



# Minutes

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom, 100 Dexter Ave. N/remote via WebEx

Thursday, November 10, 2022

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

## **Attendance**

Present: Mays, Meng, Herrera, Farmer, Brockhaus, Watts, Umagat

SPR Staff: Williams, Sheffer, Bazinet, Hoff, Burtzos

## **Welcome, Introductions, and Land Acknowledgement**

Co-chair Farmer calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Farmer offers an acknowledgement of indigenous land.

Every community owes its existence to generations past who contributed to making the history that led to this very moment. We recognize that our parks and recreation facilities are on the traditional, ancestral land of the Coast Salish peoples. We express gratitude for their stewardship of this land – today and tomorrow, since time immemorial. We acknowledge the oppression and dispossession of Indigenous communities and remain committed to racial, social, and environmental justice as we reflect on the past. We honor the resilience of the First Peoples and the land itself.

Members of the Board and SPR staff introduce themselves.

Approval of consent items: 10/13/22 & 11/10/22 agendas; 9/22/22 & 10/13/22 minutes. Farmer asks for discussion or a motion to approve. Brockhaus moves to approve all items without discussion. Mays seconds the motion. A vote is called. The results are unanimous in favor of adopting the motion.

***Adopted: 10/13/22 & 11/10/22 BPRC meeting agendas; 9/22/22 & 10/13/22 BPRC meeting minutes***

## **Public Comment**

There is no public comment tonight. Written materials to submit for distribution to the Board may be sent to [benjamin.burtzos@seattle.gov](mailto:benjamin.burtzos@seattle.gov).

Farmer thanks those community members who have submitted comments to the Board for review.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Acting Superintendent Christopher Williams delivers the report.

Williams calls special attention to the beautiful and festive lights in Denny Park. These lights are provided through a partnership with Friends of Denny Park and Amazon, among others.

**City Hall Park:** On Oct. 14, the Mayor and King County Executive announced that ownership and operation of City Hall Park will remain with the City of Seattle and will not be transferred to the County as previously proposed. The new plan for the park includes increased activation, security and a \$2.8 million City investment supporting activation, capital improvements and further design and planning. SPR is working internally and with a broader community coalition including King County and the Pioneer Square neighborhood to develop strategies for the park's re-opening and activation.

**Budget:** The City Budget Office issued an updated revenue forecast last week predicting significant decreases in revenues for the 2023-2024 budget, especially in the money we receive from Real Estate Excises Taxes and the Sweetened Beverage Tax. Due to the updated forecast, the City Council has extended the budget timeline with a final vote set for Tuesday, Nov. 29 (instead of Nov. 22). Another public hearing is still scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 5 p.m.

**Park District Board Final Meeting:** We expect the final meeting of the Park District Board (comprised of City Councilmembers) to be held after the budget meeting on Nov. 29th. At that meeting we will summarize accomplishments from the previous year and look ahead to implementation of Cycle 2 projects beginning in 2023.

**Wheels are back on Green Lake Path:** A reminder to folks that wheeled use is back on the inner path at Green Lake Park.

**Shooting at Ingraham HS:** As all of you know, there was a tragic shooting and fatality at Ingraham HS earlier this week. Our hearts go out to the family and friends of the victim, and we extend our deep appreciation to City of Seattle first responders. I also want to highlight and recognize the work of our staff at nearby recreation facilities, particularly at Helene Madison Pool and Bitter Lake Community Center. Madison Pool is adjacent to the school and during lockdown that day they provided a shelter and safe space to several pool patrons and community members. I want to acknowledge and thank frontline staff who are out in the community every day serving the public and sometimes need to work under trying circumstances.

**Mark Your Calendars:** I wanted to let you know about a few of our signature events that are happening in the next couple of months:

- Return of Salmon to Carkeek Park: From mid- to late November, spawning salmon will return to Pipers Creek in Carkeek Park. Volunteer "Salmon Stewards" are at the park every weekend through the beginning of December to help educate visitors about salmon until the run is over. Join us for Salmon Celebration Day at Carkeek on Saturday, Nov. 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Green Lake Pathway of Lights: Another sign we are returning to normal is the return of the annual holiday tradition, the Green Lake Pathway of Lights, to be held this year on Saturday, December 10 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. The paths and docks around the lake will be lit with thousands of twinkling candles. Visitors can also enjoy complimentary refreshments and live holiday music.
- Christmas Ships and bonfires: Check our website ([seattle.gov/parks](http://seattle.gov/parks)) for the schedule of Christmas Ships visiting our park locations, where shoreline bonfires will also warm park visitors. This is another popular holiday tradition.

- **Polar Bear Plunge:** Also returning in-person is the Polar Bear Plunge at Matthews Beach Park at noon on January 1, 2023! Thousands of swimmers will take the plunge into the waters of Lake Washington. Registration starts at 10 a.m.

**New Specialized Population Program:** I wanted to highlight an innovative new program being offered this fall at Rainier Community Center by our Specialized Population Program called Health. 21 adults with developmental disabilities are enrolled in the program, which is based on the application of “therapeutic recreation” from the Flourishing through Leisure Model. SPR Recreation Leaders Hannah White and Patrick Aspinwall developed the program and facilitate it weekly. Participants set goals for themselves based on 6 areas of wellness: social wellness, physical wellness, cognitive wellness, psychological/ emotional wellness, spiritual wellness, and leisure wellness. Each Wednesday, participants meet to exercise and work on their wellness goals. They walk laps, stretch, and engage in a physical game or activity. After an hour, participants move to the multi-purpose room where they share the progress they’ve made on their goals and complete a lesson related to wellness. This program has been a great success so far and participants have been taking great ownership of the goals they have set for themselves. We hope to continue the program for winter 2023 as well (10 weeks) and beyond!

A couple of highlights from our Parks & Environment Division staff who are always working hard to maintain our parks and green spaces:

- **Tree Crew:** Our Tree Crew in the Parks and Environment Division has been very busy recently, especially with all of the windy, stormy weather we’ve been having. The crew removed downed tree limbs throughout our system. Other work has included large, complicated limb or tree removals, including an elm at the Bullitt estate and a pine tree at Volunteer Park. They used advanced rigging techniques and special care to prevent property damage or disturbance to the surrounding canopy.
- **Tree Planting:** Last Saturday, more than 50 volunteers from the Friends of Lincoln Park planted 365 native trees and plants in the park to help commemorate Green Seattle Day.

**Elevate Design Opportunity at Dr. Jose Rizal Park:** Elevate is SPR’s initiative to strengthen the connection between park design and the community it serves, by widening the opportunity for community members to participate in the design process. We are launching this new community-based design process with a project to make improvements at Dr. Jose Rizal Park on Beacon Hill. For more information, please visit our website at [www.seattle/parks](http://www.seattle/parks).

**Stairway Repairs at Discovery Park:** Staff from our Planning, Development and Maintenance Division worked with crews from the Parks and Environment Division to design and construct new stairs and a bridge at the Discovery Park North Beach Trail which is now open for community use. (Before and after photos pictured on the slide.)

**Magnolia Boulevard Restoration Project:** Beginning next week, SPR will continue work on the Magnolia Boulevard Vegetation Management project, including planting historically significant Madrona trees and making landscape improvements around existing tree trunks. Plant beds will be installed around some of the trees to protect them from further erosion. This project is part of the Olmsted Landscape Restoration Program which performs essential maintenance to rehabilitate Olmsted-designed landscapes.

Construction is set to begin this month for two projects:

- ADA improvements at the Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center; and
- ADA improvements at the Gas Works Park Comfort Station and park entrance

Community Center Listening Session: Our recreation team is hosting listening session regarding the expansion of community center hours. We are hosting meetings on the following dates:

- 11/15: Jefferson Community Center
- 11/17: Bitter Lake Community Center
- 11/30: Van Asselt Community Center

I'd be glad to answer any questions Board members may have.

Mays asks whether construction along Magnolia Boulevard will interfere with temporary recreation that was in place several months ago. Williams assures Mays that the sites will not overlap.

Mays asks for clarification regarding the term "Olmsted" as it pertains to boulevards. Williams provides a short history of the Olmsted architecture firm's work in designing Seattle's Park system, including the boulevard network.

Brockhaus thanks Williams for the report and offers her acknowledgement and condolences for everyone affected by the shooting at Ingraham HS. Brockhaus also asks Williams whether the budget updates are cause for concern, and whether any of the ongoing budgeting changes have any substantial impact to Parks funding. Williams affirms that there will be some level of REET contraction, but the department won't know for a little while what the impact of this development will look like. Williams offers a different perspective, pointing out that in prior budget discussions, Parks has faced problems with its general fund, which is a scarier issue. REET funding shortfalls may well be the "lesser of two evils" here.

Herrera offers his thanks and gratitude to the trail and tree crews for their outstanding work.

Watts clarifies that the CFT funding code was revised in such a way that neighborhood can make the case for match waive funding, and offers that he has seen several applications fail to take advantage of that opportunity.

Umagat offers his kudos for the Recreation division as great messengers for the department and hosts of a recent listening session.

Farmer clarifies the date of the new City Council budget hearing. That hearing will take place on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

## **Climate Conscious Buildings/Electrification**

Williams introduces Andy Sheffer, Deputy Superintendent of Operations. There is a strong push citywide to make SPR buildings more climate conscious.

Sheffer expresses gratitude for the Parks District Cycle 2 funding allocation for climate conscious buildings.

Sheffer provides brief overview of electrification process, highlighting the benefits of moving away from fossil fuels. Council's resolution has provided some guidance and a few challenges for the department to aim for. Using those benchmarks, SPR has prioritized projects based on health and safety concerns, and on equity concerns.

Sheffer outlines the proposed Community Center upgrade project list for work by 2028. They include: Alki, Garfield, Greenlake, Hiawatha, High Point, Lake City, Loyal Heights, Queen Anne, Rainier, South Park, Van Asselt, and Mercer CCs. Currently, the plan is for at least 12 Centers to be electrified by 2028, with 3 more contingent upon grant funding coming through.

6 proposed renovation sites are in severe heat sites; 6 are also in areas scoring in the highest or second-highest Race and Social Equity Composite Index (indicating greater disadvantage).

Sheffer also outlines additional projects to bring additional sites to electrification, including Genesee and Densmore facilities. SPR has plans for project delivery that takes into consideration a variety of contingencies.

Meng thanks Sheffer for the presentation and asks for clarity regarding how SPR decided which buildings would be prioritized. Sheffer gives brief explanation of how heat index map and RSJ equity index map contributed to the selections.

Herrera sympathizes with the difficulty of procuring construction supplies on an aggressive timeline, and notes that 2028 is a short timetable for such an ambitious set of projects. Sheffer replies, "We're gonna hit it hard."

Watts and Umagat thank Sheffer for the presentation.

Farmer reiterates the concern from many commenters during the Parks District budgeting process regarding Community Center electrification. It's good to see this project moving forward. Sheffer affirms that the department is fired up.

## **2023 Parks and Open Space Plan Update**

Williams introduces Oliver Bazinet, Senior Planning and Development Specialist. SPR factors into the City's strategic plan most on the land management side of things, and this presentation was intended to be paired with a presentation from OPCD, but scheduling prohibited.

Bazinet explains the purpose of the Parks and Open Space Plan. This document is necessary for grant applications, City comprehensive plan updates, CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies) accreditation, and other accountabilities.

The timing of this plan is a bit strange relative to the Park District Financial Plan. Bazinet explains that the next Parks and Open Space Plan will probably be brought earlier to help inform the 2028 MPD budgeting process; after that, the plans would be on concurrent 6-year cycles. The Parks and Open Space Plan will likely be complete around November 2023. In the interim, Bazinet anticipates seeking feedback and some collaboration from the Board. The Plan will be up for adoption by Council in Spring 2024.

Farmer reminds the Board that opportunities to assist with this kind of planning can be a great way to dive into a topic of interest.

Herrera thanks Bazinet for the presentation and points out that the Plan offers an opportunity for the Department to define its level of service, which is a rare and unique opportunity. Bazinet concurs that level of service will be an important part of the discussion.

Farmer agrees that shifting the timeline for subsequent Parks and Open Space Plans makes the most sense given the structure of the MPD budgeting process.

## **Old & New Business**

AP Diaz's confirmation hearings will begin on January 18. Williams offers that letters and emails of support from the Board could be persuasive in this process. Mays asks how long the process will be; Williams and Hoff speculate that it will be 2-3 meetings of Council. Williams gives a brief outline of the confirmation process.

Farmer asks about any follow-up from the Board retreat. Hoff has received a couple of new applications for Board seats. Current vacancies include: District 2, District 4, At-Large (x2), and Boards and Commissions (x3). Farmer thanks Hoff and SPR staff for organizing the retreat.

There being no further business, Commissioner Farmer adjourns the meeting at 7:36 pm.