

PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

MEETING MINUTES
December 5, 2012
7:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Board members present: Julie Vigeland, Linda Robinson, Christa Thoeresz, Andy Nelson, Mary

Anne Cassin, Kathy Fong Stephens, Mike Alexander, Shelli Romero,

Sue Van Brocklin.

Board members absent: Mauricio Villarreal, Dion Jordan, Tricia Tillman, Jim Owens, Judy

BlueHorse Skelton, Bob Sallinger, Nick Hardigg, Tony Magliano.

Staff present: Mike Abbaté, Jennifer Yocom, Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Jeff

Shaffer, Kia Selley, Deb Lev, Warren Jimenez.

Call to order The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Vigeland at 7:30 a.m.

Approval of the minutes The minutes of the November 7, 2012 meeting were approved as written.

Park of the Month

This month's Park of the Month was Arbor Lodge Park. Mauricio

Villarreal's firm designed the new accessible Harper's Playground there that recently had its grand opening. Mary Anne Cassin commented that she saw many families at the playground, even on a wet, miserable day. Dion Jordan said he took his kids to the new playground and plans on taking them to every park of the month to be able to see each park

through their eyes.

Parks Tour Julie, Dion and Kathy Fong Stephens went on PP&R's new employee

tour on November 28. Julie distributed an information sheet on the Parks Board to others on the tour and this handout will be used for subsequent

quarterly tours to inform new employees about the Board.

Volunteer Opportunity Andy Nelson reported that the Friends of Peninsula Park Rose Garden

will be participating in a rose planting at the park on February 19. He thinks this would be a great volunteer opportunity for the Board and will send out information on the activity. Nick Hardigg commented that this new Friends groups is being housed at the Parks Foundation under their

non-profit umbrella.

Other Board Business Andy, Julie, and Mike Abbaté recently met to discuss the transition to a

new Board Chair and to look at the agendas for the next six months of

Board meetings.

The Parks Board will act as the Bureau's Budget Advisory Committee again this year. This work will begin in January so there will not be a regular January Board meeting. The February Board agenda will include

a discussion of the bond as most of the Board's activity in the near future will be bond-related.

The Board's annual retreat will be on Friday, May 31 at a location to be determined.

Linda Robinson moved and Sue Van Brocklin seconded to elect Andy Nelson as chair of the Parks Board beginning January 1, 2013. All members voted aye.

Communications Ad Hoc

Sue asked if the communications *ad hoc* committee should become a regular standing committee of the Board. The committee's ongoing goals would be to raise awareness of the Board and support Portland Parks & Recreation. How does the Board express their views to the public? What triggers action for the Board? The following are actions the Board might be interested in pursuing:

- Issue statements by the Board
- Write letters to the City Council and newspaper editors
- Author an op-ed piece
- Meet with the *Oregonian* editorial board
- Talk to reporters
- Participate in social media

Are there any others? Should some be deleted?

Julie commented that the Board has previously written letters to the Council regarding various issues. Shelli Romero said that other reasons for the Board to communicate are:

- A threat to a reduction in park area
- Budget cuts to the Bureau
- A bond measure

Shelli suggested taking a look at positive and proactive things that the Board could focus on. Mary Anne said that if the Bureau is moving towards a bond, there's nothing better than highlighting success (i.e., the new playground at Arbor Lodge Park). Shelli said that having the Community Garden program reach their plot goal is another milestone that could be highlighted.

Julie said that Board members could also participate in pro-bond activities before the bond is actually referred to the voters. Andy said this should be a part of the Board's agenda each quarter, and could include a discussion of items the Board should focus on. Sue suggested selecting two topics to take to the *Oregonian* and also suggested that the Board keep a calendar of Board member ideas. Julie said that the Board can place stories that the Bureau isn't able to. All of these activities will help reinforce to the public that there is a citizen board.

Shelli said that neighborhood association and community newspapers are also good places to talk about the existence of the Parks Board. Kathy suggested working on a one sentence tag line for the Board.

Sue wondered if the Board should take a simple vote at a meeting when they want to support something. What are the Board's guidelines for approving an action? Should the Board write letters of support for grants? Julie commented that when she been on a board that reviews and approves grants, she does look at who has written letters of support for the grants.

There was also discussion about voting when/if the entire Board does not agree on the Board's position on an issue. Andy said these are all things to think about and the Board should discuss this at the next Board meeting and put it to a vote. Julie commented that if the Board is voting on something controversial, it would be difficult to support a vote if the entire Board is not in agreement.

Foundation Update

Nick Hardigg reported that Columbia Sportswear is now providing a year round 30% off coupon as a thank you to donors and volunteers.

Ex-Officio Update

The Urban Forestry Commission chair would like to see more interaction between the UFC and the Parks Board. It has been proposed that a member of the UFC become an ex-officio member of the Parks Board. Mary Anne wondered, however, is this would open the door for other Parks-related boards or commissions to feel they should also have representation on the Parks Board. Mike Abbaté said that since the UFC holds hearings and is a regulatory body, they are different than other City board.

Board members commented that the Board can change and evolve their membership. Per the bylaws, each ex-officio member would get renominated at the Board's May meeting. Mary Anne said she feels this is good timing with the bond and the two boards can be united in the effort.

Mike Alexander made a motion, seconded by Linda, that the Parks Board appoint the chair of the Urban Forestry Commission to become an exofficio member of the Parks Board. All members voted aye; the motion passed.

Director's Report

Mike Abbaté distributed the handout that was prepared for Mayor-elect Hales' briefing book. All bureaus contributed like information for the book.

Staff are working on selecting dates for the upcoming BAC meetings. Four meetings will be scheduled, but staff hope to only use three of the dates. The process will be similar to last year's.

Mike announced that Jennifer Yocom, PP&R's new Community Relations Manager, will help move the bond process forward.

PP&R will receive approval today from the City Council to join into an agreement with the venues in Washington Park to control parking at the park, where there have been parking and access issues for years. A

Washington Park Traffic Management Association will be formed and they will manage issues there cooperatively.

Comm. Fish Comments

Comm. Fish said he will continue to be commissioner-in-charge of Parks until early February. Then, Mayor Hales will be in charge of all the bureaus for the next three months, although administrative details for bureaus may still be handled by the previous commissioner-in-charge.

The Mayor-elect has announced that all bureaus will do a zero-based budget exercise. Bureaus will prepare a budget for FY 2013-14 that is 90% of their FY 2012-13 budget. Add packages can also be submitted. The financial forecast shows that there will be a \$25M budget deficit: \$10M is going to the library district, \$5M goes to the Department of Justice settlement and \$8M will be converted to ongoing funding. Comm. Fish said that while the Council is looking at positives in about three years, everything is on the table this year. Other ways to produce savings are through labor costs, which could include COLAs and/or pay freezes. New revenues are also being considered, including a cell phone tax.

Comm. Fish said he told the Mayor-elect that Council needs to be clear to the BACs what the Council is asking their citizen committees to do. He said it will be a challenging budget year.

Comm. Fish said he'll do a debrief on the Washington Park parking issue at a later date, but, unfortunately, there are some people who are just philosophically opposed to paid parking. Sue Van Brocklin commented that it seems appropriate to do an op-ed piece to provide the correct information on the issue.

Comm. Fish said the May ballot is getting a lot of attention (Children's Levy, Metro, possible fluoride issue) so November is looking better for the Parks bond measure.

Comm. Fish thanked Julie for her leadership as Board chair.

Cully Park

Shelli said that a lot of partners have been involved in building this park. It's a very diverse neighborhood and the project has been a good example of a community led/driven effort.

Tony DeFalco of Verde said this was a great community-building effort in this very park deficient area. The community has taken a brownfield and turned it into a world class park. Tony gave some background on the property which was a former landfill (1980-1990). DEQ spent \$2M cleaning up the site after the landfill closed. Funds were allocated in 2006 for Parks to do a master plan, which was completed in 2008. Tony said there was a requirement to have Spanish speaking neighbors involved in the community process. But, how does the community take the next step? How do they find the money to build the park? Can they put people to work actually building it?

Tony said Phase 1 of the project will include 13 different features, which will be about half the size of the master plan. This will be a three year project to build the park and construction will start next summer with a completion date of June 2015. Tony commented that they have 25 different partners involved in the park, including 17 community-serving organizations.

Jenn Bildersee of the Portland Brownfields Program works on grants for public and private property where there are challenges in reusing the property. She got involved with the community garden aspect of the site when there were concerns about it being a safe place to garden. She said the Brownfields Program has been around for 15 years. While doing environmental sampling, they looked for opportunities for people of all ages to become engaged with the process, which included taking and labeling sample jars, and touring the water pollution control lab to see how the results are determined.

Rebecca Wells-Albers from DEQ got involved with the project when Tony contacted her agency. DEQ handles brownfields money from the EPA. To be eligible for funding, a project must have a substantial public benefit. Rebecca said the partnerships built at the Cully project were very valuable in building relationships they hadn't had in the past.

Keri Christensen from the Oregon Health Authority was also recruited by Tony DeFalco to work on the project. The Health Authority provides health risk assessments but they sought specific funding from the Federal government as the project outcome will be a benefit to the community. They will be looking to replicate this effort throughout the state.

Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong said there was a lot of fear at the beginning of the project but the key for success was sitting down and talking about the desired outcomes and then agreeing how to move forward. She said the master plan was developed by the public and fits into PP&R's 2020 guidelines.

Linda talked about a greening exchange that will be happening on Saturday at Ventura School. It will focus on three citizen-initiated projects and will talk about the pitfalls and benefits of a community project.

Mike Alexander commented that the Board has spent quite a lot of time talking about equity and today's presentation has shown how it's done. He'd like the Board to endorse the Cully project as a collaborative effort. Mike moved to formally endorse the Cully Park project as an equity-approached project. All Board members voted aye.

Julie, as outgoing chair, formally turned over the gavel to Andy, the new chair, at the conclusion of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Adjourn