

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2016

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:

Tom Byers, Chair
Dennis Cook
Marlon Herrera
Evan Hundley
William Lowe
Kelly McCaffrey
Barbara Wright, Vice Chair

Excused:

Marty Bluewater

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Byers calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. He reviews the Agenda and the Commissioners introduce themselves.

Commissioner Byers calls for approval of the Consent Items, which is the October 27 Board of Park Commissioners Agenda: Commissioner Wright moves, Commissioner Cook seconds, and the consent item is approved unanimously.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

Commissioner Byers reminds people to only speak on subjects that are not related to the public hearing.

Bob Corwin – He comments on the proposed renovation of the Asian Art Museum. He and his wife are grateful veterans of their Saturday University series for Asian art and ideas. The building is in urgent need of upgrading infrastructure; expansion is essential to continue growth and access of children’s programs, and a magnet for Asian life. Diligent research was done with constraints of the historic status. Not doing expansion

would threaten the long-term viability. The Seattle Art Museum is an active participant and pioneer in Asian arts.

Ellen Look - fascinating public process in Seattle. He is a neighbor and user of Volunteer Park. Expansion need not be an either/or, the Park can accommodate both greenspace and respect Olmsted design landscape, with art and the sense of community and engagement that art brings to the park. It is less than .125% of the park. She supports the expansion.

Barbara Malone - She lives near Volunteer Park and respects the historic nature of the Seattle Asian Art Museum building. She is a board member for SAM and she supports the expansion of the Asian Art Museum. SAM is a leader in engaging community in art. The design is a modest renovation that would increase the aesthetic from both the inside and outside of the museum.

Eliza Davidson – She comments on the public involvement policy for this project. There has been negligible oversight by Seattle Parks and Recreation. She reads from the 2012 public involvement policy, “invite and encourage direct engagement in regards to projects.” She feels dissatisfied with the way SPR has handled the outreach for this project by letting SAM do the outreach.

Kathy Wesselman - Neighbor of Volunteer Park and supports the project. She feels it is an asset to have the Museum in the Park. The improvements for seismic and temperature control are necessary. A nice facade on the east side will be more beautiful and more secure.

Jannie Spain - Neighbor and user of Volunteer Park - include landscape architect that specializes in Olmsted park design. The expansion does not seem to take up much space. She does not want a building that says “look at me!” She wants the design to blend in and highlight the park. She wishes the museum was more cross-cultural. She wonders why the design does not go down instead of up?

Kathryn Harrod - member of SAM and resident of capitol hill. The Museum is a treasure and she supports the expansion. The gain in renovating and enhancing the area will be worth the taking of space.

Superintendent’s Report

Presented by Jesús Aguirre

Happy Birthday, Commissioner Lowe! The Superintendent thanks Commissioner Lowe for coming to the meeting on his birthday. Commissioner Lowe is a member of Relatives Of Old Timers of Seattle (ROOTS) - original Seattle roots through the first AME church which has been around and involved in the community before the state formed.

Delridge Community Center – Fire on September 27 at an apartment building near the Delridge Community Center. SPR staff stepped up and provided the center as a shelter; 30 people lived there for 11 nights. Staff were working around the clock - providing recreation, food, homework help, organizing donations. This is what community centers are all about.

Jefferson Golf Course – Jefferson is hosting the 2016 WAC cross country championships this Saturday. There will be 8 colleges represented and two races run.

Julia Lee Park – There was an opening celebration to the park donated from Julia Lee Knudsen’s family. It’s a lovely park in the Madison Valley.

Lincoln Park play area is open - Treehouse, zip line; group saucer swing, and other things for sensory sensitive children.

Burke Gilman paving project to go through end of the year to remove roots and bumps.

New trails application launched – Available in the iTunes application store now and Android soon. It will allow people to see access for limited mobility. Big thanks to Chukundi Salisbury who did a great job of advocating for the trails. It does not link up with the Burke Gilman Trail website.

During the storm that really wasn’t, SPR had a great response from forestry crews supporting SDOT and City Light crews; staff was ready to respond and keep the public safe.

Denny Park - SPR has a request to Vulcan and Amazon to help support construction plan to light the park.

School District Joint Use Agreement for athletic activities – there has been much discussion and scheduling challenges due to the switch in bell times. SPR and SPS will be signing a new agreement in the next couple of months.

Update: Seattle Asian Art Museum Expansion Project

Presented by Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Kim Rohrschach, Seattle Art Museum, Sam Miller, LMN Architects

Briefing Paper

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 24, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Michael Shiosaki, Planning and Development Division Director
Subject: Seattle Asian Art Museum Renovation and Expansion project

Requested Board Action

At the Board's request, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) staff is returning with an update on the Seattle Asian Art Museum (SAAM) renovation and expansion project. The Board was previously briefed on the project on June 23, 2016. This briefing will primarily cover the issues that have arisen since that time, including the latest schematic design plan – a plan that is still evolving as SAAM receives feedback about the expansion of the museum building, the design, and the approval process for the project.

No Board recommendation is sought at this time.

Project Background

The Seattle Asian Art Museum building was built in Volunteer Park in 1933 as the Seattle Art Museum (SAM). The City of Seattle owns the building and the land under it, Volunteer Park.

Since 1933, the museum has undergone several additions: The museum building underwent the addition of an office in 1947, the addition of a gallery in 1954, the addition of a board room in 1955 and the addition of an elevator in 2007. Apart from these, in recent years significant building renovations also were needed, including seismic upgrades and major updates to the heating, ventilation and cooling systems. To undertake this work, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) and SAM entered into a 2007 Memorandum of Agreement under which the City accepted SAM's offer to act as its agent for the purpose of seeking permits and design approvals. The MOA anticipated that the parties would negotiate a separate construction agreement.

The renovation of SAAM was a named project in the 2008 Park and Green Spaces Levy, funded in the amount of \$9 million. SAM agreed to raise a like amount to make the project budget whole. The recession made it unlikely SAM could raise the like amount, so SPR obtained Council approval to redirect the funding to several much-needed major maintenance projects elsewhere in the park system with the understanding that the funds would be available later, when SAM raised the matching funds.

Since then, Levy funding for major maintenance projects has been replaced with funding from Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues.

SAM has moved forward with the design of the project, which now includes the originally anticipated renovations, regulatory upgrades and structural improvements, and the net addition of gallery and educational space. The City's contribution in the current proposed budget includes \$14 million in 2017 and \$5 million in 2018 to support the improvements.

SAM began holding public meetings in July. The Seattle Asian Art Museum has been a City landmark since 1989, and Volunteer Park has been one since 2011. SAM has made briefing presentations to the Architectural Review Committee, a subcommittee of the Landmarks Review Board, on May 27, June 23 and August 12, and briefed the full Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) on October 9. SAM needs a Certificate of Approval from the LPB to alter both the building and the park landmarks. The museum has not yet applied for that certificate. SPR must sign the Certificate of Approval application as it is the property owner.

SPR is a partner in the project by virtue of the funding in the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy in the project budget, and because of its status as the owner of the building and the land. As such, SPR will review the project in terms of its design and integration into the park, ensuring the project scope meets the project description in the levy language, and analyzing the possible impacts of Initiative 42 (see discussion below). This review is underway.

ProView, SPR's internal project review team, reviewed the project on September 20. At that time SAM committed to bring back a final schematic design, as the landscape design around the building was in flux and the preliminary schematic plan was no longer accurate.

The schematic design is in the process of being completed. In response to comments received through the public involvement process thus far the plan has been evolving. At this point, SPR and SAM staff will bring the most up to date version of the schematic plan to the Park Board meeting.

Public Involvement Process

Public Meetings – sponsored by SAM unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, June 23, 6:30 – 9 p.m., Park Board Briefing
Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
100 Dexter Ave. N, Kenneth R. Bounds Board Room

Saturday, July 16, 10:30 a.m. – Noon, Public meeting
Asian Art Museum, Alvord Board Room

Saturday, August 20, 10:30 a.m. – Noon, Public meeting
Cal Anderson Park Shelterhouse, 1635 11th Ave.

Saturday, September 10, 10:30 a.m. – Noon, Public meeting
Nagomi Tea House, 519 6th Ave. S, Suite 200

Saturday, October 15, 1 - 2:30 p.m., Public meeting
Asian Art Museum, Alvord Board Room

Saturday, November 19, 1 – 2:30 p.m., Public meeting
Asian Art Museum, Alvord Board Room
Seattle Parks and Recreation is co-sponsoring this meeting.

Saturday, December 10, 1 – 2:30 p.m., Public meeting
Asian Art Museum, Alvord Board Room

In addition to the public meetings, most of which have been attended by SPR staff, the SAAM design team has met in charrette-format meetings with representative from the Volunteer Park Trust and Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks groups.

Issues for Discussion

As with any proposed capital project, there are project proponents and others raising issues or concerns with the proposal. Several issues have recently arisen with the project's design through the public involvement process. These issues include: (1) expansion of the building into the park's greenspace on the east side of the existing SAAM building and Initiative 42; (2) potential tree loss; and (3) historic preservation issues with the building and park landscape.

Building expansion into the park and Initiative 42

The project proposes an addition on the east side of the building of approximately 3800 square feet (SF). When factoring in other areas where the project will decrease the building's footprint, the total net building expansion area is approximately 3600 SF. The issue has been raised by some community members that the building expansion takes away greenspace on the east side of the park and that this constitutes a conversion from a parks and recreation use. There are other examples of museums in Seattle parks, including: MOHAI at its former location at McCurdy Park, and its new location at Lake Union Park and obviously the Seattle Art Museum's long-time presence at Volunteer Park.

SPR's real estate staff are conducting an analysis of whether there are Initiative 42 impacts from the proposed project. Initiative 42 legislation provides:

- All park land shall be preserved for park, boulevard or open space use and cannot be sold, transferred or changed from park use to another use, unless:
- The City holds a public hearing on the necessity of the transaction and
- Adopts an ordinance finding the transaction is necessary because there is no reasonable and practical alternative and
- The City receives in exchange a piece of land or facility of equivalent or better size, value, location and usefulness in the vicinity.

Trees removals

As currently proposed, two small trees will be removed and relocated, one Korean Fir and one Katsura. Two Cherry trees will be removed, as well as one dead Fir tree. The originally proposed building addition was further north on the east side of the building and would have had more significant impacts to existing trees. The addition has been redesigned and relocated to avoid impacts to the large Beech tree on the east side of the building.

An interesting side note on tree removals - as the park is being reviewed in light of the building project it has been suggested, from a historic preservation standpoint, that some of the trees and overgrown shrubs to the south and east of the building (some Hollies and other 'volunteer' plants) be removed to return the east meadow area to a more open lawn as envisioned in the Olmsted plan for the park.

Historic preservation issues

The Seattle Asian Art Museum building and Volunteer Park are both listed as landmarks on the local, State and National registers.

The proposed building addition is outside the boundaries of the building's National Register application and inside the established National Register boundaries of Volunteer Park. Volunteer Park is considered a 'national level of significance' (the highest level). These elements translate to a much more stringent review from a landscape preservation perspective, over a building compatibility perspective.

We have recently received comments from Susan Dolan, National Park Service LA, National Director of Cultural Landscapes Preservation on the project. She has suggested some potential solutions to mitigate project impacts, including:

- Limit plant palette to Olmstedian lawn and trees,
- Grade the slopes to 'softly' roll away from the building,
- Include some tree maintenance (removal of deadwood and the like) and removal of some existing trees and overgrown shrubs (provides more open space as an offset to building addition),
- Re-establish - to the extent possible – pathways of the original Olmstead plan in the east lawn area.
 - re-work 15th Ave entrance,
 - re-establish trail on south end of building,
 - re-work trail on north side of building (which is included in current landscape plan and potential for ADA on that trail).
- No foundation plantings, plaza/patio, or seat-wall.

Budget

\$49M estimated Project Budget, from the following sources:

- \$19.0M Requested from the city of Seattle as part of Mayor's Capital Improvement Program
- \$2.0M in original Funding from Seattle for Design and Planning
- \$5.0M in estimated Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits
- \$1.5M Requested from Washington State Building for the Arts – To be confirmed
- \$1.4M from King County
- \$20.1M in Private Contributions

Schedule

- Project design is underway and SAM will soon complete schematic design.
- Summer 2016 – mid-2017 - Landmarks Preservation Board Briefings and Certificate of Approval (note, this is dependent on when the C of A application is submitted).
- February 29, 2017 – SAAM building closes to begin moving the collections out of the building in preparation for the construction project.
- September 2017 – Begin project construction.
- 2019 – Construction completion.

Presentation

Background - Partnership between the City and the Seattle Art Museum (SAM). SAM is the lead; the public has been responsive to the outreach done at this point. Design charrette meetings are coming up. They have a very ambitious public involvement process.

Michael reviews the Agreements between SAM and the city of Seattle.

1st Agreement between the City and SAM occurred in 1932 and established an art museum in the park. The building was to be completed in 18 months and pending Park Board approval.

There were several amendments from 1932 until present that did the following: no charges for entry; establishing charging fees for entry; maintenance and operations costs; raising admission prices; a Memorandum of Agreement that said SAM would seek permits for the design of the Levy project; and lastly, a 2015 Amendment that laid groundwork for an alternate project that would be more than just a renovation.

Specific issues highlighted in the briefing paper:

Expansion and Initiative 42 – There is merit in having a vibrant and viable art museum in the park. SAM has been a great partner. SPR sees the arguments about openspace in the city. The museum provides public benefits for the city and the expansion would augment the interface between the Park and the Museum.

Tree removals – There will be minimal tree removals – a few small trees that could be replanted. From a historical perspective to remain consistent with Olmsted pastoral vision, some trees need to be cleared out.

Historic Landmark Status of the Park – There are design suggestions to wrap into the landscape around the Museum.

Michael introduces Kim Rorschach, the Executive Director of the Seattle Art Museum. She begins by explaining they chose LMN Architecture for this project because they were impressed with their work at MOHAI. They kept the historical elements while making it more modern.

Kim starts by giving a brief overview of the Seattle Art Museum. They are a non-profit with a public service and educational mission.

Their budget is 65% contributions and 19% from earned revenue. Making money is not their main priority, but instead, serving the community.

They have 3 locations: Olympic Sculpture Park, SAM downtown and the Seattle Asian Art Museum (SAAM).

2007 scoping was very preliminary - money was put into the Levy budget for SAM. The scope focused on life safety and ADA compliance, but they received the funds during the recession and SAM could not proceed due to the financial crisis.

2014 – SPR spent the Levy money on other projects but promised money would be provided from another source when SAM was ready. There was discussion about moving SAAM, but after talking with the community and thinking about it, the museum location was important for the history and the community. There is a growing demand for educational programs and a growing interest and demand for South Asian exhibitions and artists. The Board and lead fundraisers felt the time was right to move forward.

Critical project goals:

- Life safety, ADA, fire egress, seismic and climate control
- Additional gallery space to better reflect Seattle community and the complex cultures
- Additional education space to serve growing audiences
- Improve unattractive, underutilized east side of the Museum and create a better connection to the park.

Concept design

- Add climate control takes up much more space in basement level – 3 times as much space as ancient boiler/furnace which forces us to expand the footprint.
- Must retain adequate collection storage and care areas, program space and staff offices

Design changes as of July 2016

- Staircase is minimized
- Plaza could be larger if the community wanted it but SAM is amenable to leaving the grass and plantings up to the staircase.
- Terracing is removed and Olmsted landscaping goes all the way up to the building.

Presented the design to the full Landmarks Preservation Board - mostly positive feedback; final presentation will occur in the new year.

Sam Miller - LMN Architects

Background – The building was designed by Bebb and Gould and was very symmetrical. The windows on the east side have been lost in the additions that have been done over time.

There are significant trees around the building. There is an arborist on the team since the beginning of the design process to identify the trees condition. The goal is to protect the trees during the building process. The contractors were selected because of their experience with historic building and preserving trees.

There have been quite a few additions to the building over time. The east side wall was created through those additions.

Proposed improvements – The back of the building to open to the Park “lobby” with a lot of glass and provides circulation to exit stairs. This will provide a strong connection to the park. Adding a new gallery for South Asian art.

Down 1 level - new element - education space created and a meeting room; auditorium and library will remain unchanged. north end - adding freight elevator and loading dock. modest but important change for functionality.

Lowest level - staff offices and community meeting space - housing for mechanical equipment. Windows on eastside of the building.

Circulation across and around the building – There are existing paths to get to the front door but they do not meet ADA accessibility standards. The plan is to extend the path to get the right access for wheelchairs. They could do 2 paths for symmetry. If the community objects, they are amenable to 1 path but recommend it is on the North side, removing the path that crosses the driveway because it is a safety issue.

East terrace – LMN has proposed a terrace on the east side with a concrete seating wall, but they are amenable to removing the terrace if the community is opposed. Other improvements are open for discussion.

Lease and Development Agreement - submitted to the Legal department on September 28. SAM is in continuing discussions with the Legal department.

Budget is \$49 million total

Funding Sources

- \$2M for City for design and planning (2007)
- \$14M in additional City funding (2007)
- \$5M requested from City (2016)
- \$1.4M King County funding
- \$1.5M requested from State
- \$5M hope to secure via historic tax credits
- \$20.4 private funding

Timeline - Start construction in the summer of 2017 and open the museum on March 1, 2019.

Community meetings - outreach process – They have had 4 community meetings and 2 more scheduled, 2 meetings with the Board of Park Commissioners and they will have 2 design charrettes.

Response to community feedback – SAM will restore the Olmsted paths and will adhere to the feedback from Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks (FSOP) regarding the plantings.

Next Steps –

- Landmark Preservation Board approval
- Complete the Lease and Development Agreements
- Design development
- Community meetings on November 19 and December 10

Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks (FSOP) – Andy Mitton

The mission of FSOP - to preserve Seattle’s unique Olmsted legacy; one of the most intact Olmsted systems in the country. Olmsted opposed the development of the museum at Volunteer Park. This is a critical time to preserve the past and look towards the future; the park and building are landmarked. The Park received national significance - important to consider this a unique landscape and ensure it is treated as a cultural landscape as there are not many examples of what it means to preserve a cultural landscape.

It is important to step back and think about what the Secretary of the Interior looks for when treating a cultural landscape. The original room and space balanced with the active side of the museum in the front. He appreciates SPR getting involved and looking to restore the Olmsted paths. He requests another charrette with SAM and LMN. He’s looking forward to moving forward.

Commissioner Byers mentions his firm has a relationship with the museum and wants to make sure that is public.

Discussion

Commissioner Hundley wonders if this will be it or if there will be more additions in the future. Kim responds there is not critical mass to operate a museum in the current space. There are other amenities they would have loved to have, but don’t want to push it. SAM is mindful of the complexity of this situation.

The partnership between SAM and the City are outstanding and contributions from SAM is extraordinary.

The museum feels foreboding - how to invite people in? 3 times a month the space is open to the public for free. The Agreement with SPR should spell out public benefit. The attendance varies but it has grown to over 80,000/year.

The east, north, south sides of the building are ugly and those parts of the Park are not inviting. There will be banners advertising exhibitions and hours.

The Commissioners caution the department to be careful of setting a precedent about how park land is used. The Commissioners do not want other organizations to feel they have expanded uses in Parks too. This is a historic landscape - cautious with how it is used and altered.

Commissioner Lowe appreciates the efforts to open the museum to the people through the design. The ramps provide accessibility.

The original configuration had a staircase, the new design does not encourage negative impacts on the use of space. Someone was forward thinking to make sure there were no barriers and how to better serve individuals to come into the museum.

Commissioner Akita appreciates the accessibility and connectivity to 15th avenue. She feels this is an opportunity to think about other modes of transportation to improve connections.

Commissioner McCaffrey wonders about how the Initiative 42 issue has been resolved. As additional uses of park land are requested, what are criteria necessary for expanding into greenspace? Superintendent Aguirre responds – this building has a historic use. Does a museum constitute recreation use? He asks the question and balances it with whether there is enough public benefit in exchange for the use. Commissioner Wright feels the meeting room needs to be defined, and the loading dock design could be less intrusive to the park, and staff parking should not be at the Museum. Superintendent Aguirre states the Agreement models MOHAI to give SPR and public access to event space.

Presentation: Homelessness in Parks

Presented by George Scarola, Director to the Office of Homelessness

Commissioner Byers introduces this issue. There have been recent ordinances regarding encampments that have generated much concern on behalf of Seattle Parks and Recreation, suggesting parks and greenspaces were not appropriate places for encampments. George Scarola was designated by the Mayor to direct the Office of Homelessness.

Superintendent Aguirre adds Director Scarola's presentation will be about the Mayor's plan. There are approximately 80-90 parks that have encampments in them. The

Mayor's plan is a humane plan that recognizes that parks are not the answer to the homelessness issue. SPR is not a social service agency but staff deals with homelessness every day and Superintendent Aguirre will ensure they have training and resources to do their work.

Director Scarola says Seattle has beautiful parks but the homelessness is a crisis. Housing is not affordable. 3 factors that contribute to unsheltered homelessness: rise in rents, vacancy rates, and weather.

The intent of the work performed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other homeless groups was to treat the homeless more humanely. Every day SPR staff rouse homeless to leave the parks. He feels this legislation will exacerbate the situation. Portland had a similar ordinance and it led to unsafe situations. Tents in Seattle are not safe in Seattle in the winter.

There are 2 plans – an interim plan and a long-term plan.

The Interim plan - when we move them, how do we do it?

- This will be informed by the current legislation and negotiations, and the interdepartmental task force.
- Parks, schools, and sidewalks are off limits; anyone camping in these locations will be asked to leave immediately.
- The feedback he's received says that Parks staff are always polite and compassionate.
- There are currently around 400 encampments - highly visible places will be asked to leave more quickly.
- Those camping under I-5 - it is dark, strewn with garbage and biological waste. Crime is happening - The Mayor wants this encampment removed. They will be given 72-hours notice to leave. The outreach workers need to offer them another space. Shelter rules and that environment do not work for everyone. Research shows it doesn't work to tell homeless people to stop using drugs in order to get housing.
- The garbage pick-up at encampments will increase.
- SPR will open community centers for showers for limited hours. Green Lake Community Center has been doing this for years.
- The Mayor's plan includes more outreach to difficult places - in greenbelts and under freeways to offer better housing.
- For aggressive homeless situations, outreach workers will be paired with SPD case workers; this scenario would result in the ultimatum: cooperate with case worker or go to jail.
- 4 more encampments will be set up, which may result in another battle with communities who don't want them.

There is a long-term plan: Pathways Home: <http://www.seattle.gov/homelessness>

Long-term plan

Housing first - prioritize getting housing for people no matter their situation to reduce the number of unsheltered people. Find decent housing for people.

There is a number homeless people can call to receive information about housing; 211 is the number but it doesn't work well because you are given an appointment for someone who can screen you. This number is only operational from 8am to 5pm, homelessness is 24 hours. The challenge will be knitting together all of the homeless organizations.

Commissioner Lowe says he spent four years as Chairman of the Board for the Greater Church Council of Seattle. This problem began with prosperity. There was an agreement with developers to raise prices. It is disparaging to see people who are existing; help someone who finds themselves reduced to the lowest level - learn to return to humanity – this is a constant teaching moment.

If there is an encampment on park or school property, please notify the police.

The goal is to ask people in Parks to leave - start with highly visible places. Maps were created to respond to proposed Council legislation. The environmentally sensitive areas and developed parks were pulled off the list of acceptable encampment locations. The Commissioners express hope this does not mean other areas of parks are acceptable.

Four new tent encampments, but no sites have been identified. More than public involvement, there will be notification to the surrounding communities. The hope is to serve up to 200 individuals total.

The Commissioners wonder what safety measures are in place for Parks staff. SPR will provide additional training; staff training in blood borne pathogens and how to communicate with homeless. SPR staff are not always able to have police officers at many places. They are receiving training on how to interact with those with mental illness.

Navigation Center – 30-day shelter with intensive social work; working well in San Francisco.

The Commissioners wonder why homelessness has increased in Seattle. Is it due to more people moving here or people losing housing? Director Scarola states that Seattle is considered prosperous and that attracts people of all sorts. Homeless with drug and mental health issues are the largest group. However, there is also no housing that is affordable.

Is there coordination with King County - All Home is the database system that collects all the data from case workers. From there, people are referred to wherever there is space. King County controls the mental health and drug treatment money.

The Park Board is here to provide advice on homelessness and parks; would like to be involved as they can.

There are many competing needs for nonprofits that offer services to the homeless. Others people's needs are not being met due to the emphasis on the homelessness crisis. Commissioner Wright stresses the importance of being cognizant about what the impacts could be on the department.

SPR setting up needle disposal sites in certain parks.

Other elements to the long-range plan? Commissioner Byers feels many homeless want to be useful and employed. He suggests Director Scarola consider the job training programs like Seattle Conservation Corps that finds them housing and restores them to employment through job training. FareStart and Real Change are other examples - strong employment plan. These programs help people contribute to their society.

Director Scarola says job training is not a prominent feature in the plan because the goal of this plan is to get housing first. Once people are placed in permanent supportive housing, they can focus on improving their lives. The employment piece is pushed into the next level.

The Pathways Home program will also invest in rapid rehousing - rather than building a new unit; the City will pay their rent for a few months while the programming will work to help them find employment.

The Commissioners comment that for most people it is hard to encounter a homeless person and not have anything they can do.

Presentation: Park District Communications and Public Engagement Plan

Presented by Christina Hirsch and Karen O'Connor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Written Briefing

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 20, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Christina Hirsch
Subject: Seattle Park District communications efforts

Requested Board Action

Informational briefing.

Project or Policy Description and Background

Seattle Park District communications efforts: The voter-approved Seattle Park District supports Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) in numerous ways with a stable, long-term source of funding for department operations and maintenance. This good news for the department also comes with heightened expectations and accountability for getting our work done. A significant part of that accountability is letting people know how and for what purpose their tax dollars are being spent.

We will present to the Park Board on the strategies and tactics we have developed for communicating Park District progress and accomplishments to a variety of internal and external audiences.

Additional Information

Below is a broad overview of the strategies and tactics we have developed for communicating Park District updates, information, successes and stories to internal and external audiences.

Strategies

- Strong use of storytelling to highlight how people are participating in and benefitting from Park District activities;
- Frequent use of social media to carry messages;
- Use of multimedia, particularly photos, video and infographics to convey messages;
- Branding of “look and feel” of Park District materials so people can easily recognize a Park District project or activity;
- Proactive media strategies with a focus on engaging diverse/ethnic media outlets;
- Involvement of major partners to help deliver key messages and updates through their communication channels;
- Regional meetings to unveil major projects;
- Involvement of Mayor, City Councilmembers, Superintendent at Park District-related public events;
- Use of Mayor’s “Seattle @WORK: open houses to inform and update people about the Park District;

- Regularly scheduled written progress reports to various audiences through various means; AND
- Regularly scheduled briefings to various audiences about Park District progress.

Tactics

External Communication

- Storytelling template and training for frontline staff to gather stories and quotes on Park District activities, which the Communications Office will use to craft blog, newsletter and social media stories showing impact.
- Weekly Facebook posts highlighting Park District successes, with heavy use of before-and-after pictures, testimonials, and vignettes; use of #SeattleParkDistrict hashtag;
- Packaging of key messages and sample social media posts for SPR social media editors to post monthly content across community center and program social media pages, and for Superintendents Twitter page;
- Bi-weekly Twitter updates highlighting Park District accomplishments, with heavy use of photos and infographics;
- Bi-monthly blog stories highlighting Park District beneficiaries and success stories;
- Monthly Park District stories featured in Explore More, SPR's external newsletter;
- Quarterly reports and annual report, supported by blog and social media;
- News releases for specific projects, programs, activities;
- Pitching stories on certain projects, programs, activities to print and electronic media, with a focus on engaging ethnic and diverse media outlets;
- Development of branded Park District FAQ page, collateral material, and power point presentation for use at meetings and public events;
- Public meetings for projects or acquisitions in affected neighborhoods;
- Briefing for Mayor's Office, City Council, District Board, Oversight Committee, Board of Park Commissioners;
- Other updates provided by staff at public meetings, Mayor walking tours, department public "listening tour" open houses and public meetings;
- Seattle Channel coverage; AND
- Regularly updated website.

Internal Communication

- Regular communication with employees through Superintendent blog and internal newsletter;
- Quarterly internal newsletter focused on how the Park District helps SPR address "big topics" such as equity, access, and livability in Seattle.
- All-staff emails to announce major milestones and successes;
- Briefing papers to various audiences: Mayor's Office, City Council, Board of Park Commissioners, Park District Board, Oversight Committee;
- Information shared by Superintendent and Division Directors with staff at meeting and in informal settings;
- Information communicated at staff meetings including all-staff meetings and retreats;
- Regular standing section on Park District implementation in Mayor's Weekly Report;
- Sharepoint site to collect and share Park District information; AND

- Recognition Guide and messaging toolkits distribution; trainings for staff.

Outreach

- Directive from Mayor on collaboration with DON and other department
- Public Involvement Policy and signage with Park District logo
- Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement – 6 strategies and DON survey
- Going to the community – examples – Lake City and Ballard play areas
- Translation – Brighton
- Using more surveys

Additional Information

Park District Website: <http://www.seattle.gov/seattle-park-district>

Please contact Christina Hirsch: Christina.Hirsch@seattle.gov or Karen O'Connor: Karen.oconnor@seattle.gov

Presentation

The purpose of the Park District communications and public engagement plan is to show the impact and benefit of the programs.

Goals:

- Inform and engage
- Build excitement and show impact
- Reach broad and diverse audiences
- Increase public understanding and awareness
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Build confidence amongst stakeholders

Strategies:

- Frequent use of social media
- Storytelling – highlight real people
- Visually engaging – pictures tell a 1000 words
- Proactive media efforts
- Involve partners to deliver messages
- Engage diverse/ethnic audiences
- Public events and meetings

External Communication tactics:

- SPR twitter account has 24,000 followers
- Facebook has 25,000 followers
- The Park District successes are communicated. Highlight SPR staff, volunteers and completed projects.

- Created a hashtag: #seattleparkdistrict
- The Parkways Blog gets 5000 views per month - highlight real people and in depth articles about a variety of our projects.
- Storytelling is hugely important. These stories highlight people and stories. The Communications Team has developed a template for staff to go into their communities and meet with participants and ask them questions about their experience. SPR staff create social media stories through these interviews.
- Explore More newsletter goes out once a month – there are 48,000 subscribers and includes Park District updates.
- Media press releases - dozens of stories published about Park District related projects.
- The Seattle Channel aired 3 TV specials about the Park District. Around 36,000 people saw the videos when they aired and 400 people have watched them online. These are embedded on the Park District website.
- Project recognition package – SPR has developed a logo so that the public can start to recognize the look and feel of Park District projects - when they see the flier they know where their money is going.
- The website has background information, project information and nearly 5000 people has viewed this site in the past month.
- Meetings and events – SPR staff attend local events to discuss Park District projects that are happening in those communities.
- Briefings and Reports – SPR provides updates on the Park District in the Mayor’s Weekly and details the progress of the Park District initiatives through the quarterly and annual reports.

Internal communication - Reaching staff through emails, updates, meetings, and the InWeb.

Outreach and Public Engagement for the Seattle Park District
 Karen O’Connor does communications for the Planning and Development division

Mayor Murray enacted an Executive Order that all city departments work together on how they engage with residents. Department of Neighborhoods did a big survey to see how people like to get engaged. The results showed most people prefer to receive information through blogs, email, social media, and meetings.

The departments hold city hall meetings to engage with people at one time and one place.

Seattle Parks and Recreation Public Involvement Policy

Outreach Collateral

- 4 x 4 sign, postcard
- 11 x 17 poster
- press release to media list including ethnic media
- blog post
- social media

Includes implementation:

- Race Equity Tool Kit
- Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Strategies, which helps staff decide whether there should be interpreters and translated materials.

Postcards go out to a 3-4 block radius from the project.

Tools used in outreach:

- Website always has project manager's name and website
- Online meetings and open houses for projects.
- Going to the community - present at events to engage local community
- Stakeholder meetings and focus groups

Relationship building is key

- Stakeholders
- Ethnic media - developing relationships
- Other SPR employees and Community Centers
- Reach out to all people who have requested permits for using that park to get their feedback.

The Commissioners feel more examples of this work will be needed to get people involved. They appreciate that SPR staff are going out to the communities since people don't leave their neighborhoods, especially during the weekday evenings.

Old/New Business

Commissioner Wright asks the Commissioners to review the draft letter to the City Council regarding the Community Center Plan funding in the Mayor's budget. The letter specifically asks to support funding of free programming and additional hours at certain community centers. The MPD has sent a similar letter.

Commissioner Byers calls for a Motion to sign the letter and forward to City Council; Commissioner Wright moves and Commissioner Lowe seconds. The vote is approved with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Cook mentions the Associated Recreation Council Board also sent a letter and he'll give an update about his work on that Board at the next meeting.

There being no other business, Commissioner Wright moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Lowe seconds, and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:54 pm.

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