



Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, April 10, 2025

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

Attendance

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

Absent: Leonor, Mays

SPR Staff and Presenters: Diaz, Catague, Schulkin, Hoff, Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Nakamura 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.

Nakamura reads the land acknowledgement.

A quorum not being present, Nakamura tables consideration of the consent agenda and proceeds to public comment.

Public Comment

Comments were heard related to the following topics:

- Concerns regarding acceptable park use at Denny Blaine Park
- Advocacy concerning SPR Environmental Education programming and funding

A quorum having now been attained, Nakamura introduces the consent agenda: tonight's BPRC Meeting Agenda, and minutes from the 2/27/25 BPRC Meeting. Lerer moves to adopt both items; Baum seconds the motion. Nakamura calls for a vote. The vote is unanimous in favor of passage.

Adopted: 4/10/25 BPRC Meeting Agenda

Adopted: 3/27/25 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Superintendent's Report

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

Department Update

Cheryl Chow Park Opening: This past weekend we formally opened a new park, Cheryl Chow Park, in the Rainier Valley. Cheryl Chow was a former City Council member, community leader, and just a lovely person. This is a great recognition, and also a park that has been a long time coming.

Parks & Recreational Services: Recreation

Seattle Parks & Recreation 2025 Spring Programs, Events and Summer Camp: Registration is now open for 2025 Spring/Summer programs. We have a wide range of exciting activities for participants, ranging from preschool and school age care camps to nature camps, to camps for youth with disabilities. You can find this information online, in addition to available financial aid and scholarships.

SPR hosted two scholarship nights, one at Lake City Community Center and one at Lake City Court SHA. Lake City CC staff assisted community members with the application process, as well as providing information about upcoming spring programs. Information on the Rec'n the Streets teen job training program was also provided. SPR staff has also one at Meadowbrook Community Center and will host additional informational events in late April.

We are excited to announce a pilot program, extending the operating hours at Garfield, Meadowbrook, and Southwest Teen Life Centers, that started on December 18, 2024. This expansion aims to give Seattle youth, aged 13 to 24, more access to fun, safe, and enriching opportunities. SPR's Teen Life Centers offer a wide array of programming to Seattle area youth including special events, Late Night Programs, athletic gyms and workout rooms, recording studios, cooking classes, social recreation and much more.

Seattle Teen Late Night & Cam Wilder Gym Takeover: We partnered with Citywide Athletics and "The Run" to create an unforgettable experience for teens across Seattle. Cam Wilder, a YouTube sensation with over 1 million followers, visited our city to challenge local hoopers in a fun, high-energy basketball game. His mission to entertain and inspire young people drew an enthusiastic crowd of teens and young adults from all over the state. We had an extraordinary turnout (200 teens and young adults inside the building with another 250 teen and young adults outside waiting to come in. Special thanks to the SE Teen Late Night & Citywide Athletics Staff on site and Park Rangers who were so important in keeping the order outside as well as inside of the building.

You can find these, and a variety of Spring activities for all ages and abilities on our [Parkways Blog](#).

Get Moving and Recreation for All Grants Update: On Saturday, March 22nd, the SPR Grants Team, in collaboration with Outdoor Activation Mobile Recreation, hosted an orientation for the 2025 Get Moving and Recreation for All grant recipients at Mt. Baker Rowing & Sailing. The event celebrated the awardees and their dedication to serving the community. The gathering also provided an opportunity for awardees to network, exchange ideas, and build meaningful relationships.

South Park Community Center Programming Update: During the construction closure, SPR is hosting programs at Concord Elementary School. The Youth Drop-in Fitness Training takes place twice a week, drawing 15 to 30 participants each session. This program has been highly praised by both the community and its young participants, reflecting its positive impact.

Parks & Recreational Services: Youth Engaged in Service Program

Youth Employment and Service Learning: During the last two weeks of March over 100 teens participated in a variety of programs focused on life skills including cooking classes and career readiness, pre-employment training focusing on active listening, growth mindset, resume writing, financial literacy, completing job applications, and interview preparation. Staff also participated in outreach at West Seattle High Career Fair where 60 youth stopped at the SPR table to learn about opportunities for youth within our organization. YESL also took a group of youth to the Fire Cadet Training Facility in Tukwila on March 22. The cadet program is designed for youths ages 17-21 who

are interested in pursuing a career as an EMT or firefighter. The tour was led by Lieutenant Beau Maples, who gave an informative overview of the paid cadet program in a classroom setting while showcasing the training facility in action. The youth had many questions, and out of the 7 that attended, 3 have decided to sign up for the program in September.

Parks and Capital Development: Project Updates

Willow Creek Fish Passage Restoration Project: SPR collaborated with SDOT on a restoration and habitat improvement project in northeast Seattle. Project improvements included restoring natural habitat and eliminating barriers to fish migration by redirecting Willow Creek away from a culvert, improving the creek's habitat, installing a new pedestrian bridge, and improving stormwater drainage. A community ribbon cutting celebration was held on March 27.

Be'er Sheva Park Cultural Stage Shelter Structure Removal: SPR recently coordinated the removal and recycling of the Be'er Sheva Park Cultural Stage Shelter Structure that was severely damaged by a fallen tree during the late November windstorm. We are working with the community and the Seattle Parks Foundation on grant applications and fundraising to replace the structure, estimated at \$300K and currently unfunded. The community will now be able to program the space at the former shelter starting this May.

Park Project Updates: Seattle Conservation Corps

Benefit Park: The Seattle Conservation Corps recently completed Phase 1 improvements for the Park Upgrade Project at Benefit Park in the south Beacon Hill neighborhood. The project expanded the existing picnic area providing new accessible picnic tables, BBQs and hot coal bins. They installed new trash/recycling cans, replaced park benches and refilled sand at the sand play area. The park is ready to welcome the community for gatherings! Phase 2 improvements will occur later this year and include installation of accessible drinking fountain and basket court area improvements.

Park Project Updates (continued)

Pier 62 Repair: One of the pilings for the floating dock at Pier 62 broke on March 6. Through the cooperation of SDOT and the Office of the Waterfront, as well as Global Diving, we worked together and were able to remove the broken section of piling, secure the float and reinstall/reattach the broken segment of piling. The float reopened to the public to the public on March 20.

Genesee Playfield #2: The turf Replacement is complete and open for scheduling & play as of early March. Girl's lacrosse were the first to celebrate on the brand-new turf field. The contractor has moved all construction fencing to Playfield #1, which it is currently under construction.

Mickey Merriam Playfield #8: the ball field portion of the project is substantially complete, and we now have full and unrestricted use of the ball field. The remaining work outside the field continues and includes hydroseeding, applying sealant to existing concrete pavement gaps, and repairing the damaged asphalt access path.

Park Project Updates: Salmon Bay Park Play Area

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is excited to announce the reopening of the Salmon Bay Park play area, located at 2001 NW Canoe Place, Seattle, WA 98117. The fencing at the site came down on Friday, April 4, officially opening the renovated play area to the public. SPR invites community members to visit the play area over the weekend and join us for a ribbon-cutting celebration on Sunday, April 27, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the park.

Salmon Bay Park's new play area is a shining example of how fun design and community input can come together to create a vibrant, renovated play space that offers an engaging, imaginative experience for kids

Park Resources: Maintenance

Tennis Courts: With over 100 outdoor tennis courts and the northwest's wet climate tennis court cleaning is a large undertaking to provide a safe and clean surface. Southeast district cleaning Lakeridge Park Tennis Court.

Volunteer Park Lilly Pond Cleaning: The two ponds at Volunteer Park were part of the original Olmstead Design to showcase aquatic plants. The landscape has evolved over time, but the staff works hard to keep this popular feature attractive and well maintained.

Parks and Environment Division: Park Rangers

Victor Steinbrueck Park: Park Rangers Joseph Wong-Garcia and Larry Adarna were recently spotted engaging with community members near the entrance of Victor Steinbrueck Park. Their uniform presence created an opportunity for the public to answer questions, share information, and emphasize the importance of public safety. By fostering these positive interactions, Rangers support the SPR mission for creating a safe environment where everyone can enjoy our public spaces.

Westwood Village Resource Fair: On March 22, Park Rangers joined nearly 30 federal, state, city, and nonprofit organizations at a Resource Fair hosted by Seattle Police Department Community Service Officers at Westwood Village. This event provided an opportunity for Rangers to engage with local residents, listen to their concerns, and strengthen community connections

Park Activation: Center City Partner Event

Center City Partner Event at Freeway Park: On Tuesday March 25th, the Freeway Park Association launched their 3rd illuminated art event in Freeway Park – *Meeting at the Balance*, an Equinox art party and installation. The Spring Equinox represents a time of changing light and shifting perspectives, so the event welcomed visitors to embrace this balance into their community and celebrate a collective awakening with art, light and performance. This program was funded by Seattle Office of Arts & Culture Hope Corps fund, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Matching Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts and supported by Seattle Parks and Recreation Park Activation Unit. The program included 10 installation artists and performance artists and teaching artists. Installations will be up in the park until June 21st. See @freewayparkseattle on Instagram for more details.

Diaz pauses for questions from the Board.

Nakamura asks for clarification regarding turf field infill. Diaz clarifies that all future project will use cork infill.

Chisholm Clare asks for update about future SPR Ranger presentation to BPRC. Diaz and Hoff affirms that this presentation is planned and tentatively scheduled for June. Flinn adds that data evidencing the success of Ranger interactions at reducing long-term negative Park behavior would be helpful for that presentation and provides some suggestions.

Baum notes that it is exciting to see all the happenings in the department, but that SPR summer camp enrollment occurs later than many (if not most) private summer program enrollments, which can make

planning difficult for families. Baum urges SPR to work on aligning the release of programs and enrollment dates with similar private programs, for user convenience.

2025 Park Operating Hours – Public Hearing and Possible Vote

Burtzos notes that no one signed up to offer comment at today's Public Hearing pertaining to the proposed changes to park operating hours. The Public Hearing is closed.

Daisy Catague, Deputy Superintendent of Parks and Recreational Services, provides a summary and overview of the proposed changes to park operating hours.

[For details of the proposal, please see the [March 27, 2025 BPRC Meeting Minutes](#)]

Flinn highlights a piece of correspondence from an Alki Beach neighbor that suggests the possibility of mixed messaging due to recent signage installation in the area. Flinn also notes that recent correspondence also included several notes of thanks for the proposed hours change, which was nice to see.

Nakamura asks for clarification regarding the distinction between park hours and boat ramp hours at Magnuson Park. Will those two areas be closing at different times? Is there a clear separation on the ground between those two areas, and is the signage clear? Catague notes that Magnuson does present some difficulty because of its complexity, but yes, the goal is to make a clear distinction between the boat ramp and beach area, which will have reduced hours, and the park generally, which will remain unaffected.

Baum shares that the comments he has seen and heard reflect some disagreement on the substance of the proposed changes but generally seem in agreement and appreciative that SPR is taking steps to address illegal activity. Baum reiterates a comment from previous meeting that his preference would be that the department take a more comprehensive, less piecemeal approach to this issue, but that's not the proposal at hand today. Chisholm Clare agrees with Baum, adding that many parks lack lighting and that 11:30 PM seems very late for these sites.

Flinn moves to accept the proposed revisions to park operating hours. Haile-Leul seconds the motion. Nakamura calls the vote. The count is seven in favor, none opposed, none abstaining. The motion passes.

Adopted: The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners accepts the proposed revisions to SPR park operating hours.

Public Affairs Division Update

Rachel Schulkin, SPR Public Affairs Division Manager, delivers the presentation.

Schulkin gives overview of her history with SPR and briefly describes work of team. The Communications team is responsible for the department's media and press interactions, branding, internal and external communications, social media, phone and email correspondence, coordinating speaking events, and departmental reporting.

Schulkin provides survey of the various aspects of the Communications team's work:

- SPR Website
 - Over 2M views in 2024

- Pool pages and toddler gyms are high-traffic sites
- Facebook
 - 40+ Facebook pages (each CC and Pool has a page)
 - High engagement for park maintenance highlights, events, park openings
- Instagram
 - Significant increase in new followers in 2024
 - Popular posts include safety notifications, events, and beach closures
- Parkways Blog
 - ~20,000 vies/month
- Newsletter

There is a focus on accessibility this year. The Biden administration issued an Executive Order, strengthened by an Executive Order from the Mayor's Office, to improve digital accessibility. The effect of these orders will be to:

- Improve digital accessibility to meet new federal standards.
- Implement Seattle's first plain-language plan.
- Enhance coordinated communications across city departments.

Our team also handles general phone and email communications. We receive anywhere from 200-500 phone calls every month, and ~300 emails every month.

We receive 1-3 news/media inquiries each day, usually from local news outlets but occasionally from national media, as well. In 2024, our top stories included:

- Freezing Synthetic Fields
- SWTLC Shooting
- Denny-Blaine Park
- Alki and Golden Gardens Hours Change
- Stolen Peace Park Statue
- Victor Steinbrueck Park
- Camp Long Fire

We're proud of what we have accomplished in 2024! We conducted internal and external-facing training, as well as furthering the work on web accessibility and a new SharePoint site. We created a TikTok, stepped up our social media presence, and integrated Canva as a tool that's available to over 100 staff people to create flyers, and we've already seen improvement in the content that our staff are putting out.

We are responsive to comments and questions, regardless of where they come from. If you write to us, we will write back, and if you log a complaint, even in the comments of a post, we keep track of that! Sometimes people ask, "how do I get in touch with SPR?" It's really, "how CAN'T you get in touch with SPR?"

For the next year, we will keep developing our social media strategies. We just got on BlueSky, and we will be on Reddit, as well. We're working on new branding guides, and working on new ways to keep people engaged. We'll continue our accessibility project and keep working on short-form video to both inform and communicate. And overall, I want our team to keep focused on creativity and innovation.

Schulkin pauses for questions from the Board.

Lerer notes and commends Schulkin's team for the amount of work the website accessibility project takes and will continue to take. Lerer also notes an improvement in communication frequency and quality from his local pool, which he appreciates, and hopes that others have had similar experiences.

Flinn thanks Schulkin and team, and suggests spotlighting park maintenance professionals, gardeners, rangers, etc. in short form video (e.g., "get ready with me" videos or "a day in the life" videos). Schulkin and Diaz agree this is a good idea; Schulkin notes that getting staff to agree to be on camera can be difficult!

Chisholm Clare notes that SPR parks have inconsistent digital and even physical mapping resources and asks if there are any resources or any project to unify these resources. Schulkin notes that all the extant digital maps are ad-hoc project maps and likely independent of any funding source. However, this is an area where Google is doing a decent job at figuring trail mapping out, although Google is historically not receptive to much feedback in this process.

Haile-Leul suggests that tapping the talents of youth and young adult employees could be a good place to start development of short-form video content, as many of these young people are very creative and already literate in the media. Schulkin agrees that youth employees can be helpful in this regard. Chisholm Clare agrees and notes that lifeguard recruitment could be a particular area of benefit here.

Baum notes the potential to celebrate restroom maintenance through social media, noting that while the department would open itself up to some negative commentary by doing so, it would also be a chance to emphasize the hard work of capital projects and maintenance as well as to celebrate the real improvement – "a bathroom that was down and is now up and operating is a big deal."

Baum asks what the vision is for SPR on Reddit, and generally, what the goal of community engagement is, whether dialogue or information distribution? Schulkin notes that SPR often uses the online space to extend ongoing public engagement campaigns and solicit more feedback. SPR is looking to WSDOT specifically for cues to engagement on Reddit, as that agency has been active on that platform for some time. Schulkin adds that other goals are to foster discussion and to be able to respond if discussions are ongoing independently of the department.

Diaz thanks Schulkin for the presentation. Schulkin thanks the Board members for their questions.

Old & New Business

Nakamura notes a previous discussion about BPRC meeting hours and asks if other members would be interested in revisiting this discussion at an upcoming meeting. Baum adds that he would be interested in continuing this discussion, and notes that SPR staff are attending and staffing meetings after a full workday.

Meng suggests taking an informal census of BPRC members to get a sense of where everyone stands on the current meeting time, adding that while later meeting times work better for him, he wants to see what the group thinks.

Lerer notes that several people are absent, and that traffic can be difficult before 6:00. The earlier time may necessitate remote attendance.

Burtzos offers to send a survey to members to get a sense of preferences prior to continuing this conversation at a later meeting. Board members agree to this procedure.

Nakamura adjourns the meeting at 7:48 PM.