



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
December 3, 2014
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

Board members present: Mike Alexander, Tonya Booker, Kendall Clawson, Kathy Fong Stephens, Patricia Frobos, Nick Hardigg, Dion Jordan, Andy Nelson, Meryl Redisch, Linda Robinson, Gladys Ruiz, Christa Thoeresz, Sue Van Brocklin, Julie Vigeland, Mauricio Villarreal

Board members absent: Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Tony Magliano, Jim Owens

PP&R Staff present: Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Art Hendricks, Warren Jimenez, Todd Lofgren, Kia Selley, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom

Call to order Kathy called the meeting to order at 8:00 am

Park of the Month Gladys Ruiz spoke about her visit to Westmoreland park. She went in the morning for 40 minutes and estimated that she saw around 50 species of ducks. She noted the nature play area was “awesome”. There were many dog walkers enjoying the park. The sunken in concrete pool area was of concern to her. She said, since it is now drained, it seems like a hazard. Salmon have been streaming there. Kathy asked: Is there a friends group? The group consensus was no.

The December park of the Month will be Sellwood Community Center. Mike Abbaté noted that Sellwood Community Center would be having a Holiday Bazaar in the upcoming weekend. Mike Alexander volunteered to visit Sellwood Community Center.

Approval of the minutes Julie Vigeland moved to pass the minutes from the November meeting, Mike Alexander seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Park Foundation Update Nick Hardigg reported that the board is working on setting next year’s priorities. One is how can we achieve goal of the 20/20 vision. They will be reaching out to Parks Board Members for input. They will also be sending out their annual appeal, which summarizes their achievements for the year. They welcome questions from the board. They will have open seats on their board in the coming year. He will be sending out qualifications of applicants. Kathy noted that Julie Vigeland and Jim Owens are on that board.

Chair updates Kathy said that she would bring a list of committees to the next meeting to reinvigorate the list and see which are ad-hoc committees and which are long-standing committees. She noted that there will be a nominating committee because there will be one or two board positions up for nomination.

Public Input to Board

Kathy stated that public input to the parks foundation has been something the board has been discussing for the last year and a half. Members of the public are always welcome to attend the meetings. Our meeting notes are posted online and our main contact is Megan Dirks. They have her email and phone number and for a while it will be Ellen Sweeney. This is not a board for public forums, we are a public input vehicle for input to the parks bureau and to the city council and commissioner. We want to clarify how one would give input to the Parks Board. At the start of each meeting, we will have a sign-up sheet, individuals have up to two minutes to speak, and they may submit materials for the committee. We may use the opportunity to reach out to friends groups to come. They may coordinate through Megan Dirks, the website and the chair if they would like to make a presentation. Megan may email their materials out to the board. As many as five individuals may present for two minutes each. There are 10 minutes available at the beginning of each Parks Board Meeting.

Mike Abbaté noted that it would be similar to what city council meetings offer. Kathy said this opportunity will be on the website.

Linda Robinson moved to accept this as a clarification of the board's policy, Tonya Booker seconded the motion, and the board unanimously voted to accept this as a clarification of their policy.

Committee Reports

Kathy reported on the Comprehensive Plan Committee in Jim Owen's absence. He will be pulling everyone together for one last look and comments.

Smokefree Parks

Kathy introduced the topic of the proposed Smokefree policy in Portland Public Parks. Sue Van Brocklin has been working on this effort.

Sue began as handouts were passed around with the final recommendation of the Smokefree Parks Policy, which the board will be presenting to Commissioner Fritz. Many parks already have a smoke-free policy, they are listed at the top of the Memorandum. This is an expansion of the existing smoke-free policies. We have added nicotine vaporizers and liquid as they resemble, taste, and look like candy. They have been added to the prohibited list. Hillsboro has now banned smoking along with Clatsop County, Reedsport, Dallas, Texas.

Kathy mentioned that the city already has a policy which states no smoking within 25 feet of designated children's areas or within 50 feet of any facility. Sue noted that the board will be recommending this policy to Commissioner Fritz and then it would likely be passed on to City Council. Commissioner would like this to be voted on in early 2015 and put in place in spring 2015. We are presenting to the commissioner today.

Gladys Ruiz commented that the Native American community requested permitting for events. Were we able to accommodate that request? Sue said The State of Oregon has an existing non-smoking policy with an exception which allows permitting for events. They used the same paragraph the state uses to allow it.

Mike Alexander asked, do we know if this is a practice limited to just the Native American community? Are there any other communities that have a similar

practice? The group consensus was that the group did not know if this is a practice limited to just the Native American community. Eric shared with the group that he had never heard of any other groups using tobacco in their events. The Native American community uses a natural, non-commercial tobacco. Mike Abbaté mentioned that there are a number of these ceremonies that do take place in our parks.

Meryl asked if there are any groups who will be in support of the proposed policy. Sue stated that they had identified Multnomah County, Portland State University, The State of Oregon, Urban League of Portland, the LGBT community, Madison and Franklin High Schools, among others as groups that will support the proposed policy. We will deploy these groups to help with the city council meetings so there are people there in council, speaking on our behalf.

Andy asked how golf courses would conform to the policy. Sue stated that Kathy and Sue met with golf and raceway managers. They asked, would this provide any economic harm to your enterprise operations and they said no. Because people tend to make a day out of golf, rather than just going for an hour, they will have a designated smoking area. However we will recommend that it be phased out in three years. The commissioner may or may not agree with designating a smoking area on these properties, from our conversation with her. Andy asked, do cities like Dallas have municipality owned golf courses? Sue replied that they did a select search of municipal raceways and golf courses and found that no one has had a problem with it.

Kathy spoke about a conversation with Vicki Nakashima, which was set up by Eileen Argentina. She will be speaking in a meeting next week about it. Sue pointed out new text on south park blocks. Christa moved to approve the recommendation, Kendall seconded the motion. Mike stated that the language should be amended to be open to other cultures, not just for one specific, named culture. Sue suggested "other protected cultural ceremonial use". Mike added: "or other similar ceremonial use by other cultural groups." The group conversed about the definition of "protected groups". Kathy noted that this is a policy recommendation at a very high level, we are not talking about enforcement. Sue pointed out that we are writing the text for the recommendation, not the ordinance. Julie moved to approve the amendment as proposed by Sue, Dion seconded the motion and the group unanimously approved the amendment.

Kathy added "25 feet" to the statement paragraph. Christa moved to approve the finished recommendation, Kendall seconded the motion, and the board unanimously voted to approve sending this policy recommendation to Commissioner Amanda Fritz. Jim Owens, although absent, did send in his vote of approval.

Sue announced that Kathy will be on Think Out Loud today to speak on this policy recommendation.

Parks Proposal Process Julie Vigeland named the subcommittee members: Tonya, Dion, Judy and Tony. The subcommittee is working under Art Hendrick's direction. The Parks Proposal Process (PPP) request has been handed out to the board. Since this has been going on for three months, she highlighted a few of the things that have happened in the

past. We were asked by the commissioner to answer the question: “Whether allowing affluent neighborhoods to help fund their own parks projects through the PPP is widening the gap in parks services.” As a reminder, the PPP has been set aside through recent years because of the budget setbacks. The committee tried to understand the difference between the PPP and the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) process. They were given examples of each side of the proposal processes. They received a list of proposal projects. They talked about how could there be more outreach, education. They found out that the process is not known. If public doesn’t know about the process, they can’t apply. Language barriers are a problem. Internet barriers are a problem. Making the process available online doesn’t help people who don’t have internet access. We need to provide printed material to those without internet. Proposal process was prompted by parks getting proposals from all over the city. This process helps staff address the requests and get through them in a timely manner. Linda noted that in her area there were certainly people who don’t know about it. How do we get the word out without having a big campaign, since we don’t have all the money to pay for every project? The committee reviewed materials, worked with staff, and asked: what ways of approaching this are there that already exist? Other processes were different, not comparable. They noticed that many of the proposals received were small requests. The process had to be simple, transparent, and available to all. The committee came up with a list of nine recommendations to PP&R staff to implement:

1. Focused outreach to communities that may not know about or how to utilize PPP. Parks staff shall evaluate what communities have been using the process and coordinate with PP&R Community Relations staff to conduct appropriate outreach.
2. Provide information and the application in languages other than English.
3. Provide printed materials in community centers for those who do not have internet access.
4. Adopt equity criteria similar to other funding processes (SDC, CIP) within the bureau to the evaluation of PPP proposals.
5. Coordinate with Neighborhood Coalition Parks Committees, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) and the Portland Parks Foundation to encourage partnerships or skill-sharing across neighborhoods, where possible.
6. Ensure the diversification of reviewers for each proposal and invite partners outside of PP&R to participate in reviews.
7. Keep PPP proposals on the small scale – projects with an estimated cost below \$10,000 will stay within the process. Approved proposals over \$10,000 will be included in the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) list which includes equity as part of the ranking criteria.
8. Explore creation of a seed fund or matching small grants program that would allow for more communities to successfully implement their small projects. BES has a small grant program that went through an equity evaluation recently and could serve as a model. The Portland Parks Foundation may also be a resource in this area.

9. Establish performance indicators for the PPP; report back to the Parks Board in one year.

Julie noted that this was a very difficult process, everyone worked a tremendous amount.

Nick said that The Portland Parks Foundation has a fiscal sponsorship program, they can provide funds and support for programs like this. For example, in number five, we could be a group to contribute support and also under item number eight, they would like to mitigate gaps and provide funding and equity. We can provide matching funds and key support.

Meryl stated that she was on the grants review committee with Tom Potter years ago, this effort matches that one in many ways and it was very successful. She doesn't have remaining paperwork, but it might be worth looking into. Art said they did look at who owns a neighborhood grant project. They found that The Office of Neighborhood Involvement has a neighborhood grant program that they looked at. Julie said they would look into it as they move forward.

Andy thanked the committee and noted that this is complex work. This is a great example of a thoughtful equity proposal. Item number five has some interesting potential. He was at Hands-On Portland. How are resources distributed equally when we can't do it all ourselves? There are some great models out there to look at. Andy would like to be involved in that process a little bit.

Kathy noted that some people were unclear about the small grants program conflicting with the CIP Projects (unclear about the \$10,000 limit?) This project was partly started because of neighbors in the grant park area wanting a fenced dog park (cost estimate is \$30,000). This is not the proper vehicle for this kind of request.

Mike Abbaté stated that this is still a great process for public requests. It is still consistent with the master plan. If it is approved as consistent and appropriate and over \$10,000, it is then moved to the CIP list, not moved out of this process.

Mike Alexander asked is there a limit in the approval process for privately funded projects? Mike Abbaté answered that there are some points for leverage. Ten points out of 100 are granted for the ability to leverage a project.

Nick pointed out that with the shortage of funds and staffing, one of the primary concerns was that we wouldn't just want privately funded projects going on. Mike Abbaté agreed, stated that yes, we want an over-arching creative process to channel requests and be consistent.

Julie moved to approve the committee's recommendation with three changes per discussion (adding "foundation" to items five and eight as well as changing the word "moved" to "included" in item number seven), Gladys Ruiz seconded the motion and the group unanimously approved the motion.

Renew Forest Park Mike Abbaté began the Renew Forest Park presentation. The bureau is taking on this project in close partnership and collaboration with The Forest Park Conservancy (FPC). He introduced Renée Myers, the Executive Director of FPC. He want to talk about a long-range vision for Forest Park. It is our largest park, our “crown jewel”. Per acre, it is lacking resources and has been for 30-40 years. It now requires substantial attention. From early on, we have highlighted that Forest Park is not getting sufficient recourses to address three main areas: Its ecological health, its infrastructure, and its visibility and connectedness to the community. Working with FPC, we have come up with a long range, 10-20 year strategy we are calling Renew Forest Park. Mike introduced Natural Areas Manager, Astrid Dragoy, and Ecologist, Kendra Peterson-Morgan. This is something that will, frankly, cost twenty million dollars and that money won’t come from individuals or one large source, it will be broken into pieces.

Astrid Dragoy stated that this is a very large initiative and it takes great partnerships, like the one they are working on with FPC. Everyone was given a handout with details on the Renew Forest Park Project. Forest Park is the largest urban forested area within a city in the lower 48 states. It is 5,200 acres. We manage its ecological health. It’s regionally significant as it is connected to the coast of Oregon through public and privately owned forested areas. It is part of the Westside Wildlife Corridor. It is also sociologically significant. There are half a million annual visitors, 80 miles of trail, 28 miles of cycling paths, 25 miles of horse paths and 21 trailheads at Forest Park. Even with all of these amenities, there is no main, significant entrance to the park.

Forest Park is often referred to as “the lungs of Portland” as it provides cleaner, cooler air. Portland State University has created a map of how climate change will affect the Portland metro area. Large natural areas such as Forest Park provides a reduction of nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants, allowing us to breathe better. Forty million dollars are spent annually on respiratory issues caused by nitrogen dioxide.

We refer to Forest Park as a jewel and helps define us as a green city. With a green city comes responsibility. For years, citizens, staff, partners and the city club has asked us to invest in Forest Park. The time is now. We have done the planning documents, we have created a recreation survey and we have done asset management inventory.

Kendra Peterson-Morgan spoke about restoring Forest Park through a long term plan for its eco-system. As ivy increases, the native diversity and structure decreases and the habitat for native species is lost. As this happens, the health of the ecosystem declines. Kendra stated that they theory is to “protect the best,” which means that they will work to protect the areas that are in the best condition first.

Kendra then spoke about rebuilding Forest Park. Forest Park has a number of failing infrastructures including the Lower Mcleay Trail, Maple Bridge, Culvert Replacements to accommodate an emergency response entry point, which is partially funded through the bond.

Kendra lastly spoke about reconnecting with Forest Park. There is currently no entrance to the park. They would like to acquire property at the intersection Kitridge and Yeon Avenues for a possible visitor center. They want to be able to provide access to all and currently there is only a ¼ mile trail that is ADA Accessible. They would like to expand this to a longer, ADA accessible interpretive loop.

This is a long term, legacy project which will protect the resilience of our park and community.

Nick asked the presenters to clarify the time frame around the habitat restoration. Kendra stated that they will work to reduce invasive species in five years, then provide general maintenance and upkeep. Mike Abbaté commented that when they acquired Riverview it took one year to completely eradicate the invasive species there, but then it requires some maintaining. Astrid compared these situations to buying an old, beautiful home. You buy it because of its potential and you put resources into it to make repairs and restore it, but it will always require attention and upkeep.

Gladys asked about healthy partnerships saying, what is the plan to involve communities who do not neighbor the park? Astrid stated that the plan is for the FPC, neighborhood environmental education and stewardship to bring people to the park. Currently the Audubon Society and day camps have engaged some and we will want to bring more groups like these to the park. Mike Abbaté said that this is the beginning of an idea. We will need a community outreach plan. We will be seeking funding at the state legislature among other places. It will require dedicated staffing from PP&R as well as the FPC.

Meryl asked why should people on the east side of Portland care? How will you build a workforce component to bring those people into Forest Park? The Economics program at Portland State University is conducting a study that asks Portlanders, What does Forest Park mean to you? It will help identify and break down barriers.

Kathy requested that the board get an update every few months.

Director update Kia Selley, the Planning and Development Manager is working on scoping and estimating projects. This is necessary work to get done before the project work will begin next July. The time-sensitive project will begin sooner. The Parks Bond Program Manager will oversee three capital project managers and an admin staff.

Mike Abbaté noted that the job would open in the coming week. He will send out the link to the job listing. He encouraged the board to send the listing out to interested parties as well as their participation on the interview panel. There is also a CSS Manager position open on Kia's team.

Mike Abbaté mentioned that ASLAC featured PP&R prominently. Westmoreland Nature Play Area and Dawson park both won awards.

He talked about Hempfest, saying that they have had problems adhering to their permit in the past, so PP&R has denied their permit for next year. It is now in circuit court. It is in a stay, the city decided not to fight it in circuit.

We have had a large amount of crows dying. Bob took the lead in the cleanup and communications. Audubon Society and Fish and Wildlife have gotten involved in the investigation. Staff is cooperating with authorities, who think that poisoned corn may be involved.

Announcements Kathy announced that there is a Budget Advisory Committee meeting on Monday, December 8th on the second floor of the Portland Building at 5:30pm. Mike noted that this will be a really substantive meeting and he encouraged board participation.

Meeting adjourned Kathy adjourned the meeting at 9:30