

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
June 8, 2017

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**Board of Park Commissioners**

Present:

Andréa Akita  
Tom Byers, Chair  
Dennis Cook  
Marlon Herrera  
William Lowe, Vice Chair  
Kelly McCaffrey

Excused:

Marty Bluewater  
Evan Hundley  
Barbara Wright

**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. Commissioner Byers calls for approval of the Consent Items: the June 22 agenda and June 8 meeting minutes; Commissioner Akita moves, Commissioner Lowe seconds and the consent items are approved unanimously.

**Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

Tim Motzer – He requests the department consider the need to fund aging park facilities now. He provides the Board with an explanatory statement about the Seattle Park District, the Inter-Local Agreement (which spells out the Park District policies and procedures), 2017 tax collection elimination. He asks the department and the Board to reconsider the elimination of tax collection to allow for an increase in the initial spending for SPR facilities. SPR promised not to tax more but the Seattle Park District Board could take more taxes. This is a self-imposed limitation. He hopes the Park Board continues their discussion of this major funding hurdle.

Carol Burton –She compliments the department for maintaining the historic district at Discovery Park. She never knew about those buildings; she thinks it would be nice if it said what the buildings are; she suggests putting up some interpretive signage.

Daria and Melissa Ilgen – Colman Park Vista Restoration Project; SPR recognizes the need to press reset. They thank SPR for moving the project forward and willingness to compromise. The community group is organized and has substantial support. The community is looking to SPR for guidance.

Margy Bresslour – Thanks the Board for listening and their advocacy within SPR to work with the community on the Colman Park Vista Project. Thanks Superintendent Aguirre for beginning a dialogue through this. She feels SPR are more transparent. They are hopeful that this communication continues and the groups are able to work well together. There are those that oppose this project, she disagrees with their point of view.

Evan Wright – Thanks the Board for their questions; feels the Board questions have made an impact on the continuation of this project.

Joyce Moty – 2017 Parks and Open Space Plan; She opposes the use of park property for the expansion of the Seattle Asian Art Museum. Voters approved renovation, not expansion. Public process conducted by SAM was inferior to SPR projects. Plan should have sturdy public involvement process.

Gary Gaffner– He states there are plaques at each building in the Discovery Park Historic District that have the title and registration number.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Colman Park Vista – The project is moving forward. SPR staff will work closely to find common ground on restoration efforts. He performed a site visit. There are challenges in terms of the environmentally critical areas and cutting trees in the city – but there are things the department can do.

Jimi Hendrix park ribbon cutting – Great turnout and great event. Friends of Jimi Hendrix Park and Jimi Hendrix Park Foundation were instrumental in putting on the event and raising funds for the park renovations. They received additional funds for more work there.

Roxhill Bog Community Festival – 120 people participated; attended learning stations hosted by students from the Environmental Learning Center.

Lake Washington Boulevard is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Summer is ramping up. Southwest pool staff saved a young woman's life who had a seizure in the pool. They did what they were trained to do and she's back at school now.

## **Discussion: Role of the Board/Strategic Issues**

*Facilitated by Tom Byers*

The Board reviews the Emerging Themes Commissioner Byers drafted and feel it is a pretty good reflection of the themes. The goal is to align their workplan to be consistent with these themes. The Board brainstorm ideas for workplan items for the next 12 months.

SPR staff to find synergy with the Board and SPR goals.

Superintendent Aguirre mentions SPR is working to be responsive to the needs of Seattle residents and clarify SPR's mission and vision, so there is an understanding of what the department does and does not do.

SPR staff to add a column that shows the boards potential role in the department's Healthy, Healthy, Strong priorities.

Commissioner Lowe clarifies that when the Board questions the department, it is always supportive. He emphasizes their role is to move forward as a Board to support the department.

Commissioner McCaffrey came to the meeting prepared with action items the board wants to do outside of the department work plan. Below are some of the work plan items the Board are considering for the coming 12 months.

- A meeting be held in another community in concert with issues relevant to the community. 3-5 times per year.
- Responding or connecting with City Council actions or other department actions that affects Parks and recreation.
- Advocating for SPR and SPR priorities; for example, King County Metro planner survey – ensuring bus routes go to parks and community centers.
- Develop a system through which any issue brought to the Park Board is answered -- to ensure SPR closes the loop.
- Liaison to new community involvement commission – to ensure SPR priorities are at the table.
- Work party to green and dirty – volunteering in the community
- Advocate for SPR parks and open space – especially regarding getting ahead of the funding gap.
- Joint Use Agreement with Seattle Public Schools – updated and negotiated to result in tangible improvements
- Develop a solid approach and structure for 6-year funding proposal.

Make sure the Board's work and key recommendations align with Race and Social Justice Initiative goals.

The Healthy, Healthy, Strong themes – use those to align Board work plan with SPR staff.

### **Discussion and Vote: 2017 Parks and Open Space Plan**

*Presented by Susanne Rockwell, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

As previously mentioned, Susanne laid out the goal and scope of the plan as part of Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office grant funding requirements. Public comment has closed. She created a summary that reflects the comments she's received since the release of the draft plan. She is scheduled to brief the City Council Parks Committee three times this summer. One briefing to full Council, 3 Parks Committee meetings on July 20, August 3, and September 7 and back to full council for a vote to approve the resolution - a requirement to the State. Current plan expires on November 17 and this must go in before City Council breaks for budget.

Susanne reviews the correspondence she received:  
90 individuals emailed regarding pickleball facilities and painting lines on tennis courts. Working closely with the law department to ensure compliance with growth management;

Outreach: 6 public meetings with Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA); 2 focus group sessions with open space advocates, 3 park board meetings; internal Inter-Departmental Team meetings; a few community meetings; two Planning Commission meetings. All of this is reflected in the appendices and public engagement chapter for the 2017 Parks And Open Space Plan.

The Park Board discusses whether to postpone the vote.

Susanne walks through the items on the spreadsheet which describes changes taken or not for the comments she received on the draft plan.

Appendix D shows all of the community center projects.

A conversation between the Board and Superintendent Aguirre digresses regarding funding for the community centers. The Board shows interest in the idea set forth during "Oral Requests" by Mr. Motzer. Superintendent Aguirre reminds the Board that funding allocations cannot be changed as they were adopted by Council already and SPR promised the public they would not change the funding during a 6-year cycle.

Superintendent Aguirre will speak with the Budget Office regarding options for more financing to fix community centers. The Commissioners ask for a timeframe for a more systematic discussion regarding alternatives for financing repairs.

Commissioners would like to be in the loop for funding of community center repairs; Superintendent Aguirre states they won't make changes to community centers until after they have their recreation demand study.

The Commissioners believe the solution to the funding gap for maintenance is a challenge that could be solved with a thoughtful approach. The exemption of new development from Park District taxing is a wasted opportunity. SPR is losing revenue – that money could help and the building boom isn't going to last forever.

Superintendent Aguirre reminds the Board the adopted 6-year plan was set; SPR and the Park District Board (the City Council) are hesitant to go back and tell the voters they want to collect additional funds. After this 6-year cycle, Superintendent Aguirre anticipates going back to the voters for an increase.

Commissioner Byers clarifies that the exemption is on new construction – the parks and recreation system is stressed by the new development -- a development that isn't paying its' fair share of the cost. There was nothing said to the voters regarding the value of new construction. Idea that growth would be exempt was never discussed during the campaign.

Returning to the 2017 Parks and Open Space Plan: This plan is required for grant funding purposes and can be updated as the recreation demand study gets started.

Susanne will add a background paragraph on level of service.

In terms of land acquisition, it is challenging because paying Assessed Value is a requirement – people have to be willing to sell for assessed value instead of market rate.

Commissioner McCaffrey says the plan settles on 8 acres per 1000 people; the previous plan had a desirable level of 10 acres. Susanne adds that given growth projections that number will decline; this will require 40 more acres over the next 6 years.

If population growth goes much higher, then SPR will have to meet demands for more land; prioritizing urban villages and areas with need.

40 acres is in addition to landbanked sites; but does not include Myers Way since SPR doesn't own it yet. Boulevards were not included.

HALA recommendations for upzones factored in? Susanne responds the HALA upzones are not included because it has not gone through the approval process yet. She agrees it is appropriate to include some commentary on that in the plan.

The pressure for additional open space will increase in areas that are upzoned. Susanne agrees and says the tool uses real-time data to inform the long-term acquisition strategies. It will change the online version and this will change SPR metrics for the acquisition to ensure that the open space goals are aligned. She will add language to say real time data will be used.

Commissioner Byers calls for a motion to approve the plan. Commissioner Lowe thanks staff for the presentation and to Susanne for being quick on her feet. He moves the Board adopt the 2017 Parks and Open Space Plan; Commissioner Herrera seconds and the vote is unanimous.

The Board is invited to testify before council in support of the Plan. The Board will write a letter in support of the Plan to be included in the final version.

### **Old/New Business**

Moorages – SPR has 3 moorages in inventory that have fallen into disrepair. They are not ADA accessible or functional. There was a Request for Proposals to create a partnership to fund the renovation and operate the moorages. The proposed Agreement provides a 3% return of growth revenues back to the department; increase public access to the moorages; secures the boats but allows public access to Ohler's Island. Superintendent Aguirre states that moorage operation is not one of the department's core jobs.

The Parks Committee of the City Council had some concerns about the legislation. The agreement currently allows the business to set the rates for the moorages. SPR staff are working to provide transparency and predictability in the rates and rate increases.

There's a health and safety issue at the moorages; improvements will ensure that these three moorages follow safety and health standards. Public will benefit by having access. Maintenance has been deferred for a long time.

Sewage and sanitation is not at an adequate level.

There is a contingent of boat owners that are not happy with this agreement.

The Board want to make sure that the public benefits for the moorages are clearly articulated.

When do the rates go up? When the moorages are fixed.

They express concerns about a private operator making money off public land, but understand the necessity to have someone manage the moorages and provide the initial capital for the renovations.

SPR staff are not able to clearly articulate the level of capital investments the lessee will make; they can't build anything until SPR approves it. SPR will work with the communities and the lessee to design the moorages.

The Board will write a letter to the City Council in support of the moorages, provided that SPR staff more clearly outline how the moorage rates will be calculated and what the public benefits will be. The Board will edit the letter at the next meeting and discuss what they want to see reflected in the next version of the letter.

The Board feels the lessee should charge market except for those from underserved communities; people who can pay, should pay.

Marina Management has done great work in the waterway in Tacoma; restricted income may need to be taken into consideration.

Principles embodied in the letter to be clearly articulated. Support position to have parameters on raising rates for an unlimited amount of time is fundamental.

Private public partnerships are all over the place. The needs of the community and public benefit is first – the Board wonders how SPR could explain this to the public. The neighborhoods around the moorages have become so accustomed to watching the moorages deteriorating. It is time to do something. Partnerships story needs to be shared.

Superintendent Aguirre wonders if it would be better to subsidize moorage customers who need assistance but not put it in the agreement itself. This would be an internal decision.

SPR staff to send out letter and put discussion on next Agenda.

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

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Tom Byers, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners