



PORTLAND PARKS BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

March 6, 2013

7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Board members present:	Andy Nelson, Linda Robinson, Nick Hardigg, Sue Van Brocklin, Meryl Redisch, Mary Anne Cassin, Jim Owens, Tony Magliano, Kathy Fong Stephens, Christa Thoeresz, Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Dion Jordan
Board members absent:	Shelli Romero, Bob Sallinger, Mike Alexander, Tricia Tillman, Julie Vigeland, Mauricio Villarreal
Staff present:	Mike Abbaté, Warren Jimenez, Deb Lev, Margaret Evans, Eileen Argentina, Kia Selley, Todd Lofgren, Jennifer Yocom, Jeff Shaffer
Guests present:	Claudio Campuzano, Pauline Miranda, Jason Smith, Josh Alpert, Emily Roth, Bryan Aptekar

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

Park of the Month Duniway Park in SW Portland was this month's park of the month. Some features of this park include the stone restroom, a lilac garden and a new sign at the entrance of the Terwilliger Parkway. Next month's park of the month will be Tideman Johnson Park in SE, along the Springwater Corridor.

Board Chair Update Andy thanked Board members for their participation in the BAC process again this year. The cover letter that he wrote to accompany the budget submission will be e-mailed to Board members. Mike Abbaté commented that each bureau's budget has now been submitted to the Mayor and it will be two-three weeks before there is clear indication of the budget's direction for next year.

Julie Vigeland will chair this year's nominating committee, with Tricia Tillman and Mary Anne Cassin serving as members of the committee. The committee will prepare a slate of officers and reappointments for new terms to bring to Parks Board members. There are no Board members rotating off the Board this June but a vote needs to be taken by July 1 to reappoint those who are eligible to serve another term (Julie, Andy, Linda Robinson, Dion Jordan).

The Board's annual retreat will be on Friday, May 31. Andy asked Board members to begin thinking of topics for the retreat.

Parks Foundation Update Nick Hardigg reported that the Foundation's current plans are outreach-oriented in order to increase awareness of the need for sustained and

improved funding for PP&R. Foundation staff and volunteers will be at 60 concerts this summer and will also be in attendance at Sunday Parkways and some movies.

The Foundation is continuing their donation incentive program where donors receive a 30% discount coupon from Columbia Sportswear. Nick also passed around the Foundation's latest newsletter to Board members.

Approval of the minutes

As there was now a quorum, Mary Anne Cassin moved that the minutes of the December 5, 2012 meeting be approved as written. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Budget Update

The requested budget decision package list was distributed. Page 1 shows the add back proposals by priority and page 2 contains the list that shows how the BAC ranked the proposals as high, medium and low priority. Central Services maintenance and Capital major maintenance have been split so Central Services is now at a higher priority. The Forest Park Rangers were funded by BES and are now part of the Bureau's add back proposal. Hort work in parks has been broken up based on feedback from the BAC and a \$204,000 add back package has been placed at the top of the priority list.

Seven BES programs are dependent on BES' requested budget. Council, however, may decide to fund these differently. Natural areas maintenance has been moved up to priority 5.

There is still a question about what/how to implement the tree code – should everything get funded or should bureaus get by with just the minimal changes to the code? This is a policy question that Council needs to determine.

There is \$11M in cuts to the SUN program. Based on the BAC's feedback, eight schools were taken off the cut list. Three schools are still on the cut list at #6 priority.

Teen programming has been funded with one-time funding. Parks will ask for this to be funded again but it's a separate request from the add backs.

The Mayor now has the budget and decisions may come within three weeks. The first public meeting is tonight, with three others scheduled for later dates. These meetings will give the community a chance to talk about the requested budgets. The next revenue forecast will come out in April.

Board members were asked for their feedback regarding this year's BAC process.

- Sue Van Brocklin echoed the views that Bob Sallinger expressed in an e-mail after the BAC's work was completed.

- Nick said he felt that there wasn't enough in-depth discussion to get the BAC where they needed to go. The BAC was hampered by trying to go in two directions at once and he would rather see a more in-depth approach. It seemed they were being asked to do both strategic direction and political buy-in. Perhaps the composition of the group needs to change.
- Andy felt that many issues came out that could be good discussion points for the Board, including the conversation about SUN Schools. He thought it would be helpful if the Board could begin to make recommendations during the year and not have to wait until it was time to prepare the budget.
- Jim Owens said that the negative part of the process was that it was painful, frustrating and inconclusive. The positive was the preparation by staff and their response to rebellion in the ranks. He further commented that:
 - The first day the BAC met was useless as they were hearing about programs and themes out of context. It would have been more useful to have feedback first from staff in regards to prioritization.
 - The BAC didn't have the opportunity to talk about revenue generation ideas. He'd like to do that prior to the next budget process.
 - There was no opportunity to talk about the BAC members' positions, i.e., should the tree code be funded. There needed to be more time to dialogue on individual proposals.
 - What are the consequences of what the BAC did? How is the Bureau's mission affected by it?
- Judy BlueHorse Skelton said she learned a lot in the process as it was her first time being on a BAC. She felt the Board wasn't as prepared as they could have been. She'd like to have a discussion of key ideas before the process starts. She'd also like more time to dialogue with both staff and other BAC members. Judy said she appreciated Bob's e-mailed comments.
- Christa Thoeresz echoed comments from other BAC members. She'd like the Board to think of longer term solutions during the year, maybe from a three-five year perspective. She also questioned if that was the Board's role.
- Tony Magliano said although he unfortunately wasn't able to be involved in the process this year, PPS has the same frustrations and he sees much the same process there because what is submitted isn't always what ends up in the final budget.
- Kathy Fong Stephens agrees with everyone's comments. She felt that staff prepped the BAC well. The ranking exercise was not helpful and could have been later in the process as it would have been helpful to have an idea of staff priorities. She said it would help to talk about the budget during the year so the Board could develop a strategy and discuss bigger issues at the retreat. How did staff feel about the Mayor's direction of preparing a 90/10 budget? Was that more helpful than prior years?

- Mary Anne Cassin said that given the size of the task, she felt the Board did a great job in creating something coherent. She gave kudos to staff for inviting the Board into the details of the Bureau budget, but there were too many details and it was very difficult to follow. She felt the Board did add value by keeping 2020 as their guide and determining the budget by that document.
- Meryl Redisch said it was also her first experience with PP&R's budget process. She commented that she would have liked to have had an opportunity to have the Urban Forestry Commission share background and perspective on affected programs, i.e., the tree code. She also felt that more information could have been given on other programs.
- Dion Jordan said most of his comments have already been shared by others. He enjoyed the process and appreciated hearing everyone's passion. Receiving the budget notebook ahead of time was very helpful. The ranking exercise wasn't helpful and should have been replaced with presentations, which then could have lead to a discussion prior to the ranking exercise so they could have made a more informed decision. Three days was not enough time to really delve into the budget and more discussion time was needed.
- Linda Robinson has been on the BAC prior to the Board's involvement. The process was more difficult then because BAC members weren't as knowledgeable about PP&R as the Board is and more had to be explained. It would be helpful to have topics to discuss during the year so the BAC can be better prepared. The first ranking exercise was not helpful.
- Jim said it was helpful and valuable to have the staff in attendance at the meetings.

Andy asked to put a committee together to work on having a meaningful discussion about the budget process at the upcoming retreat. They'll take a look at comments from Board members and recommend those that make the most sense. Bob and Jim were suggested to work with Andy on the committee; Andy will also talk to Board members who weren't able to attend today's meeting. This also can be a monthly Board agenda item.

Bond Measure Update

Jennifer Yocom updated the Board on the bond measure. The Parks Foundation commissioned a poll and, based on the poll results, the Bureau has decided not to go ahead with placing a bond on the ballot this year. The poll showed that PP&R isn't always successful at informing the public about the need for a bond and more has to be done to educate and communicate this need with the public. Staff will continue to work with the Friends groups so they all have the messaging. Staff will continue to monitor when the time is right for a bond to be placed on the ballot.

Nick said that polling was just one piece of information. 91% of those polled say they love parks and PP&R programs. It's challenging news, especially since it's been 19 years since the last bond was passed. The polling shows that people do think money is efficiently spent but they are not convinced of the need for additional funding.

Mike commented that the recent poll gives PP&R a good baseline of information and some valuable feedback from the public. Work begins now for a future bond measure. He said it's clear the public thinks Parks does a very good job, but they aren't always aware of the lack of funding because staff are very good at putting a Band-aid on things.

Josh Alpert commented that there was no surprises in the poll as it's become harder to pass ballot measures. Parks doesn't have a lack of trust with the public and the delay provides the time to adjust the message to provide a legacy for the future.

Although Board members are disappointed in the delay, Andy said he is excited for the future. Meryl said since there are a lot of Friends groups, these groups need to have the correct messaging so they are able to appeal to their supporters. Warren agreed that this is a key point and the right messaging needs to be provided for these grass roots efforts.

Mary Anne asked if the poll stated a specific target amount for the bond. She wondered if the Bureau needs to readjust how they think of bond measures and plan instead for a series of smaller ones. Warren said the poll was a private poll done by the Foundation and because of this it's not public information, but there was an amount mentioned. Unfortunately, the ballot measures that were passed last fall affected the poll responses and had a big impact on the results. Kathy also asked how the upcoming Metro bond will affect Parks efforts at passing a bond. She wondered if PP&R's website had information on the previous bond, including its successes, as those could be built on in gaining support for the future.

Jennifer said Nick could talk more about specifics, but it's most important to talk about the legacy and investment that's left for the next generation rather than spend time talking about specific projects.

Sue would like to have the Board's communications committee meet to talk about the Board's response and how to proceed. She'll set up a meeting with Jennifer, Nick and Christa.

Nick said that since the poll was financed and conducted by the Foundation, the information belongs to the Foundation and they have not released it to the City. He said he could speak to Board members privately to share information.

Board members should use Mike's letter regarding the bond as a unified response. Staff will consolidate the letter down to several key talking points and forward those to Board members.

Director's Update

Mike gave his monthly update to the Board. Some Board members may have heard about the issue of mountain bike trails in Forest Park. This will be on the April agenda. As background, Mike stated that several years ago the Bureau convened a committee to look into designating a place for mountain bikers to have an experience in Forest Park. Contrary to what has been reported, PP&R is not planning a network of trails, but rather plans just one trail adjacent to Firelane 5. Staff are reviewing reports and evaluating wildlife study results to determine if this proposal is feasible. Staff will also be talking to the Bureau of Development Services to determine rules for evaluating the proposal. Mike asked Board members to contact him if they have questions but said no decision has been made yet.

Mike also updated Board members on the Washington Park Traffic Management Association. The TMA has representatives from the venues in the park, as well as members representing adjacent neighborhood associations. Two meetings have already been held and he feels the project is moving ahead well. There will be paid parking in the park via meters this spring.

Sue commented that she'd like to hear more about PSU's smoke free campus proposal. This will be on a future Board agenda.

Geocaching Policy

Emily Roth reported on geocaching, which is a form of scavenger hunting. Geocachers use their smartphones and GIS coordinates to find small items left in specific places. There are currently 472 caches placed on PP&R property but Parks has had no policy over where they are placed. The new policy will address the importance of the sport, list acceptable behavior, locations for caches, and the impact on sensitive areas, as well as help generate more interest in program opportunities.

Policy development will include the services manager, an ad hoc committee, a review of other policies, and review by the City Attorney and the Water Bureau. A geocaching committee will review the draft policy, which will also include items that can go in caches and their appropriateness for children.

The written policy will include:

- A policy on cache placement, safety of containers and their contents, and possible removal by staff if the cache doesn't follow the policy.
- A map layer registered with www.geocaching.com.
- The total number of caches that will be allowed in the park system (520).
- A list of the park sites.
- Customer Services staff be responsible for answering questions from the public on the policy.

Next steps:

- Accept the policy
- Outreach to the geocaching community
- Provide training to the Customer Service Center staff
- Final review with www.geocaching.com
- Launch a public event

Mary Anne asked how the specific number of 520 sites was chosen. Bryan Aptekar said that staff looked at every park in the system to discuss spaces that would be appropriate. 520 sites was determined to be the number of caches that could safely be placed. Staff decided not to charge a fee for placing a cache as they determined that it would not be much of a cost. In fact, there could ultimately be a cost savings to the Bureau because caches will not be allowed to be placed in areas that could cause damage, such as irrigation systems.

Meryl commented that she'd like to review the final policy as some caches are on Audubon property.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.