



Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle 98109

Thursday, October 25, 2018

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Commissioners:

Andréa Akita, Vice Chair

Dennis Cook

Marlon Herrera

William Lowe, Chair

José Ochoa

Tom Byers

Jessica Farmer

Evan Hundley

Kelly McCaffrey

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Lowe calls to order at 6:30pm. The Board introduce themselves. Commissioner Lowe asks for approval of the Agenda. Commissioner Hundley moves and Commissioner Cook seconds; the agenda is approved. Commissioner Lowe asks for approval of the October 11 meeting minutes; Commissioner Akita moves, Commissioner Farmer seconds, and the minutes are approved.

Public Comment

Margy Bresslour – Colman Park Project. SPR staff are working on the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) for Colman Park and will follow Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) restoration protocols. GSP put together a planting plan and it contains many tall trees. They are not taking the historical context into consideration. Do you want to save the Olmsted legacy or create a forest?

Christopher Harrison – He is a member of a Seattle Green Lake running group. There have been a handful of assaults recently. It would be nice for people to have a safe space to run. He understands there is no such thing as true safety; and considerations about light pollution but feels there is a compromise. He mentions Houston's Memorial Loop as a reference, as it is lit and there is a police presence.

Deputy Superintendent's Report

Presented by Michele Finnegan, Interim Deputy Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Budget follow-up: In issue identification with the City Council – topics being discussed are:

- Additional investments at Magnuson Community Center
- Wading pools
- Trail planning for area along Brandon

Seattle Musical Theatre Group – SPR entered a 1-year lease with them. SPR will go out with an Request For Proposals later this year.

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

Cheasty Pilot – Public comment is open now on the revised version of the trail plan.

ActivNet - SPR is reviewing a new registration system with Interim Superintendent Williams next week. If he approves, there will be a transition before the December 4 winter registration date. It will be converted to the new system on November 27.

Gemenskap Park – 14th avenue park opening with a Halloween-themed event.

Next Saturday is Green Seattle Day, events begin at 9am.

Major Projects Challenge Fund Grants – SPR staff is working with the Mayor's Office to announce the decisions.

Kubota Garden Master Plan – conceptual designs were presented and now SPR staff are gathering input.

Hubbard Homestead – Public meeting for a new play area. Site improvements to include stormwater mitigation and landscaping.

Jefferson Park Golf Course – There are some ball trespass issues due to the removal of some trees. SPR would like to install nets after a public process and City Council approval. This solution shortens the amount of time the course won't be available, and the expense is more predictable.

Discussion: Superintendent Search

Presented by Pam Inch, Seattle Department of Human Resources

Pam is a Senior Executive Recruiter for the City of Seattle and leading the search for a new SPR Superintendent. Mayor is putting together a community group this month. They hope to be interviewing new Superintendent candidates in January and February with City Council confirmation by the end of February. It is important to hear from folks who have a vested interest in what they are looking for in a leader. The Board and public can send emails to Pam with answers to her questions.

What professional qualities are most important in the next superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation?

- Sense of policy entrepreneurship – growing disparities, density and climate change – drive for innovation will be important.
- Emphasis on climate change and strong commitment to racial equity
- Demonstrated successes with equity and innovative funding solutions to keep the system thriving.
- Strong collaborator; SPR touches so much of urban landscape;
- Innovation and partnerships; someone who has demonstrated innovation and partnerships. Keep up with what SPR is doing now; move the work the department is doing forward.
- Strong budgeting background; working knowledge of policy making; good motivator with employees; core values need to match Seattle's core values.
- Content knowledge of parks and recreation; experience with all the work SPR does; strategic vision.

- Someone who wants to serve – has to have a strong why. A good people manager and good steward of people’s money and trust. The candidate must be okay with decision-making processes that are open and transparent.
- Longevity – make sure it isn’t a short-term position.
- Balance competing interests and stewards of the environment. Recurring theme is the ability to prioritize. The person must like kids and dogs and trees.
- Committed to this place, the people and the future of this department.
- Community-oriented; and has enough experience to hit the ground running.

Do they need to have equal experience in parks and recreation?

What are you hoping doesn’t change in leadership?

- Open to community and staff; responsive to community and staff;
- In it for the long haul; good listener and decisive;

What opportunities for change are you hoping a new leader could bring to the department?

- Not new but, a champion of parks and recreation; fresh eyes and ideas for addressing homelessness in parks.

What would the Board like the steering committee to consider when making a recommendation on the position?

Pam mentions the City is not employing a 3rd party but will do it internally. She will bring talent for the committee to consider that comes from a wide variety of experiences, skills and ability. She is a facilitator.

- Why are they leaving? Do they have good budget skills?
- Seattle isn’t a good fit for all people. Make sure they are compatible with the people.
- Ensure the steering committee represents the City of Seattle including to make sure all communities are considered, and a race and social justice lens is used.

Kathy Nyland is doing some outreach in concert with the Strategic Plan meetings. She will an electronic survey. Committee members will also reach out to their communities. The Board wonders if there are any SPR staff on the committee? Or Park Board members?

Presentation: Specialized Programs

Brenda Kramer, Special Units Manager and Kyle Bywater, Recreation Coordinator, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Brenda manages the Specialized and Lifelong Recreation unit. They wanted to come by and share what they do, their programs and their impact. Brenda introduces Kyle Bywater, Recreation Coordinator; Jacob, Advisory Council President; and Alexa, Sally and their son Kevin – a participant and volunteer in the Specialized Programs.

Mission Statement: “We provide exceptional, accessible and affordable citywide recreation programs and resources for individuals with disabilities and their families. Our specially trained staff develop, conduct programs and, with the Advisory Council, advocate for specialized opportunities in arts, fitness and social activities for people with special needs.”

Jacob emphasizes accessible and affordable. He serves on the Advisory Council to work with community centers staff.

The Specialized Programs provides a whole range of activities –fitness, arts, educational, sports and social engagement activities for children and adults with both physical and developmental disabilities.

They provide volunteer opportunities and information and support services to parents, families, and community members, who may be assisting a child or an adult with disabilities.

Specialized Programs provides activities specifically designed and implemented by staff trained in adaptive recreation services.

The adult programs provide weekly recreational services including social, educational and fitness programs.

The after-school programs serve youth each week in community centers and middle schools providing adaptive recreational programs.

Adults and youth participate in seven different sports culminating in local and state Special Olympics competitions.

Summer camp – Lifelong Recreation serves the largest population of kids at the summer camps. They have 4-weeks of day camp and 4-weeks of overnight camp. The camp is affordable and gives these kids the experience they wouldn't necessarily get at another camp because of the training staff receive. The waitlists for camp are extensive.

In addition to their summer camps and after school programs, they also have Saturday field trips and teen socials.

Adult programs – Sally Schultz, a retired school teacher, brought her son Kevin. He lives in supportive living and is involved in SPR adult programs.

Kevin has been doing SPR camps for over 20 years; fitness and having lots of fun hanging out with his friends. His favorite activity is volunteering at Camp Long. He looks forward to it every year because he loves helping out and being part of a team; staff are helpful and friendly. He has made so many new friends through this program. They take them on so many field trips and overnight trips.

Kyle's mom Sally says, SPR programs are great and so many parents don't know about it. It helps his independence and it's all due to the wonderful staff

Kyle reviews the lists of activities for the adult special populations; the athletic programs are huge.

Adult overnight camps at Camp Long.

Partnerships: Seattle Adaptive Sports – provides athletic opportunities, such as wheelchair basketball.
Green Lake Small Craft Center

November 16 and 17 – Shoreline Performing Arts Center through friendship adventures

ICANBIKE – Teaches people how to ride a 2-wheeler in a week.

Specialized Recreation took a group of teens to the high ropes course and had 10 teens successfully try the course.

They encourage the commissioners to check out the Specialized Program Facebook page.

Commissioner Akita says it is a testament to the programs about how much people value the work you do. Great to see this work is being done.

Commissioner Hundley says the word needs to get out to more people. What do you need to get people off the waitlist? They need more staff; their programs are at capacity year-round and during the summer. What's the criteria for this? Staff must be 18 and older; most are special education college students; some are teachers who work for SPR in the summer; a number of high school students start volunteering during the summer.

Special Olympic teams are always looking for volunteers. They use the Youth Engaged in Service program

Brenda adds that there is an ADA access fund; spend it every year providing interpretation. Associated Recreation Council summer camps requested to provide an interpreter for a 10-week long summer camp and they were able to get it free.

Increased access into programs with Park District Fund; able to also start adult swim lessons.

The Board thanks Brenda and staff for exploring partnership opportunities to expand the reach of your programming.

Presentation: Climate Change in Seattle's Parks

Joelle Hammerstad, Sustainable Operations Manager

Jon Jainga, Natural Resources Manager

Todd Burley, Healthy Environment Strategic Advisor

The presenters introduce themselves. Combatting climate change is a priority for the City and SPR across all divisions.

They are going to review the impacts SPR is seeing, what they are doing, and upcoming opportunities.

New reality – climate change is real, and society will have to adapt and live with it.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a report in which they stated this is humanities last shot. People need to put everything into keeping the global temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

One impact SPR sees is rising sea levels. Seas are expected to rise 1-5 feet over the next several decades, leading to flooding, estuary inundation, erosion of shorelines, and degradation of habitat. There are real impacts to the parks

Rising temps worldwide but seeing local effects – Graph shows 2017 as warmest summer with average daily of 78 degrees. Local temperatures are warmer and drier. This last summer was the driest on record. Native trees and vegetation are stressed out.

Precipitation – Sea levels are rising, increasing wildfires, drought, extreme weather events. Precipitation patterns are changing. SPR expects longer, drier summers and wetter winters with more major storm

events. Jon shows a graph tracking precipitation and when cross-referenced with tree failure there's a correlation.

Started preventative maintenance program, which resulted in less tree failures.

Challenges in parks – more stress, disease, more invasive species, intense rains cause more flooding and landslides.

SPR expects to see impacts in their facilities and recreation programming as climate changes.

- Hotter drier summers will likely lead to more use of our pools, spray parks, and wading pools.
- Community centers may become cooling centers for our vulnerable populations as temperature extremes become more common.
- Smoky summers from wildfires may also drive more people to seek air conditioning in our facilities where there is clean air.
- And in a city where many homes have no air conditioning, many will seek the cooling power of shade under our trees.

How will climate change impact community? Folks will want to enjoy pools earlier and later; cooling centers – community centers do not have air conditioning.

Climate change disproportionately impacts people living in poverty. Vulnerable to heat events and SPR needs to be mindful of this.

Current actions -

Top priority under Mayor Durkan. The City is signed onto the Paris Climate Accord. Seattle is dedicated to being carbon neutral by 2050.

Part of initiative called “100 resilient cities” and received funding from the Bloomberg Foundation to find ways to move climate change initiatives forward.

Seattle's Climate Action Plan looks to reduce carbon emissions from our buildings and transportation sectors as ways to create the greatest carbon reductions from our community.

At Seattle Parks and Recreation, our vision is for Healthy People, a Healthy Environment, and Strong Communities. Addressing climate change is crucial to achieving all these three goals.

And as we look to the future, climate action will be central to SPR's upcoming long-term strategic planning process. We have an internal team working on amplifying our carbon reduction and climate resiliency actions.

Office of Sustainability and Environment lists out steps to reduce carbon emissions. SPR's healthy environment initiative looks at what the department can do to move the needle forward.

Policies and plans -

Climate action: Carbon reduction – Joelle works on utility conservation; 65% emissions come from vehicles and 35% come from buildings. Implementing a green fleet with electric vehicles. Putting e/v charging stations in some locations.

- Green fleet – all electric sedans (10 this year)
- EV charging stations at SPR facilities (10 this year)
- Public EV charging stations at parks (6 in process)
- Battery-powered leaf-blower pilot (12 in pilot)
- Oil furnace replacement with efficient gas boilers
- Virtual meeting initiative to reduce trips
- Multi-use trail pilot project (allow e-bikes)
- District-based park maintenance limits driving
- Anti-idling policy reduces emissions

Climate action: Energy conservation

Conservation

- LED upgrades at facilities, fields, and parks
- Pump upgrades (variable drive) in fountains and pools
- LEED Gold required for all new buildings
- Building Tune-Up Program in large buildings (3 this year)

Sustainable Energy

- Solar power (Jefferson Park shelter, Brig at Magnuson Park)
- Solar powered pathway lighting at Magnolia Manor Park
- Solar powered irrigation at View Ridge Park
- Micro-grid solar project at Miller Community Center

SPR completed 20 projects so far this year reducing energy by 58% and brought in \$135,000 in energy conservation rebates.

Building tune-up program – 50,000 sf buildings need to go through tune-up. SPR has finished three buildings this year.

Climate Action: Carbon capture

- Tree planting & urban forest restoration
- Mulching in parks and green spaces
- Nearshore invasive species removal

Green Seattle Partnership program –

One million hours volunteer service since 2005 and over one million plants planted.

Over one million plants; 60%+/- survival ratio. Most are now 13-18 years old; producing oxygen and capturing carbon dioxide. Sequestering 103 million pounds of carbon and producing 557 million pounds of oxygen citywide.

GSP returns to 500 acres recently planted to provide extra water to plants.

Climate action: Adaptation

Working with regional nurseries to find species and varieties that are resilient to climate change.

Adapting irrigation – smart irrigation ties into real time weather data to water plants that really need it.

Map vulnerability of critical infrastructure – buildings and seawalls that the department needs to worry about. Adjust plants with rising sea levels and salinity; setting up communities to be part of the solution. As parks become more important; SPR will need to figure out where barriers are and fix those things.

Climate planning

Strategic planning process – integrate climate action into the plan.

Fleet reduction executive order – reduce by 10%

Period of Maximum Constraint – This will present both an opportunity and a challenge. When the viaduct comes down there will be a month of intense traffic disruption. SPR is looking at ways to prepare for this and look to it as an opportunity to create new systems that reduce driving.

Mayor's subcabinet on climate change – SPR will work with other departments to deal with climate change.

City is working with 30 other cities to increase bulk purchasing power.

Updating entire plant palette; more drought tolerant plants; southern Oregon and northern California plant types. Adding red sequoias; beautiful grove of sequoias. Find diversity that will help us through the change.

Western red cedars, Douglas firs and hemlocks are declining.

Composting toilets? They work well but there must be a trend/change in thinking.

Facilities maintenance hopes to fund a water re-use study.

SPR staff are working with students at Explorer West about renewable resources. SPR has a Memorandum of Agreement with UW Earthlab; the department will use their research expertise to inform next steps.

Cross pollinating the Boards' ideas about responding to climate change with other departments.

OSE acts as central hub for these conversations; each department has their own piece and take on certain aspects of climate change. Seven urban forestry groups representing city departments meet to discuss this issue.

Native grasses attract more native birds and bees for nesting and pollinating. GSP has 483 trained and educated forest stewards.

Commissioner Farmer organizes professional development for urban forestry professionals to develop and share expertise through the UW Botanic Gardens.

Commissioner Herrera says we don't need more scientists, we need poets, painters and priests – it is time to take hard steps to address the problem.

Old/New Business

The Commissioners talk about the draft letter to Councilmember Juarez; Rachel will send the letter to the Board for review.

The Board expresses interest in recommending the Mayor appoint a Park Board representative on the new Superintendent’s search committee. Commissioner Hundley is nominated to represent the Board in the Superintendent’s search. Deputy Superintendent Finnegan will touch base with Interim Superintendent Williams regarding Commissioner Hundley’s representation on the search committee.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:30pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
William Lowe, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners