



# Minutes | Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, March 26, 2026

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

## Attendance

Present: Flinn, Meng, Baum (co-chair), Nakamura (co-chair), Mays, Diamond, Chisholm Clare, Lerer, Haile-Leul, Bakker, Zhang

Absent: Werner

SPR Staff and Presenters: Finnegan, Bang, Catague, Hoff, Burtzos

## Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Nakamura calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and provides logistical instructions for in-person and remote attendees.

Commissioners and SPR staff introduce themselves.

Nakamura reads the land acknowledgement.

Nakamura introduces the consent agenda: meeting minutes from the 2/26/26 BPRC meeting and tonight's meeting agenda. Mays moves to approve both items; Baum seconds. Nakamura calls for a vote. The vote is unanimous in favor. The consent agenda is adopted.

***Adopted: 2/26/26 BPRC Meeting Minutes***

***Adopted: 3/26/26 BPRC Meeting Agenda***

## Public Comment

The BPRC heard public testimony on the following topics:

- SPR athletic fields rain-out policy;
- Coleman Playground and adaptive playfield advocacy;
- Duck feeding concerns at Green Lake;
- Park user behavior at Denny Blaine Park

Finnegan briefly responds to public commenters.

## Superintendent's Report

Michele Finnegan, Interim SPR Superintendent, delivers the report.

Finnegan presents some upcoming key dates for the department.

Carson Jones, Facilities Division Director, and Mike Plympton, Aquatics Manager, present details on the ongoing Queen Anne Pool maintenance closure and plans for program reallocations for 2026 and 2027.

Mays asks if UW has any capacity to absorb additional use at their pools; Plympton is unsure but very doubtful.

Nakamura asks about impact to registration and scholarships. Plympton explains how SPR is maintaining its prioritization guidelines for these programs.

Baum asks if there is any way to continue operations until summer, despite the pool's leaks. Jones and Finnegan clarify that the scale of the issues make this infeasible.

Plympton addresses other questions regarding team pool use, scholarships, and potential service gaps due to the closure of Queen Anne Pool.

## Partnership Spotlight: Woodland Park Zoo Long-Range Plan

Katie Bang, Senior Director of Facilities and the Built Environment (WPZ), delivers the report.

Bang and Gregg Leicester from WPZ's planning and community outreach team present updates on the Zoo's strategic plan. The Zoo aims to maintain and improve main path loop structure to include functional hubs, and to establish activation points between hubs to enhance guest experience. Leicester emphasizes the importance of circulation, sustainability, and right-sizing guest amenities, while keeping focus on animal wellness and care.

Additional emphasis has been given to the entry points, greenway, and parking areas, to add a sense of arrival and connection to the neighborhood. Some elements of the proposed plans include additional lighting, wayfinding, artwork, gardens, external-facing exhibits, a coffee shop that does not require Zoo admission, and parking lot improvements.

Further community engagement will continue through May 2026:

- Returning to communities we sought input from during front-end engagement
- Emphasizing how that input has informed the plan's progress
- Casting a broader net using creative methods to engage with both current zoo visitors and those who have yet to visit
- Providing opportunities for engagement with communities have not been as represented

WPZ will return to BPRC for another update in September. Bang pauses for questions from the Board.

Finnegan asks for confirmation that WPZ will work with War Garden Park stakeholders prior to making any formal plans for alterations; Bang confirms.

Flinn commends the plan to integrate public-facing businesses like a coffee shop, into the design and recommends having a contingency plan in case the business does not succeed. Bang agrees.

Meng asks how WPZ envisions a cohesive greenway that abuts the parking areas. Bang describes how the current plan allocates space for cars, pedestrians, and bicycle/multimodal transit to coexist in this space, with the understanding that serious bike commuters are likely to use the extant protected bike lane.

Baum asks for clarification on off-season experiences. Bang clarifies that the Zoo will remain open during the winter, but the redesign will allow for a more intentional, shorter visit to experience cool-weather exhibits. Baum also encourages the Zoo team to consider ways to design a variety of different loop patterns (so that visitors can take different paths through the Zoo). Bang affirms.

Zhang notes the lack of easy public transportation to WPZ, particularly for visitors from the south end of Seattle, and encourages Bang to prioritize access in whatever way possible. This is especially needed for families with children. Bang agrees that access is an issue and while WPZ is prioritizing where possible, notes that SPR may have influence beyond what the Zoo can leverage. Flinn asks if WPZ could run private shuttles to and from a transit station, like some of the large companies downtown do; Bang notes that WPZ is limited by funding but the idea has been discussed.

## Summer of Safety 2026

Daisy Catague, Deputy Superintendent – Parks and Recreational Services, delivers the presentation.

The purpose of today’s presentation is to provide an overview of SPR’s upcoming “Summer of Safety” plans, and to solicit the Board’s input and feedback. These plans aim to create safer, more accessible parks and public spaces this summer and are supported by operational changes, including updated park and boat ramp hours, to help reinforce a consistent and welcoming environment for all.

The SOS runs May 1 through September 30. The City’s summer safety plan is grounded in four key strategies:

- Implement environmental and capital changes to prevent crime and enhance accessibility.
- Increase City presence in high-priority parks, including proactive enforcement measures.
- Re-establish Park safety norms.
- Evaluate current actions and establish a continuous improvement process.

Sites for this program were selected based on several criteria, including SPD analysis of call volume, prior experience, and community feedback. SPR will coordinate with SPD to monitor activity throughout summer. We assume a flexible approach to address emerging hot spots. Our target sites to begin include:

- Cal Anderson Park
- Alki Beach & Don Armeni Boat Ramp
- Golden Gardens & Eddie Vine Boat Ramp
- Warren G. Magnuson Park & boat launch
- Seward Park & Lake Washington Blvd

The focus will be on education and enforcement of SPR rules to ensure all visitors can enjoy City parks. Some behaviors are year-round issues, such as off-leash dogs, while others spike in the summer months.

SPR will be implementing a variety of strategies through this program, including a social media campaign, new sign and gate installations, nightly gate closures, focused ranger patrols, ongoing check-ins and coordination with SPD, and an overnight security pilot program. The department may move or relocate this pilot, but does not have the funding to add more and more sites.

Meng asks if SPR has CCTV at any Parks sites. Catague clarifies that none of the boat ramp sites have cameras.

Catague provides specific information regarding the Park Ranger hours, staffing level, and targeted enforcement assignments (i.e., for special events, beach fire patrols, and emphasis patrols in coordination with SPD).

Nakamura asks if other groups or entities are involved in emphasis patrols (or similar programs) at various parks. Catague notes that some parks and areas of town (i.e., Little Saigon, the Waterfront parks) have partner organizations that provide safety and community engagement programs.

## Beautiful Games

Daisy Catague, Deputy Superintendent – Parks and Recreational Services, delivers the presentation.

The "Beautiful Game Series" is Seattle Parks and Recreation's (SPR) approach to ensure the FIFA World Cup's impact is felt in every neighborhood. SPR's vision moves the World Cup experience beyond the stadium walls and into the heart of Seattle's neighborhoods, ensuring that the event serves residents directly, regardless of their proximity to Lumen Field. By activating 20+ community centers, 10 aquatic facilities, parks and outdoor spaces, we are creating a safe, inclusive, and vibrant environment for residents and visitors alike.

SPR is committed to showing how we promote healthy people, a thriving environment and vibrant community to the thousands of visitors we're expecting for this event.

By "reimagining" our established service lines, we are delivering a world-class experience with optimized resources to deliver massive, citywide impact that utilize our current staff expertise, facilities, and community trust. During our "Beautiful Game" Series, community will be treated to opportunities like, World Pup Cup, where furry-friends pitch in a local park; Stitch on the Pitch, where our community knit and crochet fan soccer scarves; legacy sports and walking soccer, where our elders engage in physical activity; and family Zumba where families exercise to international musical playlists.

Additionally, we are awarding grants for "Ethnic Cultural Events" to ensure our diverse communities see their heritage reflected in the festivities.

SPR plans many World Cup soccer-related activations at parks and recreation facilities throughout the city:

- 7 Outdoor Watch Parties
- 12 Indoor Watch Parties
- 2 Soccer Jamborees
- 62 Reimagined Programs (recreation programming such as classes, swims, camps, etc.)

Flinn asks how these events will be communicated to the public. Catague clarifies that SPR Comms will be building out the engagement platform for these events.

SPR will be providing additional maintenance including trash removal, restroom cleaning, graffiti removal and repairs far beyond SPR's base budget. There will also be extra demand for grounds and facilities maintenance in ensuring assets are operational and ready leading up to and immediately following these events. This will entail commitment of time, resources and coordination for our employees as they enter the busiest time of year during the summer season.

Park Rangers will provide increased presence in Downtown Parks & Unity Loop during each 2026 Seattle FIFA World Cup match and outdoor watch parties to promote positive park use, deter negative activity, and engage with visitors.

The Beautiful Game Grant for soccer and futsal programming running between June 24 – July 19 as part of official World Cup community activations will provide awards up to \$15,000.

Projects are underway at Westlake Park to improve lighting and guest experience; South Lake Union Park to replace the grass, boardwalk, and add plantings; Freeway Park to renovate the restroom, replace benches and upgrade wayfinding signs; and Prefontaine Place to upgrade the fountain.

BPRC members point out their favorite upcoming programs.

Meng asks if the Westlake Park renovations are on track to complete before the World Cup. Finnegan affirms.

## Old & New Business

Burtzos and Hoff provide timing details regarding the upcoming BPRC retreat.

Nakamura clarifies process for attendance at the upcoming SPS capital project meeting.

Baum reminds SPR staff of previous request for briefing regarding SPR Ranger interactions and follow-up briefing on SPS capital project.

The Board briefly discusses subcommittee roles, responsibilities, and upcoming work.

Haile-Leul requests information at a future meeting regarding scholarship opportunities and allocation for youth and teen programs.

Nakamura adjourns the meeting at 7:52 PM.