



Minutes

Joint Board of Park Commissioners/Park District Oversight Committee

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

Thursday, May 13, 2021

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

Welcome and Introductions

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

Public Comment

None

Superintendent's Report

SPR is trying to keep up with the changing government guidance around Covid-19. CDC states people no longer must wear masks if fully vaccinated. New signage at parks and facilities focusing on people staying masked and staying home if sick.

Citywide efforts for vaccinations; SPR vaccination site at Rainier Beach. Pop-up vaccination sites across the city.

Summer programming is ramping up, SPR is hiring!

Clean Cities Initiative – Citywide program that cleans up around the city. In the last 3 weeks, over 4000 needles collected, 243,000+ pounds of garbage from approximately 35 sites in the City. The team also deals with graffiti. Volunteer work is ramping up to assist with ongoing maintenance.

Division Updates:

Parks and Environment Division

- They are doing great work to make parks beautiful and restrooms accessible. Staff collect data to determine if changes to policy or procedures are needed.
- Jesús shares photos of area where illegal tree cutting occurred; SPR staff replanted trees using settlement funds and it looks beautiful.
- Keep Moving Streets: In collaboration with SDOT, SPR will be closing Lake Washington Boulevard from Seward Park for one mile Northward from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Planning, Development and Maintenance Division

- Fountains at Freeway Park are back up and running.
- Garfield Superblock project – involves the high school, community center and park; working to create the Legacy and Promise Promenade – to celebrate the rich culture of the area and the ethnic groups that are there.
- South Park Plaza – capital project continues despite budget restraints; exciting for the community.
- AIDS Memorial Pathway at Cal Anderson Park; construction fencing installed.

Recreation

- Seasonal hiring is a big focus right now. DOH requires SPR has staff members at spray parks to enforce rules around crowding.
- Colman and Mounger Pools are opening June 19 for the summer.
- Childcare and summer camps are open.
- Seeking ideas to activate Cal Anderson Park – email 2020CalAnderson@seattle.gov; will waive permit fees and support community ideas!

Finance and Administration

- Picnic reservations are open.
- Rental permits – make sure people follow current safety regulations.
- Woodland Park Zoo agreement is expiring and the management agreement is being negotiated.
- Improving processes – accounting, contract management among others.

Policy, Performance and Property

- Golf Courses are in a resurgence; many new golfers
- Temporary Change in Hours at Chinook Beach Park to help with late night activities.
- Legislation through Council
 - Removed restrictive covenants from Red Barn Ranch – with goal to allow BIPOC group to use this land.
 - Reciprocal Parking Agreement with Seattle Public Schools

Colman Park Restoration – GSP restoration work is ongoing using the vegetation management plan created by the Green Seattle Partnership.

Waterfront Park Task Force – Office of the Waterfront is spearheading this. Deputy Superintendent Christopher Williams is the SPR representative to ensure SPR interest and commitment to access and equity are considered.

Will wading pools/spray pools have any flexibility in terms of opening/closing? Jesús responds that given staff and budget, SPR is doing the best they can with their resources.

Presentation: Seattle Parks Cleanliness Application

For more information on this briefing, please see the video [here](#).

This phone application will allow SPR to collect data regarding usage, encampments, cleanliness. This information can be used to make decisions for resource allocation. The Ambassador program has received national interest and has produced a lot of great data.

Mike Linn, Manager of Asset Management Work Order System, shares that the former approach to collecting data by Park Ambassadors was through Microsoft Forms. The new phone application is an internal application for staff use only. Public facing application for maintenance needs is the Find It, Fix It app.

The app is still in testing. Staff can put in what park and the cleanliness. Benefit to using the app – location through GPS, upload photos, and know who is reporting.

Great use of technology; this will be a great tool to figure out what areas need maintenance. The Board wonder how the work will be prioritized.

The ambassadors/maintenance staff/ and recreation staff are out in parks daily and this allows them to report back on what they are seeing.

Commissioner McCaffrey says she did the Park Inspection Program with Craig Chatburn and thought it was interesting to see how staff look at parks for maintenance needs. How will this program intersect with the data produced with the application?

SPR has a lot of data sources, building on it and learning about what the data means and how to use it.

Michele adds, with the pandemic people are using parks differently, this app will show how usage is changing at different times of the day and how that can inform quick decisions versus long-term asset planning.

Commissioner Watts asks if there is a way of assessing sampling bias – folks interact with some parks more than others and to make sure maintenance is equally distributed. He suggests they compare with community data to see if SPR data is reflective of community data.

Is there a way to close the loop on the maintenance needs from the application? Jesús says he wants to ensure that there is some level of report on every park every day.

Strategic Plan and CAPRA Update

For more information on this briefing, please see the video [here](#).

Selena and Shanyanika provide a reminder on what they are working on and why. High level overview of Strategic Plan/CAPRA Accreditation process.

Strategic plan identified 40 strategies over the next 12 years divided into the 3 categories: Healthy People, Healthy Environment and Strong communities with overarching Equity goals.

Plan has shifted in pandemic – 5-year plan to address inequities in BIPOC communities by leveraging existing relationships between staff and community members. This work is to inform next spending plan of the Park District.

Selena provides examples of tangible changes to SPR work to make real equitable changes (58:25) by running 40 strategies through 4 parallel crisis that are happening – public health crisis, economic downturn, climate change, and solidarity with communities of color.

SPR staff are working to answer the question, what steps to make progress in long-range goals to support recovery? Internal conversations with staff and then with community members to make high level strategies more concrete in the short term.

Simultaneously, SPR staff will assess organizational readiness for CAPRA accreditation. Reviewing administrative and organizational tools and evaluate against National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) best practices.

Working with staff and community looking at 11 Lines of Business (LOB); through a participatory process they will review CAPRA standards and figure out where gaps are.

Shanyanika provides a concrete example (1:04:00).

Through accreditation process be in collaboration with staff and community to determine priority service communities and types and size of programs. What rules and procedures to follow to sustain these standards of service?

3 phases: Phase I – Internal work (setting up workgroups), Phase II – public engagement, Phase III – concrete action planning; synthesizing what has been heard and creating some plans.

Phase I - Staff process

Launched work groups for each LOB. Each workgroup has a lead and staff. Shanyanika and Selena are assisting staff with power sharing and participatory planning through training materials and facilitation.

Some of this work has come with challenges from the workgroups. SPR staff share concerns about power dynamics and white supremacy cultural norms during decision-making and recruitment processes. Met with staff to address concerns, applied course corrections to materials provided.

Clear criteria for prioritizing – the answer will depend on what they feel they have capacity and interest to do. Not all strategies are created equal.

Mapping existing ongoing work to see how work is supporting the strategies for moving toward department vision.

Ensure work is supported by the communities SPR is trying to serve; face time with leaders as they go to make sure there is leadership support. With continuous learning and improvement in line.

T Shanyanika says they are mindful that this is a challenging time for SPR staff, plates are full and are providing space and opportunity for people to participate and perform their other work functions. They are working hard to design a process that allows participants to fully participate but have their time honored.

Scarcity of resources could create competition for different workgroups. They ask staff to think within the current budget – pivoting instead of adding new items.

Although SPR wants to ensure SPR staff have time for relationship building and creating meaningful work; there is a timeline within which this work needs to be done to start the spending plan for the next Park District Budget cycle.

Next steps: Preparing for community engagement by building capacity with work groups through trainings.

Commissioner Watts asks about the capacity challenges – he suggests contracting out for temp work for busy work; or bonuses. Recognition and celebration of every accomplishment to maintain morale.

Commissioner Herrera thinks this is great and that power-sharing helps prevent silos and gaps; maybe a precursor to a management training program.

Shanyanika and Selena will return in June.

Park Board/PDOC Consolidation Update

PDOC and Park Board Consolidation

- Identified and drafted the legislative changes needed to merge the Board of Park Commissioners and Park District Oversight Committee
- Preparing reappointment files for expired positions and transferring PDOC members to Board of Park Commissioners
- Developed a timeline for legislative action
- Exploring re-naming to Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Timeline

- SPR staff will be bringing a resolution to the Park District Board on June 21 to Amend the Interlocal Agreement.

- July/August legislative package will be brought to the full City Council authorizing amendments to ILA and Seattle Municipal Code.
- Appoint the commissioners to the newly created Board at the Public Assets and Native Communities Committees of the Seattle City Council.
- After which, SPR will launch recruitment.

Shifting the timing of Annual Reports/Cycle End reports.

SMC will be changed to reflect the new membership, include Oversight responsibilities and include language about membership make up.

The Operating Procedures will be updated to reflect the current membership and will be worked on by the new board.

Selena to return to the next meeting about lessons learned from 2015-2021 Park District Cycle; highlighting cycle challenges and accomplishments.

Andy Sheffer's team is updating the Board on the Planning Development and Maintenance evaluation and the efforts they are taking to implement many of the recommendations from the report.

Paula asks for feedback about onboarding materials and ideas.

Commissioner Herrera says the Zoo has Board Buddies (a staff person and a board member) that helps you get up to speed.

Commissioner Watts says clarity around communication between community and Board members. Motivations behind roles and regulations – this could be illustrated through scenarios. What authority/influence does the Board have and what are the avenues to influence? A high-level flow chart of decision-making. Interaction with City Council - Where does the board sit in constellation of Executive and Legislative bodies? Distinction between General Funds and Park District budgets.

Paula to send questions on last slide to the Board members to spark feedback.

Commissioner Herrera thanks the staff for their hard work and time is ticking to get things through legislation before the budget process starts.

Commissioner Farmer asks the Board to make a motion formalize the approval and intent to consolidate.

Motion: Commissioner McCaffrey moves to merge the Board of Park Commissioners and Park District Oversight Committee; Commissioner Watts seconds. Commissioner Herrera amends the motion to merge the two bodies and support legislative changes proposed by staff. Commissioner Hundley asks for clarification to ensure the commissioners have all the information. Paula assures the Board that they are informed of all changes. The motion passes unanimously.

Old/New Business

May 27 meeting is canceled. June 10 will be the next joint meeting. There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:25pm.