

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 10, 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:

Marty Bluewater
Tom Byers
Dennis Cook
Bob Edmiston
Diana Kincaid
Michael Padilla
Tom Tierney, Chair

Excused:

William Lowe
Barbara Wright, Vice Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent
Susan Golub, Policy Unit Manager
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting is held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Tierney calls the meeting to order at 6:31pm. The order of the Agenda is changed. Commissioner Tierney asks for approval of the March 10 Agenda and the February 25 meeting minutes; Commissioner Bluewater moves and Commissioner Byers seconds. The Consent Items are approved by unanimous vote.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

Ellen Taft – No veterinarian or animal behaviorist has ever stated dogs need to run off-leash for adequate exercise. The City is not obligated to provide off-leash areas. She requests the Golden Garden OLA be closed because it does not prevent off-leash activity outside the OLA. She requests SPR staff visit the site and see the erosion on the hillside. Only 20% of dog owners have paid for licenses. She also asks the Park Board to ask the city limit the number of dogs per household to one and discourage large breeds.

Lex Voorhoeven – Carkeek Park steward for 20 years. He has seen a steady decline of aging Alder Maple forests in the park. The forest type will collapse, leaving little chance of natural succession. Fixing it by planting is successful. Invites Superintendent Aguirre and SPR staff for a tour.

Kris Hocking – Lower Kinnear OLA steward. The OLA is difficult to access; the homeless use and vandalize it at night. She drives across town to use a larger OLA. Upper Kinnear is used instead.

Briefing and Discussion: Performance Management

Presented by Jasmine Jose

Written Briefing

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 8, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Jasmine Jose, Strategic Advisor (Office of the Superintendent)
Subject: Performance Management Framework

Requested Board Action

This is an informational briefing with no action requested of the Board at this time.

Project Description

SPR currently has a strong system for measuring various outputs related to efficiency and productivity. We are able to produce metrics around number of community center visitors, number of permits issued, quantities of swim lessons provided, total time spent on maintenance activities, etc.

By organizing this data into a system of major outcomes and developing processes to identify where gaps currently exist, the department will be able to elevate the focus from basic productivity to an analysis of our true impact on the lives of residents. This information will be valuable in enhancing and improving the delivery of services to our customers.

The performance framework is designed to measure SPR's progress toward our overarching goals of Healthy People, Strong Communities and a Healthy Environment. This approach focuses on a set of 12 major objectives derived from the major goals of the Parks Legacy Plan:

Healthy People

1. Provide quality programs that meet the ever-changing needs of the community.
2. Improve access to programs through free programs, scholarships, stipends and grants.
3. Offer excellent and consistent customer service.
4. Increase awareness by publicizing programs and services.

Strong Communities

1. Connect the public with a diversity of opportunities to gather, play and celebrate.
2. Improve access and reduce barriers for underrepresented and underserved communities.
3. Activate downtown parks to create a welcoming environment for all.
4. Encourage community engagement and volunteerism.

Healthy Environment

1. Prolong the life of and usefulness of facilities through integrated asset management.
2. Preserve, expand and reclaim park property for public use and benefit.
3. Provide clean, safe, accessible and welcoming facilities and parks.
4. Steward an environmentally sustainable parks system for future generations.

To measure performance in each of the above objectives, the following core data sets are being refined (or developed in some cases):

- User demographics (program participants, event attendees, permit holders and volunteers)
- Program outcomes
- Utilization and attendance
- Asset management (capital projects and major maintenance) indicators
- Customer feedback

Looking at this additional data will enable managers and directors to track progress toward the department's overarching goals of Healthy People, Strong Communities and a Healthy Environment.

Public Involvement Process

Development of this process is internal, however the majority of the information we will be collecting will involve direct feedback from our park, facility, and program customers.

Issues

Data: While current systems are able to capture raw numbers relatively well, we do not have reliable or comprehensive data around how satisfied the public is with our services and to what extent our offerings are being used by the public. To this end, the department is developing a system to track user data in a number of ways:

1. "Tell Seattle Parks." Web-based application that captures experience data, issues and suggestions.
2. Program registration. Quarterly survey pushes to all program participants through the program registration system.
3. Volunteer tracking. Add demographic and satisfaction survey information to volunteer tracking system.
4. Permit holder tracking. Add demographic and satisfaction survey information to permit application tracking system.

Schedule

Attachment A shows the timeline for implementation of the performance program.

Additional Information

Jasmine Jose: jasmine.jose@seattle.gov or 206-457-6254

Attachments

Attachment A: Plan Outline

ATTACHMENT A

Performance Program Plan Outline Timeline

Phase I (Ramp Up Year)

Results Team formation

Basic framework development

Management and workforce training

Phase II Systems Analysis, Development and Integration

Systems analysis

- Parks maintenance tracking system (PLANT) data
- Program registration (CLASS) system upgrade
- Volunteer tracking (Volgistics)
- Permit application processing
- RSJI outcomes, strategies and actions (work plan goal items)

Customer feedback system development and launch

Integration of major department metrics including:

- * Parks maintenance tracking system (PLANT) data
- * Program registration (CLASS) system upgrade
- * RSJI outcomes, strategies and actions (work plan goal items)

Phase III

Superintendent and Division Dashboards implementation

Integration with individual performance evaluation systems in collaboration with Human Resources

Briefing

Performance.seattle.gov page – displays measures that SPR submits. These are productivity metrics – swim lessons, permits, etc...

SPR would like to start looking at outcomes – bringing value and changing behavior. Be our best – see how the department is doing and how to improve.

Using the 3 Overarching outcomes: Healthy People, Strong Communities, Healthy Environment to measure internal operations, user experience, and the data from key projects.

Core data sets – who isn't coming?

- User demographics (program participants, event attendees, permit holders, volunteers)
- Program outcomes
- Utilization and attendance
- Asset management (capital projects and major maintenance) indicators
- Customer feedback
- Internal operations (HRIS, Summit, etc.)

Tracking system in facilities – will more robust tracking

- Tell Seattle Parks – web based survey; give feedback
- Registration surveys – anyone who registers for a program will be asked to fill out a survey
- Resident survey – hopefully will answer who is not being served
- Volunteer tracking – add demographic information
- Permit Holder tracking - add demographic and satisfaction survey information
- Retooled public engagement policy – University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs students reviewing this and building a plan.

Phase I – Built out the results team in each division, training, and developed basic framework.

Phase II – Current phase

Results framework for Park District work

- Systems analysis
 - Parks maintenance tracking system (PLANT) data
 - Program registration (CLASS) system upgrade
 - Volunteer tracking (Volgistics)
 - Permit application processing
 - RSJI outcomes, strategies and actions (work plan goal items)
- Resident Survey & Customer Feedback System launch

Phase III – Full shift from outputs to outcomes

- see how the department is doing
- Integrate it down to the individual employee level in sync with their evaluations.

Discussion

Commissioner Kincaid would like to see metrics in relation to women's safety in parks.

SPR staff will reach underrepresented communities by going to places where communities already go.

Superintendent's Report

Presented by Superintendent Aguirre, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Many long-time employees are retiring resulting in many staff changes. Dan Johnson, Parks Division Director, served the city for a long time and has done a great job. Commissioners agree and feel he has been a wonderful SPR employee.

Magnuson Park – SPR performed a radiological survey and results show no harmful levels.

Arboretum Loop Trail – Construction is set to begin on the multi-use path that will create a loop through the Arboretum. The funds came from SR520 mitigation. The expected completion date is the end of 2017.

Hing Hay Annex – Construction has already begun. The Post Office was demolished. The park will be complete by August. This is being built with Parks and Greenspaces Levy funds.

DSA activation for Westlake and Occidental Parks – Legislation allowing the partnership between DSA for activation at Westlake and Occidental Parks is ongoing. SPR staff are working with Labor and DSA. The legislation is going to council April 7.

Zoo CEO Selection Process – The Zoo Board will be selecting the new CEO in the coming days. Superintendent Aguirre participated in the interview process.

Request for Proposals (RFP) for Building 2 at Magnuson Park – Many parties have expressed interest and are touring the site. The proposals are due June 3.

Powell Barnett Adult Fitness – 7 new pieces of adult fitness; allows adults to exercise while the kids play.

Co-Rec Adult Soccer cancels spring season – trying to figure out how to fill those spots equitably.

Scholarship applications are open – 4000 new scholarships for SPR programs

Presentation: Seattle Parks and Recreation

Presented by Superintendent Aguirre

Superintendent Aguirre reviews Seattle Parks and Recreation's Mission, Values and Outcomes that emerged from the Legacy Plan.

- SPR has a budget of \$209million, including Park District funding. 983 FTEs (1,897 this summer)
- Divisions
 - Recreation
 - Parks
 - Planning and Development
 - Finance and Administrative Services
 - Regional Parks and Strategic Outreach
 - Superintendent's Office
 - Policy Unit
 - Human Resources
 - Communications
- Ranked as 9th best Parks and Rec System in the country by the Trust for Public Land

Goes over our system – Parks, Community Centers, Boulevards, Environmental Learning Centers, Pools, etc...

Land and Stewardship – Restoring land with Green Seattle Partnership, growing food through P-patch programs and the Beacon Food Forest

Programs for all - Youth, seniors, boating, camps. Do this with partnerships too, with support from community, civic leaders, partners, employees, and volunteers!

Challenges – Superintendent Aguirre looks at these as opportunities to work towards.

- Not collaborating well with other agencies
- Public perception is not always positive
- Supporting and developing our employees
- Structured for recession times and need to figure out how to restructure
- Equity of program/facility access
- Technology is outdated

Asked to do more:

Education, social services, health, public safety

The World in which we operate is changing:

- District representation on City Council
- Mayor's focus on housing, livability, performance, collaborative planning and development, etc.
- Growing population of Seattle: 120,000 more people in next 20 years

- We are becoming more dense
- We are becoming more diverse in some areas, less diverse in others
- We are living longer
- We are dealing with climate change

Superintendent Aguirre went on a listening tour of our communities.

- Feedback from community center tours
 - We have a great team that does a great job!
 - SPR programs are important, but must match community interests
 - More programs!
 - SPR is not reaching every community
 - Communication is key
 - Process, transparency, and honesty are critical
 - SPR needs to be more innovative and open to collaboration
 - Technology needs improvement
 - SPR should be leading in sustainability and environmental education
 - Equity is important...need to meet needs and need more scholarships
- Internal feedback
 - SPR has a great team and are very passionate!
 - SPR can't be everything to everyone
 - Communication is key
 - Process and transparency are critical in decision-making and HR
 - Accountability goes both ways...managers and reports
 - Technology needs improvement
 - Internal customer service is also important
 - Equity is important
 - SPR staff need the ability to be more innovative
 - More collaboration with outside partners
 - Want to be held to high standards, but need resources
 - Greater investment in training, especially leadership development

Key themes – Seattle Parks and Recreation is a mission driven organization --

- Mission drives programs, content and core services – clarify understanding and expectations. Must be clear about what we do NOT do. Programs must be strategic and driven by long-term view. Programs drive everything else.
- Access/equity – new approach to outreach -- Question our distribution of programs, services and resources to ensure equity; must be driven by RSJI framework. Not necessarily focus on equality.
- Innovation – leverage new resources and make partnerships easier
- Performance – results driven and tell our story

- Responsiveness – shape community in response to changing needs; excellent customer service, honesty and transparency.
- Invest in and support our team – support innovation and include in decision-making; provide feedback and accountability.

Superintendent Aguirre reviews the 2016 Strategic Investments for the department. It will focus on:

- Organizational Excellence – hiring more administrative support staff, working towards Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Accreditation, and increase partnership opportunities.
- Responsiveness – feedback system, investment in community center staff training, and community engagement.
- Access and Equity – SPR to hire a full-time Race and Social Justice Coordinator position, eliminate drop-in fees, and expand programs for underserved communities.

Commissioner Byers suggests using the “Find It, Fix It” mobile app to take on the task of telling you what is broken. He emphasizes using existing systems.

Some of our community centers have social services partnerships; this could be expanded. SPR should work to create a structure to allow creative partnerships to happen.

The Commissioners feel this was a very valuable presentation!

Discussion: Community Center Strategic Plan

Facilitated by Susan Golub, Policy Unit Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Discussion Issues

1. Drop-in activities at centers often cost a small fee; for example, \$3 per person for pick-up basketball in a gym. What are the Board’s views about drop-in fees? Are they a barrier to access? Should there be drop-in fees at some centers, but not at all? Should we waive fees for low-income residents at all facilities? The fees generate approximately \$100,000 in revenue annually.

2. What is the Board's view regarding extending the hours community centers are open? Should we explore extending operating hours through outside partnerships? A consistent theme throughout the public comment leading to Community Center Strategic Plan development is that centers need to be open to the public more. Recession-era cuts led some facilities to be open only 25 hours per week; as noted, the initial \$1.3 of Park District funds added staff to provide coverage for the current slate of hours. The additional \$1.3 million of Park District funds will be allocated to a variety of needs, including adding more hours; however, the funds will not be enough for all of the initiatives included in the Strategic Plan.

One avenue for meeting the community's needs is through the use of partnerships. Currently our key community center partner, the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), provides programming and financial support and manages a large child care system within community centers; ARC does not operate any facility.

What are the Board's thoughts about partnership opportunities:

- Operating additional hours when the facility would otherwise be closed; and/or
- Taking over entire management of a facility?

3. Currently centers attempt to offer something for everyone. What are the Board's views regarding defining a demographic focus, perhaps teen or senior, for some centers? We learned through the current practices survey that turning centers into single purpose facilities is not the national trend and is detrimental to long-term flexible programming. An alternative would be to identify a demographic group as the focus group for a center, giving that demographic programming priority. The information from the Recreation Demand Study, combined with staff knowledge of the center neighborhoods, would be used to identify a demographic emphasis, where appropriate. (Many neighborhoods may be a mix of populations such that a demographic focus would not make sense.)

Discussion

1. Drop-in Fees – Raises approximately \$100,000/year. Much of that coming from a couple of popular activities like pickle ball and basketball. Should the fees be raised or lowered based on neighborhood or system-wide? Community Center staff prefer having the youth check in when they arrive, but they could reduce the fee and/or make it part of the scholarship system with a card.

The Commissioners offered the following advice:

- Charge adults but make it free for kids.
- It does not seem right if you live near a community center but you cannot afford to use it.
- Voluntary fee? Pay what you can.
- Commissioners asked Susan to consider staff time to administer the fees/scholarships.
- Suggested collaborating with the health care industry to sponsor free access to the community centers.
- Make kids sign in and take off fees.
- People expect to have a fee and do not mind paying for some uses.
- Improvements in health impact more than recuperate expense in the long term.

2. Extending community center hours –

The Commissioners emphasized the community centers and the programming should be brought about based on the needs and benefits for each community. Commissioner Tierney and others from the District Oversight Committee stress the importance that the City Council release operational funds so that community centers can be open longer.

Susan mentions SPR has hired a consultant to help tighten up and move the community center plan forward. They are holding workshops for each center to develop business plans.

In terms of partnerships, the Commissioners feel it is important that the partner embrace SPR values.

3. How to program different community centers due to competition for space? No single purpose because it does not maximize use.

Timeline: Hope to have a draft by June 1

Livability Summit on April 19

Old/New Business

Commissioner Edmiston presents the letter he wrote on behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners regarding the update to the Right of Way Manual (ROW).

The letter expresses the original intent of boulevards to provide access in all modes of transportation. The suggestions and language would move the design towards the original vision. The letter uses the Mission and Values of Seattle Parks and Recreation to analyze the ROW manual with an emphasis in the ability to walk/bike to parks and provide access for everyone. Highlights the mechanical things that make it easier to access parks and facilities. Suggests Modal hierarchy put into plan.

The Commissioners appreciate the detail Commissioner Edmiston put into this letter. Commissioner Tierney is aware of inter-departmental cooperation and need for collaboration but is unsure about the level of detail, not being an expert himself. National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is moving swiftly towards better designs. The letter refers to best practices; all of the comments from all of the boards are consistent.

The comments will be put into a cohesive report from all the boards/commissions who were asked for feedback to SDOT. Susan Golub suggests discussing the portion on the Olmsted Boulevards with the Friends of Olmsted to ensure a common vision. This is a Board of Park Commissioners letter not reflective of the Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Boards invited to comment: Pedestrian, Freight, Urban Forestry, Bicycle Advisory Board, Disability, Planning, and the Park Board

Spirit of high-level comments are consistent with values of the parks system. Suggest putting in high-level philosophical work with the details as a thought paper to consider. Talk with the Olmsted people and see if there is some language that creates consensus.

There is a discussion surrounding the level of depth to which the letter dives.

Commissioner Byers makes a motion to support high-level comments – with the reconciliation over the Olmsted Boulevards; more details presented as the work of one of our commissioners. Commissioner Bluewater seconds. Commissioner Kincaid adds the NACTO reference to the high-level comment section. The Commissioners unanimously vote to approve the letter with suggested edits.

Membership and committee update at the next meeting.

Commissioner Byers moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Cook seconds, and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 9:02 pm.

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