



Minutes | Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, June 11, 2026

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

Attendance

Present: Flinn, Baum, Chisholm Clare, Mays, Lerer, Diamond, Stonecipher, Bakker, Werner, Nakamura

Absent: Haile-Leul, Zhang, Meng

SPR Staff and Presenters: Finnegan, Catague, Jainga, Alvarado, Hoff, Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Baum 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.

Baum reads the land acknowledgement.

Baum introduces the consent agenda: tonight's meeting agenda. Baum asks for unanimous consent to adopt the agenda; without objection, the consent agenda is adopted.

Adopted: 6/11/26 BPRC Meeting Agenda

Public Comment

The BPRC heard public testimony on the following topics:

- SeaFair permitting related to the Blue Angels planes;
- Cal Anderson Park multi-use court outreach;
- Denny Blaine Park use and behavior.

Superintendent's Report

Michele Finnegan, Interim Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, delivers the report.

Department Updates

Seattle Japanese Garden: Due to ongoing planned maintenance, the Seattle Japanese Garden will be closed from June 22 until July 27.

Magnuson Park Buildings 2 & 138: These buildings at Magnuson Park (the gatehouse and the double airplane hangar) are undergoing capital improvement projects to repair damages to their roofs.

Hubbard Homestead Park: We are happy to announce that the Kraken are investing in this park to build a new sports court! That project began on June 1.

A.B. Ernst Park Addition: Ernst Park is expanding, incorporating a land-banked parcel next to the existing park site. Construction on this new site begins in July.

Operations Updates

Green Flag Award – Employee of the Year: You may remember that two years ago SPR, specifically Seward Park, was awarded a Green Flag Award for environmental management, the only public North American park to receive this honor. This year, our employee Gail Hering received an individual Green Flag award for her service and dedication.

Summer Camps and Licensed Full Day Childcare: In partnership with the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), our summer camp and childcare programs are getting started! Programs start at the end of June and run through August.

Superintendent Feedback Loop

As promised, I wanted to circle back on topics from previous meetings and some updates that Board members have asked about.

Racquet Sports Strategy: Throughout June, we are conducting additional in-person engagement to receive feedback at four locations:

- West Seattle – June 23, Dakota Place Park Building, 6:30 – 8:00 pm
- Southeast Seattle – June 25, Mt. Baker Rowing & Sailing, 6:30 – 8:00 pm
- West Seattle – June 27, Magnolia Community Center, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
- North Seattle – June 30, Loyal Heights Community Center, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

Lower Woodland Park: SPS has announced its preferred field option. SPR will be working with Co-Chairs to get this item scheduled at multiple BPRC meetings for review and recommendation.

Cheasty Project Update: As a refresher, Phase 1 (the South Loop) was completed fall 2023; Phase 2 (the North Loop) was completed Summer 2025. As part of a 2019 mediated agreement with the community group we agreed to a 3-year post construction monitoring plan. The South Loop monitoring (2023–2026) available on website. SPR will continue to monitor the whole site through mid-2028 (3 years after North Loop). From the initial monitoring, the impacts we have seen are negligible, but we are happy to bring a briefing to the Board if you would like.

Update on BPRC vacancies: We have 4 nominations to this Board scheduled for consideration at our Council committee meeting on June 17, so we will update you when we see how that goes! This would fill all of the remaining Board vacancies.

SPR Annual Report available by 6/16: This is the same date as MPD Board Meeting (4:00 PM)

Future briefings in the works:

- Racquet Sports Strategy
- AMWO/Find it Fix It
- GL/Evans Update
- Golf Update
- South Capital Parks Plan Update
- Partner Spotlight:
 - Arboretum and Botanic Gardens
 - Friends of Athletic Fields

Opportunities to Engage

The *Green Seattle Partnership* is holding Summer Volunteer Work Parties! GSP is hosting 30+ community events and restoration work events between now and our next meeting. Check the schedule at [GreenSeattle.org](https://www.greenseattle.org).

Seattle Beautiful Game Series: A reminder that we're offering 100+ soccer related activations citywide. Check the City website or the Parks Beautiful Games page for more information.

Mini Golf at Olympic Sculpture Park: Seattle Art Museum is offering a one-of-a-kind mini golf course on the waterfront this summer! Mini golf opens June 17th and operates from noon-8pm Wednesday-Sunday.

Center City Cinema: Movies in the Park bring people together for unforgettable nights of entertainment.

- Free & Accessible (7:30 pm start time)
- Bring Your Own Blankets & Chairs
- Food Trucks and Some Locations
- 7 Locations: Ballard Commons, Cal Anderson, Seven Hills, Denny Park, Freeway Park, Hing Hay, Lake Union

Finnegan takes questions from the Board.

Werner asks if Board members have access to Finnegan's presentation slides. Burtzos confirms.

Werner affirms that he would like to see the 2025 Cheasty monitoring report. Werner also asks what the feedback and meeting process will be regarding the Lincoln HS/Lower Woodland Park project. Finnegan explains.

Chisholm Clare requests a future briefing on SeaFair permitting. Finnegan affirms.

Baum asks for clarification regarding Cal Anderson Park sport court maintenance. Finnegan clarifies.

Flinn asks where feedback meetings concerning the racquet sports strategy have been located. Finnegan notes that these locations are listed on the online engagement hub.

Baum seconds Werner's call for a briefing on Cheasty greenbelt but acknowledges the busy BPRC schedule. Baum emphasizes the desire to schedule the SPS/Lincoln HS field project discussion as early as possible.

Partnership Spotlight: Downtown Tournaments

Andy Sheffer, Deputy Superintendent – Planning & Capital Development Branch, delivers the presentation.

The Downtown Tournament series is an opportunity to celebrate our partners who make our downtown come alive for two weekends every summer. These partners include the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), whose Executive Director Jackie Hillseth is here with us today, the Seattle Parks Foundation (SPF), represented today by Caroline Villanova, Director of Government Relations and Community Impact, and Patrick Pirtle from SDOT's Public Space Management program.

Coming out of the pandemic closures, SDOT and SPR collaborated on the Downtown Tournaments project as a way to increase foot traffic downtown, encourage better health outcomes, build community, and foster neighborhood connections downtown. The first step was identifying what streets could feasibly host these events when considering slope and transit stops. Over the following years we have developed some strategies for success:

- Iterative Improvements: We regularly responded to community feedback to improve the experience of the place
- Coordinated Management: SDOT worked with Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) and SPR to develop a management strategy for the courts
- People Streets, Public Spaces: Learning from pilot projects to build upon SDOT's ability to develop public space that address community needs

The Downtown Tournaments leverage the power of play to foster youth development, lifelong wellness, and social cohesion, uniting communities by breaking down geographic, social, and demographic barriers. Our three-pronged approach utilizes street basketball, soccer, and hockey to engage youth and showcase urban athleticism and accessibility. We also capitalize on pickleball, the nation's fastest-growing sport, to engage community members in accessible outdoor play. Finally, tournament scheduling creates consistent, well-managed events that turn dormant spaces into hubs of activity.

For these events, the Office of Economic Development (OED), SPR, and SDOT provide the necessary City support to ARC and SPF to carry off the event. OED handles the city-wide permitting in coordination with other city-wide events; SPR coordinates amongst all partners and provides equipment, including bleachers, and SDOT coordinates permitting on street closures.

Sheffer provides brief history of the event as it has changed from 2023-2026.

Hillseth discusses ARC's aims in the context of the event:

- Accessible Logistics: Tournaments focused on younger players with focus on families. Lowering barriers to entry for youth downtown (Free parking, meals, and shuttles)
- Skill Mentorship: Clinics and social engagement between youth and college and professional players throughout tournament
- Healthy Habits: Promoting consistent physical activity as a lifelong foundation for wellness; Promoting healthy eating habits (Free lunches and snacks during tournament)

Hillseth provides additional details regarding site expansion and funding partners from 2023-2026.

Villanova provides additional details regarding the emphasis on pickleball, noting that it has a low barrier to entry, is accessible for players from many generations, and is easy to adapt to tournament-style play. Villanova quickly describes lessons learned from 2023, 2024, and 2025 events, highlighting the need to streamline the sign-up and court rotation process, and describes changes that will be implemented for 2026, including dates, location, court sign-up procedure, and other changes.

Villanova concludes with a call to action for BPRC members to thank and support local businesses, volunteer, and spread the word about the event.

Sheffer recaps the presentation and thanks Pirtle, Hillseth, and Villanova for their partnership and for their assistance with this presentation. Sheffer pauses for questions from the Board.

Mays asks for comparison to Spokane's 3-on-3 basketball tournament, and for clarification of street parameters for 2026 event. Pirtle clarifies, noting that the target age for Seattle's event is a little younger than Spokane's.

Baum asks what the long-term vision for this event is – whether to add locations, expand the single event, etc. Pirtle notes that his team is continually looking for other areas and ways to bring play to the streets, and partners to make those events happen. Sheffer adds that the goal is to achieve the event excellently, not necessarily to expand endlessly.

Park Ranger Program Update

Daisy Catague, Deputy Superintendent: Parks and Recreational Services, and Jon Jainga, Community Services Manager, deliver the report.

Catague introduces Kim Alvarado, Interim Director of the Citywide Services division. Alvarado clarifies her role within the organization.

Catague briefly refreshes BPRC members on Park Ranger roles and responsibilities. Rangers:

- Educate community members and visitors about Seattle's park system and its code of conduct;
- Serve as ambassadors and provide information about the park system and surrounding areas;
- Support enforcement of park code in non-emergency situations and coordinate additional services

The Park Ranger program was geographically limited until 2024 due to provisions in the Seattle Police Officer's Guild (SPOG) contract. Once that contract was renegotiated, we were able to train and deploy Park Rangers to parks citywide. Last year, we staffed up the program to 28 Rangers, and now we have about one year of experience with this new model.

Jainga explains the deployment model for Park Rangers. Rangers are deployed from 6:00 am – 9:30 pm in winter months and 9:00 am – 12:00 am in summer months. Teams have some "hotspot" emphasis areas, but also follow designated patrol circuits, so all areas of the city do receive Ranger attention. Catague provides additional detail regarding deployment prioritization.

SPR has tested and launched a new Park Ranger application (full deployment Q1 2026); this app allows for incidents to be tracked in GIS. Since this tool allows for GPS data to be used, it is also highly accurate. Catague notes that there is always room for improvement regarding data collection, which means continuing to work with other City partners to refine this tool, including potential integration with FAS Animal Control, SPD incident report, and illegal vending report tools from SDOT and FAS.

Flinn asks for clarification on the level of reporting detail of the GIS tool. Jainga clarifies.

Nakamura asks about the integration of private security companies into SPR data sharing. Jainga notes that SPR is not yet able to share their systems but other groups, both public and private, do have other information tracking methods that can be added to SPR's system after the fact.

Jainga provides data on Park Ranger encounters with community so far in 2026, noting distinction between engagement and education contacts, and enforcement actions. Rangers really emphasize engagement and education contacts, and the data reflect this; only 29 written citations have been issued so far in 2026, compared to nearly 3,000 general engagement contacts. The largest enforcement category is off-leash dogs.

Chisholm Clare asks for details about enforcement contact protocol; Jainga explains and walks through an example contact. Chisholm Clare asks for information on follow-up contact efficacy in a later report. Jainga agrees. Catague notes that voluntary compliance is extremely effective.

Diamond asks what the threshold for determining what merits a written citation, and also if SPR maintains any demographic data for written citations (versus verbal warnings). Jainga clarifies that Rangers follow a protocol beginning with seeking voluntary compliance, then verbal warning, then written citation. Jainga notes that this process significantly narrows down who receives written citations, and also that many or most of the recipients of these citations are well-known to the Rangers (even on first-name terms) prior to receiving these citations. Any identifying information collected by Rangers is voluntarily given by community members;

Rangers are not law enforcement and cannot compel compliance. Mays asks if Rangers take photographs of incidents. Jainga confirms that this occurs only in cases that present a safety or security risk.

Baum expresses some concern that Rangers are *de facto* taking the responsibility of animal control. Jainga notes that these are the issues that Rangers encounter at the parks and are often responding to calls from athletics coaches.

Finnegan adds that Ranger safety is a primary factor in Ranger encounters; if escalating a conversation or confrontation might create an unsafe situation for the Ranger, they are trained to disengage and call SPD for support. Catague notes that the goal is to remain human- and education-centered.

Jainga emphasizes that one goal of the program is to deter negative behavior through good customer service, visible Ranger presence, and education. Jainga provides several recent examples of this dynamic in practice.

Chisholm Clare asks if all Rangers are CPR trained. Jainga confirms.

Chisholm Clare asks if there are plans to expand the Ranger cohort in the future. Jainga notes that expansion is the hope.

Chisholm Clare asks how community members can request Rangers to their local park. Jainga clarifies that people can call the work order line and put in a request.

Stonecipher asks for additional information on Ranger training and retention. Jainga clarifies that all Rangers receive an in-house six-week training, with collaboration from SPD, SPR, and the City Attorney's office.

Baum asks how Jainga would like to measure success of the program over time if SPR was able to measure it. Jainga would like to compare 911 calls during years and shifts when Rangers would now have been present but were not at the time (i.e., 9:00 am – 3:00 pm from 2020 until 2023) as compared to now. Another metric Jainga mentions is applications of Narcan and in particular repeated applications as drug use has evolved over the last few years. Finnegan adds concepts like “athletic field use being able to continue as planned” – i.e., non-emergency concepts that may be difficult to track via hard data, but is nonetheless downstream of parks code enforcement.

Old & New Business

Diamond asks what role SPR is playing in this year's Juneteenth events. Finnegan clarifies that SPR is not leading the programming this year but is supporting the programming via permitting and location hosting.

Baum adjourns the meeting at 7:55 pm.