



# PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

January 4, 2012

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

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**Board members present:** Julie Vigeland, Mike Alexander, Nick Hardigg, Katie Breen, Mauricio Villarreal, Keith Thomajan, Linda Robinson, Shelli Romero, Mary Anne Cassin, Andy Nelson, Bill Hawkins, Bob Sallinger

**Board members absent:** Nichole Maher, Sue Van Brocklin, Tricia Tillman

**Staff present:** Mike Abbaté, Eileen Argentina, Mat Sinclair, Fred Kowell, Brett Horner, Karen Loper, Claudio Campuzano

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**Call to order** The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Vigeland at 7:35 a.m.

**Approval of the minutes** The minutes of the December 7, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

**Liaison Reports** Mary Anne Cassin reported on the Sullivan's Gulch trail project. The committee held their final public meeting last week. The project has received some Federal grants, however, it has proved to be a difficult project because of its location along the rail line.

Bill Hawkins reported on the Willamette Park pump station project. He provided some background on the project. The Water Bureau needs to site a larger pump station in the area to carry the main water supply line. In the original design, the building took up most of the site and was 40' high. The committee, however, recommended a building that was fairly invisible to the surrounding area. When it went to the Design Commission Bill said they had a different view of the whole design; they wanted the building more visible to the public with more glass so the inner workings were seen.

Bill said he feels the building, as recommended by the Design Committee, would have a negative effect on the park. He said the advisory committee wasn't made aware that the Design Commission would have the final review and the ability to completely overrule the committee's recommendations.

PP&R would, however, receive money from the Water Bureau for siting the building in the park, which would go into a mitigation fund to make other improvements to the park.

Brett Horner commented that, although the Design Commission has the final approval, PP&R can still weigh in on their recommendation and the Design Commission's decision can be appealed to the City Council. He

said the decision for placing a pump station in the park has been determined by the City Commissioners and cannot be changed. Brett said this issue will go back to the Design Commission in February and he recommended that the advisory committee transmit their comments prior to the meeting.

Julie asked to have a discussion about the public advisory committee process at a later Board meeting. Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong said that there are many unknowns when partnering with other bureaus. Brett said that the mitigation funds will provide more tree canopy for the parking lots, and allow improvements to the greenway trail. Nick Hardigg commented that one role of the Board could be to understand the role of public advisory committees to help see that there's a good public process.

Julie asked Board members to contact her via e-mail if they wish to have her prepare a letter stating the Board's position regarding the pump station to review at the February Board meeting. The Design Commission should be contacted to determine any upcoming dates for decision-making.

## **Budget Update**

A public hearing on the PP&R budget will be held on Monday, January 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Multnomah County building. The City's newest financial forecast has indicated that if the library district is not included on the May ballot there would likely be a 4.7% cut. If the library district is added, a 6.1/6.5% cut is predicted. Parks will submit a budget with 4, 6 and 8% cuts as requested by the Mayor.

There is some flexibility now as the County has determined that they will put the library levy renewal on the May ballot and hold the library district vote until the November ballot. Fred Kowell talked about how the library district would affect the City budget because of the cap in the amount of property taxes going to local government. The renewal of the library levy would keep taxes at basically the same level as this would not be a new tax, rather a continuation of one.

The next step in the process is to submit the budget on February 4. The BAC will look at the cut lists again after the public meeting and they'll have an opportunity to do a re-ranking if they wish. Because PBOT is cutting 16% from their budget and will be coming to the Council to ask for general fund support, the BAC may still see some changes from the Bureau's final budget submission.

Julie said that the Board should continue to push for funding for a Parks levy or bond.

## **Director's Comments**

Today was Mike Abbaté's first day back in the office and he thanked the Board for all their hard work on the budget while he was gone. He said this will be a challenging year for the Bureau as they will need to implement the budget cuts recommended by the BAC. Since this is the

fourth year of cuts, the morale of employees will be of great concern to him.

There are new leadership opportunities in the Bureau opening up, including recruitment for a new Asset Manager (Mike's previous position) and a replacement for Karen Loper after she retires. There will also be retirements in leadership at Central Services. With budget cuts perhaps dictating changes in the overall PP&R organizational structure, Mike asked if the Board would be interested in an organizational discussion.

### **Board Priorities**

The February Board meeting will include a discussion about the Board's future, priorities and workplan. Julie would like to propose a change in the Board's bylaws to state that the Board year begins on July 1, instead of September 1, in order to align with the City's fiscal year. This change would not require an ordinance before Council as it does not affect City Code. A majority vote of Board members would be the only requirement to make this type of amendment.

Board members reviewed the 2011 Board workplan and made the following comments:

- Under Planning #2 - The Board's role needs to be clarified when they are working with others (bureaus, private entities).
- Planning #4 – How does the Board become more of a voice? What's the Board's role? Should the Board hold public hearings?
- The bond measure needs to be moved up in priority.
- The Board needs to be involved in the Intertwine.
- Planning #6 – re the Board's equity statement. This involves not only PP&R's service delivery, but also those who deliver the service.
- Strengthen the connection between the Board and the Parks Foundation. How do the two groups work together?
- The Board needs to provide advice to Parks for a long-term funding solution. Explore what other park systems are doing.
- Planning #9 – How does the Board get involved to be of the greatest good? This will be part of the discussion at the February meeting.

### **Comm. Fish's Comments**

Comm. Fish made the following comments:

- The Portland Tribune has advocated for a Parks bond measure.
- He's looked at the BAC's work and is very impressed with the work they did in a difficult budget year.
- He's hoping to see an uptick in business license revenues soon.
- He intends to defend the current funding for Leach Garden which is currently in the PDC budget.
- He also wants to leverage the Halprin Conservancy in order to fund improvements to the Halprin fountains and plazas with private dollars.

In answer to a question on timing of a bond measure, Comm. Fish said they last looked at polling 18 months ago. He said people should begin to mobilize, put pieces together, and then move ahead when polling says it's time.

Keith Thomajan asked for the Commissioner's perspectives on the upcoming Council elections. Comm. Fish said in the race for Comm. Leonard's seat there is only one strong candidate and the only unknown is if the winner will take office in May after the election or at the end of the year. He feels that the other Council races are open. He suggested that the Board invite the candidates for Comm. Fritz's position and the Mayoral candidates separately to a Parks Board meeting, where they can be asked about their values and priorities.

Mary Anne commented that the preparation for the bond is an important link between economic development and park development.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 a.m.