



Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, September 28, 2023

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

Attendance

Present: Stafford Mays, Andrea Stuart-Lehalle, Joshua Seyfried, Amy Brockhaus, Phillip Meng, Marlon Herrera (co-chair), Jessica Farmer

Absent: Justin Umagat (co-chair), Lauren Lanham, Pasqual Contreras

SPR Staff and Presenters: AP Diaz, Rachel Schulkin, Amy Williams, Paula Hoff, Ben Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Herrera calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and provides logistical instructions for in-person and remote attendees.

Herrera reads the land acknowledgement.

Seattle Parks and Recreation acknowledges and affirms the indigenous Coast Salish as the original caretakers of our waters and landscape, who nurtured and shaped today's parkland. We honor their legacy with gratitude and appreciation and will safeguard their knowledge and stewardship as enduring treasures to promote community welfare, cultivate inclusive expressions of nature and recreation, and commit to land acknowledgment for each ensuing generation.

Commissioners and SPR staff introduce themselves around the table.

A quorum of members not being present to begin the meeting, Herrera skips over approval of the consent items for now.

Public Comment

Moxie-S. Hubbard-S. – My family and I are originally from Indiana and Ohio. When we walked into Yesler Community Center and Mr. Gary [Alexander, Rec Center Coordinator] gave me the brochure, we signed up, like, I'm signing up for everything! We're learning how to play the piano, drums right now, learning how to roller skate – swimming for the first time, I'm 44 now and I never learned how to swim. I love learning about all the different recreation centers, and I'm also learning to take the transportation that we don't have in those states. So I wanted to tell y'all, thank you.

Kathy Colombo – Beacon Hill Council – I am here to invite you all to attend the William "Bill" Wright Information, Celebration, and Recognition Day at the Jefferson Clubhouse on October 10th, from 6:00-7:00 pm. We are a community group of about 25 different organizations working to rename the Jefferson park golf course to the William "Bill" Wright Golf Complex. We presented to this group in July and we would love to see you all at this celebration on October 10.

Peter Breyfogle – 2024 budget concern - I am calling in to provide public comments about the 2024 Budget you are going to be reviewing this evening. I would like to know where in this budget Seattle Park and Recreation maintenance is funded and specifically how those funds are earmarked for Burke-Gilman Trail maintenance. You may recall from my July comments that there was only \$300K in the budget for Burke-Gilman work this year. These funds are being used to make three repairs. But the amount of work that needed to be done to address the 13 Find It/Fix It problems reported by my group was over \$1,000,000. My request is that enough funds are provided in 2024 to fix the 13 problems reported in Oct 2022. I cannot even say how much was completed this year as there is still a project scheduled for completion in October. My group has scheduled a follow up ride and reporting for Thursday, Oct 19th. At that time, we will enter new Find It/Fix It reports to remind everyone of how much is left to be done. I am willing to ride with any member of this Board or Seattle Parks and Recreation management that would like to see what has been done and what still needs to be done in person.

David Koon – Carkeek Park Salmon Run Fencing – We have split rail fences along Piper’s Creek that are there to keep the public back from the creek. In 2021, I showed the crew chief and carpenters where the fences were failing. Since then, the fence has fallen apart more, and there is more erosion and plant growth along the creek edge. This needs to be addressed ASAP, as our next salmon run begins in about 3 weeks; this also means we will have thousands of visitors coming to the park during this time. We work with the Suguamish tribe to help restore this run; if we are not maintaining this run, I question how dedicated you are to your land acknowledgement and the stewardship of the land and the salmon.

Pat Mork - Carkeek Park Salmon Run Fencing – Last year, I was very disturbed to see some young kids running in and out of the stream, destroying salmon egg beds. I put up some plastic tape and put it up to indicate that you shouldn’t go past here. Additionally, there are now beavers in our park, and I have some concerns about giardia in the stream water, and I wonder if children or parents are aware of this. It’s not a million-dollar project to repair this fence. We hope you take this request seriously.

Ellen Taft – Off-leash Dog Policy – I have finally stopped rowing at Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing Center after 18 years. I would like to propose some solutions to problems, not procrastination. These are solutions which I proposed last winter to Daisy [Catague] and earlier this fall to Andy Sheffer. But I feel I’m getting the “Ken Bounds treatment”. This is the solution to stop employees of the parks and ARC from bringing their dogs to work and breaking Seattle Municipal Code rules. I propose that all employees of Seattle Parks and Recreation and ARC sign a contract stating that they will obey the dog ordinances and not bring their dogs to work. Also, I think that all participants in Seattle parks and rec activities, for example, at Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing club, or especially at the Magnuson field, should sign contracts saying that they will obey the rules about the dogs, and that the organizers of these activities will take responsibility for organizing these rules. And also, I think that you should make a rule that Seattle Parks and Recreation employees will stop harassing and berating me, and stop yelling at me when I try and enforce the rules. We have a solution to stop conflict, and I would ask that you, rather than be like Ken Bounds and just procrastinate, that you actually make a decision. Don’t forget that I’m the one who saved you a lot of political flack by closing down the off-leash area in Volunteer Park.

Herrera moves on to the next item on the agenda.

Taft interrupts the proceedings to demand an answer regarding her public comment, stating that she doesn't care what the answer is, as long as SPR gives her an answer at some point. Diaz agrees.

Herrera again returns to the agenda.

A quorum of members now being present, Herrera introduces the consent agenda: meeting minutes from 9/14/23, and tonight's meeting agenda. Farmer moves to adopt both items with no debate; Seyfried seconds. There is no discussion. The motion passes unanimously.

Adopted: BPRC Meeting Minutes 9/14/23; BPRC Meeting Agenda 9/28/23

Superintendent's Report

Anthony-Paul (AP) Diaz, Esq., Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, delivers the report.

Tonight, we wanted to publicly acknowledge and thank our most important community partner, the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), for their generous donation of \$500,000 to the department earlier this year.

With us here in the room tonight are:

- ARC Executive Director Jackie Jainga Hyllseth
- ARC Chief Financial Officer John Bray

Good evening, welcome, and thank you from the bottom of our collective hearts! And please extend our thanks to the entire ARC Board, which includes Justin Umagat who Co-Chairs this Board and is also the President of the ARC Board.

The money will be well spent on supporting Mayoral and Superintendent priorities including:

- The renovation of the play area at Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park
- Increased capacity for pickleball
- Increased enrollments in the Swim Seattle program
- The launch of an upcoming program around mentorship
- The Greater & Greener conference to be held in Seattle in 2024.

Again: a huge shout out and thank you to our friends at ARC!

[Diaz presents Hyllseth with a formal letter of thanks on behalf of SPR]

Jackie would you like to say a few words?

Hyllseth thanks the ARC board of directors for supporting the partnership between the organizations, especially coming out of the pandemic years. The best way for us to support Seattle Parks and Recreation is to support the new vision of expanding more services to community. We're passionate about youth efforts, including Swim Seattle and Seattle Mentors, and of course we are excited to support the park that is going to be renovated right in the Central District. We are honored to be able to do this, and I want to publicly thank my board, and our CFO, John Bray. Thank you.

Farmer and Herrera thanks Hyllseth for ARC's partnership and support.

Water conservation: I know it's been raining this week, but due to an unusually dry summer, Seattle Public Utilities has asked customers to save water until there is enough fall rain to refill the mountain reservoirs to the necessary levels. Seattle Parks and Recreation is doing our part.

The majority of the department's water use is on irrigation (only 6% of our water use goes to pools), and thus that is where we focus our conservation efforts.

Water conservation efforts we employ year-round include:

- Remotely controlled irrigation systems are adjusted depending on weather and can immediately detect leaks
- Regular irrigation system checks by staff and expedited repairs when breaks are reported
- New parks and facilities are built with the latest water conservation technology

During this Water Shortage Voluntary Reduction, the department will:

- Reduce irrigation for non-high use lawns and most garden beds
- Reduce irrigation within golf courses
- Wash vehicles for health and safety reasons only (including golf carts)
- Turn off decorative fountains

SPR had a big day at the **City Council Public Assets and Homelessness Committee**: It may seem routine and wonky, but our work on legislation that comes before the City Council is vitally important to almost everything we do. Like most legislative bodies, the City Council controls funding appropriations for nearly all aspects of our budget. I am pleased to report that at the Sept. 20 meeting of the Council's Public Assets and Homelessness Committee, we received unanimous approval of a record 7 pieces of legislation.

The committee agenda included:

- Confirmation of the appointment of Phillip Meng to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners -- congratulations Phillip!!
- An Operations and Management Agreement between SPR and the Downtown Seattle Association, which helps us activate downtown parks. You'll hear more about that later tonight.
- Authorization to acquire a piece of property in the Westwood-Highland Park area of West Seattle
- Authorization to acquire property in Southeast Seattle in the Taylor Creek Watershed, adjacent to Taylor Creek, an important salmon-bearing stream
- Authorization to accept funding from the King County Conservation Futures Tax Levy that will be used for open space property acquisitions throughout the city
- AND authorization for SPR to enter into an agreement with Washington State Department of Ecology for cleanup work at the Duwamish Waterway Park site

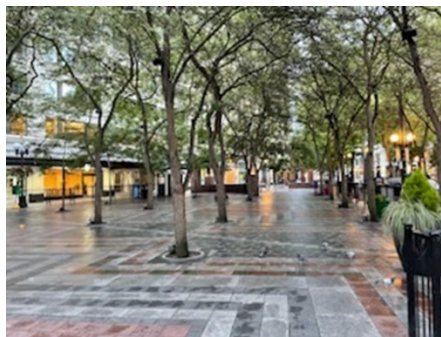
Thank you and kudos to our wonderful staff team who worked behind the scenes to make this happen and to Christopher Williams who presented the legislation at the meeting. Staff included:

- Michele Finnegan
- Paula Hoff
- David Takami
- Rachel Acosta
- Rachel Schulkin (DSA)
- Monica Haugen (DSA)
- Lise Ward (Acquisitions)
- Jeffrey Bishop (Acquisitions)
- Scott Stevens (Ecology Agreed Order)
- Karsten Springstead (Ecology Agreed Order)

Denny Awards: We mentioned at the last meeting the revival of our Denny Awards to honor stellar parks and recreation volunteers. Well the nomination period has officially opened! The deadline for nominations is Friday, October 20, 2023. Please visit parkways.seattle.gov for guidance on how to nominate someone for an award. The awards will be presented at a recognition ceremony on Wednesday, December 6 at the Seattle Asian Art Museum.

Our amazing **park maintenance team** makes us proud every day with their work to clean and beautify parkland throughout the city. Pictured here are just a few examples from the last couple of weeks.

- Crews picking up litter and debris from Weedin Place in Northeast Seattle as part of the Clean City Initiative.
- City Hall Park, Westlake Park after cleaning
- A crew at Golden Gardens Park removing sediment and vegetation along roadside drainage ditches



Here are a couple of **updates from our Planning and Capital Development Branch.**

During the Pandemic as some of you know, we put some of our capital projects on hold due to our urgent COVID-related responses and activities. I'm happy to report that we are resuming many of those delayed projects. Here are two recent examples

At the **Urban Triangle Park**, which is in this neighborhood on Westlake Ave, just south of Whole Foods, we will be installing the play area that was part of the original design of the park. That will happen in November.

West Seattle Junction Expansion Community Meeting: This park improvement project was delayed during the Pandemic and now has resumed design. Staff believe the existing design is a good one and a good fit for the neighborhood but it is over 2+ years old and needs a fresh review by the community. At the meeting on Oct. 10 staff will present an overview of the project to date and options on how we move forward.

A few fall events to tell you about happening this weekend:

Oct. 5: MONUMENTS: There's still time – until Oct. 5 – to go to City Hall Park in downtown Seattle to see the amazing and groundbreaking multimedia art installation MONUMENTS, created by world-renowned artist Craig Walsh. FREE showings of this immersive art experience are taking place nightly from 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. thru Oct. 5.

Oct. 6: Annual Fall Harvest Festival at Meadowbrook Community Center, 5 to 7 p.m.

Oct. 8: Volunteer Park Halloween Pet Parade, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., meet near the Conservatory. Prizes awarded for best costumes!

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

Farmer asks about fencing along Piper's Creek at Carkeek Park. Diaz notes that he has been learning about the beaver population in this park, and the horticulture team has been developing strategies to protect and preserve the trees and plants in this area. The fencing will be looked at soon and we need to make sure that the bridges and fences are safe and repaired. Farmer notes that the salmon run is important and moving. Diaz also hopes that informational signage can be installed in the area soon.

Herrera asks about any park hours change at the Stan Sayres boat ramp. Diaz affirms that this ramp is closed during an emergency pilot program during night hours.

Downtown Seattle Association Agreement Overview

Rachel Schulkin, SPR Communications Manager, delivers the report.

Today we are bringing forward the contract renewal between Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Downtown Seattle Association. This is a purchase of services contract in which SPR is contracting with DSA in order to purchase activation services downtown. This contract recently passed out of full Council, so a bit of a spoiler there. All good news.

At the direction of the previous administration, we did not elect to do an RFP for this work. This is such specialized work that an RFP did not seem appropriate. DSA has been incredible partner in activating downtown parks, and not only have they revitalized Occidental and Westlake but they have always exceeded their fundraising target by double, and put all those funds into the programming, safety, and vitality of these two downtown parks.

As we worked with DSA to negotiate this contract, our goals included:

- Safe and active downtown parks
- Welcoming environment with activities that reflect the community
- Demonstrated success through people counts and surveys

- All funds collected go back into the programming and activation

The contract outlines the services that DSA will provide—daily presence in the four parks listed, weekly larger-scale events, staffing and security, manage permitting of outside event organizers in these parks, work with concessionaires and vendors, advertise events online, provide services to marginalized populations, ensure that their contracting utilizes WMBE vendors, fundraise to supplement this public investment, and report both revenue and programming data twice each year.

And the role SPR plays in supporting this work:

- Manage free speech event requests
- Provide park maintenance
- Provide Park Ranger support (4 sites) and concierge support (Pioneer Square)

Specific to DSA's role in activating these public spaces, the agreement recognizes that Regular, daily programming leads people to perceive the parks as increasingly safe, welcoming, and vibrant urban spaces. Activations that are free and open to the general public lead to increased positive public use of these urban parks.

Majority of activations and programs will fall with these 4 categories:

- **Park Amenities** that support increase park use such as plantings, outdoor furniture and food truck services.
- **Health and Wellness** includes things like health and fitness programs and drop-in table games
- **Youth and Families Programs** support increased use of parks by women and children such as children's programming (games and hands-on learning), play structures and holiday events.
- **Arts and Culture** includes activities and events often offered in partnership with community organizations and artists such as providing music, films, performance art and rotating installations.

Next I'll walk through a comparison of our current contract against our proposed contract. The new contract raises funding from the city to cover the cost of 2 additional parks as well as increased operating costs. The new contract supplements DSA staffing with SPR concierge and park ranger presence in the added parks to recognize the added challenges of our current downtown climate. The DSA fundraising requirement remains at 3:1 and the contract defines a WMBE contracting requirement. SPR and DSA will take on a maintenance assessment of downtown park to better improve SPR's maintenance practices downtown, and in turn support park activation efforts. Additionally, we will be developing a sponsorship process, and moving to a programming model that takes in all that adapts to the changes in downtown worker schedules.

As many of you know we started with DSA back in 2015 under a pilot agreement. We then moved that into a 5-year agreement that was highly successful in changing the look and feel of both Occidental and Westlake Park. Due to COVID our contract negotiations were delayed, and we are before you today to present a contract to continue this strong partnership.

[Schulkin presents a number of before and after images to illustrate progress gained at Occidental and Westlake Parks under previous DSA agreement]

To date, our agreement with DSA has resulted in more than 2.5 million visits to Westlake and Occidental Square Parks since 2017. Between July 2022 and June 2023, these parks saw 9,500 hours of activation and programming, which has helped improve perceptions of the parks as safe, clean, and welcoming places, and since May 2022, ambassadors have provided outreach and welfare checks to 1,137 individuals in the parks. Since 2016, every \$1 of SPR funding has resulted in \$6.67 in private funding, exceeding the 3:1 contractual requirement by more than double.

Brockhaus asks how much of Bell Street will be covered in this agreement. Schulkin clarifies that just the Bell Street Park boundaries will be covered under this agreement.

Stuart-Lehalle asks how public perception of safety and pleasantness of the downtown parks are measured. Schulkin shares that active surveying has been done at various times, as well as counting of women and children present at events as a proxy measure for perceived safety.

Seyfried shares Brockhaus's interest in the expansion of services to Bell Street Park and notes that the expanded service range means that DSA will be working in a variety of different types of locations, with differing user groups. This expansion could result in new and unique types of engagement. Schulkin concurs with this point as both a challenge and an opportunity for DSA; this partnership helps facilitate fundraising and other types of cooperation at a very local level, which can facilitate responsive activation and programming for each space.

Herrera thanks Schulkin for the presentation and additional clarity, and explains for the record that the Metropolitan Improvement District (MID) is a self-funding downtown improvement district that helps keep downtown clean, safe, and vibrant. Herrera also appreciates the 25% WMBE threshold, and notes the broad base of support for this ongoing partnership.

Diaz clarifies that there was no notable pushback regarding the soul sourcing of the DSA for this contract extension. The scope of work for this agreement is so specific that seeking a competitive process just didn't make sense to do.

2024 Mayor's Proposed Budget: Overview and Timeline

Amy Williams, SPR Budget Manager, gives the presentation.

Tonight, I'm going to give a little bit of context on the 2024 budget, just on the development side, highlights of what's in next year's budget, and then go through the upcoming council schedule with you. Before we get into it, generally, there are not a lot of changes in the budget; it's mostly budget-neutral changes to support the things that we're doing.

One area to note is that the budget does include a one-time technical change related to the general fund and the Park District funding, which we'll get into in a little bit.

The City budgets incrementally above and below a static baseline using a biennial budget process. Year one of the budget is always in an odd year. Year two of the budget is generally focused on minor updates to the budget. Relatedly, as you may have heard, the City is anticipating a pretty big

deficit in 2025, estimated at about \$250 million between forecasted revenues and spending, so there is a strong desire to stay with some of those minor changes for 2024.

Just a little more context to give you a sense of our 2024 budget; our total 2024 proposed budget is \$321 million. \$228 million is designated for operations, with just over 50% coming from the General Fund; the remainder of that total budget is designated for capital projects. Our CIP budget is primarily supported by the Metropolitan Park District (MPD) Cycle 2 funds and REET.

The proposed budget includes a one-year technical change in how the general fund is set and measured against the Park District. The interlocal agreement includes a section that makes sure the City continues strong general fund support to SPR; specifically, it includes a minimum required level called the general fund “floor” that increases every year by CIP. This floor can be suspended by Council, and it was suspended in 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic. In the proposed budget for next year, we have about \$120 million in general fund support; this is an increase of about 3%. In 2025, it’ll go back to increasing by the annual CPI, using our 2024 budget as the base. The change really brings us in line with the inflation rate of the general fund and other levies across the city.

The 2024 proposed budget also creates a few budget-neutral position alignments. We are creating an Equity Advisor role, joining our two other Equity Advisor roles that we currently have supporting the Recreation Division and the Parks and Environment Division. We are also adding 11 new positions in the Capital Planning Division and making three more positions permanent. Another new position we are creating is an Integrated Pest and Wildlife Management position. Finally, we’re adding another counselor position to support the caseload at the Seattle Conservation Corps.

The City’s REET forecast came in worse in August than in April, so we got a pretty heavy reduction target for 2023 and 2024 of about \$20 million combined, and then there’s a gradual add-back of that plus a little bit more over the next few years, totaling \$25 million by 2029. This shift mostly aligns planned REET expenses with projected spending and project timelines:

- Major Maintenance: aligns spending plans with only one project delay—Mount Baker Bathhouse renovation.
- Community Center Rehab: shifts ~\$5M in the Lake City redevelopment project to 2025 to align with planned construction. Leaves \$3M to continue planning and site remediation.
- Athletic Field Replacements: shifts funding and delays Soundview Field conversion by one year.
- Discrete Projects: realigns funding for Carkeek Bridge replacement. Adds funding for Gasworks Park.

Finally, here is the timeline and next steps for the budget.

September 26: Proposed Budget to Council

October 16: MPD Public Hearing on 2024 Proposed Budget

October 18: Public Hearing #1 on 2024 Proposed Budget

October 27: Initial Council Budget Committee Discussion of Amendments (all amendments public)

November 13: Public Hearing #2 on 2024 Proposed Budget; Council Budget Committee Discussion and Initial Vote on Budget Amendments (11/13-11/15)

November 20: Final Council Budget Committee Vote on Amendments

November 21: Council Adopts Budget; Park District Governing Board Adopts MPD Budget

Herrera thanks Williams for the presentation, and reminds the Board that this proposed budget is just a proposal, and that there is a long way to go before Council signs this budget into law.

Farmer voices support and excitement for the expanded counselor position with the Seattle Conservation Corps. Farmer asks for clarification regarding the timeline for recouping REET funding lost in 2023 and 2024. Williams notes that changes to REET have occurred each year, so plans do tend to shift; 2025 is likely to be a difficult budget year all around. The current projections are what they are right now. Farmer acknowledges these difficulties, noting that budgeting causing a delay of a year or two to a community center redevelopment is understandable but it starts to feel a lot less understandable if the project is delayed repeatedly. Diaz agrees with Farmer's concerns, but notes that the current projections are fairly conservative, while prioritizing projects that are both high-equity and have been postponed already.

Herrera notes that in years past, SPR was able to re-allocate some REET funding to alleviate strain on the General Fund. However, now that REET is strained, he reminds the Board members not to settle for any diminution of SPR's allotment from the General Fund, even though the Park District funding can make up for some shortfalls in the near term.

Old & New Business

Farmer notes that Hoff has sent an email about BPRC member recruitment, and reminds her colleagues to spread that message to their networks.

Farmer also asks for updates about subcommittee work. Hoff notes that the park naming policy was recently updated, and that all the BPRC subcommittees will be meeting in October.

Herrera asks if calendar invitations could be sent to BPRC members for SPR events, such as the Denny awards. Diaz notes that the BPRC will be invited to an equity event and formal ARC thank-you on October 5.

There being no further business, Herrera adjourns the meeting at 7:57 pm.