



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

January 8, 2014

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Pettygrove Room, City Hall

Board members present: Mike Alexander, Mary Anne Cassin, Nick Hardigg, Andy Nelson, Meryl Redisch, Linda Robinson, Shelli Romero, Bob Sallinger, Christa Thoeresz, Sue Van Brocklin, Mauricio Villarreal

Board members absent: Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Dion Jordan, Tony Magliano, Kathy Fong Stephens, Jim Owens, Tricia Tillman, Julie Vigeland,

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

Call to order Andy Nelson, Chair, called the meeting to order. He thanked everyone for coming, and said that it was exciting to have a chance to weigh in and make a recommendation to the Commissioner. After two or three years of cuts, he noted that it is nice to be in a place to talk about enhancing.

Approval of the minutes Mary Anne Cassin moved to pass the minutes, Mike Alexander seconded, and the minutes were passed unanimously.

Park of the Month Multnomah Arts Center was park of the month for December, and Matt Dishman Community Center will be park of the month for January. Andy noted that Matt Dishman was where his son learned to swim, and said that he loves the old school gym made entirely of wood. Mike Alexander noted that he works out at Matt Dishman, and there is a lot of history there. He noted that champions have trained there, and it has been a center for community athletics in NE Portland. He noted that the area has gone through change, and there has been a real focus at Matt Dishman to not lose its history. Andy noted that Matt Dishman himself was heavily involved in Parks, and Mike Alexander added that there is a tribute to him in the lobby. Bob Sallinger noted that he also works out there, and the center is teeming with activity.

Chair Update Andy noted that at the December meeting, the Board put a task force together to consider a smoke free policy for Portland Parks. Sue Van Brocklin was coordinating, and Mary Anne Cassin, Julie Vigeland, and Tricia Tillman volunteered to be a part of the task force. Sue Van Brocklin said that they will be meeting with representatives from Multnomah County. Linda Robinson noted that she saw in the news this morning that State Parks is considering a smoke free policy. Sue noted that if they (State Parks) can do it, we can do it. Andy said that they also put together a task force to talk to Commissioner Fritz about public input, and noted that Dion Jordan, Mary Anne Cassin, and Linda Robinson volunteered to be a part of that group.

**Comments on
Comprehensive
Plan**

Bob Sallinger commented on the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's Comprehensive Plan. He said that the Audubon Society had submitted comments, which he would be happy to share. He noted that they were disappointed with the connection systems plan and Portland plan narrative. They felt that equity and some other things didn't get into the system. He felt like it was "business as usual" in terms of where all the bureaus are going. Andy Nelson noted that we have a group set up to respond, and that Jim Owens, Meryl Redisch, and Kathy Fong Stevens volunteered to participate in a task force to look at the Comprehensive Plan and report back at the February Parks Board meeting. He noted that in late February, as a group, we can make a recommendation.

**Parks Foundation
Update**

Nick Hardigg reported on the Foundations database of people who signed up to support parks. He noted that in the last two years, the number has more than tripled. He said that 3000 people have signed up and donated, and several more thousands have signed up. They have created a survey that asks people what they care about. Approximately 400 parks supporters have completed the survey.

**Parks in East
Portland**

Andy Nelson introduced the discussion for the Parks Board's recommendation on SDC funds in East Portland and Central Northeast Neighbors. He noted that SDCs came in higher than expected. He reminded the Board that SDCs are earmarked for growth, not maintenance or some of the other things we've talked about at BAC. He said that the Board's job will be to prioritize the top three projects for each area, and then send a recommendation letter to the Commissioner. Andy noted that they will be doing a consensus dots exercise in which each Board member puts a dot next to his or her priority projects, and then the votes are tallied to see where we are at. Before the vote, he noted, they will spend some time, going around, making sure everyone has the information that they need, and provide time for questions and clarification.

Mike Abbaté noted that we are looking at two of several coalition areas. He encouraged the Board to not worry about the cost of those projects. We have talked about \$8 million in terms of SDCs. Here we are in January of 2014, so we are already projecting ahead. He asked the Board to identify priorities as 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each of those areas. We can talk about the cost, and how that might affect your decisions. It's not that cost is not an issue at all, but please don't focus on the costs at this point. The main purpose of the meeting, he noted, is to give you more time to deliberate.

Mary Anne Cassin noted that getting SDCs installed in the first place was hugely controversial. SDCs are the fees that gets charged to homebuilders for new housing, and they pay thousands of dollars into this fund. She noted that focusing just in these areas should mean that the fees are collected in those areas. You are supposed to roughly put it in where the growth is happening. It's increasing capacity, and addressing growth.

Linda Robinson commented that she can provide specific information about parks in East Portland. She noted that she was also on the SDC task force, and she added that the fees are meant to address growth, not to remedy the existing deficiencies. If you have a neighborhood built out, she said, just because they don't have a park,

you can't build a new park just because one wasn't built when the growth happened.

Warren Jimenez clarified that all of the projects under consideration at the meeting are SDC eligible.

Tim Crail noted that Commissioner Fritz was planning to be here, but she is sick. She would be here if she could, Tim said, and noted that he and Patti Howard will take notes for her.

Jeff Shaffer noted that certain items on the inventory list, for example Parklane Aquatic Center, are not eligible for SDCs.

Bob Sallinger noted that he was on the SDC committee as well, and he is interested to see the analysis on how Parks decided where the allocation should go. He was curious about the distribution, and noted that he understands some of the SDCs will go to South Waterfront.

Mike Abbaté noted that Parks distributes SDCs between Central City and non-Central City. We try to spend approximately what we gain in Central City and a percentage outside of it. He noted that we can come back with a more detailed discussion. Warren Jimenez noted that there is a methodology.

Andy Nelson said that the Parks Board's task is to prioritize and recommend the top three projects for each area. He said that he wanted to make sure the Board takes the time to go over these and fully understand the options.

Mary Anne Cassin asked about urban renewal funding opportunities for Gateway, and Linda Robinson said that PDC has made it pretty clear that they don't have money for parks. Mike Abbaté said that he thinks there is an opportunity to get some money for parks.

Meryl Redisch asked about budget packages for natural areas (from BAC), and keeping that program well-funded. She wondered if whatever we select would also be using the same funding. In the metro area, for example, would funding be spread further? Warren said that any new project will be put forward with an O&M component. He noted that if there is a project in East Portland, we would come to Council with the O&M, and Council would make the decision to add those in and approve. Meryl commented that in the future, all of that would be coming out of the natural area fund. Jennifer Yocom noted that some of the CNN projects are natural areas.

Andy asked about finishing parks vs. doing work on things that are not quite complete. He noted that he has an interest in getting things done rather than phases, and asked if the only one on the list that could be completed would be Gateway. Mike Abbaté said that is not correct, and asked the Board to give PP&R the priorities and we will see which ones we can build out. He reminded the Board again to not look at \$8 million as total. Andy asked if the Board would feel comfortable recommending to Commissioner Fritz that we have a preference toward finishing things. Linda Robinson commented that it depends on if we all

agree.

Nick Hardigg asked about new households served, and wondered if some of these projects might warrant an asterisk because the story is bigger – because of bike crossroads, connectivity, or draw. Mike Abbaté noted that Gateway Urban Plaza has the opportunity to be a community gathering place. It could be a location for movies and concerts; serve the neighborhood, and beyond, and be more of a community park. Beech and Clatsop are more neighborhood like, Parklane has multiple fields, 20 acre parcel adjacent to an existing park.

Linda noted that the existing park is quite small at Parklane.

Shelli Romero noted that she served on the Lents Master Plan update. That project was to take a park that exists, invest in updating. She asked if we are talking about this kind of updating vs. looking at an area where the property is purchased, but a park hasn't been implemented. Mike said that the Lents project is SDC eligible because it expands capacity. For Lents, he noted, we look at synthetic fields, which are eligible because it expands capacity. But generally, he said, SDCs are for building new things.

Meryl asked about regional assets that are supported by a tremendous amount of grassroots (Mt. Tabor, etc.). She noted that Gateway and Cully fall under that category, and asked if there are other examples. Linda Robinson noted that Parklane has a lot of support from the people in East Portland. She noted that there are a lot of people in East Portland who feel strongly that Parklane and Beech should be developed before Clatsop. They have been waiting 20 or 30 years, and are not as affluent as the people building homes on top of the hill. Mike Abbaté commented that it is difficult to build a friends group around something that doesn't exist, like Beech. Parklane has an existing park, and a friends group, but that doesn't mean there isn't support for Beech. He noted that they have heard from neighborhood groups.

Mary Anne Cassin asked about new households served. Mike Abbaté highlighted the column with total number of households served, and noted that some are already in service area of a park, some will be newly served – those newly served are currently completely outside ½ mile of park or natural area. Mary Anne commented that it seems to her we are addressing a deficiency, and clarified that she is interested in knowing the locations of *new* households. Mike confirmed that all of these projects are going to serve new households and meet the criteria of SDC. Mary Anne noted that it helps when we rank, to know where the most growth is happening.

Mike provided an example, noting that there might be an area in SE Portland around Hawthorne, a new project goes up and it has 200 units, which creates demand, but there isn't a service gap. Those people have access to a park within a ½ mile. I would love to look at those areas too, he said, but now we are looking at areas where there is a gap, where people don't have service.

Linda Robinson noted that the number of new households served for Parklane is low because there is a small existing park. But, she said, it is small and it is hard for

a park that small to serve 2000 people. The total number served by that project will actually be quite large.

Sue Van Brocklin noted that she ranked each column and ordered the projects by numbers served. Total # Served: Parklane = 1, Beech = 2, Gateway = 3, Clatsop =4. Then, looking at new households served: Beech =1, Gateway =2, Parklane =3, Clatsop =4. When you total them, she noted Beech and Parklane have the lowest numbers – they are doing the most of what we said last meeting was important.

Linda Robinson noted that over the years, Parklane has risen to the top consistently for the East Portland Parks Coalition. It is large, a 15-20 acre park, and it's the most central one, so it would be closer to more people. As an individual, she noted, she would prefer Gateway, but representing the people of East Portland – they want Parklane.

Mike Alexander thanked the Bureau, and noted that in looking at the data, the demographics are moving significantly, with folks who have been there a long time, and folks who have just arrived. He said that the data becomes important through an equity lens. Demographic trending makes a more compelling argument.

Mauricio Villarreal commented that there are so many things to take into consideration – what is the greatest impact, look at numbers. Beyond that, Gateway Urban Plaza has the potential to be a great center.

Nick Hardigg asked for opinions on which project will reach the most people. Linda said Parklane, and Shelli Romero agreed. Linda noted that they are all getting increased diversity, but Parklane will serve a huge immigrant population, as well as people of color. She also said that poverty is greater there than in the other areas.

Nick commented that Parklane is a big project. He asked, if you do phase one, is there any assurance that the rest will get built? Linda commented that the phase three aquatics center isn't going to get built out with SDCs. Andy reminded the Board that our charge is not to work the numbers. Linda commented that someone was suggesting we do all of one, and build out, but you can't do the aquatic center with Parklane because it's not SDC eligible.

Tim Crail noted that Commissioner Fritz has been out to all the coalition areas, and she knows what they want. What she is looking for from the Board, he said, is your perspective after having been on the Parks Board. She wants your best thinking on it.

Mary Anne Cassin noted that a central thing to consider, and what homebuilders accused us of, is that we are going to solve all of our other problems with this. The main thing to think about is growth, and how we address growth.

The Board voted. Results:

East Portland: (includes votes that were received via e-mail from Parks Board members who missed the meeting)

- Parklane: 10 votes (8 #1 votes)

- Beech: 8 votes (3 #1 votes)
- Gateway: 8 votes (1 #1 vote)
- Clatsop: 0 votes

After the votes were tallied, the Board discussed their 1st and 2nd choices (identified above).

Bob Sallinger asked if the column on new households served is for new development. Mike Abbaté answered that no, the numbers represent homes that are not currently served by another park. Bob noted that Beech was his first choice. He considered households served, as well as other factors, including the percentage of non-white citizens in the area.

Nick commented on the connectivity of Gateway, and helping more people.

Meryl asked for clarification on the kinds of improvements that could be made at Gateway, and noted that if it's just basic improvements, maybe it doesn't serve as many people as we think. Mike said that for phase one it will be mostly passive: infrastructure, lawns, and pathways. Meryl said that she would want both phase one and phase two, so that the enhancements could reach more people.

Bob noted that Beech was acquired in 1984, and people have been waiting decades for that park.

Mike Abbaté noted that in the Board's letter to the Commissioner, they can recommend doing both phases. Mary Anne commented that this would be good, and would show that SDC has visible value, you are showing real park development. Warren added that the value of building out a park lines up with what Meryl was talking about.

Andy said that the letter to Commissioner Fritz will recommend priority of projects, with a paragraph on strong interest of completion. The Board is not interested in small improvements across many parks. Speak to both Parklane and Beech phases.

**Parks in Central
NE Neighbors**

Andy asked the Board to turn their attention to six projects in Central Northeast, and noted that they will use the same format and take some time to ask questions, and ask for clarifications.

Linda Robinson said that she would like to know more about the three segments of the Sullivan's Gulch project. She commented that segment 11 also happens to be related to the Gateway Green project. She noted that it is virtually impossible for people on the west side, to get on the I-205 multiuse trail. It is a long convoluted process. She asked about the other two segments. Brett Horner noted that segment one is the western segment where it comes into the Eastbank Esplanade. Linda asked if it connects to Lloyd Center, Kia said that it is on the north side of I-84. Linda asked about segment two, and Brett said that it is a bit east of that. Brett noted that because of the right of way, it's a little easier, and they don't have to deal with the railroad.

Sue asked about Sullivan's Gulch serving new households, and Mike Abbaté said that it is not applicable with trails because they connect things. Shelli Romero noted that they are like bridges. Andy Nelson added that both trail projects fall into that category.

Linda asked if the Columbia Slough trail will finish a connectivity. Mike Abbaté clarified that it will just be for the canoe launch. Brett added that we just finished the segment between Denver and MLK, and this project would provide the final piece for the canoe launch.

Andy asked about the work proposed at Whitaker ponds. Brett said that the project will include a new entry for the facility, as well as street improvements, and a visitor welcome area.

Mike Abbaté noted that two of the projects, Catkin Marsh area, and Sacajawea Park, do not have master plans. He noted that for those two projects we wouldn't be able to move into design and construction like we can with the others.

Sue Van Brocklin asked if \$250,000 covers only the cost of the plan, or the amenities as well. Brett noted that it would cover the plan as well as basic amenities, seeding and pathways. Sue noted that this doesn't seem like much to get this one up and going and encouraged everyone to keep that in mind. Linda commented on Sacajawea Park's proximity to Thomas Cully Park, and noted that there is street service on one side of the park and not the other. She asked if a street will be planned on the east side of Sacajawea to improve accessibility. Brett noted that one is not planned for this project, but believes that eventually the street will open up.

Linda noted that Sullivan's Gulch, segment 11 really benefits the Gateway Area, Madison south area, in terms of safety and additional access. She said that it will bring people into the south end of the Gateway Green project.

Mary Anne Cassin commented on the trails, and connectivity that they would bring, and said that there is something there. Meryl Redisch asked if Metro will be participating in funding those regional trails. Mike Abbaté noted that they are participating in funding some regional trails, but not Sullivan's Gulch. Brett noted that PP&R might apply for a grant as a match to help build those out, and Metro would be involved in that.

The Board voted for their top three choices.

Central Northeast (includes votes that were received via e-mail from Parks Board members who missed the meeting)

Cully 14 votes (14 #1 votes)
Sullivan's gulch: 7 votes (6 #2 votes/1 #3 vote)
Whitaker: 7 votes (2 #2 votes/5 #3 votes)
Sacajawea: 6 votes (3 #2 votes/3 #3 votes)
Columbia: 2 votes (2 #3 votes)

Andy noted that the good news is that there is a clear number one: Cully got the most votes, and all number one votes. He said that Sullivan's Gulch and Whitaker both got 7 votes, but Sullivan's Gulch got more #2 votes. Between Sacajawea and Whitaker, he said, it is not really clear on what our preference is because they both rank pretty evenly.

Andy Nelson told Tim Crail that he will work on drafting a letter on the Board's recommendation and process to send to the Commissioner by Friday at five.

Bob Sallinger asked about Thomas Cully Park, and noted that the whole model for that project was to bring in external sources of funds. He asked if they will be continuing that if we are now using funds from the city to fund that park. Mike Abbaté confirmed that yes, external funding would still be used for the project, and this will be the city's contribution.

Director's update Mike announced that PP&R is changing its NRPA membership to include all permanent employees and Parks Board members. He noted that everyone will now get a digital copy of NRPA's Parks and Recreation magazine, as well as other membership benefits.

Mike announced that PP&R has several new recruitments, and asked the Board for help getting the word out to qualified people. Kia said that in her group, they are hiring a City Planner II position, which is an entry level planning position that will report to Brett Horner. They are also recruiting for a supervisory/management position (Capital Project team managers), and noted that they will hire two positions from this pool of applicants. She asked the Board to please urge qualified people to apply for these positions.

Warren Jimenez reminded the Board about the public meeting.

Adjourn Andy Nelson thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.

** Additional comments from Parks Board members received by e-mail **

Kathy Fong Stephens

Regarding prioritizing park planning projects in EPNO and CNN:

- I'd like to see how PP&R staff prioritizes these projects based on the criteria that was discussed (and set?) just a few months ago;
- I'm unsure how the project costs might be offset by potential partners (eg Verde or urban renewal);
- I'm also unsure of the efficacy of committing part of the currently available SDC \$ for phase I of a few projects and then following through w/ future funding for subsequent phases (ie - does it make more sense to complete one whole project w/available funds OR to do phase I of two or more projects);
- the above being said, my priorities would be those projects that serve high numbers of under served households and that have community/partner support.

Dion Jordan

There was a lot of great information provided and like usual they are all good projects that I am sure we would all like to see fulfilled. Nevertheless here are the recommendations and thoughts I have.

The three major priorities in my mind are:

1. Serving households that are not already served by a park
2. Serving those Below Poverty level and non white communities that don't already have a developed park within their neighborhood.
3. Keeping our promise. If we have made specific promises to neighborhoods or communities around developing their parks and/or trails (written, verbal, or otherwise) then we need to make good on those promises.

Other Considerations include:

- I believe it is important to finish projects that we have started. It can be somewhat frustrating and insulting to start a project in a neighborhood and let it sit for years. It's like giving someone a car with no wheels or engine. It just sits there in their driveway as something to keep clean but never really use. In my mind it is better to complete projects and give communities the best we can, one neighborhood at time.
- I think projects that have partnership opportunities like Thomas Cully Park and Whitaker Ponds are also worth strong considerations. Anytime we can collaborate/partner with other funders and park supporters, we come out ahead.
- It is also worth noting that although Whitaker Ponds (and other natural areas) serves 34 households within its neighborhood, there are many schools and organizations that take educational field trips there every year and all year long. I think that should be mentioned or reflected in the numbers.

With that said here are my recommendations:

For East Portland Neighborhood Office (EPNO)

1. Beech Park Property
2. Gateway Urban Park & Plaza Property

For Central Northeast Neighbors (CNN)

1. Thomas Cully Park

Jim Owens

- Can we get an update on City Council action to fund implementation of the Tree Code?
- What is the status of convening the task force to develop input on the Comprehensive Plan Update? If I recall, time is of the essence in getting our input to the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.
- Regarding priorities for park investments in East Portland and Central NE:
 - For me, first and foremost is prioritizing investment to build community. Developed parks and recreation facilities are one of our most powerful tools for doing such.

- Central NE: While there is no question about the need/value in expanding natural areas/open space and trail facilities in any area of the City, this area is more blessed than many with existing and potential natural areas. The Whitaker Ponds and Catlin Marsh projects are both intended to create or expand natural areas. As such, in my mind, they do not build community in the same way or to the same extent that park and recreation programs could do for the area. For me, the two trail projects qualify as regional recreation facilities, rather than as neighborhood-building facilities. They should be led by Metro rather than by Portland Parks as part of the development of the 40-mile Loop/Intertwine program.

Investment in Thomas Cully Park (Phase I) is my priority for this area. It builds upon existing community efforts to transform an eyesore into a significant community amenity. The population served would actually be much greater than staff has indicated as it could be expected to serve much of NE Portland.

Given the low cost, I would include the Sacajawea Park amenities as part of any priority project for the area.

- East Portland: My highest priority for investment would be the Gateway Urban Park and Plaza project. The City has invested heavily in the Gateway area and it seems primed to finally redevelop. The proposed project would serve three neighborhoods and is doable within the context of available SDC funds. In the Gateway area, building something versus more planning is what is needed.

Tricia Tillman

My priorities:

1. Parklane – Phase I
2. Cully Park – Phase I (I think the # served is an underestimate because it is on a major thoroughfare and bus line)
3. Beech Park – Phase I

Should it come up, my preference would be to help more than one park move forward rather than focus all resources on one park.