



Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, April 25, 2024

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

Attendance

Present: Justin Umagat (co-chair), Stafford Mays, Amy Brockhaus, Phillip Meng

Absent: Joshua Seyfried, Pasqual Contreras, Lauren Lanham

SPR Staff and Presenters: AP Diaz, Jonathan Garner, David Graves, Andy Sheffer, Paula Hoff, Ben Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

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

Commissioners and SPR staff introduce themselves around the table.

Umagat reads the land acknowledgement.

Seattle Parks and Recreation acknowledges and affirms the Indigenous Coast Salish people 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.

Umagat introduces the consent item for approval: meeting minutes from the 3/28/24 BPRC meeting, and tonight's meeting agenda. Brockhaus moves to approve both items; Mays seconds. The motion passes by unanimous consent.

Adopted: 3/28/24 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Adopted: 4/25/24 BPRC Meeting Agenda

Public Comment

Michael Pierson - My name is Mike Pierson and I am working with others in the hopes of seeing the existing public tennis courts at Magnuson Park substantially refurbished — at a minimum — to realize their great potential as a valuable community resource. There are six public tennis courts at Magnuson. Unfortunately, they are in really poor shape now, though they still see some tennis and pickleball use. I strongly support SPR prioritizing the refurbishing of these existing courts so that they can provide a strong public tennis space amongst the other attractions of Magnuson Park. With the increase in housing at Sand Point and nearby, and the potential for youth and other programs through the Magnuson Park Community Center or in conjunction with the nearby private Tennis Center Sand Point, there are even more community benefits that can be realized from revitalizing these six public

courts. I have spoken with others who agree, and I've had a number of contacts with the US Tennis Association, which has encouraged us to pursue this. I believe there is a real potential for some outside money toward this project. My additional hope is to see refurbished Magnuson courts named to honor the late pioneering Black Seattle architect Mel Streeter. Mel was featured in last year's MOHAI exhibition on significant Black architects; he was also a leader in Seattle tennis circles over many, many years, and he had a particular interest in Magnuson Park. In summary: First, let's get these existing public courts fixed up to much better serve the public. Second, there's the potential for some outside money. Third, let's name them to honor a deserving Seattle hero, Mel Streeter. Thank you.

Kersti Muul – I'm an urban conservation specialist and wildlife biologist. My comment is in regards to SPR's tennis and pickleball vision. Having been involved in [activism] for the last nine months and working on a team with Parks, and Andy Sheffer, I have a unique insight into Parks' continuing failures to be honest, keep promises, and openly communicate updates to its teams. I'm here representing over 8,000 community members who continue to urge the Parks department to prioritize transparency, honesty, accountability, and public involvement in its processes and visions for the shared use of parks moving forward. By working together, we can create and maintain vibrant, sustainable parks that benefit us all. Transparency is essential for building trust between the Parks department and the community that it serves. By providing clear, accurate, accessible information about Parks management decisions and plans, the department can foster a sense of openness and accountability that benefits everyone. Honesty and communication is key to maintaining a positive relationship with the public; sharing openly allows for constructive dialogue and collaboration between SPR and community stakeholders. It is important to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them to improve park management practices for the benefit of all. Accountability ensures the department is held responsible for its actions and decisions regarding our green spaces. Establishing clear avenues for feedback and reporting mechanisms, Parks can demonstrate its commitment to serving our community's diverse interests and needs. Public involvement in decision-making and visioning for the future of our green spaces is essential for creating a sense of ownership and pride amongst Seattle residents. By seeking input and feedback from the community, Parks can ensure that their management reflects the diverse needs and preferences of those who use the city's green spaces. Thank you.

Greg Tuke – I represent a group of about 2,000 people who have signed a petition that calls for the development of 24 dedicated pickleball courts in 2024. I'm here tonight because I want to make three points: one is that Seattle right now has the dubious distinction of being the "worst in the west" in terms of providing dedicated pickleball courts. Number two, the solution to that problem can be done immediately, and it can be done cheaply. The third point I want to make is that so far we've presented a list of recommendations to the superintendent and his staff, and so far they have not been addressed on how to deal with this problem of being the "worst in the west." So, let me address the first issue. Over 5,000 cities have been researched to determine how many dedicated pickleball courts, and look at the facilities, by Pickleheads.com. The average for a city our size is having 27 dedicated pickleball courts. Seattle has one. It's in Laurelhurst. Even if you throw in four other courts that are substandard and have things like jogging tracks that go through them, you're up to five – we're still at the bottom of the list. So we think we can do much better than that. There's over 100 tennis courts in Seattle, some of them underutilized, greatly underutilized. If you took six of those

courts, you could turn them into 24 dedicated pickleball courts. We know that it can be done cheaply. It was done last year here in Seattle, where the National Pickleball Association put in \$100k to convert 10 tennis courts into 24 pickleball courts that were then, two weeks later, turned back. So we know it can be done cheaply. We support long-term development of pickleball courts, too – the idea of Magnuson Park that they've talked about, that's really worth doing. But we have such a huge number of people who are out playing pickleball, we need more courts. So I hope you'll encourage the Superintendent to bring to you a proposal to go along in tandem with the Magnuson Park one, for 24 courts this year, out of six of the tennis courts.

Constance Sidles – I'm speaking on behalf of Birds Connect Seattle about Cheasty Greenspace and natural area. We are concerned about two issues. First, the construction of the second mountain bike trail, which has already begun. Our concern is that heavy machinery and materials and ongoing construction activity will happen very near a Cooper's Hawk nest. Cooper's Hawks are a protected species in our state. We know the adult female has already laid eggs, and we believe that such human activity may cause the parents to abandon the nest. We ask that construction be postponed until the young have fledged, meaning after the first week of July. Doing so would be following best birding practices outlined in the training of our forest stewards. We're also concerned about a larger issue, namely, SPR's responsibility to the habitats and wildlife of our city. SPR's responsible not just for recreation, but for sustaining the great diversity of birds and other wildlife in Seattle's parks and green spaces, especially in our urban forests and tree canopy. Too often the needs of wildlife have been ignored as SPR continues to put human recreation above the needs of wildlife and above the needs of people who want the benefits of connecting with nature. I've been leading monthly BCS censuses at Cheasty since 2021. Over the years, we have found 64 different bird species there, more than 1,700 individual birds, an average of 197 a month. Cheasty is home to year-round birds, such as Pileated Woodpeckers, the third-largest bird in the world. It's home to migratory birds on their way to and from areas as far apart as Patagonia and the Arctic Circle. It hosts winter birds from the far north, who seem to think we are the balmy south. It also hosts summer breeders coming from as far away as Argentina. I invite you to come and see some of these wonders of nature with us, and to realize the value of places such as Cheasty. We would love to show you their world.

Kathy Colombo – I am here to follow up with you regarding our recent submittal. Following the application to rename the golf-related areas of Jefferson Park to the Bill Wright Golf Complex to honor our hometown golf African American hero in celebration of inclusive "One Seattle." I come to you from Beacon Hill, the golfing, people of color, and mainstream communities to honor our authentic local hero who broke the golf glass ceiling for African Americans and people of color with his historic victory in the 1959 National USGA Amateur Public Links Championship. He is a man of noble character; he was persistent, disciplined, hardworking, circumspect, athlete, scholar, teacher, mentor for youth, and inclusive golf community builder whose life aligned with our beloved city of Seattle beloved values of race and social justice. We respectfully ask that Ms. Hoff convene the SPR naming committee to fully consider, review, and approve our naming proposal at the latest by the end of May so we can organize a celebration and ribbon cutting with your presence and with our honorable elected officials and dignitaries on October 10th, 2024. We are available to present at the SPR naming committee and answer any questions. In the interim, please contact either myself, Kathy Colombo, or Mark Solomon.

Superintendent Diaz shares with Colombo and the BPRC that the Park Naming Committee has already made the decision to rename the golf-related sections of Jefferson Park as proposed. Colombo shares her surprise and gratitude.

Bret Barnecut – (Sarah Dolan: We are talking about pickleball at Lincoln Park.) Thank you for hearing us out. This isn't the first community by any stretch to put in pickleball courts in one place or another. This was done at Lake Oswego at Westlake Park, and unfortunately for them, the parking demands and the highly impulse sound of pickleball impacted the entire park to such a degree that they really had to study it in detail, and they hired sound engineers, they did noise abatement, and they came up with some real costs, and eventually they ended up pulling up the courts for the simple reason that having it within 550 feet or close to residences was far too loud. Now this, partially, is why this particular court at Lincoln Park has been selected, because it's 500-plus feet from the nearest "residence," like, legal residence. But it's in the middle of the park. So every resident who's trying to use the park is going to be affronted with this noise. Also, this one-time tennis court has been used for a materials storage site for the last almost 20 years, and it's been thoroughly thrashed. I don't think anyone's being honest about the actual costs of rehabilitating this site. Neither have they been honest with the costs of what happened to the materials storage site that was being used there, as now the trucks are rattling all the way over to Beacon Hill to do the same job at increased cost. There are some wonderful sites available for indoor pickleball right up the street at our local shopping center, which is in some dire needs of some help. Staples is gone; Bed, Bath & Beyond... and there's some reasonable rents to be had, I don't understand why this isn't being looked upon, other than the fact that it wouldn't be the Parks Department because it's a private thing. And I think we need to be honest here, with the pickleball community being such a large group of reliable voters by age and demographic, that they're definitely someone who everyone- it's the baby kissing of this generation, if you would have it. And again, there's a lot of good things to do with pickleball, but people who I know play, they drive to the courts, see if it's busy, line up, get in and play—this court, you cannot see the court from where you would dream about parking your car. (SD: If you could find a space.) Yeah, this parking lot is full almost all the time. Any accurate parking study would lead you to go somewhere else.

Dick Lunceford – I live in West Seattle, not too far from Hiawatha Park. I am a tennis player of 55 years, and since tonight you're going to be talking about the vision for tennis and pickleball I wanted to say something. Not a lot. Simply stated I am against any pickleball [unclear] or taking over any more Seattle Parks courts. I totally support looking at indoor facilities like Ms. Dolan just mentioned; building courts inside, there's no noise factor for that. [Unclear] My last comment is, I want to bring up the issue of historical use of- historical sports like racquetball. Thousands of people have taken up pickleball recently, but I'd like everyone to think about the history of racquetball and racket sports. Millions of people took up racquetball in the '80s, and thousands of racquetball courts were built, public and private, and there were multiple pro circuits, just like there are for pickleball now. But where are the racquetball players today? Zero. Maybe one or two. I venture, any of you, you can't even identify any racquetball players. [Diaz raises hand, some laughter in room] Tennis has been a century, more than a century. It's not a fad like racquetball. Is pickleball a fad? Who knows. When baby boomers go away, maybe it is a fad. So I want Parks planners to think about this when they talk about park planning, and choose facilities that can be transitioned, or not incur heavy expense when [granting?] park facilities.

Terry Holme – Great to see you again, thank you for hearing me. Terry Holme with Rainier Valley Greenways and Safe Streets, and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways. I'm speaking tonight in regards to the current SPR design concept for Lake Washington Boulevard improvements. I've sent you an email which you should now have in your inbox and I'm encouraging all the commissioners to read that; this is an abbreviated form of what I said there. As you may know, SPR staff, working with SDOT staff, is in the process of gathering public input related to upcoming expenditures on Lake Washington Boulevard between Mt. Baker Beach and Seward Park. Please review the [project website](#). Included in the website is a survey which will be open until May 12th. We encourage your participation which includes an opportunity to add written comments. Please see the Rainier Valley Greenways and Safe Streets "LWB Renovation Project Responses" attached to my email. This is a granular response to the Design Concepts. We have endorsed some of the planned work, but are adamant that the project as proposed will not adequately address the safety of everyone using the Boulevard for the three miles included in the plan. For this project to be successful, it is imperative to complete more traffic calming improvements than are currently proposed. The SPR Design Concept is based on currently available Metropolitan Park District funds, an amount that is inadequate to the task of significantly improving safety on the roadway. In your advisory role, we respectfully ask you to encourage SPR, City Council, and the Mayor to more fully fund this work. The future of this park, and the safety of park users is at stake. Thank you again.

Patricia Goudge – Thank you. I'm really going to speak from the heart. This is about pickleball courts and the noise problems and the siting problems. Earlier on, it was mentioned that there's one dedicated pickleball court in the city of Seattle, and that is at Laurelhurst. Well, we live within about 120 feet from that court, and the court came in with no community notice, no community input, and it has been a thorn in our sides ever since. The screaming, the noise, just the pickleball noise itself, there's a real, I hate to use the word "bro culture" but there I go, that is associated with the people who are play- I see grandmas up there screaming, 20-somethings screaming. It's a real problem. We've been working with Seattle Parks and Rec, trying to get some noise abatement put in, but it's a real problem. Be very careful where you situate the courts. I looked at the, um, there's some sites that were evaluated for [unclear] potential pickleball courts, it's on your website. Bitter Lake, Magnuson Park, Genessee Park, Georgetown, Hiawatha. I looked at the maps for each of those to see if they're close to homes. With the exception of Magnuson, all of those sites are too close to homes, so it's- you're buying a problem. We're living with the problem. And we'd like to keep other people from having to go through the misery that we're going through with the court next to us. Thank you.

Gordon Sata – I wanted to get over where I could get seen because I'm a walking advertisement, so I'm going to stand next to AP [note: Sata is wearing a Seattle Metro Pickleball Association t-shirt]. My name is Gordon Sata and I joined the board of the Seattle Metro Pickleball Association two years ago, and I want to title this speech "Empowering Play." Well, I would like to preface this evening's presentation about SPR's vision for pickleball with some recent history. In 2023, 29 semi-permanent or permanent nets were placed, 27 in the Seattle area. 12 nets were actually purchased by SPR using 2022 budget. The rest were community funded. One beautiful court restoration at Beacon Hill, the creation of two dedicated pickleballs with a lot of community support was built in downtown Seattle, bringing the number of dedicated pickleball courts up to 5 inside Seattle, which is paltry compared to our suburbs. And no further gains in courts or court linings with the halt at Solstice and

Lincoln Park. This year 2000 paddles will be hitting the immediate area. 500 from the University of Washington, where the Mayor presided over a pickleball event during a woman's basketball game which will be followed by another associated with Husky football, and you can bet that the Mayor's going to be pumped up for that. And we'll also have to give credit to UW's pickleball team, which lined 12 courts in the brand new downtown Summit Convention Center. Can you even imagine that in the heart of Seattle? To continue: 1,300 paddles are coming in from the Seattle Mariner's Pickleball Night where the Mayor has also been requested to attend, 100 more are dual-branded with SMPA and the Diversity and Inclusion in Pickleball where the Mayor and Superintendent spoke last year and took home complimentary paddles. And finally, 112 paddles donated by SMPA and matched by Pickleball Central to kick off pickleball in the Seattle Public Schools, K thru 12, on May 1st in the Franklin High School gym. The SMPA moniker is "More Courts, More Play." I am looking forward to seeing how SPR's vision and seeing how ready it is for this as pickleball is still hard charging and growing. Closing seconds. Pickleball and noise: what is the plan? A year ago in December, we talked about Acoustifence getting installed at three locations, then it was two locations, then none. Is there a plan to address noise? Thank you.

Stewart Wechsler – An earlier speaker said that it would be inexpensive to put pickleball courts in Lincoln Park. I am arguing it would come at great expense. Nearly every day for about the last 20 years, I have spent maybe an hour or more in Lincoln Park, both enjoying the natural environment, and as a volunteer, controlling the weeds – to protect the natural vegetation and help the landscape there recover some of the additional wealth of nature it might've had before the city was built around it. In reality, I come to this quiet, peaceful, and beautiful place as much to avoid dealing with the rest of my world as to help with protection and recovery of the park's natural wealth. And that's all the more reason I value the quiet. My concern about pickleball in Lincoln Park is not primarily for birds. My concern is primarily for the people who come to Lincoln Park to enjoy both the birds, sounds of birds, and the wealth of nature there in general, as well as the relative peace and quiet of one of the rarest and best bits of nature left in Seattle. Even the dogwalkers come to Lincoln Park to enjoy the sounds, sights, and smells of nature together with their dogs. Pickleball is known for the loud and far-carrying noise it makes. This would degrade the value of Lincoln Park as a natural area for the people that come from all around Seattle to enjoy the rare wealth of nature that is still there in the city. Seattle couldn't buy another place like this in Seattle for a billion dollars. Rather than degrade the unique wealth of nature people enjoy in Lincoln Park with the noise of pickleball, find a vacant lot by Boeing Field or in an industrial area for another pickleball court where there would be the least conflict of interest and the least degradation of wealth for other people.

Frank Chiappone – Hello everyone, I am Frank Chiappone, I am president of the Seattle Metro Pickleball Association. First of all, thank you. Thank you to AP, thank you Andy, I see you on the call, thank you Jonathan for your collaborative approach and dialogue over the last, well, several years. I look forward to doing more of that. First of all, I have a controversial statement to make: I believe pickleball, tennis, nature lovers, dog walkers, neighbors, can coexist, and I look forward to figuring out ways to do that. I will ask the Board to continue to put the pressure on AP and his team to be leaders in this space and in the community, and find ways to not only meet the growing demand of pickleball and the expanse of pickleball, but meet it in intelligent, thoughtful ways that meet the needs of all constituents, and also provides a balance in resources that Seattle Parks has across pickleball and tennis. I look forward to seeing your plan tonight; I look forward to working with you all on that

plan, iterating on it to make it better, and making sure that it meets the needs of our community, as well as the tennis community. I want to offer SMPA's assistance in helping you realize that plan, with not only people power, thought power, but also financial power in [any] ways that we can. And so I just wanted to stand before you and offer that. Thank you again for your time.

Peter Seitel – Hi, I'm Peter Seitel. I'll be brief. I represent a group at Green Lake, of Green Lake pickleball players. I want to say, I support everything that Frank has just said. I thank you, AP. Andy, Jonathan, I hope you as well will continue working collaboratively with us on getting pickleball facilities in the right places. Two points I want to make: one is, I don't believe this has to be a fight between tennis people and pickleball people and nature people. I think if we sit down in a room together, we can work these things out and we can find places for all the sports and all the activities we're talking about. I do not want to be in opposition to any folks that are here that have previously spoken. And then the second thing that I would like to mention is, Amy [Brockhaus], I know you have been to Green Lake, we [hosted] you at our Green Lake east facility, you saw what the culture was like, you saw what the scene is like there; it's different than a tennis environment. It's different than many other sport environments. It's open, it's welcoming, and I believe that if you all, the rest of the people on the Board and others in the Parks Department would come down and visit these facilities, you would see how different they are, and it would help you figure out, how can we make this scene, the pickleball scene, work inside Seattle, expand it inside Seattle, and be able to work in coordination with and in a friendly way with tennis players and people that enjoy nature in our parks. So. Thank you very much for taking the time to try to figure all this out with us.

Miguel de Campos – Hi everybody, I'm Miguel de Campos. I'm a pickleball player, and I've been following the Parks Department's efforts at creating pickleball courts since 2016. I was just going to ask one thing is that, in your upcoming vision and plan, you include a needs analysis for both pickleball and tennis, for both current needs and projected needs, and do a gap analysis, and that some of your conclusions be rooted in data this time around. Thank you.

Hoff reports that public comment has concluded. Umagat notes the time; Diaz suggests that since so many commenters are present in the room, the agenda be adjusted so that the presentation on SPR's Pickleball & Tennis Vision be delivered before everyone has to leave. The Board members agree; the agenda is so amended.

Seattle Parks and Recreation: Pickleball and Tennis Vision

Andy Sheffer, Deputy Superintendent of Planning and Capital Development, introduces the presentation.

I'd like to introduce Jonathan Garner, our lead pickleball liaison from Seattle Parks. When Jonathan was asked to take on this planning role, the first thing he said to me was, "When are we going to play pickleball?" He said, "I've been playing tennis, and if I'm going to take on this assignment, I've got to play pickleball." We played pickleball that evening. And you know, I think that's critical – as planners, as park and recreation professionals, that we engage in the activities that we're supporting, both tennis and pickleball, walking the environment, and Jonathan has engaged with all the stakeholders before this meeting, and I just want to applaud him for his efforts. I'm looking forward to this presentation. In this presentation, we don't address Lincoln [Park] specifically; we are on the cusp of

a decision forward on Lincoln. I just got a text from one of our partners; we're exploring a number of avenues. Jonathan, do you want to take it from here?

Diaz thanks Sheffer for partnering on this issue and for all his hard work. Diaz also thanks tonight's commenters for their advocacy, noting that he also plays tennis and pickleball, and carries a love of all racket sports. Diaz also shares that Lincoln Park is among his favorite parks in Seattle, despite the difficulty of choosing favorites. Clearly, pickleball is a strong and quickly-growing sport, and it speaks to a wide variety of participants. SPR believes that there is space for everyone to share, and that it is important not to denigrate any other activities in the advocacy of one's preferred sport. Diaz notes that he would love to install 24 dedicated pickleball courts by tomorrow; it's not that SPR thinks the sport is a fad, or doesn't believe in it. We actually spend a great deal of time and effort working on improving our pickleball services! However, working with our partners makes us stronger, and we are committed to expanding in a responsible and thoughtful way.

Jonathan Garner, SPR Senior Parks Planner, delivers the presentation.

Thank you, AP, thank you, Andy. When I was asked to take on this project, I jumped fully in. I like complex problems. This is a complex problem; this is something going on nationwide, across the country, and even in many parts of the world. A lot of planners are working on pickleball.

I'm not bringing solutions tonight; we don't have those. I'm bringing a path to find solutions, and that's what we're working on.

So, some quick background on how we got here:

- 2017 – Pilot Study: Added courts at 7 locations; 24 new courts
- 2019 – Pilot Report: Recommendations for expansion of dual striping, investigation of dedicated pickleball locations, and refinement of dual striping standard
- 2022 – Outdoor PB Study: Further recommendations of 2019 Pilot Report and respond to calls for action from PB community
- 2023 – Study Outcomes: Park District planning for dedicated PB locations; ongoing programs; Lincoln Park proposal
- 2024 – Vision Forward: Identify and select hubs, measure usage; communicate and engage with community

You can see that from 2017 to 2022, we swung the pendulum pretty hard to one side, towards pickleball. Which we needed to, to address the emerging concerns of that community, but along the way we kind of left tennis in the lurch.

This year, we need to work on making sure our inventory is accurate, that's something that I've heard from the SMPA, so take our counts with a grain of salt. But currently, we have 90 pickleball courts citywide, 87 of which are shared with other court sports. We have 135 total tennis courts, but if you discount the courts that are dual-striped for pickleball, that only leaves 52; this severely undercuts the ability for tennis players to find a place to play. As you might expect, once you add even one pickleball court to a location, pickleball players come like ants to a sugar cube. So in some locations adding pickleball courts to a location, such as Gilman Playground, effectively took away tennis courts.

[Note: After the meeting, Garner provided revised counts of these assets. The following numbers should be considered accurate:

- Total tennis courts: 149
- Total pickleball courts: 90
- Total dedicated tennis courts: 107
- Total dedicated pickleball courts: 3]

SPR recognizes that pickleball is growing, and we have two highly engaged communities here, each with needs and wants. But it's no secret, we have limited funds and limited staff to dedicate to this issue, so we have to find the right balance, and we also have to find the balance with the natural environment. So we need to find a way to swing that pendulum closer to the center.

Before we get into it, just a fun fact, Serena Williams, one of the most decorated tennis players in the world, also plays pickleball at the pro level.

In our 2024 Vision Forward, we have three main points that we want to cover:

1. Capacity
 - a. Identify tennis & pickleball hubs
 - i. Tennis: Lower Woodland (North); Amy Yee (South)
 - ii. Pickleball: East Green Lake (North); TBD (South)
 - b. Forward capital projects
 - i. Research funding plan for Amy Yee indoor expansion
 - ii. Magnuson: 8-10 PB courts
 - iii. Georgetown: 2-3 PB courts
 - c. Court improvements
 - i. Resurfacing 12 tennis courts in 2024
 - ii. High-density court structure
 - iii. "Shared distinct use" pilot
2. Utilization
 - a. Reservations for specific use of courts
 - b. Reduction of noise impacts
 - c. Partnerships to increase number of courts
3. Communication
 - a. Develop a Court Council
 - b. Meet quarterly
 - c. Online engagement hub

Hub Criteria

- Court Hubs
 - Sport specific facilities
 - Players can be part of a community
 - Facility may be indoor and/or outdoor
 - Distributed across the city
 - Desirable locations to ensure utilization

- Criteria
 - Minimum eight courts
 - Lighting
 - Proximity to transit and/or parking
 - Amenities to support facility
 - Safe “waiting” area
 - Circulation for bystanders
 - Accessible for players of all levels and abilities
- Layout
 - High-density court structure
 - USTA or USAP sanctioned
 - Space consideration for “queuing”

Garner discusses high-density spacing to maximize court use in the least amount of paved area. This arrangement could help fit more total courts on existing court slabs; however, baseline spacing is not able to be shrunk for safety reasons.

This is a bold idea, but what this spacing might allow in a court space is “shared distinct use” court structure. As I mentioned, when we dual stripe courts, what we have found is that often, even with our reservation system, this has left tennis players with no place to play. In effect, for instance, we have turned a 6 tennis court structure into a 12 pickleball court structure. With a slightly narrower spacing and some creativity, we might be able to turn that same structure into 4 dedicated tennis courts and 8 dedicated pickleball courts, with no dual striping, and we don’t need to rely on a reservation system. The idea is, frankly, everybody loses, but you only lose a little bit! This shared use system also scales up or down. Our next step will be to pilot this design in several locations and see if it takes some pressure off of our reservation system, and ease some tension between the two sports and the players themselves.

Utilization

- Pilot Dedicated Courts
 - Dedicated tennis and pickleball courts at single facilities separately
 - Pickleball – East Green Lake (North); TBD (South)
 - Tennis – Lower Woodland Park (North); Amy Yee Outdoor (South)
- Scheduling
 - Revise reservation structure
 - Monitor usage
- Pickleball Noise Reduction [BPRC members and SPR staff try out noise-reducing paddle]
 - Piloting noise reduction paddles developed with UW
 - Collaborate with USAP to develop noise standard
 - Designate specific courts for noise reduction paddles only (pilot will occur at 5th and Taylor courts)

Communication

- Set up Court Council
 - Develop charter

- Include stakeholders
- Meet quarterly
- Advance SPR's Vision Forward
- Set up Interactive Website
 - CitizenLab
 - Survey Users
 - Collect and respond to questions and comments
- Court Signage
 - Shared facility "Code of Conduct" (and other signage to direct users to dedicated tennis/PB courts)
 - QR codes to connect to Interactive Website
 - Host meet-ups and other community events

A few other announcements and notable topics to mention today:

- SPR is inviting The Pro Tour of Pickleball (PPA) to host an annual event at Amy Yee Tennis Center. SMPA has not been able to host a tournament in Seattle due to lack of number of courts in one location.
- SPR needs a standard for colors used on dual-striped courts.
- Inter-agency partnerships: 5th Ave & Taylor courts (SDOT), joint-use agreements (SPS)
- Private investment and/or public-private partnerships, including partnerships with local educational institutions (SPS, UW, Seattle U)
- Partnership with nearby jurisdictions, such as Shoreline

As I said, no real solutions today, but we hope that this presentation lays out a path towards generating some good solutions moving forward.

Diaz thanks Garner for the presentation, and adds that it pained him to have to remove the pickleball courts after the large event last year. It would be great to have a world-class pickleball facility in Seattle. It would also be great to have a USTA facility in Seattle so that we could host tennis tournaments in Seattle, and we have a partnership with USTA. The long-term vision is that we will have more and higher-quality dedicated pickleball and tennis courts, and that we will lean into public-private partnerships. SPR cannot solve this whole problem on its own; we hope that more public and private entities will continue to build and make courts available, because the demand is so high.

Umagat thanks Garner for the presentation and opens the floor for questions and comments from the commissioners.

Brockhaus asks if consideration for new courts has been given to parks that are in need of positive activation. Garner notes that this is a helpful element to consider, specifically noting E.C. Hughes Playground in West Seattle as a potential site for increased activation. Garner also notes that parks in "clusters" could make directional signage pointing to other single-use courts more viable.

Sheffer notes that activation in the downtown corridor is needed; parking garages are at 30%-50% capacity. SPR has been touring UW property downtown and will likely put pickleball courts on top of the Olympic Garage, and possibly the Convention Center, as well. The Taylor Street courts were the result of an intentional effort to deter some of the negative activity occurring there. Some locations

would require noise controls, and we are working with USAP to certify these noise-reducing paddles that we are piloting at Taylor to gain support nationally for that direction. Garner adds that USAP is willing to do sound testing at no charge.

Meng appreciates the presentation and notes that SPR appears to be taking a circumspect approach to a contentious issue. It is exciting to hear about plans to bring pickleball downtown, recognizing the challenges that both infrastructure and sound concerns will bring. Meng asks how “low-noise” designation of courts would be effected, and how enforcement would look. Sheffer notes that at the Taylor courts, a large banner sign will announce the rule and players will be able to check out low-noise paddles from three local businesses. There is no enforcement in place, we’re relying on the honor system.

Umagat thanks Garner and Sheffer again for the presentation. Diaz suggests foregoing the Superintendent’s Report for tonight in the interest of time; Burtzos will send the report to BPC members via email. Umagat agrees. With no other objections raised, the agenda is so amended.

Elliott Bay Connection Project

Diaz introduces the presentation.

The Elliott Bay Connections project is an exciting public-private partnership to connect, restore and revitalize public parks along the Seattle waterfront from Pier 62 north to the beach just south of Smith Cove. The project is slated for completion by June 2026 when Seattle hosts part of the World Cup soccer tournament and is funded entirely by philanthropic donations. Here to give us a preview is Planning and Capital Project Strategic Advisor David Graves.

David Graves, Planning and Capital Projects Strategic Advisor, delivers the presentation.

The Elliot Bay Connections (EBC) project primarily addresses improvements to existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the waterfront. EBC will help create a connected, green waterfront stretching from Pioneer Square to Smith Cove. At completion, following the opening of Waterfront Park, Seattle will enjoy 50 acres of connected public space and park along 3.5 miles of Elliott Bay coastline.

Elliott Bay Connections will:

- Create a new pedestrian and bicycle greenway connecting Waterfront Park at Pier 62 to the Olympic Sculpture Park at Pier 70 (see below)
- Restore and revitalize Myrtle Edwards and Centennial Parks (see below)

The Greenway will:

- Create a new protected, accessible multi-use path along the eastern side of Alaskan Way
- Replace obsolete trolley tracks with more than two acres of new public space
- Add new trees, shrubs, and ground cover plantings
- Provide safe street crossings and new lighting to enhance safety
- Add signage and wayfinding

The restoration and revitalization of Myrtle Edwards and Centennial Parks will:

- Restore and enhance lawns, plantings, and tree canopy
- Add needed park amenities including restrooms, concessions, wayfinding, picnic tables, seating, and lighting
- Restore two existing beach coves in Myrtle Edwards Park, enhancing shoreline habitat and improving direct public access to the water
- Add new play and recreational features
- Repair and improve the network of bike and pedestrian paths
- Honor and celebrate Indigenous narrative in architecture, plantings, and interpretation

Key principles for design

- Create a continuous, connected experience for park users along the Elliott Bay waterfront
- Respond to the public's desires for park

The goal is to begin construction early in 2025 and have the project completed in time for the World Cup in summer of 2026.

Mays asks if Graves anticipates any issues with pedestrian/wheeled traffic related to directional flow. Graves acknowledges that this may be an issue, as with any multi-use path, but notes that the changes to the paths are fairly minimal and should be improvements, rather than confusions.

Brockhaus asks how security will be provided or accounted for, noting that security at Waterfront Park will be provided for using public funding. Graves notes that no specific measures for increased security are yet part of the project plan; this connections project is not intended to be quite as “hands-on” managed as Waterfront Park. Diaz shares that an ongoing donation can be used to help with security costs, and that blue security/alert lights are part of the plan already.

Umagat commends the inclusion of safety and adaptive inclusion elements, noting that not every park user is able to access amenities the same way. Umagat points out that the points of intersection between the pedestrian and bicycle paths are the greatest potential points of conflict, and encourages additional thinking on how to keep these areas safer.

Umagat asks for the full EBC presentation to be made available for BPRC members.

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners Leadership Election

Burtzos provides brief overview of BPRC leadership position and historic traditions, and introduces nominations for Umagat and Brockhaus. [Nominations were garnered from BPRC members between meetings].

Mays moves that Umagat and Brockhaus serve as co-chairs for the 2024-2025 BPRC appointment year, ending March 31, 2025. Meng seconds the motion. There is no further discussion. Umagat calls for a vote. The vote is 3-0 in favor of appointing Umagat to the position of co-chair (Umagat abstaining); the vote is 3-0 in favor of appointing Brockhaus to the position of co-chair (Brockhaus abstaining).

Adopted: The BPRC appoints Justin Umagat and Amy Brockhaus to the position of co-chair to a term ending March 31, 2025.

Hoff notes that next month, there will be some new members joining the Board.

Umagat shares his gratitude and intention to help foster a community of commissioners, particularly with several new members ready to join.

Old & New Business

Brockhaus reminds BPRC members to attend the ARC Fund the Fun Breakfast on April 30th.

There being no further business, Umagat adjourns the meeting at 8:11 pm.