are units within the division:

The first is the real estate and acquisitions unit led by Donald Harris who is celebrating 45 years at SPR! This division is responsible for acquisitions and making sure public property stays public; engineering and design of parks through landscape architecture; oversee/review projects by following Parks design standards.

Another unit is the planners, led by Andy Sheffer who is the Construction and Major Maintenance Manager and Rick Nishi who handle the public involvement on capital projects and oversee construction of park projects.

Seattle Conservation Corp – This is a homeless adult job training/case management education program – 40 people in the Corp at any one time – they come through drug/alcohol treatment and Parks train them to help implement capital programs, invasive removal and trail building through the trail upgrade program.

Funding:

2008 Parks Levy

Real Estate Excise Tax – funded through debt; use this on small projects. For example, ballfield lighting, landscape restoration – to make sure Parks has money to fix these things throughout the year.

Parks and Greenspaces Levy

Funded: Neighborhood Parks, Greenspaces and Opportunity Fund– these are the land bank sites that are not funded for development until the Park District funds come in. Most of these sites are in Urban Villages.

- Little Saigon – east of International District – there is very little open space. Parks has searched this area for many years to buy open space.
- Morningside Substation – Wedgewood at 86th and 35th – bought it from Seattle City Light; it has been cleaned up.
- Ravenna Avenue NE and 100th – along Thornton creek, at this site Parks will not develop it but remove invasives and this helps us keep the creek protected.

Opportunity Fund – Acquisitions

48th and Charleston – Owned by a church and it is an amazing site; it's a park waiting to happen.

Major Planning Projects

Arboretum has been a beneficiary of the mitigation from SR520. The Arboretum Loop Trail funded by WSDOT will go from Madison Avenue to Duck Bay and create a loop trail when you add it in to Arboretum Drive. Funding is \$7.8million. It sits on the east side of Lake Washington Boulevard and it is a huge benefit to the Arboretum and is part of their Master Plan.

Jefferson Golf Clubhouse – paid for by bond funds. New clubhouse and driving range facility at Jefferson Park. It will be completed by February 2015. This creates revenue that pays off bonds that pay for construction. New double decker driving range.

Yesler Terrace Park – new park! 1.7 acres in size; flexible lawn area; significant play and a gathering space; have \$3 million but need more to supplement. Seattle Housing Authority may add some funds for it. Parks is using in-house architects and construction starts next year.

Reservoir lids: The final one is at Westcrest Park – creates a large flex lawn area, additional parking and a new play area. It has incredible views of Seattle and adds about 7-8 acres in the city; completed by October 2014.

Major Maintenance Projects

Magnuson building 2 – New roof and renovations inside; Seattle Conservation Corp is housed in this building. They have funded about 1/3 of the cost.

Volunteer Park Conservatory – Parks has collaborated with SPF and Volunteer Park Conservatory for replacement of the seasonal house, cactus house and prep greenhouse.

Bell Street Park Boulevard – This is a success because of infrastructure and programming; \$5 million budget and many years in design.

Seattle conservation Corp Projects

Kobe Terrace Stairs – provides marketable skills for people who have had some challenges and gets them back into the workforce.

Commissioner Albert asks if there is an opportunity to expand the program? Michael responds that the program doesn't pay for itself; there is a lot of job training and counseling and social services. There are budget limitations, but it is a great program. Commissioner Edmiston asks how can the Park Board be useful to Parks in their work? Michael says the Park Board brings a broad big picture perspective; it's nice when Commissioners come to public meetings.

Asset management plan will live with Parks Division and PDD; Kathleen Conner is coordinating the development of the system. PDD will be implementing the major maintenance.

Acting Deputy Superintendent says Michael will have a lot of work to manage the influx of funding and a whole slew of projects. Huge credits and success of proposition 1 is that the department has managed its funds so well.

Commissioner Mehdi wonders what Parks is doing to prepare for funding and do they feel they have enough time to ramp up? Michael responds that having the year to figure out staffing levels and figure out what projects to work on will give us the time to figure it out in 2015. Commissioner Mehdi feels it will be important for the public to understand how the department is spending money.

Commissioner Tierney thanks Michael for the presentation.

Update: Performance Management Work Plan

Presented by Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Commissioner Tierney introduces the topic. The commissioners discussed the Performance Management work plan at the retreat in August in public session. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli will describe the work and updates to the plan.

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli would like to get the Park Board's blessing about how the department is moving forward. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reviews the changes made.

- Susan added Section 5 to address logic model discussed at the retreat.
- On page 7, she expanded the public engagement section to address more specifically how the performance management will go through public process.

- There will be an oversight committee performing periodic reviews; and the Parks department will actively include the oversight committee.
- Invite “friends of” groups and other partners to provide input.

Implementation: The recreation division is implementing a large piece of this and they have established a results team that includes pools and swim beaches. They are working with Hal Williams – a consultant to develop a process and mechanism for developing performance measures. The measures need to be homegrown; built by the staff and used by the staff because this fosters ownership. They are working to establish high-level goals and figure out how those measures help us towards our goals as a department.

Parks is using the Recreation Division to work on the internal process; so when Parks starts a community process, more of the kinks will be worked out and Parks will have a better idea of what to do.

Recreation Division is working on some key measures – this will give Parks a better sense of how it will go internally.

Commissioner Tierney mentions that Joel and Susan have come 3 or 4 times in the last year to brief the Commissioners on the performance management work. There may be a performance management committee out of the Park Board.

Commissioner Maryman wonders what the Park Board subcommittee’s role would be? He feels they should be more involved with what the Recreation Division is doing now and participate in a more active way. He emphasizes that those who had concerns about accountability should be included in the conversation.

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli it hasn’t been flushed out but Parks wanted to acknowledge the importance of public involvement. Commissioner Tierney mentions the Park Board discussed having outsiders included on a subcommittee for the performance management. Commissioner Maryman adds the Committee would be Park Board led; the public engagement plan will be implemented and coordinated with the committee.

Public Engagement/Communications Committee: The committees can work together to come up with a public engagement plan.

Commissioner Kincaid feels that all of the Parks Committees are getting very confusing; City council is the Park District Board, there’s the Park Board, and the Oversight Committee – she expresses concern that people will be confused as to how all these pieces fit together. She doesn’t have a solution but how will the public figure out how to communicate with all of these groups.

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli says that part of what Parks is trying to do is recognize that performance measures are department wide. Park Board will be the only committee focused on the department as a whole. This is why Parks staff are comfortable with some of the pilot work; fully recognizing that there will be a different conversation when the Oversight committee comes on board. Public engagement piece isn’t as developed as it could be because there will be input from the oversight committee. 1st quarter of 2015 there will be a lot of work on this.

Commissioner Kincaid suggests that after the 1st year there should be an analysis done to see what is and isn’t working. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli agrees saying their will be a baseline performance audit at which time they will go through a process to establish baseline measures.

Commissioner Mehdi wants to involve public in determining measures so the public can hold us accountable but also wants to establish baseline so we can compare. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli states there are different groups of people who are interested in different measures at different levels: high level – park system success; aquatics program – more focused outreach; there will be multiple public engagement processes for all those. Commissioner Maryman agrees, they know their sliver and they want to give their input. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli says golf provides habitat, recreation, stormwater runoff , these are all benefits of a golf course that would not be mentioned by a golfer; a lot of different constituents have different goals.

The Commissioners are uncomfortable with an annual report being the only reporting mechanism; Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli responds that other reporting mechanisms will also be developed. Commissioner Edmiston adds he would like to see it as a living financial system that you can put windows on. Commissioner Kincaid comments that she feels families need more emphasis. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli will add language from the Legacy Plan about families.

The Commissioners postpone finalizing the Performance Management Work Plan until after their suggestions have been incorporated into the document. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli will make the changes, distribute it to the Commissioners and bring it back to the next Park Board meeting for discussion.

Thanks Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli!

Old/New Business

Committee assignments: The expanded Executive Committee met and it includes: Commissioners Kincaid, Edmiston, Vice Chair Mehdi, and Chair TierneyDiana. The primary work of that committee is agenda setting. The timelines for the committees vary greatly. The performance management sub-committee is ready to go and will be incorporated in to the next steps of the process.

Magnolia Park Advisory Committee met last night and had a presentation from 2 different groups for Building 9; it will be turned into workforce housing - \$10million from WA state. It will be affordable housing – with annual income between \$35-65,000/year. Sunday, September 28th, will be the celebration for the first flight around the world; one of those flights flew out of Magnuson 90 years ago. There is a public meeting soon regarding radiation clean up with the Department of Ecology.

Bob – Seattle is updating the Right of Way manual – how roads and sidewalks will be arranged. Different departments are weighing in on this. SDOT is primary but request participation from other departments and organizations and people will be appointed. This is an opportunity to get those changes into the right of way manual.

Tom welcomes Commissioner Albert again to the Board of Park Commissioners and says it will be a fun ride.

Commissioner Mehdi moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Edmiston seconds the motion and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:39 pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Tom Tierney, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners