



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
August 7, 2013
7:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

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

Board members absent: Mary Anne Cassin, Tony Magliano, Shelli Romero, Bob Sallinger, Kathy Fong Stephens

Staff present: Mike Abbaté, Margaret Evans, Todd Lofgren, Kia Selley, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom

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

Approval of the minutes Linda Robinson asked for an amendment to a sentence in the minutes under System Development Charge. The problem was the placement of the word *only*, which affected the entire meaning of the sentence. The sentence read: “In essence, only these fees can be used for increasing capacity in the park system.” The sentence should read: “In essence, these fees can be used only for increasing capacity in the park system.” (Note: this change has been made).

With amendment, Jim Owens approved the minutes, Sue Van Brocklin seconded. It passed unanimously.

Park of the Month Delta Park is this month’s Park of the Month. Andy Nelson asked for observations. Dion Jordan commented that he took his daughters to Delta Park to watch softball games. He also brought along their dogs, and it was a beautiful day.

Mike Abbaté noted that PP&R has a lot of staff at Delta Park, including the athletic group and urban forestry groups. He noted that Delta Park is an outstanding partnership example because while a bond has not been passed to address the poor shape of the facilities out there, private money from the Timbers, Thorns and others have brought improvements. There has been an impressive collection of non profits involved. Andy Nelson noted that Delta Park pulls people from outside the region. Mike noted that with the addition of new synthetic fields and lights, and the ability to do tournaments, they expect to draw even more people.

Andy Nelson reported that next month’s Park of the Month will be Creston Park and Pool. Mike Abbaté noted that Creston Park and Pool is a great park

with a large picnic area and popular outdoor swimming pool, but it may get missed by a lot of people outside the Hawthorne neighborhood. He noted that access and parking is a bit challenging. Linda Robinson commented that she used to live in the Hawthorne area, and that Creston Park is a great, wooded park on a hill with lots of trees.

PP&R Updates

Mike Abbaté reported that there will be a new employee tour on August 28th. PP&R do these periodically for new employees, to give an overview of the breadth of facilities. If you haven't had a chance to do a tour before, it's a good opportunity to look at what's happening on the scene. Each tour is different, so even if you have gone on a tour, there may not be overlap and you may want to go again. Mike noted that anyone who is interested should send a message to Megan.

Board Updates

Andy Nelson said that he wanted to track a couple of things that were not on the agenda. He noted that the Bylaw revision subgroup is meeting this month, and will come in September to propose final changes. He also noted that we will need to launch the Equity Task Force. He noted that Julie Vigeland and Judy BlueHorse Skelton had volunteered for this, and that Shelley Romero was suggested. He hoped that the group could meet with Mike's team to look at equity suggestions and recommendations, and report back hopefully in October. Tricia Tillman volunteered to join this Equity Task Force. Andy thanked everyone for their work on this.

Ad Hoc Communication

Sue Van Brocklin, Christa Thoeresz, Andy Nelson, Jennifer Yocom and Tricia Tillman met for a brainstorming session as a follow up to the Ted Talk presentation at the last meeting. Sue reported that they came up with a series of phrases based on: "I believe that Portland Parks:"

is the only public entity uniquely qualified to provide:

A place for spiritual connection

A place to aide in public safety

A place to become healthy

A place to play

A place to gather

A place to end racism

A place to heal

A place to learn

They considered other phrases about happiness both for kids and adults. They also focused on the idea that everyone has the innate need to see and access nature. They considered phrases on the right to play, a universal gathering place, physical and emotional health, and how Parks make Portland special. They came up with a graphic centered around connection based on Tricia's drawing at their meeting. The center star is "Parks as the connection to..." surrounded by circles to others: Self. Society. Nature. Children. Others. Under each of these subheads/circles, the group listed other ideas. Adventure, play, creativity. And things that are positive in children's lives. Feeding the soul of the city. Making Portland a great place to live.

Mike Alexander noted that you can't help but charge forward and look at how something like this can be a foundational approach for merchandising the bond issue. Mike Abbaté agreed that we need to think about this in messaging and communications. One challenge, he noted, when talking about needs, is that if you go out with "this is broken..." your message isn't always well received. This messaging, on the other hand, is all positive. Jennifer Yocom agreed that when questions arise about a bond, this is the kind of language to hold close to us. When someone asks about what we're doing, you can look at this collective message, but also find something in there that is personal. Meryl Redisch noted that all of these phrases capture a lot, including economic health. She commented that parks help drive the economy of a city; they are an economic engine. Tricia Tillman noted that it became really clear to her that this is all about winning hearts. Rather than leading with the data and talking points, you focus on the heart as leaders. The heart connection to parks, as opposed to your data or head connection to parks. She also noted that generations and legacy is an important message.

Andy Nelson commented on Mike Alexander's point about using this language as a foundational approach for merchandising the bond issue. Andy noted that we can rattle off the parks, but we also need to be clear about why they matter. This may also be useful in preparation for Parke Diem – perhaps for talking points. He noted that this would not be intended as something worded the same that everyone is reading from, but more as foundational points. Sue noted that economics and history could also be added to the graphic.

Sue noted that she doesn't know if we want some kind of elevator statement, or if it is better to have it in a larger form, so you can pick and choose the part of the wheel that interests you and moves you. Julie Vigeland commented that she liked how any one of us might have taken any one of the pieces, and that in focusing on one piece, you simultaneously think about all the other pieces. She noted that she can always speak to what she herself has absorbed. Members discussed ways to make the graphic portable – so that it could be carried and referred to anytime. Jennifer Yocom suggested a fold-over business card that could be carried in your wallet. Nick Hardigg noted that different tools might work for different people. He suggested an online tool for sharing things like this, possibly the Parks Board site. Linda noted that a wallet sized card may make the text too small to read.

Parks Foundation Update

Nick Hardigg reported that the Parks Foundation continues to build its network, and spread the word on the needs of parks. They continue to engage people who are predisposed to help. He noted that outreach is going well. They have great interns, and they are at all the summer concerts. He thanked Parks Board members for all of their help and support. They have a very active network of citizens, who are helping make free concerts and movies happen. He noted that four committees are actively raising funds. The groups are made up of volunteer citizens who know what's happening in their communities. He reported that over \$200,000 has been raised by active volunteer citizens. He noted that they are receiving great support from PP&R. He gave a big thanks to Jennifer Yocom and Mike Abbaté for the great sponsor event and concert at Washington Park. He noted that a new newsletter for the Parks Foundation

was just printed that he will pass along, as well as I heart Parklandia stickers.

SDC Process

Jim Owens reported on SDC Process. He noted that that six or seven million dollars a year is coming from new development to pay for parks. This is critical, and they are looking at a number of issues. He noted that a consultant came to the last meeting. They are addressing how to calculate rates for dorms in terms of residential occupancy. The universities in particular were concerned that the formula doesn't credit them for non use during the summer, or for the recreation and public use that they provide. A recommendation came in to reduce the formula for dormitories, but the committee hasn't landed in support of that. He noted that there are mixed opinions on whether the university is justified in their claims.

Budget Background and Process

Andy Nelson reported that while we normally roll out the budget in a more compressed way, this year we want to start the process earlier in the year, and spend some time over the next two or three meetings to present background and give context for our upcoming budget review. Mike Abbaté announced that after a long and extensive search, Jeff Shaffer was appointed as the permanent finance manager. Jeff presented a packet of information on PP&R's Budget Background and Process Overview. Jeff reviewed the first slide, Where does Parks receive its funding, and noted that although Parks has 8 separate funds, we tend to focus on the general fund operating budget. He noted that for FY 2013-14, of the \$415 million in revenue that comes in to the General Fund from property taxes, utilities fees, misc. fees, Parks has 11 percent (approximately \$43 million) of that pie. He noted that \$43 million is not our entire operations budget. We receive funds from work we do for other agencies, registration fees for programs and classes, as well as miscellaneous sales. The total Parks Budget for FY 2013-2014 is \$63.6 million, so 2/3 comes from the General Fund and 1/3 comes from other funds (charges for services, interagency revenues, misc.).

Jim Owens asked about SDC funds, and Jeff answered that the SDCs are included in the capital budget, which is separate from the general fund. He reported that Parks receives approximately \$7 million in SDC funds, and these funds are dedicated to growth. Jim noted that if the general fund is lower than 68 percent of our total operating budget -- when we go out for a bond measure, and we want it mostly for maintenance and repairs -- the smaller that percentage is, the stronger our case will be.

Nick Hardigg noted that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) puts out a report on where the spending goes, and he tries to compare Portland to other cities. Why do we rank so highly? What numbers does TPL use? Nick asked about charges for service as a quarter of our revenue. Jeff Shaffer listed registrations, rentals, program guides, ladybug walks, recreation programming as some examples of charges for services. He also noted that there has been pressure for that to grow. While general funds declined during the recession, Parks backfilled some of the cuts through increasing charges for services revenue.

Jeff presented the next slide, Where do we spend our money, and noted that predominantly, money goes to park land & facility maintenance (55%), and

community centers and aquatics (13%) are the biggest slices of our programming. Jim Owens asked about the 2 percent for pass throughs. Jeff answered that these are interagency expenses (just us doing business with other bureaus, for example, the police needs us to help mow their properties).

Jeff presented a slide showing budget cuts over the past 5 years. He noted that this doesn't reflect true loss of service. BES backfilled some of these cuts, and other times we raised revenue. For example, from FY 2010 to FY 2011, program revenue grew from 14.6 to 15.1 million, but budget cuts over the past 5 years have had a real impact. For FY 2013-2014, to provide the level of service as FY 2009 – 2010, we should be at 68 million. We are only at 63 million. That's the 5 year gap in service. Meryl Redisch noted that if we get to the line at 68 million we're only at status quo and that's not good enough.

Jeff noted that Admin took the lion's share of what got cut. 40 percent. Based on 2009 dollars. Planning took cuts in early years of budget cuts. Citywide sports. Public safety and security 20 percent. Nick asked if the numbers are inflation adjusted. Jeff said that they are inflation adjusted: in the way the percentages work. If the cuts hadn't happened, this is where we would be. Jim Owens noted that in looking at the five year reductions, the only line that didn't take a cut was trails and natural areas. He asked if this is because there were outside funds. Jeff said that this is an example of cuts getting restored. BES restored some funds, and money was taken from the general fund discretionary to backfill cuts. Mike Abbaté noted that natural areas include approximately 11,000 acres, and make up the vast majority of our PP&R property. If you look at investment per acre, particularly the maintenance, natural areas have been underfunded. Historically when the cuts happen, there is sufficient support for not cutting funds for trails and natural areas. This is an example of an area significantly underfunded compared to the work that needs to be done.

Jason Smith reported on performance measures that relate to the budget. Funding for facility maintenance has a set goal of 2-4 percent of assets. We have not been in the range we want to be over the past couple of years. This will pose problems in the future. Deferred maintenance - years back, not allocating enough funds. We are concerned about.

Jason reported on Parks affordability, and noted that in a survey that goes through the auditor's office, residents still think we are a good value despite price increases over the past several years.

Jason reported that the number of scholarships increased - 485k value scholarships we grant. Scholarships are fee waivers for courses and programs. This is a priority in PP&R's strategic plan – allocation of funds for scholarship program.

Jason also reported that we are making progress on the Vision 2020 target of 10 percent of our budget coming from donations and grant revenue. Currently, \$3.4 million supported by grant and donation revenue. We are not relying as much on general funds, on the other hand, we are raising prices and relying

more on grant/donations.

Andy Nelson reported on the timeline for this year's Budget Advisory Committee (BAC). Last year we did BAC in January, and check in in March. He noted that we can look at the minutes, refer back to and remember the recommendations.

Mike Abbaté noted that they are starting that process today. One recommendation last year was to start the process earlier in the year, and that is why we are providing the background now. Next month, we will look at the strategic plan, and brainstorm budget the following month.

Meryl Redisch asked, along with presentation about sun schools, that we look at urban forestry and trees, so that everyone, when the time comes, has a comprehensive picture of what urban forestry does.

Tricia Tillman asked for a clear direction and intent around sun schools, and data around outcomes. What does that look like across parks? Support, vision, but how is it being implemented.

**Parks
Maintenance
Audit**

Mike Abbaté reported that next week, PP&R is expecting the auditor to release the audit: PORTLAND PARKS AND RECREATION: Managing diverse assets requires evaluation of maintenance. Mike noted that PP&R has worked with the auditor's office; we have had staff available to take them on tours; and it is not a bad audit. As far as audits go, there are no sensational findings. There are 5 key recommendations from the audit. On the five recommendations, we agree. As Commissioner Fritz said in her letter, they are good recommendations, now let's fund it. We agree. Maintenance should be 100 percent preventative, and 0 percent reactive. You can't fail to respond to the needs as they come up. That will be a gradual transition over time. Throughout the audit, there are descriptions of things PP&R is doing. One thing, Mike noted, that we felt was underemphasized -- in the last couple of years, we have restructured. We haven't hired additional staff, but we shifted people. Now we have an asset manager group, and robust structural changes have occurred under Kia's leadership. We felt we didn't get credit for that. In essence, in response to the audit, we say the recommendations are all good, and we will be working on it.

Nick Hardigg noted that a lot of these things are no surprise. Look at target level of investment -- 2 to 4 percent for facility maintenance, we're at 1 percent. To point out some of the challenges of implementing the auditor's recommendations -- admin has been cut 40 percent. A lot of these things sound managerial, and a 40 percent cut to admin is huge. Mike Abbaté added that the loss of supervisory positions has had an impact as well.

Andy Nelson noted that Parks Board members will likely get calls from the media, and that we should be prepared. We agree with the audit. It's a resource issue, and we need the funds to get the resources.

Mike noted that when the report is released, it will have our response and

Commissioner Fritz's response.

Linda noted that there may be messages we can take out of this audit for the upcoming bond measure. It should help us strengthen our argument to not cut the maintenance any more.

Capital Improvement Program

Andy Nelson reported that we are looking for recommendations on Capital Improvement Project (CIP) process. Mike Abbaté noted that the goal is to give you a bit of a background -- how does a project make it on a CIP list. And, to get your feedback -- your input today is really important to Commissioner Fritz.

Sarah Huggins presented background information on Parks CIP. She noted that the CIP list is a repository list of every project that Parks wants to do in the next 20 years, even if we don't know how we will pay for it. We want to track them all. For projects that we know we have funding for, we put them on our budget for the next 5 years. Parks has a 2009 capital planning manual. She noted that a capital project is: system growth or maintenance with a project cost over \$10,000; or, it could be the purchase of major equipment of more than 5k, and expected life of 10 years or more. Ideas are collected from city council, system plans, staff, and the community. Some projects get added to the list for code or mandates (e.g. ADA compliance). Once a project is submitted, it is ranked according to CIP criteria. Sarah noted that there are 9 categories that we award points for (100 total points is max. 70 is the highest she has seen). Categories include: legal compliance; public support; conforms to city of PP&R plans; improves level of service; human health and safety; protects capital assets or facilities; environmental quality; financing/business opportunity; effect on operating budget.

Andy Nelson asked if PP&R is asking if this criteria is still relevant, since he noted that the system was finalized in 2008. Sarah noted that the committee rating projects uses the same lens as previous years.

Jim Owens asked if budget priorities are factored in. If the budget has emphasis on maintenance for example, does that play at all in the criteria. The budget is a prioritization process. Could that conceivably push something to the front of the line? Kia Selley noted that the list is kept from year to year. This is the CIP for 20 years for the bureau, so we wouldn't reframe every year. We look at the operating budget, and also add to that when we select projects that will be funded by the CIP. Jeff Shaffer noted that this is a capital process. The budget is around our operating costs. We may look at numbers and choose to prioritize sports fields on delta park. We can build these sports fields, and in return build revenues.

Jim Owens asked about points for projects that conform to city and PP&R plans. He noted that all projects should conform to city and PP&R plans, so this seems like an unnecessary category. Sarah said that there are distinct subcategories within this category for projects that were spelled out in the PP&R 2020 goals, or if they are part of new plans.

Jim also asked about funding sources and points awarded for outside financing. For example, if someone comes in and gives 75 percent or more, do we also look at operational and maintenance over time? The ongoing costs. Mike Abbaté answered that it depends. For example, on soccer fields, we are putting in an 8 year plan to replace grass fields with synthetic fields. Whether it's funded by sponsors, donors, general fund, anything, we take it to council, and ask for funds to cover the maintenance. We don't require the partner to fund the maintenance, but ask city council to approve additional dollars for parks staff to go toward maintenance. Jim asked if more points would be awarded for a partner that does include funds for ongoing maintenance. Jim also asked about points for equity. He noted that he would like to see that word here somewhere. Members discussed equity, maintenance, and other criteria. Linda Robinson asked if grants are included under Financing/Business opportunity. Yes grants are included. Under environmental quality, an example was given for ensuring pool chemicals are not getting into the sewer. For effect on operating budget, an example was given of replacing a roof, which might be more efficient than patching it year after year. Sarah noted that if we are out of compliance (ADA), more points would be awarded for human health and safety.

Nick Hardigg noted that it seems like a lot of criteria with similar amount of weighting. He suggested that perhaps fewer criteria might be better. He said he can imagine very different projects with 67 points vs. 69 points. Mauricio Villareal noted that the CIP ranges from fixing a roof on a shed to building a new park, and that it seems like points should be weighted differently. Equity may need to be weighted heavier. He noted that the numbers are too similar, and that the projects should match up with needs and goals. Tricia Tillman asked for a timeline for feedback. Andy Nelson noted that he doesn't want to rush through. Mike Abbaté suggested a work group to review the CIP criteria and report back to the group. Tricia Tillman suggested that the equity subcommittee take a look. Mike noted that we have 700 projects already rated. He suggested that we might want to look at what's missing, and rate those 700 by that one criteria.

Director's Update Forest Park

Mike Abbaté reported on Forest Park. There has been discussion and controversy. Commissioner Fish and Director Santner started process for evaluating single track mount biking. Currently, last year a number of studies were done, including wildlife, and customer survey. We asked staff to take all of the data, and turn it into methodology, not just for mountain biking, but anything within forest park. He noted that there are a lot of proposals and ideas for Forest Park, and we need a tool to do an initial screening (to weigh benefits and impacts). He noted that it is a science driven process. We wanted a method that is objective and could tell us if something is worth further investigation or not. This Project Objective Screening Tool (POST) is on our website, and it was shared at a public meeting Monday night. Commissioner Fritz attended. People are heavily invested. The tool is not tied to mountain biking. But we will use it and share with the proponents of mountain biking. They can take that and decide whether to move forward or not. We've had meeting with BES. We think it will give us clear direction on level of evaluation and assessment. It will be up to advocates of the trail.

Washington Park Parking

Mike reported on Washington Park parking. We are proceeding with pay to park program. Commissioner Fritz asked us to make one change. She's asked that we add 2 more citizens to the board. We have neighborhood representation, Metro, Children's Museum, Bureau of Transportation. Go live date will be no earlier than October 1. Transportation Management Association (TMA) hired Heather McCarey as executive director.

Mt. Tabor Reservoir

Mike reported on Mt. Tabor Reservoir protests July 12 through 15. He noted that the group protesting is called Camp Cascadia, and what they are protesting is not really about parks. It's about the water supply for Portland, and reservoir connections. First issue: How does city protect its water, and what is the role of the reservoir in that? Council has decided to build 500 million gallon storage tanks on Powell Butte, water bureau property. The City has decided that is how they will store and distribute water. The second piece: what is the role of the reservoir in the parks? That is us. We are working with the Commissioner to address that piece.

Andy Nelson asked what do we do with them now that they are empty? Mike said exactly. What do we do? Some people want them to look exactly as they do now. They will likely transition from a water bureau resource to a parks asset. Will be an issue for us to investigate. This is also happening at Washington park with open reservoirs now. Thinking of ways to protect water supply.

Jim Owens noted that this is a money question. The Mt. Tabor issue is consuming unanticipated staff time. Are you being reimbursed? Mike answered that not a lot of staff have been impacted. Rangers are a different subject. Jim asked if there is a strategy for increased costs for the reservoirs. Will it be a budget issue for this coming year's budget
Mike answered that he thinks it will get resolved. Discussion will drive the timing, and he sees this as a separate topic.

Meeting Time

Mike reported that security and building hours in City Hall have changed. It is more difficult to get in for meetings at 7:30 am. Members agreed that changing the start time to 8 am would be fine.

Announcements

Meryl Redisch announced that Audubon Swift Watch is August 30 to Oct. 5th. She thanked PP&R for Ranger Support. There has been resistance from surrounding neighborhoods about bad behavior. For those who go with alcohol and wine, there will be much more enforcement this year. Move people off school and park grounds.
Linda Robinson announced that the Gateway Green online survey was launched for input on planning, asking which features would you be most likely to use. This will help us as we go for permits. She will send link; it will run for 9 days. A fundraising campaign will be coming up in early September.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.