



# PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

May 2, 2012

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

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**Board members present:** Julie Vigeland, Linda Robinson, Bill Hawkins, Mary Anne Cassin, Nick Hardigg, Katie Breene, Shelli Romero, Sue Van Brocklin, Bob Sallinger

**Board members absent:** Nichole Maher, Keith Thomajan, Mauricio Villarreal, Mike Alexander, Tricia Tillman, Andy Nelson, Tony Magliano

**Staff present:** Mike Abbaté, Warren Jimenez, Mat Sinclair, Margaret Evans, Randy Webster, Todd Lofgren, Brett Horner, Eileen Argentina, Fred Kowell, Emily York

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**Call to order** The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Vigeland at 7:34 a.m.

**Approval of the minutes** The minutes of the April 4, 2012 meeting were approved as written.

**Nominating Committee Report** Mary Anne Cassin reported that this year's Board recruitment turned out to be a very competitive process. 21 applications were received; seven candidates were interviewed by members of the nominating committee and the Parks Director. The nominating committee has recommended the following three candidates to the full Board for their approval: Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Kathy Fong Stephens, and Christa Thoeresz. Board members voted unanimously to recommend these three candidates to the commissioner and mayor for appointment to the Parks Board. The other four candidates who were interviewed will be encouraged to participate with PP&R and the Parks Board in other ways.

**Board Officers** The recent revision to the Board's bylaws changed the Board year to end on June 30 instead of August 30. This coincides with the City's fiscal year. The change means that the chair's term will also end on June 30 beginning this year. However, as Mike Alexander is not able to assume the chair's position until January 2013, it was moved and passed unanimously to have Julie continue as chair through the end of the calendar year. Mike will begin his term as chair in January 2013 and serve through June 30, 2014. The nominating committee has recommended Andy Nelson serve as the next vice chair and Board members unanimously approved this recommendation.

**Board Retreat** The Board retreat will be on June 1, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Cottrell House on SW Skyline. Parking at the site is limited; carpooling is encouraged. More information will be sent out prior to the retreat.

**Bonds and Levies Presentation** Bonds are sometimes referred to as GO (general obligation) bonds. GO bonds raise funds by borrowing money which then is paid back through property taxes. Bonds must be approved by the voters. Bond amounts are generally referred to as a certain amount per \$1,000 of the tax-assessed value of a home or property. Bonds are used for capital improvements, major construction projects, landscapes, plantings, major renovation of existing buildings and the salaries of staff who are working on the projects. The entire amount of the bond is available upfront.

Levies are also a tax that is approved by the voters. Levies differ from bonds in that they are used for operating and daily maintenance of buildings and programs. Voters could also approve a capital levy but this mechanism is not usually used. Levy costs are spread out over a five year period and only a certain amount of funding is received each year.

Most of PP&R's long list of deferred maintenance projects could be funded with either a bond or a capital levy. However, tax compression would be an issue with a capital levy. Tax compression can lower the amount of money received from a levy because all new levies must be added to existing levies and then all must fit into the maximum amount allowed to be taxed. The amount received by each levy may be lowered if the levy funding cap is reached.

The City is already in compression so any new levies passed would compress the rate even more. Compression impacts the local option levies first and voters may vote against another levy in order to protect levies already passed. There may be less political opposition to a bond, although voters may vote against a bond because it will increase their taxes.

#### Levies

##### - Pro

- They fund operations and maintenance.
- They have a five year life span.
- There's minimum financial cost.

##### - Con

- Tax compression can reduce the amount actually received and prevent the complete implementation of projects.

#### Bonds

##### -Pro

- There's no tax compression.
- They're financed over a longer period of time.
- Large amounts can be raised.

#### Other options for funding include:

- Adding to existing utility fees
- Telephone tax equity (cell phones do not pay a tax to the City)
- Hospitality tax
- Corporate income tax

- Payroll tax
- Sales tax

Upcoming measures coming to the voters include:

- PDX arts education (Nov 2012)
- PPS capital (Nov 2012 or May 2013)
- County library (May 2012)
- Childrens Levy (Nov 2012)
- Metro natural areas

Board members viewed a map showing how the park system has improved over the years due to the passage of bonds and levies. Parks has generally gone to the voters for a bond or levy every 9-10 years.

## **Strategic Planning**

Randy Webster gave the Board a presentation on the Bureau's 2012-15 Strategic Plan planning process. The Bureau's previous plan expired last year, but updating the plan was delayed due to the retirement of the previous Parks Director and other issues.

Randy said a strategic plan needs to have:

- A focus in order to accomplish the 2020 Vision.
- An overarching theme or statement.

The new strategic plan will continue to have "improve service delivery" and "manage and protect assets" as its main themes, but the updated plan will have more focus on health, youth, obesity, and lack of activity. It will also focus on underserved communities. The phrase connected to the Plan is "All Portlanders play. PP&R and its partners will close the Play Gap to build healthy communities."

Focus areas in the new Strategic Plan are:

- Health
- Recreation Programs
- Access
- Trails
- Asset Management
- Sustainability

Some of the identified gaps include the levels of participation at community centers, access to all areas of PP&R, trail acquisition that is far behind the 2020 goals, and the deferred maintenance backlog.

Board members commented that they feel it is a strategic error to use the word "play" as people may think play is something that is unnecessary. Mike said that the Strategic Plan is more of an internal document meant for staff to have something to focus on. Randy said it is viewed as a series of stair steps to 2020. The 2008-11 Plan focused on building the internal management of the Bureau, which culminated in the winning of the Gold Medal.

Each strategic theme has a champion on the senior management team. Randy distributed a handout that shows the various themes, the champion for each theme, and the goals for each on the left, with sub themes to support the goals at the top. Each theme will be viewed through various lenses: community, process, financial and organization capacity perspective. Randy said he will have a discussion draft available for the July Board meeting.

Linda Robinson suggested an addition under the Organization Capacity perspective so that the first box reads “Workforce/Diversity/Contracting Capacity.” Shelli Romero suggested that under the Health focus area the first “Key Phrase” should be edited to say “Heath/active transportation partnerships.” Mary Anne also suggested that “Building Community Investment” should be added under the Community Investment umbrella for each theme.

Bob Sallinger asked about the use of the word “sustainability” as a focus area. If the focus is on natural resources, he felt the word should be changed to reflect that. He also mentioned that since there is a push from the public to allow dogs off leash in natural areas, that wording should be added.

Todd Lofgren asked Board members if they felt anything was missing from the plan. Julie said that since equity is an important issue for Board members, it needs to be included. Mary Anne commented that she does see the big issues from the 2020 report updated in the plan.

Board members should provide any additional comments to Mike or Randy. The plan will be expanded and brought back to the Board for another look in July.

### **Equity Follow-Up**

A pie chart was distributed that shows the race/ethnicity characteristics of the PP&R workforce. The first pie shows the population of Portland, as reported by the 2010 Census. The other three pies show the make up of PP&R’s permanent staff in 2011, the race/ethnicity of non-permanent staff and new hires in 2011. The demographics do not include contracted employees. Margaret Evans commented that PP&R has reduced the number of contracted employees from 120 to 35-40 at peak season. PP&R does, however, use a company that recruits diverse staff for these contracted positions.

Julie commented that she recently attended the PP&R Diversity Development Committee meeting and will try to attend their monthly meetings as often as possible.

### **Parks Foundation**

Nick Hardigg spoke about the Parks Foundation and how their board members are talking to people about how the Foundation can make the most impact to PP&R. The Foundation has recently raised money to install a water fountain in Piccolo Park, install a pump track at Ventura Park, and they will be acting as the fiscal sponsor for the Friends of Peninsula Park. He mentioned that in order to build public support the

Foundation will have a table at concerts and movies in the parks over the summer. He invited Parks Board members to help out at tables during these summer events.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.