



# Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle 98109

Thursday, July 25, 2019

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 the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The board members introduce themselves. Commissioner Byers moves approval of the Agenda and Commissioner Cook seconds. The Agenda is approved unanimously.

## Public Comment

Teresa Haine, Vice President of Seattle Metro Pickleball Association – Fitness, friendship, and fun are the base of pickleball. SMPA shares mutual goals with Seattle Parks and Recreation. Thanks to the SPR pilot project, there are 7 different outdoor venues. The pilot ended in October 2018; pickleball lines will be added at tennis courts as they are resurfaced. There is an active pickleball community in some areas. She asks SPR to provide more suitable pickleball places and to paint more lines at east Green Lake courts.

Cindy Sam, Beacon Hill resident – She would like a doggy bag station at Maplewood Park. She notices a lot of waste; if the City cannot afford bags, there could be a donation bin.

Doug Luetjen, member of Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks and Co-chair of Olmsted Legacy Task Force – He came to remind the Board to review the task force report and invite the taskforce to return; FSOP would like to begin on elements of the report but have not been given the green light. They would like to start working on educational materials; Jenifer Ott has finished her book and it will be out in October.

Margy Bresslour, Colman Park Project – She requests an update on the Colman Park Vegetation Management Plan. The community gave detailed feedback and suggestions to the plan. May 29 the community received an email from Jesús and it said the VMP would be done soon and Green Seattle Partnership would contact the community. The Colman Park community would like

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

specifics, timelines and details. Baffled by why SPR and the community cannot come together to create a common vision.

## **Superintendent's Update**

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Superintendent Aguirre responds to the public comments.

- Jesús will be briefed on the pickleball report, after which, the report will be available to the public.
- Olmsted task force – SPR is in the middle of the strategic planning process; including investments in the Park District.
- Colman Park VMP – Jesús says the plan will be moving forward as is; Commissioner Byers asks whether the community's input was considered and follow-up with the community performed. Jesús says they fundamentally disagree on certain aspects of the VMP and wonders about the efficacy of having more meetings.

Beach Closures – Lake Washington beaches closed due to spillage from the treatment plant. Discovery reopened on July 22.

Othello Park Improvement project is complete; the play area is being enjoyed.

Strategic Plan update – Had a meeting with the Magnuson community to get their feedback on the strategic plan.

Greater Greener Conference – City Parks Alliance conference in Denver – SPR staff went to understand what it takes to put on the conference because Seattle will host in 2023. It will align with the opening of the new Waterfront Park.

Leadership team from San Francisco Parks is coming to Seattle to do some information sharing, Superintendent Aguirre invites the Board to attend the walking tour.

Reimagine civic commons – This is a group thinking about approaching open space and civic properties in a different way; they will come to Seattle to give feedback and for Seattle to share accomplishments.

Thornton Creek 125th Street Acquisition – SPR has purchased a piece of property along NE 125th Street. SPR will partner with SPU to help with the health of the creek and flood water retention.

Big Day of Play – August 17th; there are multiple opportunities to volunteer and Superintendent Aguirre hopes they do.

City Hall Park – In collaboration with other agencies, SPR is activating the park. It is a friendlier place to visit now.

Ballard Commons is another park that is struggling and SPR has some daily activation at that park.

SPR grounds and maintenance staff are fantastic. WSDOT gave notice they are closing some of I-5 at Freeway Park for road work; and, SPR will use that time to clean up some of the overgrown vegetation.

Mercy Housing affordable housing project - Saturday, August 10, at 10:30am. This project will provide 148 units of family housing, a health clinic and child care center.

## **Presentation: Wildfire Smoke Preparedness**

Presented by Joelle Hammerstad, Sustainable Operations Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

The last two out of three summers the Seattle area has had smoke from nearby wildfires. There is significant wildfire potential throughout the summer and into the fall. So far this year, Seattle is having a typical Seattle summer; however, National Wildfire Center says there is still potential.

Poor air quality websites: Puget Sound Clean Air: they update the air quality levels daily.  
Airnow.gov – gives air quality for the whole country.

Puget Sound Clean Air has been a great partner as SPR prepares for more smoke.

In the past 2 years, there have been 24 days of poor air quality. Wildfire smoke is dangerous because of pm2.5. PM 2.5 are microscopic bits that get into the lungs and packs directly into the bloodstream. Lung function changes, immune cell responses, heart rate variability responses. As of yet, there have been no mental health studies regarding the effects.

EPA wildfire smoke summit – Representatives from the Northwest discuss the challenges of living with wildfire smoke.

Seattle is working with Public Health – Seattle & King County;

Who will the smoke effect most?

- Babies and kids – breathe faster, have more lung capacity and faster breathing.
- Employees who work outside, do physically demanding work or works in buildings without HVAC systems.

How will we serve our community?

Heat is paired with smoke – our climate is warming; Seattle gets 10 days of 85 degree or hotter; which is exacerbated by the fact that most of us do not have air conditioning.

The city is looking to provide clean indoor air centers. Most of the community centers were built for air to pass through, providing a breeze but not a barrier to the smoke particles.

5 elements of cleaner indoor air:

- installed air quality monitors;
- Merv 11 carbon impregnated filters on exterior HVAC units;
- sealed HVAC unit;
- installed air doors/air curtains to separate air that is filtered from the outside air;
- Placed portable air scrubbers in select rooms.

Cost: one-time cost are capital costs; additional staffing will be needed if there is a wildfire event. Recreation division will beef up staff events to program the spaces.

How to know if it works?

Smoke Ready Communities – Partnership with Dr. Jaffe, from the University of Washington, an expert on global transport of pollutants who installed additional instruments, will help with data analysis, and develop surveys for cleaner indoor air centers during a wildfire smoke event.

Goal of City of Seattle – Mayor’s Office hosted Smoke Ready Communities Day at Rainier Beach;

- Residents understand the risks of smoke exposure
- Residents have access to information and tools to protect themselves.
- Resources are on hand to help vulnerable and underserved residents.
- Residents understand the threat of climate change to the health of their community and planet and are taking actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Seattle Center has 3 locations – The Armory, Exhibition Hall and Fisher Pavilion.

Protection for employees – Added wildfire smoke as an inclement weather condition in the inclement weather policy. The rules are stringent – the City will offer an n95 smoke mask; employees who decide it is not safe to come to work, may talk with supervisor about time off. All staff will be provided masks if they must work outside. The City will hold trainings for employees on how to use a mask.

Kelly asks about masks for kids; how is SPR handling kids during those wildfire smoke events? The intention is camps will be open and brought into gyms for quieter activities. Unfortunately, the two community centers cannot help all the kids. Recreation folks are looking to different indoor activities for smoky days.

There are only two recreation centers that are equipped for smoke.

SPR is looking at two other buildings to see if they can be converted. This is not to be for shelter but to provide short-term respite. There is a benefit to convert to electric heat pump instead of natural gas.

Most people do not change their behavior after wildfire smoke or during days of poor air quality.

## **Demonstration of DIY air purifier**

Ken Foss, Carpenter, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Items needed:

- 20x20 box fan;
- 20x20 1" Merv 13 filter;
- Right angle brackets;
- felt marker;
- a drill
- a screwdriver

Directions:

The box fan has the logo on the front; the filter will go on the back.

- put filter on back of fan – arrow shows which direction air goes through;
- put metal brackets on filter (don't press down);
- put marks with felt marker where holes need to be in fan;
- drill holes;
- put the bracket on with screws;
- when the fan is on it sucks the filter toward the fan.

\*If one does not possess a drill; use duct tape to affix the filter to the fan.

\*Always have a second filter to compare it. Try to keep windows and doors closed to keep the air in the house. Create a swamp cooler by placing a tub of ice water in front of it to make the air cooler.

Puget Sound Air recommends this air filter. It works well. Change the filter every 3 months, but best to do a visual check and make sure that air is going through it.

## **Presentation: 2018 Race and Social Justice Report**

Presented by the Bianca Hill, Equity Strategic Advisor and the Race and Social Justice Change Team: Jason Vining; Aisling Quinn-Fleming, and Belinda Chin

Bianca starts the presentation by recognizing that we were gathering on territory of Coast Salish people; Duwamish are first people of this area; we are fortunate to play on this land and bear responsibility to be better stewards; and be ecologically-minded as we move forward.

## 2018 RSJI report

Seattle Parks and Recreation has a mission to provide welcoming and safe opportunities to play, learn, contemplate and build community and promote responsible stewardship of the land for all city residents. Through our many parks and programs, we foster healthy people, a healthy environment and strong communities.

SPR workforce by gender – 60% male and 39% female

Race – 52% workforce are People of Color; Seattle Parks and Recreation is very racially diverse.

## 2018 RSJI Accomplishments

### Healthy people

Healthy people live in a balanced state of physical, mental and social wellbeing. SPR is committed to promoting healthy habits and working to address health disparities in our community. Based on our gap analysis, SPR staff piloted two programs in 2018 to increase access and opportunity for low-income residents to access Seattle Parks and Recreation programs. Here are two examples in 2018 of how SPR makes a difference.

Rec in the streets – Increase participation and physical activities in neighborhoods afflicted with health disparities. SPR collaborated with community partners and summer events – mobile recreation program.

Destination Summer Camp – to serve historically underserved populations. Analysts showed low enrollments in summer camps in SW Seattle. This program showed that scholarships were needed in these communities for kids to go to camp. Used various ethnic media sources to get the word out on this program.

### Healthy environment

People of Color and low-income people are more exposed to environmental conditions that harm their health; POC represent 12% of environmental workforce; most are on the front-line. SPR needs to provide a pathway to leadership.

Low-Income Youth Employment and Trails program – in 2010 SPR recruited 10 Youth Green Corps members, four graduates work for SPR now.

Urban Food Systems Program – In 2018, youth leadership and career development opportunities in partnership with South Park Community Center. There are more kids in South Park than any other neighborhood. South Park is a recovering superfund site and identified as a food desert. It is difficult to walk 10 minutes from home and find fresh food. The Garden Squad Program is a

partnership between community center staff and Urban Food Systems Program. We hosted seven Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) participants last summer and 12 SYEP participants in the winter at the community center. These young people successfully grew produce at Marra Farm; applied hands-on learning and skills related to diet, nutrition, and healthy meal preparation; and catered food at community events.

### Strong Communities

People of color and marginalized communities are more vulnerable to isolation and opportunity gaps. We create inviting spaces for residents to recreate, learn and connect, thus building strong social ties.

Seattle Conservation Corps – helps homeless individuals. In 2018, we assisted 46 homeless adults secure employment after completing the Seattle Conservation Program, and 41 obtain stable housing. Seattle Conservation Corps is now officially accredited as an apprenticeship program.

Recreation Opportunities For All – builds partnership to build culturally relevant programming in neighborhoods where health disparities are prevalent.

### **Women Minority Business Enterprises, Purchasing and Consulting**

Purchasing – in 2018 SPR's total WMBE dollar amount spent was \$2.8mil and this was an increase from 2017 (\$2.7mil) which lends to a percentage increase from 17 to 20%. 2018 also yielded the highest WMBE purchasing data for the department in comparison to previous years.

Consulting - SPR exceeded the consulting goal: 48% actual vs 21% goal. During 2018, there was an increase in women-owned business consulting contracts, particularly in Planning and Development. Although the two largest contracts (totaling \$1.5mil) were one-time projects, SPR recognize the importance of how the WMBE efforts work to leverage the City's purchasing power to include and build the capacity of Women and Minority Owned businesses.

### **Internal capacity building at SPR**

Based on our previous employee surveys and our goal to integrate RSJI values in our work, we saw the need for growing internal capacity through training, staffing and practice.

To train up and increase staff knowledge base, SPR offered an all-staff RSJI training. Foundation of Change was the biggest RSJI event at SPR in our recent history!! To ensure that all staff receive RSJI training, SPR supported 732 (84%) regular employees who attended the Foundations of Change training workshop. Nearly every member of the Change Team participated as a facilitator.

In addition, 702 (74%) employees completed one of the three implicit bias training workshops in 2018.

SPR hired their very first RSJI Equity Strategic Advisor – B. Hill – who is currently working on an RSJI work plan called “Pathway to Equity”. B continues to work with the Strategic Plan to provide advice. They are developing training curriculum on environmental justice.

B is helping to normalize conversations about race by partnering with the Executive Team to address barriers, fears, concerns regarding race and social justice conversations. B advocated including frontline staff in executive level trainings and workshops.

Challenges – Race and Social Justice is a hard conversation and a long-time struggle. It must be a core part of each employees’ work. Foundations helped SPR understand where staff felt the department is in the work.

Moving forward working on increasing staff capacity and/or access; accountability for leadership/supervisors; considering more productive ways to hold managers accountable to their race and social justice goals; and, Streamlining information dissemination to all parts of the division.

### **What’s in store for 2019?**

Looking at ways to engage and include underserved populations.

Pathway to equity – – is SPR’s commitment to the advancement of the RSJI. The framework will utilize the following pillars to move SPR along the pathway to end institutional and structural racism and achieve racial equity in Seattle.

- Organizing and Advocacy
- Building Relationships and Infrastructure
- Creating Accessible Tools and Resources
- Training and Capacity Building
- Applied Learning and Accountability
- Embedded Practice

Foundations of change training 2.0

Equity Innovation Labs – started a series with Policy Unit on dismantling white supremacy culture.

Continue to develop finance equity tool.

After Foundations of Change, how did employees feel about it?



There was a lot of skepticism that this work would continue or move forward. SPR is moving from foundational knowledge to transformational and staff will see work move forward. Most of the critical feedback had to do with people who were unfamiliar with the subject matter; very tightly packed curriculum so there wasn't time for deeper conversations.

Commissioner McCaffrey is appreciative of how comprehensive their approach is to move this work. Attack the systems and structures that perpetuate institutional racism.

Are you looking at retention? B is strongly aligned with HR and working closely with the Talent and Acquisition Manager.

Purchasing and contracting – The goal numbers were aspirational to begin with and now SPR tries to improve each year. Q1 for consulting is at 40%.

Superintendent Aguirre adds how much he appreciates the staff for their work on this. They commit extra time to work on this.

## **Old/New Business**

Letter to the Mayor: Commissioner McCaffrey provides some input to the letter. Commissioner Byers moves to prepare the letter in final with corrections; and for the Chair to send it to the Mayor. Commissioner Cook seconds, the Board approves the letter.

Associated Recreation Council is having their retreat tomorrow. They will be talking about access and equity. There are 19 members and they are moving to be a governance board; ARC should make a presentation at Park Board.

Follow-up with Mayor or Council: Deputy Mayor David Moseley is the SPR contact. Andréa will follow-up with Deputy Mayor's Office.

The board members went to a City Council meeting to testify about an idea they supported; they heard a lot about the Seattle Green New Deal.

Retreat – Potential topic: discuss how SPR can be included in the Green New Deal

Commissioner McCaffrey felt the Council presentation was not loud enough for the Council to hear.

A commissioner mentions they went through the Seattle Times City Council candidate poll and many of them were not opposed to replacing golf courses with housing. 3 former SPR Superintendents have been working on this issue; they have received over 12,000 signatures on a petition.

Volunteer Park – Andréa walked the park and it was so beautiful and inspiring to be there. The vision to create openspace for the next generation was special. She was impressed and pleased with the SAAM renovation.

Commissioner Lowe is involved with the restoration of the fish hatchery at Seward Park and invites the commissioners to come help at 1:10pm on Sundays.

**There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:40pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
William Lowe, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners