



# PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

March 7, 2012

7:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

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**Board members present:** Mary Anne Cassin, Tony Magliano, Mauricio Villarreal, Julie Vigeland, Mike Alexander, Sue Van Brocklin, Shelli Romero, Andy Nelson, Linda Robinson, Nick Hardigg, Tricia Tillman, Keith Thomajan

**Board members absent:** Bob Sallinger, Nichole Maher, Katie Breene

**Staff present:** Mike Abbaté, Mat Sinclair, Jeff Milkes, Fred Kowell, Warren Jimenez, Emily Hicks, Deb Lev, Carolyn Lee, Margaret Evans, Karen Loper, Max Behrens, Brett Horner, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, Liz Moorhead

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**Call to order** The meeting was called to order by chair Julie Vigeland at 7:32 a.m. She began the meeting by explaining how the Board began their conversation about equity. An equity subcommittee meeting was scheduled and almost the whole Board showed up for the meeting. An affirmation statement was created out of this meeting and a full Board discussion was scheduled for the November Board meeting. However, that meeting was postponed when the Board began their work as the Budget Advisory Committee.

**Approval of the minutes** The minutes of the February 1, 2012 meeting were approved as written.

**New Assistant Director** PP&R's new Assistant Director, Warren Jimenez, was introduced Warren is currently working as chief of staff for Mayor Sam Adams, but will begin his position with Parks on April 2. Warren commented that he sees PP&R as ahead of the game on the issue of equity and looks forward to discussions regarding what it means to provide equitable access to the community.

**Opening Comments Workforce Equity** Mike Abbaté began the conversation by saying that the 2020 Vision Plan is why this group is gathered together as the 2020 Plan recommended the establishment of a parks board. This morning's meeting will discuss the key issue of equity and Mike said he's here to listen and hear. PP&R is building trust and direct communication. Staff recognize and respect one another and bring all their cumulative experience together to better serve the community.

Karen Loper said the purpose of the meeting is to have a two way dialog. She reviewed the Board's equity statement with its six key elements. Mike Alexander continued by saying that the Board sees imbalances in staffing that were discussed at the recent budget forum. It was agreed that those who are underserved should be at the top of the list. He said

that there have been challenging discussions and the Board is on an evolving path. What values and attitudes are brought that will shape tomorrow? How can this challenge be addressed with PP&R staff?

Margaret Evans commented that PP&R realized they had room for growth and improvement and they also need to evaluate how they do business. Three subcommittees comprised of employees with different cultural backgrounds and jobs from throughout the Bureau meet regularly. Margaret mentioned that the City's hiring process has proved to be a roadblock to many as they found the information difficult to access. To facilitate change, staff have begun taking information sessions about hiring out into the community. Staff have also attended career fairs and trade schools and are working with these groups to expose people to jobs at PP&R. Margaret has also worked to develop interview questions regarding diversity development and is looking at different ways of developing a mentoring program. It's a huge cultural shift for Parks as there are so many differences – cultural, generational, and career paths. Margaret has taken each recommendation and is assigning champions to each one to make the changes happen.

Karen gave an overview of the number of employees in Parks. Tony Magliano said at PPS he is frustrated by the lack of diversity in the candidates that apply for jobs. How do you target communities of color? Margaret said the City has developed a list of groups to contact and they've found that many of these groups also have sub-groups. Max Behrens commented that by the time Parks goes out for hiring, it's too late to begin developing and cultivating relationships with diverse groups. It's a continuing conversation. Carolyn Lee commented that she is also working to target people within the City of Portland who have interest and connections.

Shelli Romero asked how Parks is doing on attracting diverse candidates. What is the biggest need? When Parks has promotional opportunities, is there a diverse pool available? Margaret said the Bureau probably earns a C average. Staff are constantly challenging the City's Bureau of Human Resources to get this type of data. Now, with the move to an online application process, she is finally beginning to get reports. She said historically not many diverse candidates have moved from the minimum qualifications to get placed on the eligible list. As far as promotional opportunities, Margaret said the Bureau has been offering resume writing and interview classes to Parks staff to better prepare employees for promotional opportunities. She has also been working with HR's classification section to see if entry level classes can be developed so there's room for growth.

Tricia Tillman said the goal is to have a workforce that mirrors Portland's population. What policies are in place? Does Parks require employees to have experience working with diversity? Are minorities protected in the layoff process? Margaret said Parks has extended recruitment deadlines on some job postings when they haven't gotten the pool of applicants needed. Who have we not reached out to? The new

online application process – NeoGov – now provides race and gender information to assist bureaus in their efforts.

Astrid Dragoy talked about the challenges in City Nature. During one recruitment they did not get a diverse pool of applicants and she didn't know how to find interested people to apply. She commented that in 2008, City Nature began a new program called GRUNT which reaches out to high school kids who are low income and minority. 20 teens volunteer for a school year and then are able to transition to paid jobs. While in the program they learn respect, are introduced to recreation, horticulture and trees, and also work as teachers at summer day camps. She said there are 30 internships currently and they work throughout the Bureau.

Linda Robinson asked about the connection between the 450 permanent jobs and the 2000 seasonal jobs. Is there a process to identify and mentor those who are interested in full time employment with the Bureau? Margaret said there are a handful of seasonals who want ongoing permanent employment, however, most seasonals are college students, teachers, etc. who are just interested in summer employment. She said staffing levels go from 1000 total employees in the winter to 3000 or more in the summer. Mike Abbaté said the challenge is getting diverse candidates for a wide range of jobs. Many seasonals don't consider their jobs at Parks as a career path. Parks also needs to consider succession planning to bring a new generation into Parks as long time employees retire.

Tony said once the pool of applicants is achieved, there needs to be focused training for transitioning those entry level employees into managers.

Carolyn said that the City has mandatory cultural competency training for all managers. Parks offers additional training for both managers and front line staff which addresses issues and challenges that Parks faces as a workforce. Karen commented that PP&R has also been very deliberate to make sure there is someone on each hiring interview panel with a different perspective.

Tricia commented that she never saw a jobs board when she worked out at Dishman Community Center. She said this would be a great idea for many PP&R facilities.

Margaret talked about the City's Cooperative Leadership Institute which provides leadership development and training. Parks has also developed their own leadership training course where individual participants can learn about the link to get from front line employee to supervisor. Margaret said PP&R has also begun advertising PP&R careers in program guides.

Margaret also said she has been looking at placing job boards at various PP&R sites. Eileen Argentina said Parks has made sure seasonal jobs are

posted on PP&R's website as these jobs do not go through the City's HR department.

Sue Glenn said PP&R is trying to build the trust that Parks is an employment opportunity for all. She is looking for bilingual staff to work in community centers and is also working with partners to reach out when there are hiring opportunities. Eileen commented that, as a senior manager, she doesn't always get involved in hiring. The Bureau needs to have checkpoints along the way to ask who's on the hiring panel and what are the questions they are asking.

Keith Thomajan referenced the book "Start With Why." He said change will take a level of tenacity and commitment that can only come from Mike and his team.

Mike Alexander said he's seen a lot of management strategies over the years and at the end you do what you believe in, have measured, observed and noticed. The gap from school to the world of work is too big for some kids to breach. There has to be a way to use the time wisely and never break the cycle. Keith wondered what it takes to change the culture.

Shelli said there are three emerging issues: Education, economics and equity/diversity. How does Parks partner with groups like Home Forward?

**Engaging the Diverse Community** In regards to programs and services P&R delivers, why is this issue so important?

Tricia commented on the health impacts of gentrification. She sees it as the experience of being an outsider and that impacts the health of the community and underserved/outsideers. Many factors come into play - limited English, disabilities, who's hiring, who is in leadership, and who makes the decisions with the change in demographics of Portland.

What are the resources and services being developed? How do we know what the needs are? What is the point of input of diverse staff? Who makes the decisions, what is the budget? How are we working with underserved adults/seniors?

Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong said she believes products are better if there are good processes and who is actually in the room matters. The Community Relations team was established at Parks with the arrival of Mat Sinclair. How do we get people in the room? What do they experience once they get there? How does that translate to jobs/hiring? Who are we serving?

Alejandro Vidales said the approach of the Outreach Program is:

- Getting to know the community first.
- Creating opportunities to work with the leadership of agencies and be at the table at the beginning.

He said many of the diverse communities didn't know who PP&R was, what they offered, or how to access the services. He made presentations at various agencies and they identified which would be the most interesting/productive classes for their clients to attend. Some didn't realize that the community centers were not private clubs and were open to all.

Alejandro helped support events these groups were having and helped develop new ones, including:

- Native American Family Day
- Latino Day coming in April
- Field trips for kids to take them places they hadn't been before

He said there is more culturally diverse programming coming into the centers. Another program he developed last year is the soccer program at Delta Park where 20 teams played by invitation only. He commented that career programming is just part of what Parks can offer. The process is just as important as the outcome.

Linda Robinson talked about the concerts and movies in East Portland last year. After Jeff Milkes talked about playground programs at a recent meeting, they asked the East Portland Action Plan for funding to expand the program in East Portland. The program may also be taken to other sites besides parks (i.e., churches, apartments). 10 additional mobile playgrounds sites will be funded, although the food program will not be a component due to dietary concerns of the ethnically diverse groups.

Tricia asked how PP&R will know that the work being done now continues when current employees leave? Where is the accountability? Elizabeth commented that every project is supposed to address how it affects those living in the area. There is a policy and staff need to be more proactive in using it. How information is passed along needs to be part of training the next person to take over.

Mary Anne Cassin asked how Parks is conducting outreach to low income groups. Max said five barriers have been identified:

- Programming – it must be relevant
- Education – people must be informed how to connect with Parks
- Welcoming environment – facilities must be sensitive of all cultures
- Transportation – many don't have a way to get to facilities
- Economic – how do they pay for classes and activities

Alejandro commented that a lot of the grants PP&R receives are for low income people.

Todd Lofgren mentioned that the Bureau's new three year strategic plan takes current policies and the 2020 plan and focuses the Bureau's efforts by giving them another tool to operationalize their policies.

Tricia asked about engagement with the Coalition of Communities of Color, outreach with the Native American community, specific outreach to African American communities and DCL training. Elizabeth said they had talked about DCL doing leadership training programs, however there is currently no connection to get those who are trained involved with committees and PACs. Deb Lev commented that it's easier when a new program is started. For example, the Acquisition program wanted to find land in underserved areas but while doing the outreach she heard about the various reasons people didn't use existing parks. How does the Bureau determine how people are using the parks?

Sue Glenn said that staff do mentor some youth to give them skills and a job. The faith-based community is an area that the Bureau needs to reach out to in order to get youth engaged. Max said it's the entire Bureau's responsibility to use the resources and support that is out there. Time is a big constraint on being involved. The more Parks goes out into the communities the better.

## **Contracting**

Who does Parks do business with? How are we reaching out to tell people how to do business with Parks? Are there targets or aspirational goals for sub-contractors?

Liz Moorhead said that a disparity study showed the Bureau wasn't reaching their MWESB goals. The City put together a Fair Contractors Forum that was tasked to make sure that opportunities are available for all people. Parks is doing outreach to MWESB businesses and has hired some of these businesses to do small evaluations.

Liz gave an example of the outreach work that was done for The Fields. An outreach plan was written, a project flyer printed and staff went to various groups to do presentations. Projects are also on the Procurement Office forecast calendar and Procurement now has a minority evaluator program. All PTE (Professional, Technical and Expert Services) contracts have a minority evaluator. Liz said the fair contracting utilization goal is 35% on subcontractors. Currently Parks is at about 32%, with 8% minority, 4% women and 20% emerging businesses.

The Fields project has 62% MWESB participation, following a unique level of outreach for the project. MWESB contractors must be registered and certified by the State.

Linda talked about the residents in Cully who want the park to be developed by people who live in the community – is this something that could actually happen? Todd said PP&R needs to expand the definition of the term “contracts” to be able to address this in the future.

Mike Alexander asked how long businesses can be defined as “emerging.” Minority and women contractors get to keep that label forever; emerging businesses have a time limit on the term. The 35% MWESB goal is aspirational. PTE contracts are scored based on

MWESB participation, however, construction contracts are awarded on the basis of the low bid.

The following final comments were made by Board members and staff:

- Julie – We need to be doing an updated 2020 plan now.
- Emily Hicks – She wants to bring back ideas to Comm. Fish and remind him we’re all a team and that he remains connected to the conversation.
- Deb – She’s excited to be reminded about the importance of these things.
- Astrid – Staff have been working on this issue for a long time.
- Mike Alexander – This was a very helpful session. He likes to think we’re in agreement of the importance of this and we continue to build on and refine. Our role is to continue to support the effort.
- Mauricio – It was good to hear about equality and equity and how resources are available
- Shelli – Equity – there’s no time like now. The Cully model should be brought up at a retreat, along with the 2020 plan update. There should also be an external stakeholders/advisory group on public involvement and contracts.
- Alejandro – He’d like to invite Board members to any of his upcoming opportunities.
- Fred – The session was very helpful.
- Jeff – This is a step forward for the Bureau, but he fears that budget reductions will take us a step or so backwards. We need to specifically define steps.
- Tony – Conversations about race and equity are difficult. This needs to reach deeper into the organization than the managers.
- Mat – This was a good conversation.
- Todd – PP&R partners address equity alignment, health insurance addresses equity.
- Andy – He’s excited that we want to get into action – a 2020 update is important.
- Elizabeth – When we do the work it makes a difference.
- Nick – Not just a “good” thing to do – it’s survival, the key to fixing the downward funding issues with Parks, and that what money we do have is spent the right way.
- Linda – This has helped expand her public involvement focus.
- Sue Van Brocklin – She appreciated hearing about Astrid’s example, and feels it’s worth replicating to other efforts and bureaus. This is a great example of innovative thinking.
- Margaret – Thanks for the conversation and not just the presentation. We’d love to have Board members join us at a Diversity Development Committee meeting to continue the conversation.
- Max – Thanks for your efforts and for letting me talk.
- Brett – He likes to think of the day when we are just naturally getting the candidates and contracts we want without making special efforts.
- Eileen – She’s excited to have managers here to share conversation.

- Sue Glenn – She sees excitement around nurturing the core value we have; we need to let it shine.
- Tricia – She’s very encouraged around what she’s heard, but wants more data, and needs to have the history of areas noted (i.e., The Fields)
- Liz – Please check in with her if you have other questions.
- Mike – He appreciates the respectful conversation on all sides. There’s more to be done, and more data to get. This is a leadership moment - we do what we believe in and it’s the right thing to do. This subject is at the core of his beliefs and motivation is critical. It’s part of who he is, and his commitment is that we do these things. How do we touch the community? We have the ability to reach everyone. He’s passionate that we need to focus on the health benefits of parks and recreation. The mission of Parks is about building community. We can facilitate the community coming together and having these conversations. Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland for all – new tag line discussed by managers.
- Julie – This has been a good start, and great conversation. Many of us have had experience in different classes and it has taken a year to have these conversations. We did this at one meeting. Thank you for taking the time and for being prepared.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

The following comments were supplied by Tricia Tillman as an addition to the meeting notes.

Tricia Tillman’s Notes  
 Parks Board meeting  
 March 7, 2012

Topic One: Hiring

1. Hiring staff that proportionately reflect the broad diversity of the population in Portland.
2. Hiring that reflects diversity through recruitment, retention, and advancement within PP&R.
3. Strengthening and enhancing the organizational culture of openness and transparency, with a goal of continual learning.

career fairs/outreach  
 mentoring  
 cultural shift  
 taking recommendations to make sure they happen

Goal: workforce matches the city population

Data and policy???

- Where is your glass ceiling? do you stop hiring processes if the candidate pool is not diverse?
- Lay off processes
- Job descriptions that require demonstrated experience working with diverse communities
- Guidelines v. policy!! - policies and systems because it can't be based on good will and best intentions
- Data - challenge; HR is the keeper of information; NeoGov - getting reports on applicant pool (race and gender);
- Information to seasonal workers - pipeline to bring them on as permanent workers - need to develop the next generation.
- Cultural competence in management training - required for all City managers; bureau level - respect in the workplace;
- Leadership development; management development; job rotations - city-wide cooperative leadership institute - 9 month course; parks has its own cooperative leadership institute – diverse group of individuals; leap from front line to supervisor (not for past 9 months) – and once there, how do you maneuver in that role?
- Recruitment at community centers? – advertising in program guides; diversity community centers – and all facilities; idiosyncratic – depending on the neighborhood; also looking at posting season positions on a web site;
- Leadership moment - tenacity and commitment; unwillingness to accept the 100 reasons why this is hard - accountability in real time; metrics;
- National Park Service diversity initiative - Mosaic
- Connector Project - Malcolm Gladwell (Tipping Point) - 3 emerging issues - equity, education, economy; partnering with Home Forward (housing authority)

### Topic Two: Services at PP&R

Insider/Outsider - people of color/east Portland/seniors/people with disabilities/Native American community/immigrants and refugees/low income communities?

Board members explain two key areas of the Affirmation Statement related to programs and service delivery. PP&R staff share their efforts/practices in these areas to date. Together, Board and Staff talk through ideas for improvement.

Two key areas:

1. Directing resources and programs to underserved populations.
2. Collaborating with underserved populations to design services and create innovative culturally appropriate strategies and partnerships to reach these populations.

Data driven decision making - who are the underserved? How do we know they are underserved by Parks? How do we know we are meeting their needs? What are the points of input from diverse staff and community? Who has decision making authority? What resources do they have to work with?

We have heard a lot about parks work with teens? How do you engage the adults? the seniors?

- Public involvement and community engagement - better product with better process - who is in the room matters – Budget Advisory Committee (different conversation based on different participants)
- Community relations team - public facing pieces of the team - how do we intentionally and actively engage the community; bring them in and engage them;
- Dawson Park - African American community; Dishman Community Center; Emanuel Hospital - got to 30% AA
- Getting to know non-profits who are working with the communities; having communities be at the table - past year +
- CBO's don't know who we are...of the programs we offer, what is most interesting to community members?
- Iraqi Society of Portland and Bhutanese Community – parks, aquatics, senior recreation, etc. – need to clarify that center is open to the public; supporting events and developing others; NARA – addictions and recovery day.
- Native American Advisory Committee - NAYA, NARA, Bow and Arrow, etc. - training on cultural norms - culturally specific lifeguard course – connections of employment specialists at NAYA with Parks.
- Latino - Teatro Milagro, Latino Network, Causa
- Building relationships with the communities - is broader than recreation activities - includes participation in public involvement; data; how do we use the information?
- How do we operationalize policies? Summer free for all - reset existing programs - new 3 year plan for the bureau with tie to 2020 Plan.
- Cully property - highlight this as an alternative model for how community leadership can be supported in parks planning, development, operations, etc.

- How do culturally diverse communities use parks? Big groups? Dogs? Teens in tanks and shorts?
- Healing - promises that have not been fulfilled. Voice to part-time and seasonal staff, youth from neighborhood, faith based community? Celebrations of what is working well. Where can we use help? How to operationalize tools?
- Wvery employee at parks and recreation is responsible for this...

? Diversity in Civic Leadership Program; Coalition of Communities of Color;

? poverty is higher in communities of color - 1/2 AA children

? Advisory Committees from different communities?

? Where is the policy? Is it being implemented? How is accountability built in? How is the behavior institutionalized?

Diversity at the community center and recreation level leadership?

Q3: Design and construction in City of Portland - MWESB certified with the State of OR

- 32% MWESB for Parks overall
- 62% MWESB for the Fields - general contractor is a Minority Owned Business
- Parks reports these numbers every year at Budget process
- What percent are M v. W v. E (8% minority, 4% Women, 20% emerging)
- Fair contractors forums - barrier - owners paperwork is a barrier
- Cully Park – model of park being developed by people with the community?  
Todd – for mission statement we could expand the definition of contracts – to include design, build, operate, and maintain....contracts with non profits who run sports fields.
- How much of the MWESB's are lead contractors?
- Is 35% goal stipulated in contracts? Goals are aspirational... PTE - contract proposals are scored based on MWESB (25% of points); alternative processes - not done often - where we could increase MWESB - CMGC