



Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

Via WebEx (Please see the video [here](#))

Thursday, April 22, 2021

6:30 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting is called to order at 6:35pm and the Board members introduce themselves. She acknowledges that we are on unceded land of the Coast Salish people. The board members and staff introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Elaine Chung – Today is the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day; staff and volunteers labored to put together virtual and in-person activities for Earth Week. Please check it out and join!

Polly Thompson – volunteer with Rainier Valley Greenways and Safe Streets; she encourages SPR to keep the road closed.

Nate Prudhon – appreciates the land acknowledgment but wonders what SPR is doing to honor the Duwamish.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent's Response to public comment

- Superintendent Aguirre thanks Elaine, for coming to the meeting and for her service to the community and SPR.
- Regarding Lake Washington Boulevard – looking at proposals to provide access for bicycles and pedestrians; considering longer-term closures or bicycle weekends in coordination with SDOT.
- Great question about honoring the Duwamish; Superintendent Aguirre attended a meeting with members of the Duwamish to talk about ways to collaborate.

Superintendent's Report

Welcome Back Seattle – more people are coming to parks, park ambassadors return and SPR is ready. Superintendent Aguirre implores people to wear their masks and social distance so Seattle stays in Phase 3.

Earth Week – SPR is providing many events both in person and virtual. More details available on the Parkways Blog [here](#).

Volunteer Events are ramping up and SPR is very appreciative of their efforts. Volunteer maintenance makes a huge difference to keep the parks looking beautiful.

Green Plaza Pilot – Advancing a pilot to “Green” 23 downtown parks by using battery-powered blowers and offering composting at Food Plaza Parks. There will also be Power Pedestals available for the food trucks to offer carbon neutral power.

Clean City Initiatives – Over 11,000 needles collected in the past 2 weeks; 247,000+ pounds of trash removed from 50+ park encampment sites.

Miller Playfield Restoration – Encampment was removed from Miller Playfield in advance of students returning to Meany Middle School. HOPE team and HSD reached out and offered shelter to those living unsheltered at the park. 41 referrals to shelter made. SPR crews worked over several days to remove debris and graffiti and clean courts and fields.

Division Updates

Parks and Environment Division

- Miller Playfield Encampment cleanup.
- Staffing up for Spring and Summer
- Maintaining parks
- Prep for spring/summer – mulching, reseeding, planting flower beds

Planning, Development & Maintenance Division

- Received 4 awards for state landscape architecture – Fitz Hedges, Alice Ball, Arboretum Loop Trail and Rainier Beach Urban Farm
- Northwest Native Canoe Center – Final design and permitting happening now.
- Public Electric Vehicle Charging – installing charging stations at some of the parks.
- Multiple trades working to make sure pools/spray parks are ready for summer.

Recreation Division

- Piloting first indoor programming – ping pong at International District Community Center
- Reopening plan – SPR is hiring for lifeguards, waiting pool attendants, boat ramp operators
- Virtual programming will continue, especially for older adults
- Spring Break Camps

Finance & Administration

- Permitting for athletic fields
- Japanese Garden had more than 9,000 visitors in March
- Staff gearing up for summer – picnic shelter rentals
- OO Denny Park Agreement to be extended with the City of Kirkland

Policy, Performance & Property Division

- Legislation - Lease for Southwest Youth and Family Services, parking swap between Seattle Public Schools and SPR; and removing restrictive covenants at Red Barn Ranch to allow for BIPOC group to use.
- Strategic Plan and CAPRA work ongoing
- Federal Stimulus proposals total \$8m to help with reopening

Follow up on Park Board/PDOC Merger

- At Park Board Executive Committee, discussed having combined meetings moving forward. The Board think meeting jointly is fine.

Questions from the Commissioners:

- How do they count the needles? The needles are collected both in bins and scattered and collected.
- Update on Colman Park restoration? Jesús will return with this information.
- Commissioner Herrera asks if they would consider a street vacation for Lake Washington Boulevard? Superintendent Aguirre says they are not considering this right now.
- Commissioner McCaffrey asks about the status of the Alki Get Moving Street; Superintendent Aguirre says SDOT is the lead in this effort and is doing the public engagement. Superintendent Aguirre mentions that his concern is the unintended consequence to equity and access; especially for those that historically used Lake Washington Boulevard in a different way.
- Commissioner McCaffrey asks what the threshold for public comment to feel there is enough. Superintendent Aguirre says it isn't quantity but who commented and ensuring people are being represented.

Briefing: Sound Transit & Jackson Park Golf Update

David Graves shows the Sound Transit system map. Connection to the 145th Street station is up for discussion tonight. The Ballard to West Seattle line environmental impact statement is being reviewed by city staff. SPR is working with Office of Planning and Community Development on the station area planning to ensure a good pedestrian experience and easy access to the stations for neighboring communities.

I-5 and NE 145th Street – David shows a graphic of the proposed location of the 145th street station and adjacent intersections. SDOT is making bicycle and pedestrian improvements to 5th Avenue NE which are impacting the edge of Jackson Park Golf Course. There will be a connection from the improved sidewalk to the Jackson Park perimeter trail. Some trees will need to be removed. Those trees keep errant golf balls from leaving the course and entering the road way. This issue will be mitigated by using 10 feet of golf ball netting at the top of the fencing.

Project Schedule – City of Shoreline completed 30% design and handed the project off to WSDOT to perform Environmental Impact Statement. They are in the final design stages and permitting. Construction is scheduled to begin towards the end of this year and will finish by 2024.

Section 4f – Dept of Transportation Act of 1966

Federal regulation requires WSDOT to look at other options in lieu of impacting park properties. The loss of trees is an impact but with simple mitigation, there will not be an issue. The 18 trees being removed will be replaced by 38 trees at this location and others.

Commissioner Hundley says projects of this size have the potential to get larger and he wants to make sure WSDOT will not use more park land. David replies that they are staying involved in the project to make sure this does not happen. Commissioner Hundley also asks about noise and David says this will be part of the Environmental Impact Statement and he will review it when it is completed.

Commissioner Farmer recalls that during the planning, the community was discussing reuse of Jackson Park Golf Course and asks if there is updates to this. David mentions that there are voices in the community that recognize the golf course is a park and to change that would mean the park land would be gone forever.

The Board thanks David for the update and says he did a great job.

Old/New Business

Following up on the Superintendent's Report, Commissioner Hundley gives kudos to the staff for their work cleaning up Miller Park, for the Ambassadors who work in the Parks, and the hiring SPR is doing.

The Park Board is in favor of consolidating the meetings with the Park District Oversight Committee.

Paula has a list of items for the upcoming meetings – Strategic Plan update; briefing on Facilities, Planning and Development Division; and the consolidation of the Park Board and Oversight Committee.

There being no other business, the Board adjourns at 7:50pm.

