



PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

September 19, 2012

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Board members present: Mike Alexander, Nick Hardigg, Linda Robinson, Kathy Fong Stephens, Mauricio Villarreal, Julie Vigeland, Andy Nelson, Christa Thoeresz, Shelli Romero, Tony Magliano, Tricia Tillman, Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Sue Van Brocklin, Dion Jordan

Board members absent: Mary Anne Cassin, Bob Sallinger

Staff present: Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Mat Sinclair, Kia Selley, Warren Jimenez, Jeff Shaffer, Deb Lev

Guests present: Claudio Campuzano, Jeff Milkes, Kim Calame

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

Approval of the minutes The minutes of the July 11, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved as written.

Nominating Committee The nominating committee has recommended that Dion Jordan be appointed to the Board to fill the unexpired term of Keith Thomajan. A motion was made to approve the recommendation; it was seconded and passed unanimously. Dion's name will be submitted to the Mayor for appointment by the City Council.

Julie announced that Katie Breene has resigned from the Board as she has moved to Seattle. This leaves an additional vacancy.

Parks Audit Julie reported that the Auditor's Office is beginning an audit of Parks maintenance. She will be receiving updates on the audit and will share them with the Board. Julie also attended another PP&R Diversity Committee meeting and said they are doing positive and exciting work.

Park of the Month The park of the month for October is Holly Farm at 10819 SW Capitol Highway.

Former Board members Bill Hawkins, Nichole Maher and Keith Thomajan were honored for their terms of service on the Board with a plaque placed adjacent to a refurbished park bench. Bill's bench is in South Waterfront, Nichole's is in Columbia Park, and Keith's is in Mt. Tabor Park.

Bylaws Revision

Mike Alexander reported on the recent review of the Board's bylaws by the bylaws ad hoc committee. The committee recommended changes related to ex officio members of the Board. The changes propose that up to three ex officio members can be appointed to the Board at any one time. This is a change from the current "open ended" appointment. Ex officio members will be looked at as part of the formal composition of the Board. Topical issues may lead the Board to appoint ex officio members from other areas than the Board has appointed from previously. Mike moved that the changes be accepted; the motion was seconded and approved unanimously. The bylaws will be revised to reflect these changes.

Service Project/Challenges

An ad hoc committee met to discuss a service or other type of project that Board members can become involved in. Some ideas are participating in a bulb-planting project in Chapman Square on October 16, 17, and 18 from 9:00 - 1:00 and doing ivy pulling in Lower Macleay Park on a first or third Saturday beginning at 8:45. Board members would also like to have some additional dates for lunch with Mike Abbaté.

Tony Magliano talked about the parks tour he went on as part of the "new employee" tours that PP&R has reinstated. These tours will be offered quarterly; additional dates will be sent to Board members. The Bureau has agreed to save several seats for each date so Board members to participate.

Julie also mentioned another worthwhile Board activity is a job shadow with a Parks employee. A job shadow can be for several hours or a whole day, and can be done with any Parks employee in any department. Board members should contact Julie if they are interested in this opportunity.

Sue Van Brocklin said that the communications ad hoc committee needs an additional member now that Katie has resigned from the Board. The committee's goal is to find a way to express the views of the Board to the public, including how the Board will assist in getting the word out about the bond measure. This committee will likely not continue as an ad hoc committee but will be recommended to become a standing Parks Board committee.

Westmoreland CAC

Mauricio Villarreal reported on the Westmoreland Park project. Public meetings have been held and staff marked off the area in the park where the project will be placed so people could visualize its size and scope. He thinks things are going well and believes the project will be a great success.

Werbin CAC

Mike reported on the Werbin project, which is a small parcel of land in the Cully neighborhood. The final meeting is tomorrow. They have met over the last several months and have identified three basic designs for the park. The final design will be determined at tomorrow's meeting. Construction will begin in Summer 2013, with completion in 2014.

Shelli Romero reported that the "Let's Build Cully Park" committee is working on building a community garden on the Thomas Cully Park site.

Linda Robinson reported that Portland Audubon and the Cully neighborhood are planning a greening exchange at Ventura Park on November 3. This will be a half day of exchange of ideas on community parks with a discussion of what worked and what didn't.

Parks Foundation Update

Nick Hardigg distributed a brochure on the Parks Foundation, which was available at Summer Free For All concerts and movies. The Foundation is ramping up a campaign and volunteers were able to gather the names of 1000 parks supporters, along with \$650 in donations at events this summer. Tricia Tillman commented that she was a "bucket passer" at one of the concerts and felt that would be a great volunteer activity for Board members next summer.

Park Project Updates

Kia Selley reported on current Park projects. She said there are three major construction projects currently underway: South Waterfront Greenway, Waud Bluff and The Fields.

The Bureau received conditional use approval for the former Washington Monroe High School site in Southeast. The permit is good for ten years. Venerable Properties is still working on their plans for the use of the original school building. Kia will look into having a joint presentation on the two developments for the site at the Board's December meeting.

The Fields in the Pearl District began construction in April and is on track for a January 2013 completion. There will be a loo at the south end of the park.

Parks staff and other agencies are working together on a developing an enhancement to the south entry of Washington Park, which is the entry off of Highway 26 that is commonly seen as the entry to the Zoo, Children's Museum and Forestry Center. A plan is being developed to define it more as an entry to the entire park and not just the nearby attractions. The completed plan will come to the Board at a later date.

New playgrounds are under construction at East Holladay Park and at East Portland Community Center. A celebration will take place on September 28 from 10:00 - 1:00 at East Holladay Park.

Repairs are underway on a 100' section of the Springwater Trail on the Willamette riverbank near the Ross Island lagoon. Planned completion is in December. Next spring staff will look at an additional 1000' stretch north of this repair to determine how to reinforce the bank.

The Waud Bluff Trail is under construction and will connect Swan Island with Willamette Blvd at the University of Portland. It is due to be completed in December.

Warren Jimenez told the Board that staff have placed a six month moratorium on new plans for parks. They will still continue to collect new ideas but none will be processed during the moratorium. The citizen-initiated process falls under this moratorium. Any projects that are already in process will continue.

Tricia asked if PP&R owns any properties that are no longer needed by the Bureau. She'd like to see a list if one has been developed. Warren said that staff are still looking at needs and assets in PP&R's current inventory. There may be some properties that the Bureau would consider divesting themselves of, but a strategic conversation would need to occur before that could happen.

Jeff Shaffer was introduced as the interim Finance Manager, replacing Fred Kowell who left to take a position with the Port of Hood River.

Comm. Fish Comments

Commissioner Fish told the Board about two upcoming events - the official opening of the Oregon Heritage Rail Foundation this weekend, and the grand opening of Harper's Playground at Arbor Lodge Park in late October.

Comm. Fish informed the Board that, as shared earlier, he wants to move forward with a bond measure for Parks in 2013. He said that the case for a bond is obvious - buildings are not safe seismically, older playgrounds are not safe, some parks need more lighting to be safe so it's time to reinvest in parks. A periodic infusion of new money has allowed the Bureau to expand but there are now acute capital needs and a commitment to equity is now the focus. Because Parks has acquired land in East Portland but there's no money to develop them, there are inequities in service. A bond measure would be a chance to blend the traditional rationale for capital needs for a bond with the rationale for equity. Comm. Fish says he feels there have been enough positive changes in the economy that it's time to go ahead in 2013 for a bond.

Comm. Fish said the last time the public was polled regarding a Parks bond, people weren't ready to support it. It hasn't been determined yet if the bond will go on the ballot in May or November as it depends on what else will be on the ballot. He said he believes that the Children's Levy and possibly a Metro bond will be on the May ballot so Parks will likely wait until November.

The Bureau has been through four years of demoralizing budget cuts and staff have seen the erosion of both services and the Bureau's mission due to the lack of funding. A bond could be a rallying cry and something positive after so many years of cuts. Comm. Fish would like to have the Parks Board fully and strongly support a bond by participating in outreach, helping raise money and be foot soldiers to inform the public about a need for the bond.

One new idea would be to include a matching component as part of the bond where a portion of the bond funding would be dedicated to a

matching grant fund, much like Metro's Nature in the Neighborhoods grant program. This would be a great program for Parks' partners, such as the Pittock Mansion, the Japanese Garden and the Forest Park Conservancy.

Shelli commented that she understands the rationale of not having Parks compete with too many other measures on the ballot but she wondered if it will cause problems for Parks if they wait until November. She also was concerned about making sure the public understands the difference between the Parks bond and Metro's levy.

Comm. Fish said he has been discussing the bond with pollster Lisa Grove, who has done a lot of work on levies and bonds. She has given him suggestions as to who could lead the campaign effort.

The bond project list that was prepared in 2009 will begin the conversation as a baseline of projects for the new bond.

Mike commented that timing is critical as following a Metro levy on the ballot, as Shelli noted, will be confusing to some people. Comm. Fish said that Metro hasn't made a final decision on their levy yet. Kathy Fong Stephens said she is intrigued by the matching fund idea - could it be set up so people could contribute to it? Could the Board have involvement in decision-making on grants? Tricia commented that timing is essential as there's never any more love for parks than right after the summer season when the public has enjoyed so many free events in parks.

Andy commented that getting the Board energized is key and perhaps an ad hoc committee could be formed as a tie in the larger effort.

Tricia moved, and Mike seconded, that the Parks Board support and endorse moving forward and having active involvement in a bond measure for Parks. The motion passed unanimously.

East Portland Action Plan

Tom Lewis, Debby Smith, Rosa Hernandez and Arlene Kimura were in attendance to talk about their involvement in PP&R's summer mobile playground program. They said they felt the program needed to have a strong diversity/equity element that reflected the population of East Portland. Tom Lewis said it was important for residents there to participate in this issue, in partnership with various ethnic communities.

Through an interpreter, Rosa Hernandez talked about how kids in the East Portland neighborhoods who live in apartment complexes do not have safe places to play and instead play in dangerous parking lots. She got involved in the project because she felt the mobile playground program was important. Although it was a big challenge for her, she said she never lost her faith that they would be successful in having the mobile playground come to her area. She said 154 children participated in the program and now keep asking now when it will come again. Flyers and publicity were very important and were printed in Spanish

and other languages and distributed to schools, churches, stores and on the street. They will be working to reach more people next summer.

Claudia Carrillo was not able to attend today's meeting but sent word that she felt it was important to have arts and crafts for the kids in the area. She was happy that she could participate in these projects with her children and they all enjoyed the mobile playground program.

Debby Smith said the project started small and then increased. Various neighborhoods in East Portland participated, along with agencies such as Human Solutions, Rose CDC and the New Portlanders Program. The East Portland Neighborhood Office (EPNO) also assisted. They worked with PP&R and others who are concerned with the need for equity in East Portland.

Arlene Kimura talked about how people in the area first came together because they had requested that a mobile playground van be dedicated to the East Portland area. The committee looked at non-traditional sites such as apartment complexes, undeveloped parks and SUN Schools. They also participated in the hiring of staff for the mobile programs who lived in and reflected the East Portland community. During the process they hired 22 people from the community. Some of these will get called back for jobs next summer.

Tom said that understanding the funding was the committee's first issue. They wrote a grant to be able to add 10 additional playground sites. This project allowed the community to stretch PP&R resources and they look forward to bringing in more partners and expanding the program next year.

Linda Robinson distributed samples of the summer brochures that were designed for East Portland activities and printed in English and other languages. Eileen Argentina introduced Parks staff Jeff Milkes and Kim Calame who staff the summer program. This program was capacity-building for Parks and forced staff to rethink their hiring assumptions.

Board members communicated their thanks to the East Portland Action Plan members for coming in to update the Board. The Board communicated that they are happy to see the Board's equity goals in action.

How does the Bureau apply the lessons learned in East Portland to next summer? Jeff Milkes said that translating brochures for summer activities into other languages is the next step, although some neighborhoods have already begun doing this on their own. As the Bureau centralizes much of their messaging, staff will need to start thinking in a different way to determine how to pay for this type of marketing. Jeff also commented that he has received requests to show movies next summer in other languages, such as Spanish and Vietnamese.

Tricia commented that the use of other languages needs to be addressed in PP&R's web presence and in their planning materials so the ability to access PP&R's services is equitable to all. Linda commented that EPNO was able to make money available to hire translators and provide childcare at their planning meetings so there was no barrier to participate in the committee.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.