



# Minutes

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Via WebEx

Thursday, May 19, 2022

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

## Attendance

Present: Farmer, Thomas, Contreras, Umagat, Mays, Akita, McCaffrey, Herrera, Brockhaus

SPR Staff: Burtzos, Hoff, Finnegan, Williams

## Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Farmer calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Introductions of Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners and Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff.

Consent Items: May 19 Agenda. Akita moves to approve the agenda; Brockhaus seconds. There is no discussion. Farmer calls for a vote to approve; the vote is unanimous in favor of approval. The motion passes.

*Adopted: May 19 Agenda*

## Public Comment

Tim Motzer – Lake City resident – Proposing set of corrective actions regarding the Park District tax rate. This includes lowering the recommended tax increase from 37 to 33 cents, stabilizing the tax rate for the next six years, amending the interlocal agreement to allow for intra-cycle amendment, and develop a six-year spending plan in line with 33 cent solution table.

Larry Hubbell – Voices support for maximizing Park District funding by increasing Park District tax to 75 cents. The burden to homeowners would be minimal in comparison to the benefits reaped by improvements to the Parks system.

## Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Williams thanks the Board for their hard work during the prioritization process and for being present on such a lovely, sunny day.

Clarifies that increasing tax to 75 cents would result in an increase of \$400; the calculation is based on \$1000 of assessed property value, rather than \$100,000.

Earlier this week, Mt. Baker Rowing & Small Craft Center received a call from Seattle Fire Department dispatch inquiring about the availability of a safety boat and staff to help three boaters in distress on Lake Washington between Stan Sayres Park and the I-90 bridge. Two coaches, Jamal Anderson and Kyle Freeman (both ARC employees) took a 15' Boston Whaler north to locate the boat. Harbor Patrol arrived and took one of the adults and the child along with the staff into the Harbor Patrol vessel. After speaking with SFD staff and with our staff, we are certain that the inflatable would have been pinned up against the I-90 bridge well before

Harbor Patrol, SFD, or the Coast Guard would have been able to render aid. Given the conditions, the boat would likely have not survived against the bridge.

Seattle Parks and Recreation will start a pilot program shortening the hours at Golden Gardens and Alki Beach during the 2022 summer months to address dangerous and/or illegal behavior that has been typical of summer evenings at these two parks. Under this pilot program the beach hours at these two parks will be 4 A.M. – 10 P.M. from May 27-September 4. After September 5, the hours will be 4 A.M. – 11:30 P.M.

Big Day of Service: SPR staff are participating the One Seattle Day of service at Hutchinson Park in Rainier Beach. Staff will be weeding, mulching, and cleaning up trash. There is still time to sign up for available sites online.

April Clean City Data: SPR, along with our City partners SPU and SDOT, cleaned 141 locations, gathered 805,888 lbs. of garbage, collected 70,237 needles and picked up 118 Purple bags. The focus parks were Genesee Headquarters, Little Brook Park, Miller Community Center, Longfellow Creek, Seward Park and Discovery Park. Graffiti was eradicated from 8000 square feet of city surfaces.

Today there was a Press Conference to celebrate the collaborative efforts to address homelessness at Woodland Park led to an unprecedented 89 referrals to shelter and housing alternatives for those experiencing homelessness, a critical first step on a pathway to permanent housing, progress, and stability. Leaders today came together to highlight the success of the united approach as park restoration efforts continue.

As the last park-based encampment of significant size, The Mayor made cleaning this park a top priority for his administration. Over the course of outreach which began in January, over 100 total people received offers of shelter, and every person identified by outreach as residing in the park on the day of the encampment removal received an offer of shelter. More than 80 individuals were connected with shelter, including 60 referrals to Tiny House Village options, 25 referrals to enhanced shelters, and 4 relocations to permanent housing alternatives. These efforts included providing direct transportation to shelters once a person received a referral, helping to reduce barriers to enrollment.

After closing for one week to begin restoration efforts, the park is now open to the public, though portions of the park will remain closed as work is being done. This work includes addressing a backlog in maintenance; addressing damaged infrastructure; and repairing picnic shelters, public restrooms, and vegetation. Woodland Park will begin hosting larger events and sports this summer.

Contreras inquires about training program for Mt. Baker staff and relates that he is familiar with the center's capabilities. Williams clarifies that the staff is highly trained in water rescue and emergency procedures, despite their young average age.

## **Final Park District Funding Recommendation and Discussion**

Farmer explains how the District funding plan fits within the maximum allowable levy, including precommitments held over from Cycle 1. If much more were to be requested, a public vote would be required. Farmer also provides a very brief overview of the subcommittee prioritization process and recommendations moving forward. Public outreach has informed the prioritization process throughout the last three years.

Farmer thanks SPR staff who facilitated and supported the subcommittees' work over the past several weeks. Mays asks about the duration of the funding plan, and expresses excitement for the work to get started, especially with the Greater Greener conference coming up in 2024. Williams shares Mays' excitement. Herrera points out that the Parks District is only one revenue source for the department, and not the largest one.

Umagat asks for clarification on the distribution of precommitment funds. Farmer confirms that Umagat is reading the chart correctly and that the discussion of precommitments will be upcoming. Herrera fills in some details about how those precommitments are allocated.

McCaffrey moves that the Board ends discussion and votes to adopt the Full Board Report and Recommendations. Thomas seconds the motion. Farmer calls for a vote by show of hands. The count is: YEA 9, NAY 0, ABSTAIN 0. The motion passes.

*Adopted: FULL BOARD REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS*

## **Pre-Commitments Overview**

Finnegan provides high-level overview of pre-commitment investments from Cycle 1. These include: land bank development projects, Smith Cove Park, Amy Yee Tennis Center maintenance, Loyal Heights Community Center stabilization, Mercer Mega-Block Community Center, Lake City Community Center re-development, Green Lake Community Center, and Evans Pool. Finnegan also addresses that the priorities were established with equity in services and access in mind, even if the map of projects doesn't necessarily reflect that.

Cycle 1 park development projects, unfunded in the final year of Cycle 1 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will require an estimated investment of \$15M to complete. Williams relates that the public did vote for these projects and priorities in Cycle 1. The parks that went forward in Cycle 1 were the ones with higher equity scores. Herrera thanks SPR for making these prioritization decisions based on equity.

AYTC needs major maintenance, including upgrades to roof that will enable the building to sustain electric heat in line with the department's commitment to eliminating natural gas from all buildings. SPR anticipates this pre-commitment to cost approximately \$10M. Williams addresses the failures of SPR to meet its commitments to the AYTC community.

Loyal Heights CC requires significant exterior seismic stabilization. The cost of this project would be approximately \$15M, with an additional \$7-10M investment to expand the scope of services offered at the CC. Williams informs that this project falls into a risk management category due to the nature of the repairs needed.

Mercer Mega-Block CC: Developer of building providing first floor of building at no cost as public benefit for CC space, but City responsible for improvements (\$10-15M) plus operating costs. Williams points out that it would look weird to walk away from a mostly free building.

Lake City CC is a small facility, and not really a full-service community center. SPR anticipates an investment of \$20-25M needed to support capital project as well as operational budget for renovation and full-service center costs.

Green Lake CC & Evans Pool was deemed past its useful life in 2016. Community prefers current location. Cost estimate at current location is over \$100M. Evans Pool roof might be landmarks eligible, which will create additional cost. SPR is exploring alternatives to invest in current facility and anticipates approx. \$50M in MPD funding.

## **Pre-Commitments Discussion**

Mays inquires about the service radius of the Mercer Megablock CC. Williams clarifies that South Lake Union has gained both in population and density in recent years. Mays further points out that Loyal Heights CC recently gained a brand-new turf field, and that upgrading the community center seems to bring the whole campus in line.

Contreras advocates for re-using what is existing, regarding buildings, not only because the process is greener, but also because demolishing one building to rebuild a similar building seems like a waste of time, energy, and money.

Umagat joins with Contreras' comment and supports reimagining existing buildings rather than constructing new ones.

Brockhaus emphasizes the importance of the pre-commitment projects and adds voice to re-use of building. Proposes preserving the historic character of older buildings and architectural styles.

McCaffrey points out the patience of some of the communities who have been waiting for SPR to follow through on these projects for a long time, including Amy Yee Tennis Center, Green Lake, and Lake City.

Herrera points out that South Lake Union has been underserved in the time since Belltown CC closed, and is excited about the Mercer CC opportunity.

Farmer summarizes the Board's comments. The Board agrees that Farmer can add a few sentences to the Board's recommendations.

Umagat asks Finnegan for clarification on land bank sites and process of development.

## **Old/New Business**

Summer schedule will be one meeting per month: 6/9, 7/14, 8/11. June 9 meeting will be in-person/hybrid with a dinner and celebration for Board members, followed by sort of a new Board member orientation meeting before diving into meatier policy issues in July and August.

Co-chairs thank the Board for their hard work.

There being no other business, Farmer adjourns the meeting at 8:10 pm.