



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
June 4, 2014  
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.  
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

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

**Board members absent:** Mike Alexander, Meryl Redisch, Linda Robinson, Shelli Romero, Bob Sallinger, Mauricio Villarreal

**Staff present:** Mike Abbaté, Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Deb Lev, Todd Lofgren, Jeff Milkes, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom

**Guests:** Patricia Frobos

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

**Introductions** Andy introduced new Parks Board member Patricia Frobos, whose appointment will begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The Parks Board and PP&R staff went around the table and introduced themselves.

**Park of the Month** Andy noted that the park of the month for April was East Portland Community Center. He said that June's park of the month is South Waterfront Park, and noted that there have been some recent changes. He asked for comments. Mary Anne Cassin noted that PP&R has recently completed bank work. The area is a former industrial site, and she noted that the soil was in bad shape. A lot of effort went into re-sculpting the bank. It is now a step back bank to allow the river to fluctuate, and new trails will serve the residential community.

Mike Abbaté noted that there may be some confusion about the location of South Waterfront Park. We are not talking about Tom McCall Waterfront Park, or the park at South Waterfront Trail. South Waterfront Park is south of the Riverplace development and between Marquam Bridge. He noted that it is distinctive and unusual, and doesn't look like many of our parks. The park includes raised planters, with a broad spectrum of horticultural species, and a beautiful restroom building, and concession building. He noted that Mary Anne was talking about the new extension.

**Approval of the minutes** Tricia Tillman moved to pass the May minutes. Mary Anne Cassin seconded, and the board passed the May minutes unanimously.

**Smoke free policy subcommittee Update** Andy Nelson noted that we have been tracking expansion of our smoke free policy. The smoke free policy subcommittee has been gathering information and building a case.

Sue Van Brocklin reported that Commissioner Fritz laid out a timing suggestion for the Board's recommendation, and that they will wait until after the November election to bring this to a vote. In the meantime, she noted that at the last meeting, there were many suggestions for things the Board would like to know more about. The subcommittee has gathered some information to pass out for review, and the Board will resume discussions in November or December.

Sue distributed handouts, including comments from employees, information on smoke free policies at golf courses and PIR related facilities around the country, the history of Portland parks that are already smoke free, as well as media coverage of historic discussions on this issue. Andy noted that it might be wise to get the new Parks Board members up to speed on the Board's discussions so far, with the goal of coming back together in November with a group that is informed. Sue noted that Megan is helping her get information handed out to the new members. She said that the other consideration is that the subcommittee will be losing Tricia Tillman and Mary Anne Cassin, and the only subcommittee members left will be Julie Vigeland and herself. Sue asked if others would like to join. Christa Thoeresz and Jim Owens volunteered.

Sue noted that they will continue to gather information on other questions brought up at the last meeting, and will bring forward in the coming months.

**Equity Subcommittee update** Andy Nelson noted that that there was discussion last month about making the Equity Subcommittee a standing committee. He said that the Board is excited that PP&R is going to hire a permanent position (Equity & Inclusion Manager) who will be a partner for us. He asked if there are any updates from the Equity Subcommittee.

Julie Vigeland noted that the only action at this point is the request to make the subcommittee a standing committee.

**Park Foundation Update** Nick Hardigg noted that the Foundation has been working with PP&R for the partnership fundraising event, tomorrow night (6/5/14). This will be an event to celebrate volunteer groups, movie and concert committees. The event is called Parklandians Unite, and is all about getting to know one another, and networking. Nick said that he hopes all Parks Board members can come, and that they are welcome to bring a guest. We hope to have a couple hundred people. Portland has one of the greatest rates of volunteerism, including all the people who raise money for Summer Free for All. He noted that the event will begin at 6:45 pm, and it will give Board members a chance to see how the various volunteer groups feel about being a partner to parks. Thank them, and hear their issues. Nick gave a huge thanks to PP&R, cohost for the event. It will be fun. There may be musical participation events. Mike Abbaté noted that the event will take place at the Oregon Historical Society, and there will be a big photo opportunity from a boom truck. He added that it will be a great event. Please come, and identify yourself as a Parks Board member.

Nick noted that the Foundation is also partnering with PP&R and the Portland Art Museum on the Museum's summer exhibition, celebrating the Art of the Louvre's Tuileries Garden. There will be a series of events that will give park loving people exposure to art, and bring art to the parks. There will be an activity promoting various hidden gems in the parks system, with fun cards promoting hidden gems, as well as asking people to go out and declare their own hidden gems. There will be a campaign to collect (social media collection) photos of hidden gems. Instagrams – (hashtag: capture parklandia) will have a running series. Fun, trusting to the masses their love of parks. Mike Abbaté will play a role in presenting a talk on the history of Portland Parks as part of a speaker series.

Nick noted that for Parke Diem, the Foundation plans 130 events. The Foundation will be at all concerts and all movies for SFFA, helping to raise funds, having raffles, and distributing information about the needs to raise awareness.

Christa Thoresz noted that the City is a sponsor of the Trail Blazers 3-on-3 Tournament, benefiting Special Olympics Oregon, August 23 and 24. She said that we will have an opportunity to table at the tournament if the Foundation is interested. Nick said that would be great, and they will talk to Jennifer Yocom.

Nick noted that the Foundation is starting a trailer of Parke Diem highlights, and efforts. He said that should City Council and the Commissioner decide to go for a bond, the Foundation is there, to raise awareness, to love parks. Andy thanked Nick, and noted that he hopes to see people at the Partnership Event.

**Chair Update** Andy noted that he wanted to pay tribute to the three outgoing Parks Board members, Mary Anne Cassin, Bob Sallinger and Tricia Tillman, who have each served 2 complete terms. His comments are summarized below:

Mary Anne has been involved officially with Parks since 1984, and has always brought a deep understanding of parks issue. It has been amazing to have you as part of this group, to fill us in on things that may have been decided years ago, some that you had written. You've been involved a long time, always thoughtful, passionate, and always willing to get involved in committee work. Committed. Focused on 2020. Reminded us often of that lasting vision. Brought us back there when we need to go there. You have an ability to summarize comments when we most needed those. You will be sorely missed. Thank you for your service.

Mr. Sallinger, you have had a deep and lasting impact on this group, and not just about natural areas and wildlife. You are passionate and committed, and you've brought that passion to the whole park system. Your intellect and sharp eye, you brought issues to us that we otherwise wouldn't have known about. You are not afraid to be contrarian, which has been healthy and valuable and much appreciated. You understand how government works, and how to make change. Your work with the water district is just one example of how you've gotten in there. You are able to rally people. You have had a deep impact on this group, and will be very missed.

Tricia, your leaving is a big loss. While on the nominating committee, we thought about the people who were leaving, and how could we replace them? What we

found is that those leaving were not replaceable. You (Tricia) bring a deep understanding of the issues in the city. Particularly around equity and public health, but also a deep understanding of how the community works. You are an effective communicator, and speak in a way of getting to the heart of the matter. You have a way of illuminating the truth. Just listening to your comments, I've learned a lot. IT may come naturally to you, but it's an amazing skill. You're also a lot of fun, and you always brought that too. You will have a lasting impact to this group. We'll miss you.

Mary Anne stated that it has been an honor to serve, getting to know you all, and hopes relationships will go forward. The bond – go, go, go!

Tricia said that she has never been so happy to get up so early on a Wednesday morning, make her way downtown, and find parking. She noted that she has had the opportunity to work officially with 3 Parks Directors, and has learned a ton on how the City works. She has appreciated learning about the tribal history, history that predates Portland. She thanked staff, and noted a much deeper appreciation for what is behind the soccer fields, and basketball courts. She said that she hopes to continue in some way in an emeritus role.

Bob Sallinger said that this is a great group. Of all the city groups he has participated in, this is the broadest, most diverse group of people. He also noted that it is far more diverse now than the day he started. He said that over the last several years, he has noted increased effectiveness each year. He noted that he is very interested in staying involved, especially on the levy. These campaigns are difficult. Polling is great, but we shouldn't underestimate at all the political climate, and how hard it is to motivate the public. He noted that we are starting from a good place, with a good reputation. We should win it overwhelmingly, and really send a message.

Andy reported that our gift to each of you is a park bench. Mike Abbaté announced the locations: Tricia Tillman's bench will be in Dawson Park; Bob Sallinger's bench will be in Kelley Point Park; and Mary Anne Cassin's bench will be in Tanner Springs Park. Mike commented on the diversity of those three parks: where they are in the city, what they mean to the community, and the history of those three parks. He noted that it is a great tradition, started by Julie Vigeland – for Parks Board members who complete 2 full terms, we recognize your service with a park bench in your name, and identifies your years of service.

Andy said that he is very excited to announce Kathy Fong Stephens has agreed to step into the chair role. He noted that she brings leadership, and understanding of the issues, particularly important with the possible renewal of our bond. He thanked Kathy for agreeing to serve in that role. He noted that there are no other nominations, and asked the Board to vote. Julie Vigeland moved to appoint Kathy Fong Stephens as the next Board chair, Jim Owens seconded the motion, and the board passed the motion unanimously.

Kathy noted that she is pleased to accept the role, and said that she agrees with Bob that this is a very diverse and effective board. She looks forward to continuing that tradition. Andy noted that we will also have a vice chair, and will bring that forward in July. Mike noted that appointments for the new Board members will go

to Council this morning (June 4), as well as reappointments on the consent agenda.

Jim Owens gave an acknowledgement for Andy, noting that Board members are constantly asking you to bring things forward, and you've always been accommodating and adaptable. He said that he realized this morning, that Andy is also an exceptional public speaker, very eloquent. He noted that the tributes Andy just gave were quite impressive.

Andy said that his contribution was moving the meeting to 8 am, which will be a part of his legacy. He noted that it has been an honor to follow Julie (Vigeland), an outstanding chair. Thank you (to Julie) for leading the way.

Andy noted that at the Park Board retreat, they discussed priorities for the upcoming year. He said that it is good to know what our priorities are. We want to be receptive to things that come up through the year, but want to keep track of things we want to accomplish.

Sue asked if the communications committee might be able to help if there is a bond, with letters to the editor, or opinion pieces. She asked if July the anticipated date, and Jennifer Yocom answered that July 24<sup>th</sup> is the projected date for the Commissioner's recommendation. Sue asked if it would be appropriate to hear from the City Attorney at the next meeting on what the Board should or shouldn't do in relation to the potential Bond.

Mike Abbaté noted that he will have Harry come in July. He said this will also be good for the new Parks Board members. Leading up to that point, he noted that it might be good for the communications subcommittee to meet with Jennifer Yocom. Andy noted that they don't want to get out ahead of any strategy. Jennifer Yocom said that leading up to the referral, it will be a very public discussion, and she would welcome getting together with the subcommittee. Subcommittee members include Sue Van Brocklin, Christa Thoeresz, Andy Nelson, and Nick Hardigg. Andy noted that they will get an e-mail to the group, and get the committee rolling to look at what we can do between now and July 24<sup>th</sup>.

Kathy Fong Stephens suggested that after the bond gets referred, this Board can be a conduit of information.

Jim Owens asked about the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability's Comprehensive Plan, and it was decided that the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee (Kathy Fong Stephens, Mary Anne Cassin, Meryl Redisch and Jim Owens) would meet with PP&R staff and BPS staff to go over the Parks Board recommendations.

Jim Owens asked about the smoke free parks issue. He noted that he perfectly understands why the Commissioner would not move forward a policy at the time of moving forward a bond issue, but suggested that this group continue to move forward, make a recommendation, and the Commissioner can decide when to make it public. Julie Vigeland noted that the Board is public. Mike Abbaté noted that it is a question of capacity for staff – and all hands are on deck keeping parks up and running. He said that many of our initiatives will have to go to sidelines. Bob Sallinger noted that we've never seen a media as aggressively negative, and they will

look for opportunities to find divisiveness. He noted that we don't want to give the media wedge issues. Andy Nelson noted that he believes the Commissioner wants to keep her focus on the bond measure, and Tim Crail agreed.

Sue Van Brocklin noted that the subcommittee can still meet and get ready. We will just hold off on a vote, or recommendation. Andy Nelson noted that this will give everyone time to read through the information distributed so far.

**Summer Free For All** Jeff Milkes presented information and discussed goals for Summer Free For All (SFFA). He handed out the SFFA brochure, and noted that this year, PP&R printed brochures in 6 different languages.

Jeff noted that back in 2009, movies, concerts, and playgrounds functioned fairly independently. Commissioner Fish had the idea to merge them all under SFFA. Since then, we have seen a 50 percent increase. We are about recreational opportunity, entertainment, getting people outdoors, and promoting positive development for our children. SFFA relies on partnerships with community members. It's all about partnerships, neighborhood communities, faith communities, business communities, schools.

Jeff noted that he was asked to make relationships with communities. This was one reason for bringing the zones into being. He noted that if there is an issue, he can pick up the phone, and have a neighborhood association chair on the phone. Many of these relationships are built from the Summer Free For All because it provides opportunities for our communities to get together. One requirement of all staff is to have fun – the have to sign a pledge, and enjoy it. If you don't have fun, how can you help others have fun.

Jeff noted that SFFA has 48 playground sites. Additionally, a mobile group comes on a schedule. Lunches are served at some sites, but not all. This is based on neighborhood demographics, and the number of children who qualify for free and reduced lunches at local schools. We've almost doubled number of lunches served since 2009. There will be 8 events for the Washington park festival, 56 movies throughout the summer at parks all over the city, climbing walls at 106 different sites, and 88 swimming lessons. We expect 350,000 visits, and 98 summer jobs (one thing Jeff is most proud of).

Jeff noted that 55% of our budget is in kind donations. We are one of 3 key charitable gifts for Clear Channel Radio. They create commercials and voice overs amounting to \$860,000 worth of radio advertising spots. Jeff noted that our new development manager, Shelly Hunter, is an amazing development person. He said that he went with her to Comcast one day to talk about how they will they participate. They were planning to give \$25,000, and that number moved up to \$50,000 (\$25,000 Cash/\$25,000 in kind) when we left the room. They will air our commercials (300+) during prime time. Some of the SFFA budget comes from the City's general fund. The majority of city money – \$170,000 comes goes to summer playgrounds, and lunch program. Movies and concert funds are raised by the neighborhood groups. There are 57 organizing groups, and they are extremely successful at it. For every dollar we spend, we see about \$5 leveraged in sponsors, and in kind donations. A few months ago, we didn't know where we would be, and

then donations started rolling in. I was contacted by the City of Chicago recently, wanting to know how we do it. We lead the charge in outdoor events. Some cities are proud of their 8 movies. We have 56. Our sponsors include Bank of America, Comcast, Clear Channel, and the National Recreation and Parks Association all at the 25k mark or more. Thanks to all of our sponsors.

A significant part of our budget comes from small donations that add up – anywhere from \$25 to \$400 – we have close to 500 of these small donations. These require stewardship of those relationships, and it's why our organizing groups are so important to us.

Jeff talked about PP&R's dedication to nutrition and fitness with our summer playgrounds program. We've taken a pledge in line with our strategic plan, not just to bring kids to park for recreation, and feed them lunch, but to combat obesity. We have a health epidemic on our hands, and there is no agency better to combat that than parks & recreation. We are one of 50 who received this grant, which involves nutrition and focus on a healthy heart, brain, bone. We will introduce the curriculum this summer. We pilot tested in 2012, and the children loved it. Children have to do a certain amount of exercise to get heart rates up. In a study of this program, in which 40,000 children participated at the University in Florida, with a non-profit, they realized statistically significant improvements in the participants' waist circumference, blood pressure, even academic performance.

Jeff noted that we are increasing our outreach this year, with Summer Free For All brochures translated into eight languages: Burmese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Nepali, Somali, and English.

Jeff noted that no one has to fall out of an airplane to join the party (referring to E.T. skydiving into the movie in the park at Overlook Park in 2013). We will be as creative as we can. This is a Portland tradition that started with a 1912 Laurelhurst park gathering.

Andy Nelson noted that they promote this a lot at Big Brothers, Big Sisters. He noted that they love this, and are getting excited about it. He asked if there are any tools you could set us up with, brief emails, to spread the word. Jennifer Yocom noted that we'll send the tools, and we will have a full newsletter dedicated to Summer Free For All, that you can forward. Jeff noted that the summer schedule will kick off with a movie at Peninsula Park on June 27th, and will really pick up after July 4th.

Jennifer Yocom noted that this year, we are seeing something new, and that is sponsors looking to get other sponsors. Thanks to the partnership with foundation, Bank of America, Northwest Natural, Comcast, Clear Channel are recruiting other people to get involved. It's really exciting to see, and we can't thank the Foundation enough.

**Director's Update** Mike Abbaté noted that Saturday (May 31<sup>st</sup>) was an amazing day for the parks family. We opened a bridge over the railroad at Pier Park, Chimney Park. He suggested that if you've never been to Pier Park, you should ride your bike on the new path. Mike noted that there was also a big remembrance event for Charles Jordan at the

Charles Jordan Community Center. He asked Dion Jordan to recap how the event was received

Dion Jordan said that it was wonderful, and noted that he couldn't imagine a kinder gesture for his father, and family. From the people who showed up, and people dancing to the letter from President Obama. To have so many city officials come, and say so many kind things about his impact locally and nationally, it was humbling to say the least. Dion noted that his family came into town, which is why he missed the retreat on May 30<sup>th</sup>. He noted that they were all in tears. The best part was the stories. People sharing stories of how pops affected them. Dion noted a heartfelt thanks to Mike, Parks, the Commissioner's office, Mayor, Senator.

Mike noted that it was a real love fest. The room was full of love for Charles, what he stood for, his values. Speakers included Senator Wyden, Mayor Hales, and Congressman Blumenauer. He gave props to Eileen Argentina's team – we had 13 speakers, and protocols, cupcakes, and how many minutes allotted for each thing. It was a major, major demonstration of love and appreciation, and the staff did an amazing job. Mike noted that the event was filmed, though he was unsure about how it would be distributed. There was a letter from President Obama. Mike noted that we have an office here in the City – the Office of Government relations, led by Martha Pellegrino; Vicki Cram is our lobbyist in DC, and she worked magic to get it in a short time frame. Mike noted that it was an honor to be a part of the event.

Mike noted that, related to the bond measure, Jennifer Yocom and her team are laser focused. We are getting daily reports in preparation. Mike asked the Board to pencil in a hold for a Town Hall meeting on the evening of June 30<sup>th</sup>. He noted that we are going to reconvene the budget advisory committee on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and want to encourage Parks Board members to come to that as well. More details to come.

Mike noted that on July 17<sup>th</sup> he will be speaking with Zari Santner on the history of Portland parks in creating communities. This will be an opportunity to talk about our parks, and get a message out on the importance of parks in communities. The talk will be on July 17<sup>th</sup> at PAM, downstairs in the auditorium. More details to come.

Mike noted that there is a lot going on. From staff side, all hands on deck. We are readjusting our priorities to make sure we hit some key dates. Hope everyone is clear on what is being proposed for the bond -- \$68 million. Drop in the bucket; \$380 million is needed. This is to address the most urgent issues. It was announced over the weekend, and as we said on Saturday, Monday, we would start getting e-mails about things. We have. You can communicate to your neighbors, and constituents. These are the things that are about to fail, or have failed, and will come out of service. Pioneer courthouse square, some bridges, and playgrounds.

Mike noted that the overall budget, compared to what we had when he came in as director, we are doing so much better. We have gained 22 new positions, converting seasonal positions to permanent positions; Grunt will be funded at current level; \$250,000 in major maintenance; and City Council paid off debt. We've gone from \$600,000 to \$1.2 million for major maintenance. Small but it's bigger than it was. Deborah Lev added that we will get money to implement the tree code, fully funded as per budget request. It is cut down from what staff



thought, but full as requested. Mike noted that 2 years ago, in Mayor Adams last budget, there was a cut to Portland Parks to generate \$400,000 of its own budget by selling our properties. Commissioner Fritz was able to have that removed.

Nick Hardigg noted that we have an annual need of about \$36.5 million per year over 10 years for major maintenance. With only \$1.2 million, we have to look at big picture, bond measure is to catch up and repair our deteriorating assets.

Mike Abbaté noted that the increase in SDC fees led to announcement of new parks, and we have more money for major maintenance than we've had in past years. We could have a bond to pass. This is huge from a staff perspective. Kia Selley's group has hired 2 new project managers for the new parks. Things are happening in the bureau. If a bond measure passes, that will increase the workload, which will also have huge implications for Margaret Evans, with recruitments and staffing. Because economy is turning around, people have more options. Makes outreach efforts more difficult, challenged.

Mike noted that the mood in the bureau is good, and the indication is that the community and our elected leaders tremendously value the role of parks.

**Announcements** Judy Bluehorse Skelton noted that the Delta Park Powwow is coming up on Father's Day weekend. She thanked PP&R for their support. The event is put on by the Bow and Arrow Club. She noted that people think it's not open to public. It's open to the public. It will take place in the far northwest corner of the park, and it is open to everyone.

**Adjourn** Andy adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.