



PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

February 1, 2012

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

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| Board members present: | Julie Vigeland, Mike Alexander, Mauricio Villarreal, Linda Robinson, Bill Hawkins, Sue Van Brocklin, Andy Nelson, Katie Breene, Mary Anne Cassin, Tricia Tillman, Shelli Romero, Bob Sallinger, Nichole Maher |
| Board members absent: | Keith Thomajan, Nick Hardigg, Tony Magliano |
| Staff present: | Mike Abbaté, Fred Kowell, Margaret Evans, Brett Horner, Karen Loper, Mat Sinclair, Eileen Argentina, Deb Lev, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong. |
| Guests present: | Hugh Price, Fulton Community Center Supporters |

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| Call to order | The meeting was called to order by Chair Julie Vigeland at 7:35 a.m. |
| Approval of the minutes | The minutes of the January 4, 2012 meeting were corrected as follows: Page 2, fifth paragraph, 6 th line, the word “level” was changed to “levy;” page 4, second paragraph, second sentence should read “...in the race for Comm. Leonard’s seat there is only one strong candidate....” The minutes were unanimously approved as corrected. |
| Park of the Month | This month’s park was Spring Garden Park, however, no Board members were able to visit during the month. The park neighbors recently received a grant from Umpqua Bank to build a natural play area in the park. |
| Board Bylaws | A change has been recommended in the Board bylaws to have the Board year begin on July 1, instead of September 1. This would bring the Board year into alignment with the City’s fiscal year. The proposed changes will be sent to Board members for their approval. This type of bylaws change requires only a vote of the Board and is not subject to approval by City Council as it is not part of the City Code. |
| Nominating Committee | The nominating committee will consist of Andy Nelson (chair), Sue Van Brocklin, Mary Anne Cassin, Mike Alexander, Mike Abbaté and Julie Vigeland. They will plan to schedule a meeting soon. The recruitment period for new members will be announced on the Bureau’s website as soon as the deadline for applications is known. |
| Public Involvement Grid | Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong has provided an updated grid of public involvement projects. The South Waterfront Greenway and the Westmoreland Park nature play area both need a liaison from the Board. |

PP&R will be scheduling a day-long workshop on nature play; Linda Robinson, Mauricio Villarreal and Julie expressed interest in attending.

Board Business

The March Board meeting will be dedicated to a discussion on equity, with the meeting time extended by 30 minutes to allow ample time for discussion.

Julie suggested holding the annual Board retreat in June this year instead of December. She suggested holding the regular June Board meeting on the first Wednesday, with the retreat on the third Wednesday of June from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Andy suggested holding the retreat on a Friday instead, and not hold a regular meeting that month. Board members will be contacted about their availability on three Fridays in June.

Board Work Plan

Julie asked Board members to talk about one item they would like addressed in the Board's workplan. The following were suggested:

- Mary Anne: A Parks bond measure – how the groundwork is being laid, how the momentum will get going
- Mauricio: Give the Board a more relevant voice, make them more involved in decision-making
- Mike: A bond is critical. Parks needs to learn from the school bond issue. The Board needs to continue to evolve their equity affirmation and be involved with the City's new Equity Office.
- Linda: A bond measure. Develop a better relationship with the Parks Foundation.
- Sue: Bond measure, upcoming changes in Council members.
- Andy: Finding a long-term funding solution, bond measure, look at other park districts' best practices. Where will additional revenue come from?
- Bob: All of the above are important. The next generation of funds won't come from the City's general fund. The Bureau needs the support of the entire City Council.
- Shelli: Bond measure, continue the equity work, potential staff changes re equity, funding strategy. Also interested in knowing how it's determined which master plans are done and how the Bureau gets money to actually build what's in the master plans.
- Tricia: Long term funding strategy, equity.
- Katie: Long term funding, clarify the Board liaison role, and how the Board interacts with other entities.
- Bill: The relevancy of the Board, PR issues, the constant attack on parks by others wanting to take park land for other uses. The Bureau completes master plans but there's no money to actually do the work so a bond needs to be passed. The role of Board members on public advisory committees. How PAC's work, how relevant is their work, and how the City works with the process.
- Julie: The continued question of the Board's role.

Comm. Fish has suggested that City Council candidates attend a Board meeting. It was asked if the Board wanted to invite candidates to the May meeting or wait until after the primary when the two final Mayoral candidates will be identified. Andy asked if Board members were interested in sponsoring a citywide candidates forum. Board members discussed the timing of this and whether there is still time to arrange a forum before the primary. It was also suggested that Steve Novick, candidate for Comm. Leonard's position, also be asked to attend. Karen Loper commented that holding a forum before the primary may not be realistic timing as there may be a limit to the kind of assistance staff can offer because a candidates forum is considered a political activity.

Sue suggested that candidates could come to a Board meeting in the spring and then come again in the fall to a more public meeting. She said she'd be interested in inviting at least the Mayoral candidates, and those running for Comm. Fritz's position. Julie said that the April Board meeting would be the optimal time to invite candidates to attend. A subcommittee of Andy, Bob, Tricia, and Sue will begin working on developing questions. Julie will contact candidates to have them save the date.

It was agreed that having the Board act as the budget advisory committee this year was a big step in giving the Board more relevancy. Although there was a large time commitment Board members felt they are better versed in the Bureau's budget and budget recommendations. Andy said he felt that the hours they put in were honored in the final recommendations and he felt the BAC really helped make difficult choices.

Bob commented that Parks was far and away the most relevant BAC he's been involved in as the priorities were dealt with in a substantive way and hard conversations were had. Julie commented that the BAC allowed Board members interaction with staff and union representatives in a whole different way. The BAC required a large time commitment, but it was time well spent. Next year she promised to get meeting dates to the BAC earlier in the process.

Julie moved ahead with the discussion on the 2011 work plan and asked Board members which items they felt had been completed and which were still ongoing.

Under Planning, it was agreed that #2 (Clarify our roles as liaisons so we can be effective) had been completed. All other items under Planning need to be continued into 2012.

Under #9 (Determine what a "now" issue is...), Board members asked how they determine what a "now" issue is and if a subcommittee should be establish to discuss this. Andy asked what the Board's priorities are for becoming involved in issues. Tricia was interested in determining when the Board should stop and address emerging issues, i.e. a baseball stadium in Lents Park. She said a "now" issue should be defined as

something that's a threat to a park or the Bureau. Andy suggested that #10 be amended to say that the search for potential Board members should be connected to a strategy.

Under Advisory, all items were viewed as important to continue on into 2012. Andy felt the Board should focus on #5 (Encourage stakeholder input) and #6 (Be "of counsel" to the Bureau Director and Commissioner as needed). Mike Alexander said that the Board acts as stewards and advocates and those roles are a constant reminder that how they do things is as important as what they actually do as a Board. Julie will work with Karen and Mike on restructuring the list.

Under Equity, the Board considered these items completed, although #3 (Promote an equity policy for PP&R) will be reviewed after the March Board meeting.

Willamette Park Pump Station Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong gave an overview of the public process and the Bureau's role. She said the Water Bureau approached Parks when they needed to replace the Fulton Park pump station in order to increase capacity. The Water Bureau had three choices:

- Condemn houses next to the old pump station in order to rebuild a larger pump station on the same site.
- Acquire new property along the water line and build there.
- Use property in Willamette Park along the water line.

One of the questions asked was if the community would support using land in the park as long as the Water Bureau provided mitigation money to PP&R for the loss of open space and provided the public a say in the process. Elizabeth commented that the public advisory committee was advisory to the Water Bureau and not to Parks.

Although the advisory committee made their recommendations, when the project went to the Design Review Commission, the Water Bureau did not circle back to the advisory committee. Elizabeth said the Water Bureau has been asked to reconvene the committee on February 28. She said structures in parks are not typically subject to design review but a review was triggered because there is a design overlay in the park. Elizabeth said PP&R is working to improve the relationship between the Bureau and the Design Review Commission so the DRC is better able to understand Parks' "business."

Elizabeth gave an example of the process that Parks generally follows when something is to be built in a park – staff discuss the impact on the public, they perform an analysis and then Elizabeth writes a public involvement plan, with the subsequent appointment of an advisory committee. Mike Alexander asked if an actual step was missed in the process regarding the pump station. Mike Abbaté said that Bureau strongly recommended that the Water Bureau circle back to the committee but it wasn't a formal deviation, although they did not keep the advisory committee in the loop.

Bill passed out some historical information on Fulton Park and the oak trees in the park. He commented that he understands the need for a water line going through Willamette Park and felt that the PAC submitted their recommendation in good faith. He said the PAC was wearing their “park hats” but were surprised to discover that the Design Commission did not consider their recommendations. Elizabeth said the Bureau had asked for the project to be designed to PP&R standards but since this was not done the Water Bureau is now coming back to complete the missed step.

Bob asked if Parks has the ability to say no when/if a project doesn’t meet their requirements. Brett Horner commented that there’s a land use approval connected to this process. The location of the pump station is set; it’s the design that’s in question. He said this will go back to the PAC to honor the commitment and the Water Bureau will then decide how to proceed. However, because of the overlay final approval from the Design Commission will be required. Hopefully, the concerns of the Water Bureau and the PAC will be reconciled. Brett said the land use decision can be appealed but he recommends working with the Water Bureau and Design Commission instead.

Comm. Fish Comments

Comm. Fish thanked the Board for their role as the BAC. He said City Council will need to make choices citywide regarding service cuts. He made the following comments:

- The Fulton Community Center closure has moved from the 4% to the 6% cut list.
- PDC has released their budget, to be followed by a public process. Some of PP&R’s items aren’t in their budget submittal, including funding for Leach Garden.
- The City is hosting the Intertwine conference on Friday.
- The budget process is not over until the final budget is adopted later this spring.

Linda asked about the recommended cut in producing program guides – will this affect the Bureau’s revenue stream? Is there another way to get the information out? Comm. Fish said that a larger cut in program guides had originally been asked for. The guides currently cost \$300,000 a year to produce. The initial cut will not affect guides in the first year. Later, there may be a charge for a guide. They will also be available in libraries and online but will no longer be mailed to households. Karen said the Bureau is working on a communications plan regarding program guides.

Mary Anne thanked the commissioner for his support of Leach Garden. Comm. Fish said that a tour is being scheduled for PDC to see the site as they know it’s an issue of concern.

Budget Update

Fred Kowell distributed an updated spreadsheet on the requested budget reductions. There are two new items since the BAC met:

- Reduction in the printing and mailing of quarterly program guides.

- Elimination of one management position as part of reorganization.

As part of the budget reductions, 35-40 positions would be lost. Fred said the diversity position was taken off the cut list, as well as the closure of all splash pads.

The transfer of the entire SUN program to the County by July 1 has proved to be problematic due to State statutes regarding the transfer from one public entity to another. Parks is proposing to cut three SUN Schools instead, which will save the same amount of money. Nichole Maher commented that she would rather see the program shifted to the County rather than close three sites as the City and County have different strategies regarding the programming. Karen said Parks hasn't abandoned the idea of the transfer, but realized it couldn't be accomplished in such a short time frame. The reduction has now been moved down to #4 in the priority ranking.

Tricia commented that it's not accurate to say that the BAC ranked this as #4 as the cut recommendation has changed since the BAC discussed it. Nichole said since Parks spends more to run a SUN School than the County does, she'd like to understand the costs. Mike suggested noting "New" on the reduction since the BAC did not discuss this exact package.

As Comm. Fish noted, Fulton has moved from #3 to #9 on the priority list.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.