



PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

November 7, 2012

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Mt. Scott Community Center

Board members present: Julie Vigeland, Kathy Fong Stephens, Nick Hardigg, Sue Van Brocklin, Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Andy Nelson, Mike Alexander, Mauricio Villarreal, Dion Jordan, Tricia Tillman, Linda Robinson, Christa Thoeresz

Board members absent: Mary Anne Cassin, Bob Sallinger, Shelli Romero, Jim Owens, Tony Magliano

Staff present: Alejandro Vidales and members of PP&R's Native American Advisory Committee: Donita Fry, Shawna Zierdt, David Lewis, Sherry Addis, Verdene McGuire, Sherry Scott.

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 October 3, 2012 were approved as written.

Park of the Month This month's park of the month was Lents Parks. Christa Thoeresz played soccer there but no one else was able to visit.

Native American Advisory Committee Judy BlueHorse Skelton talked about the Advisory Committee's activities, including this morning's proclamation by Mayor Adams at City Council that proclaims November as Native American Month.

Members of the Advisory Committee introduced themselves. Donita Fry said that she has been advocating on behalf of the Native community since 2005 in order to build strong relationships with the parks system. She said that there's been a lack of recognition of the influence of Native people in parks and in park history. She would like to have the Committee involved in naming parks and in all aspects of the system, including the addition of culturally relevant programming.

Alejandro Vidales, PP&R Outreach Coordinator, said that work has been going on before the Advisory Committee was formed. Former PP&R Manager Michelle Harper organized a committee in 2010 that included representatives from local tribes. The Advisory Committee was formed to reach and involve the Native community and educate others on the value of the Native community. Alejandro said the purpose of today's visit to the Board was to present some projects the Committee is working on and to gain support.

Judy said the Native community wants to create celebrations of their community through the parks system. An upcoming event is the Native American Family Day at East Portland Community Center on November 16. She mentioned other activities such as the tribal involvement in revitalizing and moving the salmon festival, which was previously held at Oxbow Park, to Westmoreland Park. Other activities include involvement in the South Waterfront art projects and what these projects have to say about place. They've also been involved there in native plant selection, indigenous language, and discussions about historic context to text and signage. Judy also mentioned that PSU students have also put up a display at EPCC. Sherry Scott said that the glass cases at EPCC include a copy of the proclamation, books, art and maps.

David Lewis works as the cultural liaison for the Grand Ronde tribe. He talked about the history of the tribe and their lands. He's currently working on a project to let people know that there's a previous history and a deeper story to be told. He said he's been working with the Water Bureau at Powell Butte to install an interpretive display and is also working with Metro on various projects. He mentioned that the tribe would like to do a project at Kelley Point Park because the junction of two rivers was historically a trading point. He's interested in providing space to revive traditions with a plank house and an area for ceremonies.

Sherry Addis commented that there has been a Siletz tribal office in the area since the 1980s. She said the Native community thinks about time as immemorial and they have always thought about sustainability. Sherry commented that the Native community members always introduce themselves by stating their own lineage. She is proud to have her staff and tribal members work on the Committee.

Judy said a tribal/native gathering garden is underway at the Cully Park site. This came about through a PSU Capstone Project. Traditional plants will be planted on this former landfill site to find healing in this space. A ceremony will take place this afternoon to scatter seeds on the site.

Linda Robinson said she is interested in interpretive work at Powell Butte and would like to talk to the Committee about interpretive work at Gateway Green. She also wondered if there was any information on Native history at Rocky Butte.

Tricia Tillman asked how the Advisory Committee is being utilized in regards to other Parks issues, such as mountain biking. Alejandro said the Committee is trying to find a balance and they have mapped out what they will be working on in the near future. Tricia also asked if there is a policy in place concerning the impact of projects on other cultures. Mike Abbaté said that several committees have started out advising the Bureau on projects, but then have moved onto other areas. He'd like to talk about this again.

David said that the Grand Ronde tribe is interested in decisions made about programming for youth and others. He said he doesn't see much outreach to tribes asking what they think. The Native American Advisory Committee has done some work on this, but they have not been utilized on a wide scale throughout all City agencies. He thinks the Committee needs to be more widely known so other bureaus know they're available for consultation.

Nick Hardigg commented that engagement with the river is a key plan to what happens in the future.

Julie asked to keep an ongoing communication with the Committee and the Parks Board. Alejandro will provide reports on the Committee regularly to the Board.

Warren Jimenez commented on the uniqueness of the Committee which brings sovereign nations and urban populations together. He said Parks needs to determine how to utilize this resource.

Election Laws Update

City Attorney Harry Auerbach updated Board members on current election laws. Oregon law prohibits any public employee (which includes members of City boards and commissions) from promoting or opposing a ballot measure while on the job. The law was designed to prohibit the government from getting involved in electioneering or coercing public employees to promote or oppose a ballot measure while on the job. While representing the Parks Board, members cannot express views regarding support or opposition once a ballot measure has been referred by the City Council to the elections officer. Prior to that, Board members are allowed to do what they want. Also, after a ballot measure is referred to the ballot, Board members can do what they want, on their own time, as private citizens, however, they cannot identify themselves as Parks Board members.

Public employees are permitted to distribute impartial and factual information about a bond measure. The Secretary of State has become more stringent about this so Harry would want to review anything first. He also stated that any information distributed must talk about how much the proposed bond measure would cost, but it is prohibited to state that programs and facilities will close if the bond is not passed.

If information is distributed prior to the bond measure being referred to the ballot, that same information cannot be used after the measure has gone to the voters.

Harry stated that there are penalties for violating election laws and the City will not pay fines for individual actions. Election law violations do not assist in the passage of a bond measure and will impact the effort and decrease credibility.

Harry said he is always available as a resource if Board members would like to contact him at 503-823-4047 or harry.auerbach@portlandoregon.gov)

Andy Nelson asked about the status of the Parks Board as an arm of the City government. The Parks Board is appointed by the Mayor and is part of the City Code. Nick commented that the Portland Parks Foundation, as a 501(c)(3), doesn't have the same restrictions as the Parks Board. The Foundation can do limited engagement on a bond measure and will be forming a committee for this. He'd like a Parks Board member to be involved with this committee.

Sue Van Brocklin asked if an "in my opinion" piece for the newspaper can state that the writer is a member of the Parks Board. Harry said a Board member can write an opinion piece as a member of the community but cannot state that they are on the Parks Board. He suggested always checking first with the Secretary of State's office.

Tricia asked if there are restrictions for the Parks Commissioner. Harry said that as an elected official the Commissioner has no restrictions, but he can't tell other public employees/board what to do, including request that staff type up speeches or do other work related to the bond measure. Harry said that he will need to talk to the Board later about scheduling updates on their agendas after the bond has been referred to the voters.

In order to be on the November 2013 ballot the Council will need to refer the bond to the voters in July 2013. In the meantime, PP&R will take the time to get prepared, perform internal staff work, get together a team and designate a single point of contact. Tricia asked if a Parks Board meeting would be allowed to adjourn at 9:00 and then hold a bond committee meeting after that. Harry said yes, with the following caveats:

- People can't be coerced to stay for the second meeting.
- Staff can only attend on their own time, not on the City clock.
- No City resources can be used in preparing documents, etc. for the meeting.

If people ask a Board member what they think about the bond measure, the Board member must be specific in saying that they are speaking as a private citizen because the Parks Board isn't allowed to take a position.

Other Business

The ex-officio discussion will be moved to the December meeting agenda. Julie asked Board members to begin thinking of additional areas that should be represented on the Board in the form of ex-officio members.

Julie announced that due to Mike Alexander's new job commitment he is not able to assume the position of chair of the Board in January as planned. Andy was slated to become the next vice chair in January, but will now assume the chair at that time. Julie asked Board members to begin thinking of items for the agendas.

Ad Hoc Committees

Sue distributed a handout giving a recap of the communications committee. Julie would like to talk about this at the December meeting.

Mauricio Villarreal reported that the Westmoreland project is moving ahead with permitting issues. Construction is slated to begin in mid 2013.

Director's Report

Mike gave an update on Harper's Playground, an innovative accessible play area designed by Mauricio's firm, which has recently been installed at Arbor Lodge Park. Arbor Lodge will be December's Park of the Month and Julie urged members to visit the park to check out the playground.

Deborah Lev has been permanently appointed to the position of City Nature Manager. She has been serving as the interim manager.

Mike also reported on the October 30 Friends and Partners event held at the Forestry Center. This was an opportunity for staff to thank these groups for their support of PP&R parks and facilities.

Next week, the City Council will hold a retreat with new and old Council members to talk about priorities. Mayor-elect Hales will then meet with bureau directors so they can get some budget direction. Mike commented that it looks like it will be a tough year budget-wise and there may have to be some mid-year budget cuts. Staff are already working internally on the budget and have solicited budget ideas from staff.

On other projects:

- Washington Park parking – PP&R is the owner of the parking lot at the Zoo and has been working with the venues in the park. The plan is to go to a meter system instead of the current honor system. There would be a shuttle available from the Max station to the Japanese Garden and the Rose Garden.
- Staff have been working with the neighborhood associations surrounding Washington Park on a parking lot near the Forestry Center that was never permitted, just paved. It recently went to the Hearings Officer and was approved.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m. Board members were given a tour of Mt. Scott Community Center by the center director, Craig Vanderbout.