



Minutes | Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, February 26, 2026

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

Attendance

Present: Baum (co-chair), Mays, Stonecipher, Flinn, Nakamura (co-chair), Werner, Meng, Lerer, Chisholm Clare

Absent: Zhang, Haile-Leul

SPR Staff and Presenters:

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: meeting minutes from the 1/22/26 BPRC meeting and tonight's meeting agenda. Baum asks for unanimous consent to adopt the consent agenda; without objection, the agenda is adopted.

Adopted: 2/26/26 BPRC Meeting Agenda

Adopted: 1/22/26 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Public Comment

The BPRC heard public testimony on the following topics:

- Discovery Park Visitor's Center and funding for repairs and programming;
- Lower Woodland Park athletic field proposal and its impact on Lincoln HS families;
- General advocacy for sports fields;
- Denny Blaine Park user behavior

Superintendent's Report

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

Park and Facility Renovations

Hiawatha Community Center Opening: This is our first all-electric community center conversion and was a long time coming for the West Seattle community. SPR renovated the building to increase the life of the facility and increase programming potential. The result is a greatly enhanced public space, improving functionality of

the building, addressing long-term maintenance concerns, while respecting the historic aspects of the building. The renovations included seismic retrofit of the gym and building's brick veneer, new energy efficient windows, a roof replacement, renovation of the restrooms and kitchen and installation of a new electrified HVAC system. Hiawatha Community Center is the oldest community center in the SPR system.

Maplewood Playfield: Seattle Parks and Recreation announced the renovated play area, plaza, restroom and parking lot at Maple Wood Playfield, 4801 Corson Ave. S are all open! This renovation project provides a cohesive accessible design and improves the site for the surrounding community and city-wide recreation. The playfield and portions of the landscaping at the park will remain off-limits and closed to all as the natural turf establishes. The investment supports SPR's ongoing commitment to equitable access to high-quality recreational spaces.

SPR Project Updates

Lower Woodland Park: SPS will continue public engagement, per our agreement with them, and hold a second public meeting in April regarding the addition of a rectangular field to the lower woodland sports complex. In this meeting SPS will present on how they have made design changes informed by previous public comment and engage the public in design exercises. More information can be found at

Seven Hills Park: SPR removed the fencing at Seven Hills Park, as the current emergency rule expired. We have developed a reopening plan that focuses on activation, safety and security, signage, maintenance, and an online map encouraging a walking route connecting various Capitol Hill parks. The pictures shown were taken today!

Park Maintenance Updates

Colman Pool: Pool Operators prepared Colman Pool for the season by draining the pool and completing a full deep cleaning of the pool shell. The team removed scale, residue, and buildup from the walls, floor, gutters, and fittings, paying close attention to problem areas that develop over the off-season. This work restores water flow, improves circulation and water quality once refilled, and sets the pool up for a smoother, more reliable opening.

Parks Maintenance Underway: Current priorities for the districts include ballfield maintenance, pressure washing, and shrub bed pruning. Recent activities include Ballfield soil delivery at the Northeast district and a project at Gemenskap Park.

Sustainability in Action – Rainier Beach Pool

Rainier Beach Pool: SPR is working to reduce the Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of our buildings in preparation for the new Washington State Clean Buildings Performance Standard. In January, Project Manager Ryan Carey oversaw the installation of two destratification fans in the leisure pool at Rainier Beach Pool, devising a creative solution to mount them on the wall when ceiling installation wasn't possible. These fans circulate air to prevent heat from accumulating near the top of the natatorium, improving efficiency and reducing energy use. This project is part of a larger initiative. Over the past several years, we've installed dozens of these fans in community center gyms and pool natatoriums across the park system, driving measurable energy savings and advancing our sustainability goals

SPR Staff and Programs Highlights

SPR Staff and Programs in Action: Lifelong Recreation staff Masha Shtern has been making concerted efforts to establish programs in the SE region of Seattle to support the needs of the older adults in this community. In 2025 she sought out sponsorship to bring a fitness class called "Whole Body Fitness" to the Rainier Beach community, a lower income area. This class has seen a terrific response from the community. Masha Shtern has been able to secure continued sponsorship of the class through 2026.

Taking One for the Team: The Park Rangers supported the Seattle Police Department for the Seahawks Parade at City Hall Park and Westlake Park. The Rangers were also spotted at Carkeek Park with our outdoor camp kids!

SPR Childcare Update: As of Fall 2025, SPR became an authorized provider of DEEL's Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP), supporting financial access to qualified families enrolled in SPR childcare programs. In the first three months, this new subsidy opportunity has supported an increase in childcare enrollment by four new participants, expanded financial subsidy support to a total of 14 participants across multiple locations citywide, and distributed more than \$20,000 in subsidy funds. Summer childcare registration begins in March, and we anticipate expanded participation in the CCAP subsidy program.

Volunteer Park Conservatory: Lunar New Year Tea Tasting Event occurred on February 9th. The conservatory gardener's hung lanterns throughout the Conservatory and set up the Seasonal House for the event. They also collaborated with Friends of the Conservatory staff and volunteers at the Seattle Chinese Tea Association to hold a successful event.

Lifelong Recreation hosts Community CPR Class: In mid-January, Lifelong Recreation held a Community CPR Class at Northgate Community Center, facilitated by the Seattle Fire Department's Medic 2 Bystander CPR Training Program. The free class welcomed 18 registered participants and covered essential skills, including adult, child, and infant CPR, choking interventions, and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Many attendees shared that they joined the class to better support family members in emergencies. By the end of the session, participants expressed gratitude for the training and felt more confident and prepared to respond in critical situations.

Roxhill Park Peat Party Celebration: The event last week celebrated a major milestone in the restoration of the Roxhill Bog, marking the successful completion of a pilot project designed to rehydrate one of Seattle's last remaining peat wetland, which had been slowly drying out for decades.

These wetlands are ecological powerhouses that serve several vital functions:

- Carbon Sequestration
- Water Filtration
- Flood Mitigation

Local advocates, scientists, and city officials gathered at Roxhill Park to celebrate this milestone restoration of the Roxhill Bog.

Upcoming Events / Opportunities

Loyal Heights CC Pancake Breakfast: The event will be held from 9a-12p on Sunday March 1st, and will also feature a silent auction component, featuring several items from local Ballard businesses. This annual fundraiser has been a community staple for over 50 years and has brought together thousands of our community members and raised much needed scholarship funds for Community Center programs, classes, and special events.

Roanoke Park Play Area Renovation: Seattle Parks and Recreation invites the community to participate in the future play area in Roanoke Park. Please join us at the park on Sat. March 7 between 11 am and 1 pm to review the play area schematic design options and provide your feedback. Roanoke Park is located at 950 E. Roanoke St. in north Capitol Hill.

Froula Playground Play Area Renovation: Help Shape Froula Playground Play Area: This event is an opportunity to meet the project team and review the concept design options that have been prepared based on the previous community input. Additionally, you can visit <https://engageseattleparks.com/froula-playground-play-area-renovation> to review the schematic design options and provide input through a short survey.

Discovery Park Daybreak Star Pathway Improvements: Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) invites the community to learn about a community-initiated path planned near Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center. On Saturday, March 7, from 1 to 3 pm, SPR staff will be at the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF) annual Take Over event. Please visit our table at Daybreak Star, 5011 Bernie Whitebear Way in Discovery Park, to learn more. We look forward to discussing this project with the community.

Together, SPR and UIATF have completed the initial phase of planning and conceptual design for the pathway. The project will focus on a new accessible and illuminated path from the Daybreak Star Center Indian Cultural Center's lower entrance to the Powwow Grounds. In addition to the planned accessible path, we are coordinating with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to add a new sidewalk to the portion of Bernie Whitebear Way closest to Daybreak Star. This SDOT-led sidewalk is planned for 2028.

More information on these, and other events, can be found on our blog at www.parkways.seattle.gov

Finnegan pauses for questions from the Board.

Flinn expresses relief that SPS has another planned public meeting to discuss the Lower Woodland Park project, noting that previous public outreach has felt insufficient, but adds that the process seems too slow. Keeping a feeling of urgency around this issue might help build and maintain trust. Flinn also expresses concern about the lack of robust bleachers and seating in the proposed field plan, cautioning that racing to a solution with serious logistical issues may only halfway solve the problem.

Stonecipher notes CM Hollingsworth's recent mention of SPR and of the Find It, Fix It smartphone app in her announcements. Finnegan adds that this app is now better integrated with SPR's Asset Management Work Order (AMWO) system.

Chisholm Clare asks for more information at a future meeting regarding GPS coordinates in Find It, Fix It. Flinn notes that this data is now captured in the application.

Baum asks about the origin and collection of safety data, and how that data is used, to better advocate for park users. Finnegan agrees [to provide this information].

Baum notes that the BPRC had not seen or heard any information about the Lower Woodland Park/SPS athletic field project prior to the January 22, 2026, meeting, adding that the Board would like to see very clear

evidence of SPS community engagement and planning before moving forward. Baum notes that nearly all comments seem to have a common goal of building a new field facility and acknowledges the community's frustration.

Lerer notes that if SPS is hosting a community meeting in April, he would like to hear from SPS representatives no later than May to acknowledge the urgency of the project. Lerer adds that the gap between the initial SPS outreach meeting on this plan [11/6/25] to the first BPRC briefing [1/22/26] was actually fairly short.

Partnership Spotlight: Tilth Alliance

Melissa Spear, Executive Director, Tilth Alliance, delivers the presentation.

Spear gives a brief history of Tilth Alliance. Tilth Alliance works in community with Washington farmers, gardeners and eaters to build a sustainable, healthy and equitable food future. Programs take place at the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland (RBUFW), and the Good Shepherd Center.

The 10 acres that RBUFW sits on was exposed in 1917 when the construction of the Ship Canal caused lake levels to drop. The Atlantic City Nursery occupies the site until it closes in 2010. In 2011 Tilth Alliance (then Seattle Tilth) enters into a Management and Operations agreement with the Parks Department.

- Tilth Alliance is responsible for all site maintenance
- Parks is responsible for maintenance of primary utility lines and building envelopes
- The site will remain open to the public for a minimum of 25 hours per week
- A minimum one community festival attracting at least 200 people must be held on site
- \$40,000 in annual use fee can be offset by Public Benefits associated with programming and community building events

In 2014-2015 Tilth Alliance and the Friends of RBUFW raise \$2.8 million to renovate the site. New Facilities include offices, bathrooms, a classroom, and a commercial kitchen. The renovation project begins in 2016 and was completed in 2017. In 2022, the Management and Operations Agreement was extended for 5 years to November of 2027.

Approximately 4 acres of site are in food production including diversified crop fields, 3 greenhouses and fruit and berry orchard; approximately 4 acres are restored wetlands forest; approximately 2 acres are devoted to parking, pathways, work areas, gathering areas, and storage.

Tilth Alliance has invested in:

- Renovation and electrification of greenhouses
- Addition of a Coolbot
- Storage sheds
- Farmstand structure
- Orchard and cropland expansion
- Site signage

RBUFW Activities include:

- Food production (6000 pounds of produce grown)
- Farmstand
- Good Food Bags
- Rainier Beach Youth Stewards
- Summer Camp
- Field Trips
- Soil and Water Stewards
- Farm Fest

Tilth Alliance operates several market programs at RBUFW:

- Good Food Bags: Over 18,000 bags of fresh, organic, locally grown produce distributed to low-income households
- Community supported Agriculture: 30 Families received weekly boxes of produce grown at RBUFW
- Farm Stand: More than 5000 people visit and over \$55,000 in free produce distributed during 13 weekly pay-what-you-can farmstand

Tilth Alliance also conducts urban agriculture and ecology programs, including community orchards and school gardens, wetland restoration, and has trained over 300 soil and water stewards. 4000 children learn about growing food and caring for the environment at summer camps and vacation camps. 300+ children visit RBUFW and GSC on school field trips each year to learn about the natural world and where their food comes from.

Tilth Alliance conducts an average of 60 adult education classes per year, teaching gardening, cooking, beekeeping, etc. to 900 plus people. Tilth is also a host site for Sound Generations East African Senior meal program, serving nutritious lunches 3 days per week to over 100 seniors.

Other programs include:

- Master Composter and Sustainability Stewards: 35 volunteers support Seattle's waste reduction and recycling efforts each year by participating in a yearlong training program learning about composting and sustainable practices
- Garden Hotline: Garden Hotline educators answer over 6000 calls per year to answer gardening questions 6 days per week
- Culturally Relevant Plant Starts: Over 16,000 culturally relevant plant starts are grown and distributed to the community

Tilth Alliance developed edible gardens for educational purposes in Meridian Park in 1977. Gardens include the Learning Garden and the Children's Garden. Tilth Alliance's offices are in the Good Shepherd Center.

Finally, through the Coalition for Organic and Regenerative Agriculture, Tilth Alliance conducts several advocacy measures.

- Research to continue to support the implementation of the most effective organic and regenerative practices;
- Education to provide producers and farm workers with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively engage in organic and regenerative agriculture;
- Resources to help mitigate barriers to transitioning to organic and regenerative agriculture;
- Marketing and promotion to encourage demand for organically and regeneratively produced food;
- Policies and programs that promote and support adoption of organic and regenerative practices; and support an equitable and just food system.

Spear pauses for questions from the Board.

Mays asks if everything grown at RBUFW is organic; Spear confirms that 100% of Tilth's practices are organic, although the organization has not sought certification.

Board members express gratitude and appreciation for the presentation.

Reopening Plans for South Capitol Hill Parks

Andy Sheffer, Deputy Superintendent, Planning and Capital Development Branch, introduces the presentation. Several parks in South Capitol Hill have been closed to the public for restoration and safety enhancements for the past several months. SPR has developed a robust reopening plan for these parks.

Annie Hindenlang, Planning Manager, delivers the presentation.

SPR has been conducting outreach in the Capitol Hill neighborhood since November to develop this plan and has taken input to help develop a multi-park plan. The reopening plan consists of seven points, including immediate action steps and 90-day implementations. These points include plans for safety & security, park maintenance, signage, a new multi-park walking loop, dog activation, exercise stations, and other park activation.

Maintenance Highlights

Immediate:

- New Rainbow & Code of Conduct signs
- Pressure wash surfaces
- Graffiti abatement
- Litter removal & mulch refresh
- Arborist assessment of site & ROW trees
- Natural features installation
- Remove fence

90-Days:

- Implement arborist assessment
- Replace/repair bollard lighting
- Aeration & re-seeding of lawn

Programming Plans

Immediate:

- SPR's Sound Steps Program Support Walking Loop
- Daytime Concerts: March 14, 21 & 28; April 11 & 25; May 9

90 Days:

- Knack Box with Play Supplies for Childcare Orgs
- Finalize Friends of Group for Long-term Activation
- Coordination with 15th Ave BIA
- Movie Nights
- Partnerships with Fitness Groups & Health Services

Hindenlang highlights a few specific elements of the reopening, including planned maintenance steps, details of the 3.1-mile "Healthy Capitol Hill Hike", and planned 2026 site interventions (such as new exercise equipment and landscaping improvements).

Baum asks for clarification regarding the location of landscape updates in Tashkent Park. Hindenlang clarifies.

Looking into the future, SPR will prioritize systems-based solutions to achieve equitable service for greatest number of residents with available resources most efficiently & effectively.

Hindenlang pauses for questions from the Board.

Chisholm Clare asks if the new signage is related to an ongoing wayfinding study. Hindenlang provides clarity.

Flinn asks if gardening staff will be increased to address the increased landscaping demands; Hindenlang clarifies that no new staff will be hired.

Flinn asks who will be coordinating park activation. Hindenlang notes that Tom Diamond has been leading the activation piece of this plan.

Chisholm Clare asks if SPR Rangers have been assigned into the future to support this plan; Hindenlang affirms that some additional support during the reopening process will be provided.

2025 SPR Communications in Review

Christina Hirsch, OOC Public Affairs Manager, delivers the report.

Communications really touches on everything SPR does, whether it's supporting staff behind the scenes or connecting with community. We oversee media and social media, graphic design and photography, internal and external communications, digital and website accessibility, speaking events, media inquiries, and public reporting, among other things.

Hirsch reports on social media highlights from 2025, noting trends in engagement and high-volume posts. Before/after maintenance photos, safety advisory notices, and park and pool closure notices tend to receive a high amount of engagement across platforms; other highlights include the "Where's Edward [Cullen]?" series on TikTok, which has been recognized by the official Twilight account and led to a series of movies in the park (which was correspondingly well-attended).

Hirsch provides brief summary regarding trends and protocols for conventional communications, including email, phone calls, media inquiries, and print reporting. Board members ask some clarification questions, which Hirsch responds to.

In 2025 SPR Communications achieved a number of special project accomplishments, including reaching benchmarks in digital accessibility, language access, and an increase in short-form video.

In 2026, SPR will be supporting the City's efforts surrounding the FIFA World Cup, and activation events like watch parties and soccer clinics. It will be very important that all of our materials are multilingual and accessible for visitors to Seattle. We will also have the Next Move campaign; this is an initiative from the City's innovation and performance team, where we are trying to connect young people to more City services. Finally, SPR will be undergoing a rebrand during the next year, and we expect to see that by early 2027.

Chisholm Clare asks how much of this work is in-house versus contracts. Except for some of the graphic design, all is in-house.

Flinn asks Hirsch how large the Comms staff is. Hirsch notes that the Public Affairs Division currently has four staff, including herself, and will have an out-of-class posting soon.

Baum commends SPR for employing influencers and hopes that SPR will lean towards local and "up and coming" influencers. Hirsch confirms that this is the plan.

Old & New Business

Baum recaps BPRC retreat availability poll results. The poll was a virtual tie. SPR staff recommends the April date for scheduling ease. Exact schedule and agenda of the retreat is in the works and will be sent when finalized.

Baum reiterates request for presentation to the Board on the SPR Ranger program, including results, feedback from public, lessons learned, and plans moving forward.

Stonecipher asks for an update on hiring and staffing, particularly as we head into the spring and summer seasons. Finnegan doesn't have exact details handy but notes that the process is well under way, and on pace or a little ahead of the prior few years.

Flinn asks for details regarding SPR's standard 10% concession fee for vendors, and if this is a meaningful source of revenue to SPR and if there is any flexibility in the policy. Finnegan notes that while the fee is essentially self-reported (i.e., on the honor system), it is a meaningful source of revenue and SPR cannot offer flexibility in this policy. Baum asks if a flat fee has been considered for very small businesses. Finnegan notes that each agreement is different, but in general, the concession fee is standard for for-profit partners.

Baum adjourns the meeting at 7:55 PM.