

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
September 14, 2017

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

Present:

Andréa Akita  
Dennis Cook  
Marlon Herrera  
William Lowe, Vice Chair  
Kelly McCaffrey  
Rachel Anne Williams  
Barbara Wright

Excused:

Tom Byers, Chair  
Evan Hundley

**Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff**

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Lowe calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Commissioner Lowe calls for approval of the Consent Items: the September 14 agenda and July 13 meeting minutes; Commissioner Akita moves, Commissioner Herrera seconds and the Consent Items are approved unanimously.

**Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

Tim Motzer – Chair of Lake City Neighborhood Alliance Parks Committee; he proposes an enhanced solution for aging park facilities to amend the 2018 spending plan. The City Council has offered no response. The current plan cannot be changed until next cycle. Tim has documented funding deficiencies based on the 2016 strategic plans and documented promises to the voters. The \$48million collected and the amount per assessed value. Tim asks the Board to support their funding alternative.

Andy Mitton – Board President for Friends Seattle’s Olmsted Parks(FSOP). The mission of FSOP – look to preserve Olmsted heritage and provide open space for all people. The bd is looking at legacy parks and pressures they have been facing. Sometimes it’s

important to look back to see why something is important. There is a letter that will be coming to you regarding Colman Park Vista.

Margy Bresslour – The report from FSOP is terrific and the research provided regarding the Olmsted’s relationship with Colman Park. SPR is presenting at the next Park Board meeting. They asked to be involved in the presentation and briefing but have not received a response. Together with SPR, they are working on a plan that adheres to SPR policies that uses native plants and requires little maintenance, while adhering to the Olmsted vision and stabilizes the slope. SPR talks about working with community to generate ideas to solve problems together. She is getting mixed messages from different staff. She appreciates the Boards assistance.

Evan Wright – He distributes Bradner Gardens Letter of Support. He appreciates the diligence of the board. There is a lot of information out there regarding this project but they want to move this project forward. They would like concrete evidence of willingness to compromise in the briefing paper.

Barbara Rigg – Represents Save Evans Pool- The 2008 levy promised \$3million to make facility work for the next 30 years. Green Lake Community Center and Pool are regularly closed for system break downs. 2 goals – 1 maintain it for the next 6-10 years until renovation can be done. When the Superintendent toured the facility, SPR staff promised a new boiler, HVAC and roof, she would like to know the status of these projects.

### **Superintendent’s Report**

Green Lake Community Center – SPR committed to a stabilization project at Green Lake Community Center and Pool. There is a going to be a full facility closure in November to replace the boiler, roof and there is a laundry list of new improvements. Official closing notice will be distributed in the coming weeks.

Colman Vista Restoration Project – Deputy Superintendent Williams commends the volunteers for the work they do. The Superintendent has made a set of decisions for how the project moves forward which will provide a framework to get SPR and the volunteers out of the cyclical conversation they had. Jesús will meet with volunteers next week to share how and where the department is comfortable moving forward. The Park Board will hear this same presentation at the next meeting. Deputy Superintendent Williams agrees that part of the Seattle experience is taking in views from the seven hills.

SDCI attended a meeting with Colman Park regarding the policies around Environmentally Critical Areas and the Superintendent’s decisions are informed by how the Ordinance should be interpreted.

SPR finds it difficult to compromise on ECAs – Commissioner McCaffrey asks what is stopping this project from moving forward. SPR tries to meet communities half way;

sometimes, when staff are slow to make a decision it exacerbates community frustration. The clarity and direction from Jesús will mitigate frustration.

Mayoral transition – Jesús sent an email to SPR staff thanking them and asking them to continue to serve the people of the City.

Budget – Protem mayor Bruce Harrell will deliver the budget message to City Council on Tuesday. SPR staff will brief the Board in October.

Request for Proposals for Recreation Strategic Plan Consultant – This will allow us to get into the community to create facilities-based plan. Lake city and Green Lake Community Centers were not included in the budget because there is a need to take inventory and make decisions about how recreation programs will drive facility development. This will be an 18-month process. SPR will select a consultant to work on engaging the public through this process.

National Drive Electric Week – September 9 at Denny Park there was a ride and drive event to test drive electric vehicles and help people understand the importance of clean fuel to combat climate change.

>>Commissioner McCaffrey asked if the new charging stations will charge electric bikes? Deputy Superintendent Williams doesn't know but will find out.

Legislation passed to enter lease agreement with Marina Management LLC. SPR will continue to operate through 2017. Tenants will receive invoices for rent and letters from new moorage operators. There is a site on the SPR webpage about all of the public benefits they will offer the residents of Seattle.

Violence at West Seattle Park – Commissioner Akita mentions the recent shooting that occurred at a West Seattle Park and wanted to see what SPR does to support their employees. Deputy Superintendent says they offer therapy through the Employee Assistance Program for the employees to make sure they have support they need. And they are conducting meetings with the Community police team – a facilitated meeting with SPR staff and community.

### **Briefing and Discussion: Park District Funding**

*Presented by Ben Noble, Seattle Budget Director*

Ben Noble presented the Park District funding to the Park Board with a focus on answering their questions regarding Council's decision to use the \$48million instead of the rate of assessed value, which would rise with the rising housing prices.

#### **Background**

Prior to the vote for the Park District, voters expressed distrust that there would not be accountability because the levy does not expire. It is a separate taxing entity. The

Mayor has no role in the Metropolitan Park District (MPD). Staff looked for solutions and crafted the InterLocal Agreement – between the City and the MPD. This was an attempt to make a commitment to the public. It committed to a 6-year plan.

He showed them the relevant parts of the Inter-Local Agreement that commits the Park District to a 6-year spending plan, the same one the voters agreed to on the ballot. Ben passed out a handout that had sections of the InterLocal Agreement and graphs showing the difference in value between collecting taxes based on a rate per assessed value versus capping it at the promised \$48million.

Section 2.3 describes how the financing for the MPD works. Section 4 talks about the budget process. “each budget request shall be consistent with the then-current 6-year plan”. It also states SPR will finish a 6-year cycle before starting another 6-year cycle.

The first 6-year plan identified \$48million; the increase over following years reflects inflation. From a policy perspective, this is how it is done.

There is no legal preclusion to raising the tax rate.

Ben feels the expectations of voters is not to be taxed more than what was discussed during the MPD process.

This fixes the tax bill for homeowners around \$150. Whereas the assessed value method would add approximately \$50/yr.

He also talked about how important it is to look comprehensively at all the levies imposed on property owners to ensure they continue voting on levies by keeping the taxes down. Library depends on levy dollars for operating hours; this city is very levy dependent. Universal pre-k would not be able to continue. Housing affordability is becoming an issue; voters may have reached their limit. This state is too reliant to regressive taxes.

The Commissioners asked whether the Park District could take development impact fees and Ben clarified the Park District does not have the ability to take those, the City could but the priority is for affordable housing right now.

Metropolitan Park District – the City Council is the Park District Board.

Deputy Superintendent Williams emphasizes that public trust and confidence is gold in this work; it carries a huge risk for SPR and voters to think SPR has not met their end of the deal.

City has constraints on how much they can levy. The MPD is not subject to levy restrictions but has its own limits with a maximum rate per assessed \$1000. Voters' willingness to tax themselves, not the legal limit, is the change.

Tax rates are going down.

Commissioner Wright says the city is growing rapidly but the parks/facilities are not. Could the Park District bond against something to move forward more quickly?

Ben responds the MPD has its own debt capacity; it would have to be backed by the city. This results in a higher borrowing cost and the City will be paying it off for 20 years. The next 6-year plan could contain a balance that has some debt funding for facilities. No more than 6% of the City's general fund can be dedicated to debt.

Ben is aware of the needs of the department and it is hard to argue there aren't sufficient resources to meet them. He recognizes the need to take a comprehensive look at all areas to ensure the plan encompasses all that is out there.

Next district plan will have a focus on facilities; the department did not include facilities in previous plan- resulted in too much money. SPR currently working to stabilize the system and engage the communities to determine how communities use facilities. SPR has made a commitment to fund programs for people and are still meeting basic facility infrastructure. There was \$270mil in deferred maintenance and SPR will continue to chip away at that, though that cost keeps increasing.

Set at this rate in this phase, when will the next plan start? 2019 starts the planning process for the next 6-year cycle.

The RFP for a consultant to work on the recreation master plan is out now, their main priority will be public engagement and priority setting.

Ben mentions the City has trouble maintaining what is already in the inventory and this is important to recognize.

The Commissioners add this needs to get going in order to make the ballot by 2020.

Commissioner Wright says the Board needs to keep pushing this forward.

Ben reminds the Board that bonding is not a funding source, but a financial tool.

Are there a set of criteria that determines what gets funding through bonding and what doesn't? Typically, larger projects that serve many people.

Can the MPD collect from other revenue streams? Development impact fees? No, the MPD does not, the City could on behalf of SPR. It is a capital source and there are a fair number of hoops to jump through. With the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) they were not using impact fees, affordable housing has been put first.

The Commissioners thank Ben for coming and for all the great information.

**Update: Parks Volunteer Inspection Program**

*Presented by Robert Stowers and Charles Ng, Parks and the Environment Division, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

**Written Briefing**

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: August 15, 2017  
To: Board of Park Commissioners  
From: Robert Stowers, Director, Parks and Environment, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR)  
Subject: Implementation of SPR's Park Inspection Program conducted by Seattle Resident Volunteers

**Requested Board Action:**

Seattle Parks and Recreation is starting a Parks Inspection Volunteer Program. We last briefed the Board on this program in June of 2016 and are returning now with a program that is almost ready to launch. We feel this program aligns well with our shared goals for a Healthy Environment and strong communities through engaging with community members and empowering them to take a more active role in their parks.

We would like your input on suggestions for successfully recruiting community partners to ensure implementation of the volunteer inspection program is successful and sustainable.

**Brief History and Description of Program:**

This program is based off the Parks Inspection Program that was implemented in 2001 and utilized until 2009. That program was developed to help SPR meet the City's goals for clean, safe, and well-maintained parks. During this time, SPR staff conducted field work and evaluated the condition of our parks. The current program will be conducted by Seattle resident volunteers, stakeholders and public officials. Parks Field Staff Supervisors will lead the trainings. Field inspection results will be collected, compiled, and prioritized into maintenance and job work orders in the new Asset Management Work Order System (AMWO).

**Issues for Discussion: Proposal for the new Park Inspection Volunteer Program (PIVP):**

The proposal presented to the Park Board in June of 2016 was well received, however we did not have an implementation plan at that time. SPR staff were still grappling with:

- Creating a program management structure to sustain the Parks Inspection Volunteer Program
- Developing a recruitment plan for Volunteer Inspectors
- Identifying who would be responsible for training the Volunteers, and what specific training would be required
- Creating a system to determine which parks would be selected
- Determining the number of inspections to be completed on a quarterly/yearly basis
- Rewriting the Inspection Guide, to include the current parks and park assets.
- Determining how the inspection information would be collected, stored and used.

**Current Program Proposal and Recommendations:**

SPR staff will implement the PIVP that was presented to the Seattle Parks Board in 2016. The Implementation Plan will have the following components:

1. A supervisory level position and staff support dedicated to implementing and managing the PIVP
2. A Video Training Program that will be conducted by SPR staff at SPR facilities, and will be accessible from the SPR website
3. A computerized selection program system that randomly identifies which parks will be inspected each month
4. An integrated volunteer recruitment plan and process that will assist parks staff in identifying volunteers
5. A scheduling system that will schedule parks a month in advance
6. Staff support to collect and input the data and work orders into the Asset Management Work Order System

The additional volunteer participation, involvement of SPR management, elected officials, and community-based organizations, will ensure a broader array of assessment tools for evaluating the conditions of Seattle Parks.

**Project Goals:**

- One inspection per month for each district
- 72 inspections annually, 20% of our parks
- 2 inspections quarterly with elected officials, Board members, and key partner organization
- 80 park inspections annually
- Rating average between 3.5 and 4, on a scale from 1 - 5

## **Public Involvement Process:**

SPR maintenance staff have worked with the Parks Volunteer Supervisor and Parks Communications Manager to develop a webpage for ongoing recruitment of Seattle residents to volunteer for the program. Also, SPR Urban Forest Manager of the Green Seattle partnership has invited forest stewards to participate as Park Inspectors in the Volunteer Program. Volunteers already registered in SPR's volunteer program have been invited to participate and invitations will be extended to City Council Staff, the Mayor's Office, Seattle Parks Foundation, and our Advisory Councils.

**Schedule:** Program implementation will begin in September 2017, after peak summer season

## **Additional Information:**

Robert Stowers: Robert.stowers@seattle.gov 684-8012

## **Presentation**

Seattle Parks Inspection Team:

- Robert Stowers – Sponsor/Director
- Patrick Merriam and Belinda Gigliotti – Program Development Leads
- Park Maintenance Management Planning Staff
- AMWO Team – IT Development
- Rebekah Anderson – Data Management

Components of the Parks Inspection Program

- Monthly inspections of sites selected and scheduled by a Parks Crew Chief. Volunteers assigned to these inspections a month in advance.
- Quarterly tours with appropriate elected officials, Board Members, and key partners led by the Park Resources Manager. Tours will cover at least two (2) parks per tour.
- The Previous Inspection Program's Inspection Guide Book has been updated to be consistent with our assets and Park Categories.

## **Planning and scheduling inspections**

6 parks, 1 in each district, will be inspected each month.

- Crew Chiefs or designees will lead District Inspections.
- Site selection will be determined using a random-sample software system. Once a Park is selected, it is removed from the sampling for one year. This addresses sampling concerns we had in the past program
- To ensure fairness in the random selection process, each district will carry out the random selection identifying one Park monthly to be inspected. The inspection selection will be equitable and consistent with RSJI Values

## **Recruitment of Volunteer inspectors maintaining RSJI Values (in addressing concerns with past recruitment)**

- District Park Inspection Volunteers will be recruited from our registered park volunteers; forest and natural area stewards; and the Community Center Advisory Councils. The SPR Website will post an invitation to the public to sign up to volunteer for the inspections.
- Also, volunteer recruitment to the community partners District Crews work with on various park projects and issues.
- The Park Quarterly Inspection Tour Inspectors will be invited from Parks Advisory Boards; Park Board members; Council Staff, Mayor's staff; and Finance. Inspection tours will be done equitably throughout the City.

## **Training**

Before one can inspect volunteers will complete a training

- A video on how to conduct an inspection and how to use the rating guide with suggestions/advice on how to rate with examples.
- The video training will first be conducted by the Manager for all Crew Chiefs and Senior Leads.
  - The Parks Maintenance Planning Supervisor(PMPS) will then be responsible for training all volunteers by conducting video training in a 15-30 minute presentation before going on inspections.
  - The Park Resources Manager will take part in Video training provided by the PVIP for Volunteer Inspectors for the quarterly inspection tour.
  - Parks will make Online Video Training available

## **On-Site Inspections and Completion of Evaluations**

- The Park Maintenance Management Staff will be responsible for scheduling; and coordinate transportation of the volunteers to the park sites.
- Crew Chiefs, in the District-based inspections will be on-site to assist evaluators.
- The Park Maintenance Management Staff will collect the inspection forms at the end of each of the monthly park inspections and the quarterly inspection tours.

## **The Evaluation Packet**

- For each district site inspection and quarterly inspection tour assigned, the evaluators will receive:
  - Inspection guide
  - Evaluation form –Includes PLANT/AMWO system Assets
  - A park map and/or list showing location of site features and assets.

Integration of Data from the evaluations forms to Google forms

- Phase Conversion to Technology -
  - Phase #1
    - Data transferred from Parks Transaction Evaluation to XL Files following Inspections
    - Information from XL files entered into AMWO

- Phase #2
  - Complete conversion to AMWO. Information entered into AMWO automatically via electronic tablet – End of 2018

#### Next Steps:

- Park Resources Staff Park Inspection training – Week of September 26th
- Trial Park Inspections with selected volunteers – Week of October 2nd
- Random selection and scheduling of park inspections for the month of November – Week of October 7th 2017
- Identify and recruit volunteers for week of October 16th 2017
- Implement program - First week of November 2017

### **Sustainable Work Process**

#### Park Maintenance Planning and Usage

- Built into ongoing operations
- Managing inspection results on line
- Integration with Parks work scheduling
- Monthly and Quarterly Management reports
- Online reporting
- Complete Integration with Parks AMWO system

### **Discussion**

Robert finishes his presentation by stating this program will allow SPR to project the work load by having information available for what needs to be done.

Commissioner Lowe mentions the massive amount of maintenance that needs to be done and how it seems the department is ill-equipped to handle the amount of work. Robert says the only way to address backlog is more staff. Maintenance has fallen behind since most of the levies has been capital project based. SPR is working on backlogs. SPR and SDOT are collaborating on projects. This collaboration came out of all the encampment cleanups they have done together. They are having an interdepartmental barbecue to thank staff for all of their collaborative work to meet maintenance needs.

The Commissioners wonder if volunteers can take on more minor maintenance needs at the parks. Adrienne Caver-Hall, volunteer coordinator for Seattle Parks and Recreation says volunteers are limited by employee union contracts. SPR does not have staff to support recruitment of volunteers.

Deputy Superintendent Williams mentions that density and population growth has impacted the need for more maintenance and cleaning. The frequency of use drives frequency of cleaning. Yet, SPR has had the same level of staff for a number of years.

Each inspection takes approximately 2 hours and there is no dress code.

AMWO has not been fully deployed yet; there have been issues and kinks to work out.

How does this relate to Fix It First effort? The inspection reports and all Fix It First notifications are entered into the Asset Management Work Order system.

Is there a follow-up to circle back with people after they complete an inspection?

**Old/New Business**

**There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:32pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Byers, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners