



PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

May 8, 2013

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Board members present: Andy Nelson, Mary Anne Cassin, Linda Robinson, Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Nick Hardigg, Kathy Fong Stephens, Mike Alexander, Shelli Romero, Dion Jordan, Tony Magliano, Christa Thoeresz, Sue Van Brocklin

Board members absent: Jim Owens, Bob Sallinger, Tricia Tillman, Julie Vigeland, Mauricio Villarreal, Meryl Redisch

Staff present: Mike Abbaté, Warren Jimenez, Kia Selley, Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Todd Lofgren, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom, Deborah Lev

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

Approval of the minutes Mary Anne Cassin moved to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2013 meeting. Mike Alexander seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Park of the Month Maricara Natural Area is this month's Park of the Month. Deborah Lev said that this natural area was one of PP&R's first projects funded by the Metro Local Share dollars. The project improved access and the habitat at this site which is on 20 acres tucked away behind Jackson Middle School. Mary Anne commented that she was amazed to see how far the park has come from its former condition.

Election of officers The Board elected officers for their next Board year. The slate of officers is Andy as chair and Sue Van Brocklin as vice chair. Linda Robinson moved to approve the slate of officers and Mike Alexander seconded the motion. All members voted in favor – these officers will serve the Board for the next Board year ending June 30, 2014.

Chair/Board Business The Parks Board's annual retreat will be Friday, May 31. Members will meet at Overlook House at 8:15 and depart at 8:30 via mini bus for a tour. The bus will return to Overlook House at 11:00 for lunch and a presentation and discussion. The second tour will leave Overlook House at 1:00, returning at 3:00. This tour will be a much different tour than the new employee tour that some Board members have previously gone on. It will include a wide variety of PP&R sites, with a look behind the scenes. Staff will be in attendance at all sites to answer questions and provide information.

It was suggested that a photographer join the tour to take some photos for the future. Jennifer Yocom will also arrange for a staff person to video the tour for Board members who are not able to attend. One of the tour stops will include a 10 minute trail walk at Lower Macleay Park so everyone should wear comfortable walking shoes. There won't be any strenuous hiking.

Foundation Update

Nick Hardigg updated the Board on the Foundation's activities. The Foundation previously focused on raising private support and donations, but they are now also looking at public support with a focus on a bond measure in the future. In previous polling, Nick has seen that a lot of work needs to be done so the public is aware of the need for a bond measure. The Foundation and volunteers will be doing outreach again at summer concerts and Parks Board members are invited to join them at their table. The Foundation will also be featured in a trailer at movies in the park events.

Nick announced that the Foundation is also promoting a new volunteer effort with PP&R. This will be a citywide volunteer day with Parks that will include two days of volunteering to raise awareness of the needs of the park system and also get some needed work done. This event, called Parke Diem, is scheduled for October 11-12. Nick said they hope to have over 30 sites for volunteer projects. This is a great opportunity for media attention and raising awareness and Nick hopes it will become an annual event. The Forest Park Conservancy will also hold their day of service during that time. Nick is billing it as "the biggest volunteer day of service in PP&R history" and more information will be announced in the near future.

Linda reported Gateway Green is gearing up for a major fundraising campaign. The group will be working with Oregon Solutions who will do much of the work. The campaign will launch in July or August and will run for five weeks.

Budget Update

Mike Abbaté announced that the Mayor's proposed budget has been released. Some of the highlights include major realignments between several bureaus. PP&R has received a cut of around 3.5%, instead of the 10% cut the Bureau was directed to prepare. Bureaus were asked what their priorities would be if they had more money. Mike said Parks' number one priority is to receive the proper O&M funding when a new park opens. \$700,000 in O&M funding that normally would come to the Bureau got flagged as an issue this year and was not recommended to be funded by the City's budget office. This automatic funding was supposed to be a Council policy so Mike has asked the Mayor to add this funding back into PP&R's budget.

Parks also received the following add backs:

- Three SUN School sites
- Additional funding for Natural areas maintenance and central services maintenance

- Aging services pass through is funded at 50% for one year.
- Teen programming received \$300,000.
- The summer lunch program extension into August and September, which was to have received one-time funding, has been moved to ongoing funding.
- \$800,000 in BES-funded services will be added to the budget. PP&R's BAC recommended that BES continue to pay for these services, but BES' BAC recommended they be cut. These services will now be funded with General Fund ongoing dollars in Parks.

The Mayor's proposed budget also included some items that had not been considered – decorative fountains, previously maintained by the Water Bureau, will now be operated and maintained by Parks. This will add \$500,000 into PP&R's ongoing General Fund budget and includes the authority to hire two FTEs to perform the work.

BES' contract with the Friends of Trees to plant trees will now be transferred to Parks, who will now take on that responsibility. More details are still to be worked out as to how that contract will be administered.

Warren Jimenez said that in comparison with other General Fund bureaus, Parks received one of the lower cut percentages. The Fire Bureau is taking a 6% cut and the Police Bureau will be cutting positions. He said there is better news in the coming economic forecast and in PERS news out of Salem. Warren said that the relatively low percentage of cut also speaks to the work the Board is doing on advocacy, which demonstrates the Board's effectiveness. Parks is still, however, looking at a loss of 15 positions.

Nick wanted to know how large the overall cut to Parks will really be. He sees some added responsibilities and some unfunded mandates so wondered when there will be a clearer picture. Mike said it's a difficult year to put a hard percentage on it due to the realignment of bureaus. Things that previously weren't PP&R's responsibility, have now been moved to Parks, so how do you count that money? Mike believes the Mayor's intent is to also give Parks money to do the work, along with the new responsibility.

Warren said that the total amount of cut for all City bureaus was lowered to about \$21.5M by the recent forecast. When all is evened out each General Fund bureau will take an equal cut of about 6.5%.

Mary Anne said it's still a cut, but she sees some historic good trends. She wondered if the Parks Board can go on record to say they support some paradigm shifts, the move to honest budgeting and the shift to not keeping public safety bureaus held harmless.

Andy commented that the hard work of the BAC has historically been held aside, but this year he feels the BAC's hard work was taken into

consideration. He thinks reinforcing some of these paradigm shifts to the Mayor would be a good idea. Warren said this is a critically important thing for the Board to do. A letter could be sent or the Board could do whatever they're comfortable with. The first vote of the Council on the budget will be on May 29. A public hearing will be held on May 16 and it was suggested that a Board member could come to testify and bring a letter for Council. Mary Anne made a motion to inform Council that the Board appreciates their support of the BAC's work, and that honest budgeting is a great way to approach the work going forward to keep the cuts more evenly distributed across the bureaus. Andy will draft a letter with Mary Anne's help. Board members who are not in attendance today will be asked for their comments. Sue seconded the motion, and all members voted aye. Jeff Shaffer announced dates of the other upcoming public forums.

Budget Process and Follow-Up How did this year's budget process go for the Board, what are the Board's issues and concerns, and what can they be looking at throughout the year? An ad hoc committee met and determined that, process-wise, keeping the full Board as the BAC makes a lot of sense. They feel there's big value to it, and they liked the consensus approach on the budget. By and large, the major recommendation of the ad hoc committee was that the BAC feels every year that they don't have quite enough information when they start looking at line items and cuts. Members felt it would be good to start getting this information in September or October so when January comes they can start the BAC process with a better understanding of the Bureau's budget and issues.

They would also like to hear from Mike's team about their recommendations. If add-ons happen throughout the year, what are they? In regards to performance reporting, how is Parks doing in order to make their various targets? Are investments working, and are they paying off? Is the Bureau achieving their equity goals? What are the pass-throughs and IGAs? What are the revenue-generating leverage possibilities? These are things the Board would like to be considering throughout the year.

Dion Jordan said he'd definitely like to get more information earlier as he could offer more to the process if he had information throughout the year. This could be an item on each month's agenda so the Board could look at budget-related items all year round. This topic could also be moved to an ad hoc committee. Kathy Fong Stephens would also like to see information on revenue generating, new initiatives, and discussion about possibilities for partnerships and ways the Parks Foundation can help.

Tony Magliano said it would be helpful to get information on how service delivery is measured, what are the key measures Parks looks for and how the budget is aligned.

Shelli commented that she'd also like to get more information on the Bureau's budget before the process starts. There are many questions

about certain PP&R programs, i.e., SUN Schools. Are programs like this core to Parks' mission, is there another way to provide this service, and what are the political realities around it? Andy said he'd like to put some thought into the SUN program, discuss it with several other Board members, and then make a recommendation to Mike and his team. Tony said he's not clear how all the various SUN programs are funded. Does the money have to be divided amongst all these agencies? Services Manager Eileen Argentina is on the SUN Coordinating Council along with Josh Alpert of the Mayor's Office. Kathy, Dion, Tony volunteered to be on ad hoc committee to discuss the SUN School program.

Tony commented that the collaboration agreement with PPS over what is shared in terms of resources is another very complex issue. Linda wondered how the other school districts in Portland share with Parks. Eileen said she has shared maintenance ideas with the other districts. Jeff said that the October financial forecast drives the City's initial budget work. Staff need to start working on what they would like to bring back when there's more money, which is a difficult process in itself.

Board's Role Regarding Public Input An ad hoc committee met to discuss the role and charge of the Parks Board and to clarify the Board's purpose. They see two main questions – the Board's role in accepting feedback from the public around issues and the Board's role regarding public hearings. The second issue revolves around the Board's decision-making.

Board members interpret their purpose as an advisory board that represents the public. As a result, the Board is representational of the city, but the bylaws are vague and unclear. The bylaws include language stating the Board is a forum for public decision-making, which sounds like the Board holds public hearings. The ad hoc committee recommended clarifying the language in the bylaws to more accurately describe the charge of this group. As the Board is a public body, their meetings are public, but they are not set up to provide public input nor does the Board feel that that's their role. New language has been drafted to state that the Board is providing a forum for park issues. The committee then recommends that the language about public discussion be removed as the public may interpret that to mean they can come and make comments to Mike and his team.

The ad hoc committee also recommends a change in the term "decision-making." Occasionally, Board members give their own personal advice, and sometimes the Board makes a motion. The committee discussed whether the Board is there to serve the public or if members allowed to offer their own views. For example, when a baseball team made a proposal to use Lents Park stadium, the Board got together and spoke with a unified voice on that subject and the ad hoc committee wants to continue to give the Board the flexibility to do that. Also, Mike has expressed an interest at times in hearing Board members' personal voices.

Mary Anne commented that there may be times when Board members wish to schedule something on the agenda for public input. This could be within a meeting or at a separate meeting. She'd rather not tie bylaws up so tightly so members could be able to choose, but also keep to the Board's workplan and strategic direction. Andy said he would seek advice from the City Attorney and perhaps propose some bylaws changes at the next meeting.

Linda commented that she had attended several Parks Board meetings before she was appointed to the Board. As such, she was hesitant to come on the Board because it seemed that staff always picked the agenda items. She has been pleased to see that the agenda now receives input from both Board members and staff. Andy commented that the agenda now gets set up when he and Mike meet prior to each meeting and they are open to receive agenda items that Board members are interested in.

Mike Alexander commented that the idea of public input is tricky; when City Council receives public input it is because they are decision-makers, but the Board is not. People are on the Board because they have different perspectives. He commented that this year's budget cuts impacted his agency but he didn't lobby the Board – rather, he lobbied everyone else. The Board is here for a reason and should keep that as their focus, even though members may have personal perspectives that run counter to the work of the Board.

Nick commented that Julie Vigeland had mentioned previously that a group wanted to address the Board and share their story and he wondered if there should be a means for groups to address the Board. Andy commented that groups have sent letters and e-mails and he's very open to that. In terms of public input, the Board has to say no to some and he knows some groups will end up feeling alienated, but the Board is focusing on the issues they feel are the biggest and have the broadest impact.

Sue would like to see this stated in writing so as not to open the door to the Board being a public forum. Instead, invite those whom the Board would like to hear from. The language needs to be very clear as the Board is not a public forum for that kind of discussion.

Andy is in agreement and will formulate a bylaws change to state this. He commented that the Board could state that if people wish to provide input to Board members, the Bureau's website could be updated to include information on how to contact individual Board members. Board members queried what was actually on the Bureau's website about the Parks Board. Currently, there is just a list of Board member names. The roster is made available for those who request it. Dion suggested having Board members' bios posted on the website so members of the public can contact someone who has a connection to their issue. He commented that some people don't always feel heard and would prefer to meet face-to-face. Andy also commented that Parks employees who do outreach should be aware that Board members are a resource. Andy and Mike

will discuss how to redesign the website content to provide more contact information for Board members.

A member of the public attending today's meeting asked the Board not to close the door to public comment. He likes Sue's suggestions as they give an opportunity to give input. Information in writing could be given to the Board; they could read it and decide if they want to pursue the issue further.

Communications Update

Sue distributed notes from the last communications committee meeting (comprised of Christa, Nick, Tricia, Jennifer and Sue), which has now moved from ad hoc to permanent status. She commented on the fourth bullet which talks about the 2020 Vision and what it says about the Parks Board's role. The committee sees that their role is to serve in an advisory committee capacity to the PP&R communications staff and Parks Foundation on issues regarding funding and communication messages and messages from the Board as a whole, and to help mobilize the Board in a communications capacity and act as editor, when needed. She said she hopes the Board sees themselves as ambassadors for Parks and that they will attend summer events, participate in Parke Diem, and support the Foundation's fundraising events. She'd also like Board members to stay on message regarding a future bond and other challenging issues. One of the first things the committee would like to tackle is an "in my opinion" piece re Parke Diem with a Foundation member. She said the Board may only get one or two opinion pieces a year published, so members need to be mindful of using the Board's name when they submit an opinion piece for something else.

Jennifer will be writing a newsletter for Parks and could include a profile on a Board member in each issue. The Board has significant players and that is one way the Board can communicate the value of parks. Jennifer said she thought of using Bob, Tricia, Christa, Dion, Shelli, and Judy first in her profiles. Board members don't always know a lot about each other so this is a potential opportunity for all to be involved. Jennifer distributed a mock up of what the profiles could look like and the information that would be needed from each Board member. She used Tricia as a model, with a quote, photo, three sentences to say how she is connected with parks, some personal history, her job, what part of the city she lives in, and what newspapers she reads. Jennifer will be asking each member between now and the May 31 retreat to write their profile - why they joined the Board, why they love parks, along with one interesting connection to parks. Jennifer will distribute Board members' original board applications to see what was said at the time they were appointed.

Mary Anne said she sees these profiles as valuable information for the website, and also as something that would be blown up to place on boards to have displayed at summer events.

Jennifer will add the Mid County Memo to the list of newspapers. Board members should let her know if she's forgotten any others. The profile

information should be brought to the retreat; Jennifer, will follow up with people who aren't here today.

Director Update

To help the Board feel connected to the big issues that are happening in the Bureau, an example of the weekly hot sheet update was distributed to show what is sent to the Mayor's office each week. Mike also passed out a piece done by Community Relations which includes items that may come up in the media. Board members would like to receive these updates and they will be combined into one document.

Some Board members were confused as to why they are getting e-mail from NRPA. Parks Board members get these as the Bureau is allowed to designate 10 citizen board members with their agency membership. Board members can unsubscribe if they no longer wish to receive these e-mails.

Other updates include:

- New Central Services Manager at the Yard will be hired soon.
- Finance Manager interviews are coming up.
- On the subject of the new Parks Commissioner, more will be known after May 29 when the Council will have their first vote on the Mayor's proposed budget. Bureau assignments should be made shortly thereafter.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.