



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
October 2, 2013
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

Board members present: Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Nick Hardigg, Dion Jordan, Andy Nelson, Jim Owens, Meryl Redisch, Linda Robinson, Bob Sallinger, Kathy Fong Stephens, Christa Thoeresz, Tricia Tillman, Julie Vigeland, Mauricio Villarreal

Board members absent: Mike Alexander, Mary Anne Cassin, Tony Magliano, Shelli Romero, Sue Van Brocklin

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

Call to order Andy Nelson, Chair, called the meeting to order. Mike Abbaté noted that the Parks took a hit with the weekend weather, but everyone stayed safe. We lost a few trees; the urban forestry team worked around the clock all weekend; the sports fields were closed, but we are getting back to normal.

Approval of the minutes Kathy Fong Stephens moved to pass the minutes, it was seconded, and passed unanimously.

Park of the Month Normandale Park was September's park of the month. Speaking of soccer fields, Andy noted that the fields at Normandale may be closed this week. Park of the month for October will be Piccolo Park. Nick Hardigg said that he loves Piccolo Park. He noted that it was built close to 20 years ago, and it is a very small, well used, well loved neighborhood park. It was 3 vacant lots, and the people stood up and created a park. It was named Piccolo because of its small size.

Chair Updates Andy previewed agenda items for the next few months. In November, the Board will finalize their decision regarding a change in the bylaws on Public involvement, which will be proposed today. He also noted that November is Native American heritage month. By December 2nd, the budget process will be lined out. They will also have a discussion on smoking in parks. They can also look forward to an update from the Urban Forestry Commission.

Equity Committee Tricia Tillman reported that she, Judy Blue Horse Skelton, and Julie Vigeland met with PP&R staff last week. She said that they reviewed the capital projects list, and looked at HR data, and the strategic plan. She noted that they don't have a product to present yet, but they are on the way. One thing that was really encouraging was getting the HR data.

Andy noted that he hopes the Equity Committee will be able to give us a sense

of how we're doing. He asked if they will be able to report back in October. Julie said the earliest will be December, since the group will need to meet again, and they have a lot to go over.

Linda Robinson noted that she would be really interested in HR Data, and specifically, if there is a way to track how many seasonal employees move into full time positions.

**Parks Foundation
Update**

Nick Hardigg reported on a few new, exciting grants. The Parks Foundation made a great connection between Gateway Green and Coca Cola, and Oregon Solutions/Gateway Green is coming very close to the \$100,000 goal. He also reported that \$20,000 has been committed for trail reconstruction, as well as another \$25,000 more for park work that he is not allowed to announce yet.

Nick noted that Parke Diem is coming up, and 72 volunteer projects will be occurring across the city. They have a user friendly interface on the website, and you can sort by date to see what's happening on each day. He noted that many Parks Board members have volunteered, and he thanked everyone. Now, he said, we need volunteers to show up. He asked everyone to spread the word to their networks, and forward the info he has sent out. Think of a few folks who might find this interesting. Julie Vigeland noted that for Facebook, the easiest way is to friend Nick and then share.

Nick noted that the Parks Board is listed as a prominent partner on the back of the Nike shirt. This is a fun thing that all volunteers get. He noted that this event is not about the Foundation, but rather about the partnership with 40 organizations that have signed up so far; city nature, community gardens, Steve Pixley, Communications team at PP&R are all in. He noted that there is a good chance we will hit 1000 people – a real inaugural of a future tradition.

**Bylaws Revision/
Public
Involvement
Policy Discussion**

Andy Nelson reported on revising the Parks Board bylaws. The intent will be to clarify the language, so that the public understands the Board's role. Andy noted that he met with Dion Jordan, Julie Vigeland, and Mary Anne Cassin to come up with a revision. He noted that after getting feedback from the Board, they will take the revision to the City Attorney's office and go through the proper channels to make the change. Andy distributed a copy of the revision and proposed language.

Julie Vigeland noted that in their meeting, they struggled to find the right words, to make it clear. If we've done that, great. If not, we can go back to drawing board.

Jim Owens said that procedurally, he feels comfortable acting on this. He noted that one topic they have previously discussed, which he and Bob Sallinger feel strongly about, is the Board's ability to receive public input.

Kathy Fong Stevens noted that there are two issues with this bylaw revision. The first is the proposed process for input, which she feels should be as open and unrestrictive as possible. The second will be for them to agree upon an established process for how they receive public input.

Linda Robinson noted that this second piece has to be well communicated because if the public doesn't know then the purpose is defeated.

Julie Vigeland noted that we don't want to muck up the bylaws. She agreed that the issue includes two separate things. Most people are not going to go to our bylaws, so it is most important to define the procedures, and have it on our website.

Bob Sallinger said that he feels every advisory board of the city should be a public body. Accessibility and transparency are very important. He noted that he has made that point before.

Andy said that while the Parks Board is not a public hearing, he agreed with the spirit of Bob's point. He noted that right now, the process is not clear. He said that they hoped to agree upon a process, so that anytime someone asks "how do we get something in front of the Parks Board?", they can find the process on the website. Essentially, he said, we would bring requests for public comment to the Board. The Board would decide whether they want to include that in a meeting. If we need more information on an issue, we schedule it out. If we decide no, what we are saying is yes we are interested in the information, we just don't feel we need to take time at a meeting.

Linda noted that the phrase "request for public comment" is not clear to her. She said that this could mean a dozen different things.

Andy said that once we have agreement, we can reword as needed.

Jim expressed concern that the structure might not allow for timely input. For example, if a request comes this afternoon, we don't meet for a month, and the issue has come and gone by then. He noted that he feels uncomfortable saying, no you can't talk to us unless you submit a formal request. He envisions a comment period. Anyone can show up at anytime with any issue.

Linda suggested timeslots that could be scheduled for items that would need more time.

Tricia Tillman suggested time at the end of the meeting, which she noted in her experience mostly won't be used. If you need more time, you schedule, so that you have room for both.

Bob noted that the public comment piece is a challenge, and that we would be more relevant if we had more attendance. Occasionally it takes you over the breaking point, but the feedback is more important.

Judy Bluehorse Skelton noted that the Community Involvement Committee (with Bureau of Planning and Sustainability) holds time for input at the end of their meetings. This serves the community engagement piece. She noted that this is intended not to overwhelm them, but for check ins, and that it is helpful for them to get a sense for what's happening.

It was suggested that the Board reserve 10 minutes on the agenda. It was also noted that the Commissioner plans to go out to neighborhood associations as a way to bring in public comment, and that she might want to report back to the Board.

Dion Jordan noted that he is totally in agreement on setting time aside on the agenda for public comment, which adds a richness and uncovers blindspots we don't normally see. He expressed concern regarding the Board's message back. If the comment period is at the end of the meeting, that's a rap and we leave, how do people know that they are heard?

Andy noted that the group listens, and that's the process. He said that he is very open to adding time to the agenda, which is clearly the will of the group. He noted that other folks have been involved in commissions that do that successfully.

Jim asked if they could do it at the beginning. If you do it at the end, he noted in agreement with Dion, some of us have drifted out, and there is no opportunity to respond. He suggested that we keep an open request for individuals or groups to make presentations. Assume that goes through the chair to become an agenda item, and we allow 10 minutes at the beginning.

Tricia noted that it would be interesting to add the public comment section to the beginning, and wondered if there could also be a way for people to give feedback outside the meeting, such as a comment section on a webpage, or an e-mail.

Andy noted that we had discussed making that obvious on the website, without having personal e-mails out there.

Linda noted that in response to Jim's comment, we worked on a policy with regard to speakers to allow time for discussion after a presentation: half equal time for us to ask questions, and discuss. She asked if we could get that policy to Jim and other new members.

Mauricio Villareal noted that it is important for people, when talking to us to feel they are being heard, but also to be clear about what we can and cannot do. We may be able to comment, but what can we truly offer?

Mike Abbaté noted, in response to Tricia's question about receiving comments outside meetings, one thing to keep in mind is that PP&R has multiple avenues for people to comment – through our own website, staff, some through the Commissioners office, and that management is a big commitment. If the Parks Board decides to receive public comment, they will need to decide how to take in, respond, and share information. He noted that the Board can route them to PP&R, or set up their own process.

Linda asked if there is a way for us to know about the issues that people are sending to Parks.

Jennifer Yocom noted that logistic parks issues are all logged into Parkscan, which anyone can see anytime. Then there are specific policy and advocacy issues that would need a question to focus it.

Linda said that she would be interested if there is a lot of feedback about a specific thing. Mike responded that we send out the Parks Board update each week, which includes concerns, ordinances, and press. If it's on that sheet, we are receiving lots of comments. Last week, for example, we received lots of comments on Colwood.

Tricia noted that it would be valuable to have a Parks Board email because not everyone can get here at 8 am, and it would offer a different conduit for people who may feel their issues are not being heard. This is the value of a Citizen Advisory Group. We can bring forth issues, but only the issues we know about. If someone knows Dion, or Julie, they have access. If they don't, then they don't. It creates an equity issue based on social networks.

Meryl Redisch asked if the public could join Parks Board sub-committees. Andy replied that he was not sure if it's come up. Meryl noted that this might be a way to get issues before a committee that could then bring it forth to the Parks Board.

Nick Hardigg commented that there are so many issues that could come our way, and he expressed some concern over taking the role of arbiter. Do you really want to be the person who decides which issues to bring before the Board? Andy clarified that the model would be that the group would decide. Nick noted that the process could be slow. Andy agreed and noted that there are not a lot of requests now, but there might be in the future.

Meryl suggested that initial requests go through the various committees first. Linda noted that they are all advisory committees, and meet ad hoc; none meet regularly. Julie agreed that we don't really have a standing committee.

Jim noted that we will need to distinguish between general public comment and request for presentation. A group either wants to educate or advocate. If the request is for a presentation, then that would appropriately go through the Chair, and staff. Can we fit it on the agenda? Is it germane? He noted that he doesn't know if we need a formal process to the Board for those requests, and that the Chair may be able to figure out a way to accommodate them. Andy noted that the second piece would be the public comment period as a standing item on the agenda, and a third piece might be an email or way to get information to us outside meetings.

Mike noted that there is an easy technical solution, and an e-mail can be set up on the Parks Board website. But, he asked, how do you want to manage that as it comes in? Andy suggested that requests can come in, and get distributed to the entire board. Mike noted that there are some ramifications with that process. Think about managing your own e-mail, and then imagine dozens, or hundreds of additional messages coming in. If you create a forum, there is an

expectation that there is a process. For an agency that has more than 400 people (PP&R), responding to the requests and comments that come to us, and making sure the Commissioner is involved, requires extensive staff time. Mike referred to Dion's question about the Board's message back, and said they may want to emphasize the Board's role, which may help them manage expectations.

Kathy suggested setting up the e-mail or message board with a two sentence preface that states the role of the Parks Board, and what we plan to do with feedback. Andy noted that this might answer the question for people if they can't make the meeting, or don't feel comfortable, how do they get their information in front of us.

Julie suggested starting out with clarification of the Bylaws, and announcing that we are having a 10 minute part of our meeting dedicated to those who would like to come speak, with a clear procedure. Try that as a place to start, and see if we can reach out through those processes that we haven't had. She noted that she understands what Tricia is saying about access, but commented that she doesn't want a gazillion e-mails that she can't address. If we can be clear on the website, and any other way to get the word out, she said she would like to start there.

Linda noted that they have a place for public comment on the Gateway Green website, and 90 percent of the comments have nothing to do with the Gateway Green. It is filled with spam, such as increasing website prominence. She noted that they do get some interesting things, but they really need a moderator to decide what to do.

Christa Thoeresz noted that the open comments section of the Timbers and Thorns website gets filled with ridiculous things. But, she said, they also provide a form on their website with drop down menus. The form filters everything, so that what comes to them is relevant and manageable.

Andy thanked everyone for their ideas and discussion on public involvement. He proposed adding a public comment section to the agenda: 10 minutes at start with Chair/Board business. He also noted that they will clean up the public presentation process, and bring it to the Board to take a look before we release to the public. He said they will also continue thinking through other ways of getting information to us, either with e-mail or forms. They will try to structure and get some ideas around that. For the Bylaws, he proposed waiting, noting that it was too soon to vote, but they would schedule a vote for a future meeting.

**Budget
Brainstorm**

Andy reported that for this month's budget process discussion, they designed an activity with the goal to capture everyone's best ideas. They came up with three questions:

What are your savings/efficiency ideas?

What are your ideas for restoring/expanding services?

What are your revenue ideas?

Post-it notes were distributed, and the Board was given 10 minutes to brainstorm ideas for each question, and post them under each question. After the brainstorming session was complete, Jim Owens asked if we can do this again. Andy said yes, we can. He noted that we will compile those ideas, get them out, and at the November meeting we can take a look at what we came up with. ***(included at the end of the minutes)***

Director Update Mike Abbaté reported that the Mayor hasn't made any official statements about the budget. He did, in meetings with bureau directors, talk about a stability budget. Mike noted that he is not sure what that means yet, but we will get direction from the mayor by the end of October. There were early talks about a cut budget, he said, but noted that he is not privy to economic news yet. He said that he expects to get more direction from the Mayor, but believes that they won't be looking at the same challenges they've looked at over the last couple of years.

Mike noted that the Board has said that they were not given enough time for due deliberation during last year's budget process. He said that it won't be jammed into January, and they will start looking at things as early as November. He noted that the Commissioner's core value is public engagement, and that she is expanding the Budget Advisory Committee to include representation from Parks Board, as well as neighborhood groups, representing geographical sections of the city.

Mike noted that for the last couple of meetings, we've been talking about how budget works. One thing we are thinking, he said, is to have a Budget orientation meeting, and make it optional for Parks Board, but make it mandatory for new folks. This will give everyone a chance to go over the pieces we've already been discussing. He said that they will try to do that orientation in the middle or end of October. The first budget advisory committee meeting will be in early November. He noted that our budget will be due the first or second week of February, so they will gear toward that with two meetings before the new year, and a meeting after. He expects lot of good ideas from the brainstorming activity that can be a resource, and jumping off point.

Andy asked Mike to clarify the BAC's role in the City's budget. He asked Mike to characterize the BAC's weight vs. Parks Board regarding advising on budget, and if there is room for both. Mike responded that each Bureau is required to have a budget advisory committee with selected individuals from different constituencies. Different bureaus have different advisory committees, but we are not limited. Mike noted that the Budget Advisory Committee, particularly with Parks Board involvement, carries a lot of weight.

Meryl Redisch noted that on the agenda there will be an Urban Forestry update in December. She said that one thing she heard last year was that we didn't know as much as we wanted about sun schools, or urban forestry. She noted that it will be useful to see the stats of urban forestry, so that they can make the most informed decisions, ensuring that management plan goals align with Parks goals. Linda asked if December will be soon enough. Warren

Jimenez said that this will be good timing. The Budget Advisory Committee, he noted, will start in November, but no decisions or recommendations will come out at that point, so the timing lines up really well.

Linda noted that we should have 10 minutes to update, and 10 minutes to ask questions, and asked if we can get 20 minutes on the agenda. Andy agreed that would be great, but noted that they have a lot to cover. Linda noted that we have a policy to ensure time for discussion.

Mike noted that PP&R will share more details as they have them. He said that for the previous two years, the BAC has met at different times in different locations, and it was good to move the meetings around. He noted that we are aware that your time is limited. Linda noted that there are fewer conflicts in the morning.

Mike said that PP&R will also have a public forum, just on the Parks budget. When he has that date, he said he would send it out and would appreciate for all Parks Board members to attend. He noted that this will be an opportunity for you to hear issues the public is concerned with.

Julie commented that it will be important to have the background meeting, and they should all be encouraged to attend, so that the Board is ready. Linda noted that it should not be repeating information, and Mike agreed that the goal would be to not repeat.

CIP criteria status Mike Abbaté distributed a new updated draft of the CIP rating criteria. He said that after feedback from the Board, it is ready to take to the Commissioner for her approval. PP&R will now need to sit down and evaluate the projects, since CIP, he noted, is part of our budget process. Mike noted that everything in red is a change. He noted that ADA compliance is now broken out from legal compliance. Equity is cumulative for 15 points total. These changes respond to comments from Parks Board meetings. A change was also made to maintenance – if outside organization is contributing to ongoing maintenance (50%). Mike noted that they hope to share this new draft, and get a vote of support if it is ready to go.

Nick Hardigg noted that he had suggestions that would require more time to implement, and hoped that it could be revised in the future. He said that he would propose five categories instead of twelve, looking at the net impact on operating budget. This would be a bigger rewrite, he said, but would add value longer term. If he were a voting member, he noted, he would say yes, fine, but would look to make bigger changes in the future.

Meryl Redisch asked if the CIP rating criteria dovetails with the evaluation methodology for forest park (POST). Mike replied that they are two completely different things. What Meryl is talking about, he noted, is a screening tool for doing things in Forest Park. Once a project is proposed, we have a methodology that evaluates if it is appropriate to pursue further. If it goes through that process, successfully, it could get added to possible CIP projects, and then be subject to evaluation. There are also projects that

partners propose or evaluate with no city money attached, and those are not included in the CIP.

Tricia Tillman asked if maintenance finance was reduced because no one ever covered 100%. Mike confirmed that yes, the bar was too high. We will never give those points.

Jim Owens thanked PP&R for their responsiveness. He noted that he thinks it's improved, but also that Nick's ideas have legitimacy. He commented on legal compliance, and noted that if you are not in compliance, you are not going to proceed forward, so he is not sure it should be included.

Mike noted that we get unfunded mandates all the time. We get multiple mandates. If it is an imminent risk to public health, or it is a Council directive, or revenue generation; there are many things we are instructed to do, he noted, and we try to do them all, but they don't automatically happen.

Bob Sallinger noted that conforming to Park plans should be prioritized at the highest level. That is the roadmap, he said, and he would like to see more value on conforming. Also, he said, environmental quality is such a core part of what Parks does, and he would like to see that criteria in the same category as equity. He noted that health and safety points should also be higher.

Kathy Fong Stevens commented that she would like more information on how a project is taken through this criteria, but recognized that we should move forward because there is a time crunch.

Julie Vigeland moved to approve the draft, Tricia Tillman second, and it was passed unanimously.

Announcements Mike Abbaté noted that the Parks Board is a public body, and as such, you can't do deliberations about issues without being in a public forum. He said that it is important for the public to hear the Boards deliberations, and form their own opinions. He noted that we have had Harry Auerbach, City Attorney, come in the past, and that he can come again to present to the Board. Mike said that he is talking particularly about e-mail correspondence, and he asked the Board to not e-mail each other about issues on the agenda or likely to be on the agenda. Warren Jimenez said that it will be good to have Harry come in, and talk with everyone.

Adjourn Andy thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

