



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 4, 2013  
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.  
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

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**Board members present:** Mary Anne Cassin, Kathy Fong Stephens, Nick Hardigg, Dion Jordan, Tony Magliano, Andy Nelson, Jim Owens, Meryl Redisch, Bob Sallinger, Christa Thoeresz, Tricia Tillman, Sue Van Brocklin, Julie Vigeland

**Board members absent:** Mike Alexander, Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Linda Robinson, Shelli Romero, Mauricio Villarreal,

**Staff present:** Mike Abbaté, Margaret Evans, Warren Jimenez, Deb Lev, Kia Selley, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom

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**Call to order** Andy Nelson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approval of the minutes** Meryl Redisch noted that she was not present for the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting (the minutes were updated to reflect her absence). Tricia Tillman moved to pass, Christa Thoeresz seconded, and the minutes were passed.

**Park of the Month** Andy Nelson noted that November's park of the month was St. John's Park and Racquet center, which he visited on the tour. He commented that the center has structural needs, but a very interesting after school program. December's park of the month is Multnomah Arts Center (MAC). Mike Abbaté encouraged everyone to visit and see the new art gallery. He noted that the remodel was funded through community donations, and a number of companies, including SERA architects, offered pro bono design services. Leftover material from the Edith Green building was used for construction. The design includes modular walls that move, and it is absolutely gorgeous. He said it is one of the most unique community centers, and includes classes for textiles, dance, music, painting, sculptures. It is indoors, so it is a good time of year to visit. It is in Multnomah village. Mike told board members to identify themselves at the front desk as Parks Board, and Michael Walsh, the center director will give them a tour.

**Chair Update** Andy Nelson noted that the Board will not be meeting in January (*this was later changed, and the Board will meet on January 8*). He noted that they will have a lot of BAC work in December and January. He asked for a quick update from the Diversity and Equity committee, and noted that they were going to look at the plan that was created a couple of years ago. Julie Vigeland reported that the group has had two meetings, and would like to be put on the agenda for February. Julie noted that they went over some amazing materials at the second meeting. She was really happy to see, not so much the progress, but the tracking in changes and improvements. She said that the PP&R staff has done incredible work.

Andy noted that for an upcoming agenda item, there has been some interest in looking at smoking in parks. He said that he was working with Sue Van Brocklin to put a task force together for input and a recommendation. Tricia Tillman is also part of this task force. Meryl asked about the current policy. Mike said that smoking is prohibited in a couple of parks, including Director Park and Pioneer Courthouse Square. It is also prohibited within 50 feet of play areas. He noted that there has been talk over the years of prohibiting smoking in all parks. There are a number of cities and counties that have already passed smoke free parks. Sue commented that we always think that we are ahead of everyone else, but this is not true on this issue. She said that it is embarrassing that we do not have smoke free policies. Mike noted that the Commissioner is interested in this issue as well. Mary Anne Cassin and Julie Vigeland volunteered to join the task force. Tricia noted that it would be good to bring in the equity committee to make sure that we are not further marginalizing some populations. Andy commented that it is an appropriate role for us, thinking about the framework for this policy.

Andy noted that a bylaw update was proposed, and the Board has been talking about public input. He noted that he met with Commissioner Fritz, who is open to our efforts. A change in bylaws is technical and may require code changes. In the course of their conversation, Andy noted that the Commissioner offered her ideas about public input as well. He said that he was open to those, and suggested a subcommittee to meet with Commissioner Fritz and her team to think through the proposed change, and integrate the Commissioner's ideas with ours. He noted that it is taking awhile, but the time is appropriate in that it will be a change. Andy asked if anyone is interested in being a part of that group. Christa asked for clarification on what the group would be doing. Andy said that they will be looking at how we take input from the public. It hasn't been a clear process. Dion Jordan and Mary Anne Cassin volunteered.

Andy noted that Nick Hardigg is not here with Parks Foundation update, but he expects him to arrive later, and asked if there are any other committees or task force updates.

**Urban Forestry  
Commission  
update**

Meryl Redisch introduced the Urban Forestry Commission update. She noted that Jenn Cairo will provide an overview of the Commission, and how it relates to Parks strategy and goals. She said that they wanted to give an update to the Board before the budget process. There were cuts last year, but this year, it is a much better and improved situation. Meryl said that she wants to make sure this year and going forward, that everyone in this room understands what Urban Forestry does. She noted that they will take comments as they go.

Jenn Cairo said that it has been on her list to come to a Parks Board meeting for awhile, and she thanked the Board for having her. She noted that she will be giving an overview of the Urban Forestry program with a focus on common goals with broader bureau goals.

The first slide shown was a historic photo of Portland covered in tree stumps. This was Portland, she said, and this was how we got the name "stump town." It is a different story today, due to folks who came before us and worked on

adding trees. We now have 236,000 street trees, 1.2 million park trees of 41 types. She noted that the structural value of our urban forest is \$5 billion. Our trees are valued at \$27 million per year in benefits. Jenn showed a historic photo of a street in Kenton with no trees, and then an image of the same street today, lined with street trees. She noted that we reap good benefits from our trees - providing shade, decreased erosion, sound buffers, storm water management, increasing property values— having large trees on or near your house can increase resale by 10 to 15 percent. Meryl added that trees provide improved mental and physical health as a social value, and also increase business and tourism.

Jenn gave an overview of the Urban Forestry Program's permit services – which includes permits and approvals to do any cutting or trimming. She noted that City Code assigns maintenance to adjacent property owners, which she said many people don't realize until something happens to a tree in front of their home. She said that eight tree inspectors do regulatory work in various parts of the City in various ways, working with PBOT and parks development projects as well. In addition, they have 14 arborists. Among other things, arborists respond to emergencies. She noted that when trees fail, folks come out and clear within an hour. They also do requested maintenance in Parks. They do not do routine maintenance, but she said that they would like to.

Urban Forestry work also includes conducting canopy reports. Tree cover in city -- quality as well as quantity. They also keep up on the latest research in tree planting. Additionally, Urban Forestry has an education/outreach arm. She noted that they have partnerships with Portland Public Schools to plant trees and supply curriculum work in classrooms. They have a neighborhood tree steward program. Anyone in the city can participate and become a tree advocate. These are neighborhood based workshop series. She showed a photo of the UF staff, and noted that their group is small compared to their equipment, bucket trucks and cranes.

The Urban Forestry Commission is advisory to the City Forester. They advocate on behalf of tree canopy, and support programs – Arbor Day, heritage tree planting. Appeals come before the Commission. They represent the general public. Jenn noted that they are key partners, and do a lot of heavy lifting when it comes to advocating: infrastructure, BDS, BPS, PBOT, Environmental Services, Verde, friends groups (Arboretum, and Friends of Forest Park Conservancy). Meryl noted that they are looking for folks to serve on the Commission, and they are looking for people who represent diverse areas of the city. Deb added that the Urban Forestry Commission like the Parks Board is appointed by the mayor.

Jenn discussed how the Commission's goals overlap with bureau goals to preserve, protect and restore nature in the city, promote healthy outlets for lifestyles and community benefits, as well as equitable access to the City's resources, and ensure Portland's park and recreation legacy for future generations.

Jenn presented information on the new tree code. In 2011, City Council

approved changes in the tree code. The new tree code has not been implemented primarily because of budget restrictions. In two weeks, staff will come before City Council to present on staffing and budget for implementing the tree code. The primary focus of the new tree code is to protect mature trees, increase enforcement of the code, and improve customer service. Citizens came forward and told the city these are the areas they want to see more in the tree code.

Jenn gave a preview of the Dec. 19th presentation. They propose to add 7 full time equivalent staff, which will be 2 more than proposed in 2011. Most additional staff will be Parks staff, and will be housed at BDS where permitting happens. The additional staff will be paid for with permitting fees, and half from the general fund.

Andy thanked Jenn and Meryl for their presentation. Tricia asked about the requirement that property owners take care of their own street trees. She asked if there was ever a time that the City put them in with the promise of taking care of them. Jenn answered that since 1995, property owners have taken care their own street trees. She noted that it has been like that for a long time. It is different in some cities. Some do a combination. Some cities do all maintenance. Lake Oswego is similar to Portland. Tricia noted that it is an equity issue, especially for homes that have been owned for a long time. The City put trees in; families need to struggle to maintain their homes, and now need to maintain the trees. What if the homeowners can't afford to maintain? She noted that it would be helpful to look into options for these homeowners. There may be opportunities for urban forestry to have a more targeted response rather than one size fits all. Mary Anne noted that it may be a real burden for elderly, and said it gets back to funding issues.

**Comprehensive  
Plan Update  
(BPS)**

Mike introduced Michelle Kunec-North and Eric Engstrom of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Eric and Michelle presented the Comprehensive Plan, which paints a blueprint for the future of the city. Michelle noted that they have been talking with lots of citizen groups around the city, and they wanted to come to the Parks Board meeting to talk about some parks related issues in the Comprehensive Plan.

Eric noted that the implementation plan is starting to ramp up. Earlier in 2013, they presented a city wide system plan. They will be taking comments until Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, and they hope to have a consolidated plan out by June of 2014 based on input.

Michelle shared the Comprehensive Plan's mapping application, which is a web tool designed to aid in the planning process. She noted that they want to focus today on discussion two questions and prompt the Parks Board to give feedback in other ways either through the board or as individuals, using the online tool.

Parks related issues that have come up so far, she said, reflect the Parks 2020 plan on green infrastructure, including parks as a structure asset. A key piece will be proposing land use changes for parks property to open space designation to more accurately represent that they are used as parks. Mike noted that the

Eagle Point property acquired last year will be rezoned as open space.

Michelle went through the special applications of the online tool. She noted that there is an online tutorial. The application includes three things of particular interest to this group. Desired park improvements show up as orange dots on the map. She also highlighted a few blobby areas that represent deficient areas and targets for future acquisitions. She discussed city greenways, and a proposed network of trails, and premier streets that would provide pleasant walking, biking, non-driving activities. She also highlighted proposed areas of urban habitat with tree canopy, environmental aspects to meet stormwater needs as well as improved natural habitat throughout the city. She noted that there is a button on the map app, where you can go in and leave your own comments as points. She asked specifically for Parks Board to share their thoughts on whether this meets the 2020 Vision, and asked for their feedback if there are areas to improve. Andy said that they can give feedback on a couple of levels, and asked if BPS prefers group or individual feedback. Eric said that they would love a letter from the Board if that's within their capabilities. He noted that a number of different bureaus have given feedback. They hope that this plan will promote connections between bureaus with the greenways, bike infrastructure, etc. He noted that the programs have synergy with each other, and we can see where they overlap. The proposal would be that there is an iconic network. He noted that the deadline for their current wave of outreach is Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, but said that they would be responsive if they got feedback after that. He noted that ideally feedback would be in by February to give them enough time.

Michelle said that their second question for the Board on the city wide comprehensive plan relates to infrastructure priorities. She discussed an investment strategy that addresses system asset management needs, as well as growth, deficiencies, and increased equity, and density over time to create more complete neighborhoods. She discussed relative growth, looking at relative population over time, as well as level of need. The plan includes a variety of infrastructure services, and they need to think about prioritizing investment relative to those needs. She noted that East Portland, Gateway, Lents, and Roseway will all see a lot of population growth and they want to prioritize making improvements if we have limited dollars. She showed how the mapping application tool can sort by extent of growth and extent of deficiency. Green dots versus gray dots. Green represents high concentration of communities at risk – low income households, risk of gentrification, communities of color. Meryl Redisch commented that it is interesting to think about greenways and investments. She noted that they should think about engaging community interests, including non profits, to make this a reality. She said that this is of interest to Audubon. Eric said that the capacity to do this varies across the city, and that the biggest needs in some areas, also have the least capacity. Meryl noted that maybe an investment in the non profits would help. Eric added, or coordination. Tony Magliano commented that parks and school districts share some school property also called parks. If they are zoned residential, he asked if those will be rezoned as well. Eric said there are a pile of ideas. One reflects current priorities of looking at both schools and parks. Tony noted that lots of schools are zoned residential, and he has heard that rezoning

them is not part of the plan.

Jim Owens commented that this is a framing question. He noted that these are meaty questions that deserve study and discussion. There is a wealth of information in the comprehensive plan that he said we should review before we respond. Most important is how we wish to engage the Planning and Sustainability Commission, and noted that this is a unique opportunity to contribute to how we build parks over the next 15 to 20 years. He noted that this deserves the investment and energy of this board. Andy agreed, and noted that there is a window of opportunity. Kathy Fong Stevens follow up on Jim's comments, and asked about the bundle of infrastructure needs: sewers, parks, streets, noting that it is not all parks specific. Mike Abbaté asked if there is a way to just show parks. Michelle said yes, and highlighted the centers on the map that are parks deficient. Mary Anne Cassin commented that this is right in her wheelhouse with her work on 2020 in the past, and volunteered to head up a group. Andy noted that it can't be more than half of the Board. Jim Owens, Meryl Redisch, and Kathy Fong Stevens all volunteered to be a part of the task force.

Andy thanked the volunteers and noted that it is a fun time to be on the Parks Board. He also thanked Michelle and Eric for the information and the work they are doing. He noted that they will put the comprehensive plan task force update on the agenda for February. Eric said comments received by the end of February will be fine.

**Parks in East  
Portland and  
Central NE  
Neighbors**

Andy noted that next on the agenda is talking about equity and access in East Portland. Kia Selley thanked Andy and greeted the Parks Board. She noted that today, they will be looking at two different neighborhood coalition areas, and the projects that are proposed within those areas. She said that there has been a significant uptick in development in the past year, and actual revenues from SDC fees have exceeded projections.

Mike Abbaté noted that Commissioner Fritz is here because she wants to be a part of this discussion with the Parks Board. One of her priorities has been to go out and talk to citizens of Portland and identify what their priorities are for spending that SDC amount. Today we want to focus on the two areas where we want to move quickly: Central Northeast (Cully) and East Portland.

Commissioner Fritz greeted the Parks Board, and said that she hopes to see everyone again on Thursday (for the BAC meeting). She thanked everyone for being there. She noted that Parks has a \$450 million capital improvement deficit. The \$8 million dollars in SDCs will be a drop in the bucket, but she said she hopes to make it a significant drop in the bucket. She noted that her priorities include closing the play gap, and providing facilities where there are not any. She also said that she wants to do complete projects. She noted that she is hearing from citizens that they want the focus to be on equity. Even in parks deficient areas in Southwest, she noted, folks have said they want to provide for people who have less. Portlanders have come through, she said, and noted that she would expect no less. Commissioner Fritz noted that we are starting with identified parks that have master plans. We can use SDCs for master planning as long as we go right ahead and build the park.

Kia thanked Commissioner Fritz for the introduction. She told the Parks Board that we are asking for feedback on highest priorities in each of the two identified areas (Central Northeast and East Portland). Kia distributed handouts that included a map with each of the proposed projects, as well as demographics of Portland in terms of race and ethnicity, household incomes, and demographics for each proposed project. For each defined project, the handouts included acreage, a short description of what is proposed, cost estimate, and service area information. She noted that for each area, they calculated a traceable network of streets and trails that are within a ½ mile to determine the total number of new households served. Some households are already served by a number of parks, and there are some households that are not within ½ mile, so those are the new households that would be served. She noted that the census track information is imperfect, but it is the most readily available information we have. For each of the proposed projects, there will be collaboration with community, designing, and then actually building/constructing the park. Once the master plan is in place, Kia noted that it takes about 3 years to go through design and construction phases. That is why we are focusing on those parks that already have a master plan.

Kia gave an overview with handouts on East Portland: Clatsop Butte – \$9.8 million for both phases; Gateway – 4 acres, plaza and developed park. Cost to implement master plan 4.7 million. Mike noted that Gateway is within the gateway renewal district. Part is owned by PDC, and they are trying to attract development. He noted that this project would be eligible for about 1 million in PDC funds; Parklane – to implement everything but aquatics is about 10 million, add aquatic center – 28 million; Beech park – \$7.7 million not only household census bureau. We don't have any improvements on this site (true also at Gateway and Clatsop), and there are lots of youth in this area.

Tricia Tillman asked what feedback is needed. Mike said they are hoping the Board can give feedback on highest priorities for each of the two areas.

Tony Magliano expressed concern about the significant operations and maintenance costs to maintain and sustain some of the proposed projects. He noted that pools and aquatics are expensive. Commissioner Fritz answered that we will get additional operations and management funds for new development from the general fund. Nick Hardigg expressed concern, and noted that he sees a compression of the general fund, and asked if that will simply create new problems. Mike Abbaté said that if we take a project to Council and they authorize it, part of what they are approving is an allocation from the general fund for ongoing maintenance.

Jim Owens expressed concern over operations and maintenance coming from the general fund, for additional maintenance, that will affect the budget for deferred maintenance. He asked if we are addressing the type of facilities needed, developed sports fields for example. He asked if these plans are responding to identified needs.

Mike said yes, the aquatic center planned at Parklane for example: pools are at capacity, and there is a need for additional pools in east Portland, as well as

sports fields.

Jim noted that some of the proposed projects exceed the dollars available, and asked about the strategy for coming up with the additional money.

Mike said that they are first looking to prioritize and then will look at strategy for dollars. There is \$8 million this year, but they expect additional SDC funds in future years, and it will take three years to build out a project with a master plan.

Kia noted that on the overview map, we can look at parts of the community that are not currently served. She noted that we've been talking a lot about equity, and we have an opportunity to look at populations that we want to focus on serving.

Kia gave an overview of the proposed projects in Central Northeast: Whitaker Ponds, Catkin Marsh, Thomas Cully, Sacajawea Park, Columbia Slough. She noted that Parks is currently in partnership with Verde for completing phase one for Thomas Cully. Julie Vigeland commented that if these have been through the process of community input, and this is what the community wants, she would like to do one of two things: see the complete Beech project, or do phase one of Beech and phase one of Gateway. She noted that when you look at households affected, although we haven't had a lot of time to go through, looking at those numbers, it's huge. She commented that we need to show that something can be finished. If we do scatter shot, we lose the opportunity.

Andy commented that we are not going to get everyone's input in 5 minutes. He said that it is getting exciting on the Parks Board, and asked about the timeframe for feedback. Mike said that we need input within a week.

Andy noted that within that timeframe you are going to get individual feedback, not a unified Parks Board, unless we call special meeting. That can still be valuable. Jim expressed concern over the short time frame, and asked why a week. Mike said that the Commissioner would like to make decisions and an announcement before the end of the year.

Tricia noted that a matrix with side by side comparison would be helpful, so that they can look at income, households served, size of project and cost. She asked if it would be possible for Parks staff to send something like this out in a survey. She noted that there is a lot of information to go through. Meryl asked, if we send in our thoughts, does that comply with quorum? Andy said that we can't have reply all.

It was decided that Parks staff will send an e-mail to the Parks Board with a side by side comparison matrix. Based on these two areas, each member will send in their top two priorities. Mike noted that we don't need a ranked order, but we want your feedback for full build out of particular parks. He reminded everyone that we can't have conversations outside the public meeting, so please do not reply all.

Nick Hardigg noted that the Board is spending 15 to 20 hours on the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), and this (identifying priorities in East Portland and Central Northeast) is a process that has major impact. He noted the disparity of the budget process, and this coming on within the week. There is a huge opportunity for impact, and he noted that it seems unfortunate that they do not have more time. Dion Jordan asked Mike to clarify how to give feedback on priorities, or individual projects. Mike said of the four potential projects in each area, which of these four are most important. He asked everyone to identify the most important two for Central Northeast and two for East Portland. Jim raised objection to the process. He noted that parks are one of the key features in defining communities, and he said that he doesn't like being rushed into this. He requested that the Commissioner give them more time. Meryl Redisch agreed and added that Urban Forestry would like to weigh in as well, and there will be no way with the timing of this.

The meeting was adjourned.

*In consultation with Commissioner Fritz, it was decided that more time was needed for Parks Board feedback. A special Parks Board meeting will be held on January 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss Parks in Central Northeast and East Portland.*