



## Minutes | Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Webex

Thursday, February 9, 2022

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

### Attendance

Present: Contreras, Meng, Mays, Umagat, Herrera, Farmer, Brockhaus

SPR Staff: Diaz, Finnegan, Jones, Ng, Blackshire, Elmer, Jose, Hoff, Burtzos

### Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Co-chair Herrera calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

BPRC members and SPR presentation staff introduce themselves around the table.

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.

Herrera introduces two consent items for discussion: tonight's agenda and the minutes from the 1/26/23 meeting of the Board. There is no discussion. Brockhaus moves to adopt both items into the record; Mays seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

***Adopted: 1/26/23 BPRC Meeting Minutes; 2/9/23 Meeting Agenda***

### Public Comment

Mike Shaughnessy – Save the Stone Cottage – I'm here to introduce this project to the new Board members and to the new Superintendent. About 20 years ago, Clay Eals of the Southwest Seattle Historical Society, former Superintendent Ken Bounds, and others met with the owners of the cottage and began the conversation about preserving the building. 15 years later, the owners were forced to sell, and we approached them and succeeded in relocating the cottage into storage at the Port of Seattle. We have made great headway with SPR regarding relocating this cottage onto Alki Beach somewhere, but progress stalled when the pandemic hit.

Deb Barker – Save the Stone Cottage – Before the pandemic, we presented a plan to the BPRC that involved gaining ownership of the stone cottage, finding an interim location for it, and then a Phase II that would involve returning the cottage to the Alki community. Boards often hear pie-in-the-sky ideas from groups, and this may have seemed like one of them. The difference is that we have moved the cottage. We have a track record of accomplishing our goals, with an advocacy award from Historic Seattle under our belts. Let's do this.

Clay Eals – Save the Stone Cottage – I want to put the stone cottage preservation effort into a larger context. Our historical society has a long history of preserving Seattle's historical treasures. The stone cottage is

worthy of preservation, and its logical home is the beach from which its 15,000 stones came. It is an invaluable asset, and it is available to SPR free of charge. We trust that SPR will be guided by the values of identity, legacy, and hope in determining the path forward with the cottage.

Diaz thanks the speakers for their comments. SPR staff will be meeting with Save the Stone Cottage representatives next week to restart the conversation that was paused by the pandemic.

## Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Diaz delivers the report.

Welcome Board members, staff and members of the public.

**Black History Month:** As you may know, February is Black History Month, and here in Seattle we are proud to have more than a dozen of our parks named after local and national African American leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our Seattle Parks and Recreation communications team will be highlighting those parks on our website and on social media throughout the month of February.

Late last month we got an early start by holding celebration events in honor of Dr. King at Southwest Teen Life Center, Garfield Teen Life Center, Meadowbrook Teen Life Center, and South Park Community Center. Over 260 young people engaged in film screenings and discussions, guest speakers/performers, open mics, arts and crafts, basketball tournaments, and civil rights movement-themed scavenger hunts.

**AMWO Integrates with Find It, Fix It App:** Beginning last Friday, SPR's Asset Management Work Order System (AMWO) integrated with the City's popular Find It, Fix It app providing a more efficient system to respond to customer requests. Find It, Fix It allows city residents to report potholes, graffiti, abandoned vehicles or something in need of repair via a mobile phone app. AMWO is SPR's internal system to track maintenance requests and repair work. Under the new integrated system, when a request is made about an SPR asset, a service request will automatically be generated and reviewed by a dispatcher to create an associated work order for the appropriate SPR shop. In the past, a City dispatcher would manually enter the request into the AMWO system via email. The new integration will also inform the requestor about the status of work orders. Kudos to SPR's AMWO Team, Finance and Administrative Services Customer Service Division, and Seattle IT for making this happen!

**MLB All-Star Game:** We are excited about our partnership with Major League Baseball. This July, Seattle and the Mariners will be hosting the 2023 MLB All-Star Game. An important part of All-Star week activities are community legacy projects that support the host city's community-based programs. The Mariners and SPR staff have identified two potential Seattle Parks and Recreation fields – at Garfield and Rainier playfields – for major improvements.

**Hiring:** Hiring processes are ramping as we begin to fill vacancies plus a host of new positions funded through the Park District.

In mid-January our Parks and Environment Division hosted a hiring fair at the Mount Baker Rowing & Sailing Center where 45 candidates were interviewed for 28 maintenance positions. So far, a total of 12 people have been hired.

**Recreation:** The Recreation Division is also planning a few special hiring events including an in-person interview day on Feb. 28 at Rainier Beach Community Center for some of our new Park District positions and current vacancies. Later in the spring we will hold a Recruitment Fair focused on summer hiring.

**Seattle Mentors update:** We will be bringing discussion of this program to the Board for input in the future, but we are excited to announce the hiring of Romell Witherspoon as our director of youth mentorship. Born and raised in Seattle, Romell understands the challenges for youth in this city and has some great ideas for this program and is working on a 30-day plan.

**Swim Seattle:** This is a key initiative for SPR in 2023. We hope to significantly reduce the incidence of drownings, particularly among the BIPOC community. We have a new partnership with the YMCA to utilize their pools and get young people learning to swim. We may also partner with King County and the City of Bellevue.

**Greater & Greener update:** We had a great meeting last week with our local host team of partners and with a visiting team from the City Park Alliance. Paula and Jasmine Jose will provide more details later in the agenda.

**Lifting the City's Covid Vaccine Mandate:** As COVID transmission and hospitalization rates continue to remain low, the Mayor announced earlier this week that the City is lifting COVID vaccination requirements. Informed by Public Health – Seattle and King County, and issued in partnership with King County, vaccine mandates will end for employees, contractor, and volunteers. Employees who test positive still must follow isolation and notification guidelines. Masks are still available to all staff.

**Superintendent community engagement:** I participated in a night tour of Cal Anderson Park with Councilmember Lewis and community park partners, International District representatives, Mt. Calvary Church, other BIPOC organizations and partners. We discussed community concerns and potential park improvements.

**Park Maintenance:** I'm so impressed with the volunteer work parties that come together to help keep our parks clean and taken care of. These groups meet to collect trash, plant trees and native plants, and many other tasks in concert with our staff. These work parties really help the department accomplish so much more than we could on our own.

We are going to be partnering with the Office of Arts and Culture on a public request for proposals concerning artistic transformations of our comfort stations. As we build and renovate more comfort stations, we hope they can become a positive feature of the park instead of just a utility.

Ballfield preparation is under way at Lincoln Park and other sites. We're getting ready for the spring sports season!

**Specialized Programs:** This unit of Seattle Parks and Recreation offers year-round activities for people with disabilities. The program provides recreational opportunities for individuals who may choose to participate in activities specifically designed and conducted by trained staff to best meet their needs. We offer Sensory Friendly Saturdays for participants ages 6-21. Engage in games, science, art, music, sensory exploration, indoor and outdoor activities, and some free play. Activities are fun, purposeful, and emphasize each person's strengths to promote independence. This program is designed for youth who need a high level of support to transition, complete activities, and socialize.

**Lifeguard Training:** Ballard Pool recently hosted a Lifeguard Training class. The instructors made it in during snowy, icy weather to train a new group of 5 lifeguards. Attendees ranged from a 15-year-old volunteer to a 68-year-old retired person who always dreamed of being a lifeguard.

**Basketball Clinic:** A clinic at High Point Community Center was a big success with 45 youth participants! The clinic was in partnership with Highpoint Community Center, Marvin Thomas Memorial Fund, Kids4Camp Foundation, and All Community Productions.

### **Planning and Development**

We currently have four projects advertised for construction bid:

- Don Armeni Boat Ramp: This project renovates two existing, failing boat ramps. Work includes demolition of existing concrete abutment, pile driving and installation of steel piles, installation of new concrete abutment, procuring and installation of concrete floating docks and hardware.
- Pratt Fine Arts Center Roof: Roof replacement project
- North Rainier Land-banked Site: This Seattle Park District project will create a new neighborhood park in south Seattle. It was funded to provide the community access to open space within this high-density urban neighborhood.
- Be'er Sheva Park Redevelopment: Improvements to the park's lakeside include greater shoreline access, walkways, and art installations.

Last meeting I shared with you our new departmental organization chart, so you are aware that we have a new Deputy Superintendent focused on capital project delivery, Mike Schwindeller. Mike is putting together a work plan and I will ask him to come meet the Board soon so that you can answer any questions you might have.

Herrera thanks Diaz for the report.

### **Seattle Management Association Awards – Seattle Parks and Recreation Recipients**

Diaz explains that due to a miscommunication, SPR employees were not able to participate in the city-wide awards ceremony. The department wants to take a few minutes to acknowledge these employees for their tremendous work and recognize them before the Board today.

Deputy Superintendent Finnegan leads the presentation.

We were delighted and extremely proud to learn that several of our stellar SPR employees won special and very well-deserved recognition from the Seattle Management Association late last year. We'd like to honor these amazing team members tonight in front of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

#### **SMA Emerging Leader Award: Christopher Powell**

Chris Powell works in our Athletic Scheduling Office and over the past few years, he has forged a strong relationship with one of our major community partners: Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Chris successfully negotiated the renewal of the 5-year SPS and SPR Joint Use Agreement, which covers operational aspects of rentals at SPR and SPS athletic fields, schools, community centers, pools, and tennis courts. The Joint Use Agreement encompasses use and scheduling of 250+ fields, more than 200,000 hours of youth and adult use and thousands of permits issued.

Chris worked hard to strengthen the terms of the new agreement by including a stronger commitment to equity and underserved communities, determining how SPS and SPR could best leverage capital dollars to support athletic facilities, and simplifying the SPR and SPS booking request process for fields, pools, and tennis

facilities. Chris worked collaboratively with many stakeholders at the City and at SPS to get it approved. Chris exemplified the City's core competencies in accountability & action, equity & inclusion, communication, service, and teamwork.

Aside from this project, Chris successfully negotiated a Montlake Field agreement with Seattle Prep that was approved by the City Council and he was instrumental in developing a community drop-in program to increase community access of athletic fields.

Chris brings professionalism and stellar customer service to his work every day working with diverse community groups and troubleshooting and resolving conflicts so they don't escalate further. He is a pleasure to work with and the City's athletic scheduling program operates at a very high standard thanks to Chris' efforts.

Our congratulations and heartfelt thanks to Chris Powell!

#### **SMA Community Service Award: SPR/SPS Strike Response Team**

Team Members: Sherrie Belt, Susan Lee, Connor Durham, Damien Hicks, LaShawn Street, Trevor Gregg, Barb Wade, Tim Pretare, Temesgen Habte, Tianna Scott, Lori Chisholm, Isabel Mireles, Kelly Hudson, Anna Barron, Katie Sifford, Andy Sheffer, Marissa Rousselle Jackie Jainga Hyllseth

During the brief teacher's strike at Seattle Public Schools last September, Seattle Parks and Recreation distributed food to over 2,000 school-age kids over 2 days. The operation was a phenomenal success because our staff worked together and relied on one another to ensure that the children were fed. It was another great example of the amazing things we can achieve when we collaborate and support one another.

Facilities staff set up equipment for distribution to the crew quarters over the weekend: tables with instructions, count sheets, sign in sheets, COVID protocol kits, vests, tables, chairs and tents. Everything was ready and set out on the loading dock for an early Monday operation.

Recreation staff stood up 8 "Activity Hubs" to provide over 1,200 children with active learning for working parents and meals throughout the day. Children rotated through stations that focused on reading, and active learning.

Special thanks to our partners at the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) for stepping up big time, repurposing staff in the school-age care programs to help with the activity hubs on those 2 days.

Parks and Environment staff received the equipment and distributed it to over 38 sites. Grounds maintenance staff set up the distribution centers, received the meals, and met the volunteers. Staff stood in for volunteers when there were "no shows."

Superintendent's Office staff coordinated with the Emergency Operations Center, drafted a safety plan, set up on-line training, and coordinated messaging and mayoral visits to the sites.

Thanks to this great group of professionals for their amazing teamwork!

#### **SMA City Government Service Award: Sandra Jackson-James**

Sandra Jackson-James works in SPR's Recreation Division. Through her work in the department and a long history of volunteer work in the community, Sandra exemplifies service to the community.

Sandra was nominated by her daughter Jaren James, who works for the Seattle Public Library. Writes Jaren: “My mother’s service has been truly exceptional to the communities she has served and continues to serve. Sandra is also the beloved mother of 5 children, a 15-year veteran with the United States Army, and has served the City of Seattle for the last 30 years.”

In addition to her work as Recreation Leader for Seattle Parks and Recreation, Sandra has been an AAU referee for 28 years, and has coached many sports teams and classes around the greater Seattle area. Sandra has made significant and long-lasting impacts on many people’s lives and communities, especially on young people.

She is known by many people in the community simply as “Coach,” a term that connotes great respect and affection. Sandra exemplifies City of Seattle values of respect, hard work, service and devotion to community. We are happy and honored to recognize Sandra here tonight.

Congratulations to all our SMA Award winners!

Farmer thanks all of the department’s award recipients for their hard work, day-in and day-out. It is great to hear about these accomplishments and an honor to support the work of this team.

## Comfort Station Update

Seattle Parks and Recreation is upgrading our inventory of comfort stations as part of the Metropolitan Park District Cycle 2 investments. Carson Jones, Oliver Bazinet, Markeith Blackshire, Charles Ng, and Selena Elmer from SPR staff delivered the presentation.

SPR has 129 comfort stations that are not connected to facilities such as community centers, environmental learning centers, crew headquarters, etc. We use the general term comfort station to include the following:

- Stand-alone comfort stations – these are our most typical facilities found in 91 parks.
- Shelter Houses – shelter houses typically have a gathering space or other usable room in addition to the restroom.
- Bathhouses – bathhouses are typically associated with water and beaches.

The life cycle of a comfort station is circular, and it takes multiple divisions to keep our facilities in good condition and in use for as long as possible.

### Preventative Maintenance

- Fixing broken – Shops respond same day to anything that takes a Comfort Station out of service.
- Winterization is necessary during extreme weather events to prevent damage due to freezing.
- When de-winterizing all soft parts are changed out.
- Auto-locking feature allows comfort stations to be locked/unlocked remotely or on a schedule.
- Saves time and prevents a trip to site to lock up at night or unlock.

### Cycle 2 Commitments: Winterization

- 2023 investment: \$545,000 (1 FTE)
- Supports increased capacity for year-round restroom access by providing funding for winterization to prevent damage due to freezing, including upgrading heating and electrical components and structural improvements.

With GIS, we can map out where these 129 comfort stations are in respect to get a better sense of their distribution and how well their presence, or lack thereof, is serving the community. One way is by mapping their overall distribution and overlaying another dataset (like the race and social equity index).

#### 2023 Ramp Up: Winterization

- Send electrician out in Q1 to identified sites to assess electrical capacity, fixtures, and building conditions.
- Assessing 19 sites in early 2023; anticipate winterizing at least 15 sites in 2023 based on: geographic parity, “low-hanging fruit,” power requirements.
- Recommended early sites are not slated for renovation in 2023-2024
- Mid-2023: Identify plan/sequence for winterizing all 60 sites.
- Winterization work to be completed in-house or by contractor, beginning early Q2.

Farmer asks about conditions where auto-locking is not optimal. Jones explains that locked locations near community centers and other SPR structures are less likely to be overcome and end up housing people overnight. Expansion of high-speed data network infrastructure is also a concern.

Comfort station condition assessments took place systemwide in 2016 and 2017. These assessments rated each comfort station based on interior and exterior structure, the condition of their partitions and fixtures, accessibility, and overall appearance. This study is the baseline for determining which projects are in most need which will be prioritized each year.

Locations were given a higher priority if they were in high priority census tracts on the race and social equity index, if they were on the citywide Barrier Removal Schedule, and if there were adjacent planned projects into which this work could be incorporated to reduce disruption to the community and provide cost savings for project delivery.

In late 2015, we completed a study to develop a set of guidelines for comfort station design and to look at a prototype for single use restrooms.

It's critical to consider clear design criteria when renovating comfort stations for the future. Safety, accessibility, and code compliance are always paramount. Our restrooms need to be durable to withstand a large amount of use and they need to be readily maintained. In addition to these criteria, we want them to be pleasant to the users and features such as good ventilation, natural lighting, soap and hand driers, and decorative tile can help us reach this goal. At sites where it is possible, we are also incorporating all-gender single use design where a person can have the safety and convenience of going into a single room with all the amenities provided in a multi-use facility. The all-gender toilet room facilitates the needs of parents with infants, fathers with daughters, mothers with sons, persons with a disability and their caregivers of opposite sex, and children's group leaders.

This design is more easily implemented with new buildings, but some existing facilities can also be transformed into single stall restrooms.

#### Cycle 2 Commitments: Renovation

- 2023 Investment: \$2.1M

- This investment increases resources available to provide much needed refreshes to comfort stations and shelter houses including replacing windows, finishings, plumbing fixtures, partitions, and roofs, meeting accessibility requirements, and providing non-gender specific restroom options. It also supports auto-locking and other restroom access initiatives by providing staff capacity to manage, track, operate, and facilitate repairs in existing auto-lock sites, and as new sites are added.
- Supports ~4.5 renovations a year.

Additional resources we received in Cycle 2 are geared toward increasing the number of renovation and replacement projects we can take on each year. At the Cycle 1 level of program funding (\$1,600,000) and based on the average project cost of (\$540,000), comfort stations were renovated on average, every 42 years. If a replacement is required, project cost will increase based on need. With the additional \$1.2 million per year received in Cycle 2, we hope to lower that cycle to about 34 years. The additional funding will allow us to complete approximately 2 more comfort stations per year; however, this may vary depending upon emergent need due to arson and vandalism. Some of that additional funding will be dedicated to restoring and updating vandalized locations. The total project cost may also vary depending upon the complexity and needs of each individual facility.

SPR is developing an overarching capital project delivery strategy (to be summarized in Ramp Up & Reporting Plan), including opportunities to seek efficiencies and facilitate bidding.

Comfort station renovations planned for completion in 2023 and 2024 already underway: Gas Works, Bradner Gardens, Bitter Lake Playfield, and Pathways (2023); Lower Woodland, Mount Baker, Genesee, and Maple Wood (2024). Potential sites in 2025-2028 forthcoming.

We plan to conduct simple/informative outreach unless renovations are packaged with a broader project.

Farmer asks about timeline of comfort scale renovation. Bazinet explains that timelines vary; renovations can take just a few months, whereas demolition and rebuilding of a structure could take a year or more.

Farmer appreciates the inclusion of ADA barrier removal in the prioritization process for comfort station updating.

Umagat asks if portable restrooms are installed during renovation. Bazinet confirms.

We have 6 comfort station crews made up of 2 Laborers, for a total of 12 positions that are dedicated to just comfort station cleaning. However, no one on the Parks Team is free of comfort station responsibility.

There are a variety of comfort stations that we clean that each require unique methods and frequencies.

As part of Cycle 1 investments, SPR provided secondary service (in some cases, third and fourth service) at 41 high-volume sites during peak season.

Daily Clean or a Dry Clean:

- Announce yourself before entering any comfort station to begin work/inspections.
- Visually inspect each comfort station for damaged equipment and fixtures:
  - broken doors, hinges, faucets, hand dryers, toilet paper dispensers, soap dispensers, light fixtures, door locks, windows, graffiti
- Make note of any items that are damaged and submit work orders for repair.



- Flush toilets and run faucets to make sure all fixtures are in good working order.
- Pick all ground litter and sweep floors with a broom and dustpan.
- Wipe down and sanitize sinks, trash cans, door handles.
- Wash down floors with water and cleaning chemicals.
- Squeegee floors to remove excess water.

Wet cleans: all comfort stations should be washed once a week with hose or pressure washer.

Comfort stations at high use Parks and Beaches and wading pools must be washed daily.

Deep Clean – almost entirely completed by pressure washer and the difference is it starts from the top to the bottom

- Start at the ceiling dusting light fixtures and removing spiderwebs.
- Wipe down the entire toilet, sinks, soap dispensers, toilet paper dispensers.

Goal of 1 deep clean per District, recently increased to 3 deep cleans per district per week.

Service interruptions can be frequent, as comfort stations are often targets for vandalism. Some vandalism has a quick repair. Park resources and maintenance work together to reopen a comfort station within the same day, but with shipping delays and supply chain demand we are not always successful. When a comfort station is forced to close, we do our best to provide two Sani cans: one regular, one ADA.

Cycle 2 Commitments: Maintenance

- 2023 Investment: \$1M (12 FTE)
- This investment forms two evening/second shift maintenance teams devoted to North Sector and South Sector to increase non-peak season comfort station cleaning from 5 to 7 days a week. These teams will also support evening/weekend priority work around garbage and recycling, litter pick up, gate locking, and peak workload activities such as beach fires in the summer and leaf removal in the fall.

2023 Ramp Up: Maintenance

- Fill the 12 FTE General Laborer (GL) vacant positions by March with the qualified candidate lists from the recently completed GL hiring process.
- Evening/weekend shifts will be fully operational in Q2.
- This ramp up will allow for 7 days coverage during nonpeak season (fall/winter season).

Other Maintenance Ramp-Up Steps

- Adjust our cleaning plans and schedules.
- Develop Route Cleaning Teams.
- Purchased and installed hot wash units.
- Increased sterilization through steam cleaning.
- Increased service vehicles.

The Board thanks the team for their presentation, and all of the maintenance crews for their hard work.

Herrera asks what the biggest challenges for achieving Cycle 2 commitments are at this point. Staffing is a challenge; for example, there are currently 6 open positions in the plumbing shop. Other challenges include project delivery in an uncertain economic climate and intra-department coordination.

Diaz shares that innovation and coordination across city departments is ongoing with an eye towards delivering on Cycle 2 commitments.

## Greater & Greener 2024 Update

Jasmine Jose, SPR Organizational Development Advisor, provides an update.

A reminder: Greater & Greener is a biennial four-day event hosted by a national nonprofit called the City Parks Alliance.

The conference begins with weekend tours of the host city and mobile workshop. After the weekend, the conference kicks off with sessions led by industry experts on a variety of topics important to cities organized in conference themes or tracks, such as climate change, homelessness, COVID-19 impacts and recovery, and much more.

Since I last presented here at BPRC, we've made quite a bit of progress in the overall project plan.

We are now at the stage where we are focused on implementing the project plans for each of the sections you see on screen.

Weekend tours are a popular component of the Greater & Greener conference and give the host city an opportunity to showcase the city's parks and recreation system to participants. These tours are 80% fun and 20% educational, are offered at various times on Saturday and Sunday, and last approximately 4-6 hours.

Mobile Workshops are 80% educational and 20% fun behind-the-scenes learning tied to conference tracks. Mobile workshops focus on innovation throughout the city and connect participants with local leaders in the community.

At each Greater & Greener conference, attendees and local organizations come together for Volunteer Service Day, an opportunity to make a difference in a city park in the conference host city.

Conference Volunteers are the backbone of the conference experience:

- Great way to engage partners who would like to participate in the conference if they can't register
- Volunteer Opportunities
  - Weekend Tour and Mobile Workshop leaders
  - Tour Assistants
  - Room Assistants
  - Registration Assistants
  - Conference Runners

The next steps in the planning process will include weekend tour proposals, service day planning, engagement with local vendors, and fundraising.

Hoff shares update on fundraising with Board members, and asks that Board share information about the conference with their personal and professional networks.

The Board asks for clarification regarding the scope of the conference. Greater & Greener is not SPR-specific, but obviously will focus heavily on SPR-managed spaces. The emphasis is on Seattle's parkland and open public spaces, sustainability, and recreation.

Farmer notes that the Urban Community Forestry Conference was recently held in Seattle, and some institutional knowledge may be able to be borrowed.

Contreras points out that the Food Forest on Beacon Hill might be a good blend of open space, community building, and food stability.

The Board thanks Jose for the presentation.

### **Old & New Business**

There being no further business, Herrera adjourns the meeting at 8:24 pm.