



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

June 3, 2015

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Board members present: Mike Alexander, Tonya Booker, Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Liz Field, Kathy Fong Stephens, Dion Jordan, Tony Magliano, Jim Owens, Linda Robinson, Gladys Ruiz, Christa Thoeresz, Sue Van Brocklin, Julie Vigeland

Board members absent: Kendall Clawson, Patricia Frobles, Andy Nelson, Meryl Redisch, Mauricio Villarreal

PP&R Staff present: Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Kia Selley, Jennifer Yocom

Call to order Kathy called the meeting to order at 8:02 am. Kathy noted that Kia Selley will be acting Parks Director. Mike Abbaté and Warren Jimenez are absent.

Park of the Month Kathy noted that Pat Frobles is out of town, and not reporting on Marshall Park. Next month we will have Pat Frobles report, as well as a report on Two Plum Park. Kathy noted that Two Plum Park is neighborhood pocket park in NE Portland. Kia added that it is located on NE 7th, between Shaver and Mason. Jim Owens will visit, and report back to the Board in July.

Public Input to Board No public testimony.

Commissioner Fritz Patti Howard and Tim Crail reported that there are no updates today.

Approval of the minutes Mike Alexander moved to pass the minutes from the June 2015 Parks Board Meeting, Sue Van Brocklin seconded the motion, and the board unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Chair/Board Parks Foundation Update

Business

Liz Field reported that it has been a busy month at Parks Foundation – they just had their annual meeting and retreat, and elected new officers. Gina Eiben is the new chair. In addition, they approved an Executive Director search committee, comprised of 5 members. They will meet this Friday (6/5/15). At the retreat, they focused on the purpose of the Foundation. They reaffirmed that their primary purpose is to raise money. All other activities support that purpose. They reaffirmed the importance of partnership with PP&R. Liz noted that the Board left the retreat feeling optimistic about their shared purpose, role of foundation, and seeing eye to eye with where the foundation is going.

Mattie Courtright has been hired as the new program manager. She comes to the Foundation from Saturday Academy, where she was coordinator of the apprenticeship program. She is passionate about parks, particularly around access and equity.

Chair Updates

Kathy reported that she is working on the agenda for the upcoming retreat. Information will go out soon. The tour is 9:00 am – noon, and the meeting will follow. They have allotted 2 hours, but likely will not take the entire time. Kathy noted that they will go through foundational policies, and bylaws briefly. They will take a look at priorities from this past year. See how they did, and will look at the coming year. Patti Howard will be joining the Board. Commissioner Fritz will not be there. Kathy told the Board that if they have input for that meeting, let her know. She added that it is a terrific tour for those of you who haven't been on it before, and is energizing for the coming year.

Kathy reported that the off road mountain biking plan has been taken on by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Michelle Kunek-North is taking that on. She added that she and Commissioner Fritz talked at their last meeting about someone from this board serving on the advisory committee to track progress. Kathy asked board members to let her know if interested in serving on that committee. After the retreat, Kathy noted that she plans to look at current rosters of standing committees. She asked board members to let her know if they are interested in joining any of these.

Reports from committees

Equity

Julie Vigeland reported that they have the Board's equity affirmation statement, and a new position for equity and inclusion in Parks, but as the committee comes together, they struggle about what their purpose is. She noted that Art has taken

their last two meetings, and has filled them in on some information. The group went through implicit bias tests, and have been filled in on general issues – what we currently do, and who is involved staff wise, and what our partnerships are. PP&R has a massive list of various partnerships, and the staffing that goes with that. Julie noted that there has been good discussion, and that Art has been looking to the committee as a sounding board.

Julie noted that the committee talked about park intercept surveys – PSU comes in and talks to people in parks – they intercept people. They ask them why they are there, if they are enjoying it. They note age range, ethnicity, and try to get a better handle on who is using our parks. The only place we track that is at the community center. Julie noted that the committee talked about it, but it is very expensive (\$16,000 dollars per park). They discussed options for doing them on a volunteer basis. They talked about finding ways to get a better handle on who is using our parks – so that when we give information out, we are confident.

The committee had a conversation on what defines success, relative to diversity and equity. No answer yet because they are grappling with things that are not really specific yet. Julie noted that they are hoping next year, we get beyond, and can get more focus.

Dion Jordan added that in talking about surveys, they discussed how we could take advantage of rangers who are already out there.

Tonya Booker noted that the core question is determining response and addressing needs of communities of color. She added that she commends Parks for diving into the question. A lot of organizations are looking at equity at a conversational level. Parks seems to be working at going further into the intersections of health and access and wellness, and taking steps to address inequities.

Julie added that it is a great committee.

Gladys Ruiz will join the committee.

Nominating Committee - Officers, Appointments/Reappointments, Ex-Officio

Sue Van Brocklin noted that she and Patricia Frobes and Judy BlueHorse Skelton have been meeting for a couple of months, looking for a capable leader of this group. Kathy has been so great, well spoken, and gracious. Sue noted that they did some recruiting of their own. Judy stepped down from the committee, and has kindly offered to be chair. They have nominated Dion Jordan as vice chair. Sue added that they feel that Judy and Dion are a wonderful combination.

Sue moved that Judy BlueHorse Skelton and Dion Jordan be slate of officers for 2015-2016. Mike Alexander seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Judy noted that she has appreciated the process on this board since starting 3

years ago. She has learned from the incredible people sitting around the table, who continue to inspire her. Judy touched on Julie's comments on the work of the equity committee, noting that she sits on a lot of sub committees. Parks is really the face of the city, and is really diving in, as we redefine success. It is an exciting time.

Dion added that he echos everything that Judy has eloquently shared.

Sue noted that Judy is unable to join the retreat. Kathy will lead the retreat, and in the places where she would have had Judy she will have Dion lead.

Kathy noted that the Board has one vacancy, and a couple of reappointments, as well as a reappointment from a partial term.

Dion Jordan reported that Ian Jaquiss has been selected to fill the vacancy, noting that unfortunately, we are losing Mike Alexander. We also have several reappointments, including Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Tonya Booker, Kathy Fong Stephens and Christa Thoeresz.

Dion noted that Ian is highly recommended. He serves at OHSU as disability specialist. Everyone on the nominating committee was ecstatic that he wanted to serve on the Board. When he was approached, he immediately accepted, enthusiastically.

Dion moved to appoint Ian Jaquiss to the Board, Tonya Booker seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Ian Jaquiss.

Kathy noted that we will reach out to Ian and ask him to join the Board on the retreat. He has been contacted, and may be able to join.

Kathy noted that Mike Alexander will be sorely missed. As a testament to this fact, one rogue parks board member tried to stage a coup, and rewrite the bylaws to have Mike come back for an unprecedented 3rd term. Kathy said to Mike that he has certainly made a difference, and has been a strong voice for underserved communities. She added that although we can't change bylaws, we can add you to committees, and we know where you live. We appreciate your service.

Julie Vigeland added that Mike's departure from the Board leaves a huge hole, noting that he has led us and grounded us in so many ways. She commented on the astounding role he has played, and his ability to synthesize a conversation. She added that it won't be the same without him.

Kathy added that a park bench is dedicated to those Parks Board members who serve their 2 term commitment. Mike Alexander's bench will be at Dawson Park.

Mike Alexander said that it has been a tremendous honor for him. He joined because he honestly believes Portland has the opportunity to redefine community. People who come into a room who look differently, and who are committed to serve people who look differently, and to create a pathway to equality that they have not been afforded. He added that he has never been in a

room where that has been taken more seriously. Mike said that he started bike commuting because Linda (Robinson) inspired him, adding that he has learned so much about stewardship, and tenacity from this group. He said that he will watch with keen interest, the work of the Board moving forward. He told the Board that they can feel free to sit on his bench any time.

Dion moved to reappoint Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Tonya Booker, Kathy Fong Stephens and Christa Thoresz. Gladys Ruiz seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the reappointments.

Kathy noted that ex-officio, non-voting members, can be switched up according to bylaws. These members serve one year terms. As long as I've been on the Board, Kathy noted, we have had the same ex-officio members. They have been terrific. Kathy noted that they have talked about bringing in other perspectives, adding that the underlying reason why we have ex-officio members is to hear different perspectives. Current ex-officio members include representation from the Parks Foundation. Kathy noted that it makes sense for this role to be more ongoing. Representation from schools has always been Portland Public Schools – they will consider for the future going forward. The Urban Forestry Commission is a pretty official advisory group to the Parks Board. They have decision making power. Kathy noted that they talked about the rationale for having those go forward. Andy has been in charge, talking to parks related groups, community related groups in east Portland in particular. Now, we would like to reappoint 2 positions and have a plan for the 3rd in August or September. Kathy noted that the Foundation and UFC positions will continue. UFC will be important in keeping track of the implementation of tree code. Sadly, that means that our representation from Portland Public Schools will be rotating off. That recommendation will be made after July 1. The following year, Urban Forestry Commission will rotate off.

Julie Vigeland noted that none of the ex-officio were in existence until she was chair. There isn't a huge history. She noted that they first brought on Nick Hardigg (Portland Parks Foundation) because they needed that connection. They found that worked really well. She noted they already had identified Portland Public Schools when they were doing bylaws. Julie expressed concern about rotating ex-officio representation, noting that to not have the Foundation at the table would be ironic. Kathy agreed that this was why they considered keeping that role on, noting that the bylaws state that ex-officio members include the Foundation, and to consider one of the school districts.

Jim Owens said he would like to float the idea of having standing representatives from our partners. He expressed some concern that PPS would rotate out. Clearly they are a partner in providing parks and recreation. Jim noted that representation from the Planning and Sustainability Commission would be valuable. Kathy added that they could also handle this with a liaison.

Kathy noted that in talking with Mike Abbaté about ex-officio members, Tony is such a great rep of PPS. There may be other opportunities in standing committees for work that goes on between the schools. Input would be as we

start to rotate, that would be the natural one to start looking at. Kathy added that we may want to wait.

Julie said that she would like there to be more discussion, particularly about schools, adding that she feels the same way. To rotate just to rotate... this is a big discussion.

Kathy noted that we've been talking for over a year. Andy has been in conversation with one of the groups. She said let's wait on the issue for now, and will put something together for July or August, and have Andy come in and talk. Jim asked if this could be put on the retreat agenda, and Kathy said yes.

Judy noted that representation from the Planning & Sustainability Commission would be interesting, and asked if it could more than be 3.

Kathy noted that it is written in the bylaws up to 3, and that the Foundation and a school district are mentioned specifically. Jim asked about changing the bylaws

Holladay Park Eileen Argentina introduced North/Northeast Zone Manager Sue Glenn and Urban Park Coordinator Alicia Hammock to talk about programming at Holladay Park. Eileen noted that this came together very late in the year last year, but they have been really pleased with the results

Sue Glenn said that as zone manager for north and northeast, Holladay park falls in her portfolio. She briefly discussed the park's history as a unique urban park, with an award winning design, but challenges.

The park has a history of violence and crime – drug dealing, gang recruitment, and some petty crime. Over the years, they have made infrastructure improvements, including a fence along the max line meant to hinder people from stealing, and jumping onto a max train.

The Lloyd District has a security committee, which includes representatives from businesses in the area. It is a robust group. Parks sits at the table once a month to share information. Holladay Park is at the center of the district. The business district hired a district attorney, and they were able to put a restriction 10 blocks around. Whether gang activity was taking place there, or meeting to go somewhere else, Holladay park was associated with that. Groups were hanging out, some recruitment was going on. At that time, Benson High School was a regular high school. There were conversations about fencing the whole park in. It's an award winning design, a great design. The problem wasn't the park. They looked at security through environmental design, changed bulbs so it was brighter. It was the behavior, not the park. It's unusual not to have eyes on the park.

The goal for Holladay Park was to have positive things happen, so that it is less comfortable to do negative things. We have stakeholders who really care. It is Sullivan Gulch's only neighborhood park. At that time, during the recession, we didn't have resources. We talked about bringing concerts, and other things, and

we were hoping the business district could help fund some of those things, to change perception. Crime was reduced, but the perception was still there.

Fast forward to a year ago. Cypress Equities, the new owners of Lloyd Center, wanted to improve the shopping experience. Cypress hired Biederman Redevelopment Ventures (BDV), known for activating and transforming urban parks (Bryant Park in NYC). They came to Director Abbaté, and wanted to take over the park. Sitting at the table, we know Portland better than someone from Texas. We knew we could program the park with sensitivities to NE Portland, and we wanted to be sure that the music played, and other activities, honored the history, and connected with the people. We were given latitude to pitch back. Cypress was willing to fund. We had challenges, and now funding/resources provided. It is the second year now, and we are excited about the changes. We are working with Holladay Park Partnership, and Cypress has asked other businesses in the area to contribute.

Sue introduced our urban park planner at Director Park – Alicia Hammock. Alicia noted that we started programming on Monday, we have staff in the park, daily from 10 am to 8 pm. It has been fantastic, and we are seeing our families back again.

Last summer, we were open from 10:00 am to 6:30 pm daily. Within the first week, the impact was so noticeable, due to our amazing Parks staff. People used to walk with heads down as they moved through the park, and within a few days of programming we started to see that heads came up. Over 73,063 people visited from late July through August 31st. Parks staff used clickers for every person they saw (to track). We had drop in fitness programs, Zumba and yoga, foosball, other programs. We have had ping pong year round. People have bought their own paddles and balls to come and use year round.

We used a collaborative staffing model – staff to meet and greet, and act as a portal to Portland parks, connecting people to different parks and city services. We have a ranger on site and host on site. This helps people feel welcome and safe. Anthony is back in the park this summer. They know so many kids from Benson High School, and have built phenomenal relationships. We have seen a decrease in antisocial, negative behaviors.

The summer program includes drop in activities, reading, game cart, crafts, imagination playground, fountain fun, teen time on Thursdays from 3 – 6.

This summer, we have a more robust fitness class schedule – Zumba, yoga, belly dancing, tai chi, pilates, all free, and open to the public.

Kathy asked if we are keeping track of attendance to the classes. Alicia responded that we keep track of numbers, but not demographics at this point.

Hassalo on 8th will be sponsoring monthly concerts this summer. Friday music, and more and more people are wanting to rent the park for special events. On Saturdays, the park draws so many families with the Lloyd Center – families of

people working in the mall. We are seeing large groups of people.

Tonya Booker asked about advertising, and Alicia noted that it is not included in SFFA marketing materials. We have a Holladay Park website, signs in the park, and at Lloyd center, a newsletter that's growing, slideshows over the next few weeks, Go Lloyd and other partners, and businesses are heavily promoting the park.

Mike Alexander commented that he appreciates PP&R remaining involved. He added that he could see some skepticism with high rises coming in that it looks like a redesign of the neighborhood. He said it will be important to have PP&R involved with the neighborhood changes, and make sure to honor the history.

Eileen noted that we see the potential, and want to maintain that awareness of history. The advisory group was put together in a really intentional way. It was important to us as well.

Ranger Program

Security Manager Galina Burley reported on the Ranger Program. In March, we went to Council for a soft audit of the ranger program. City Council wanted to know state of ranger program, and how it had evolved.

Galina noted that we have a very successful ranger program – and community partners who recognize how important rangers are. In any park, in any setting, we come in and make a huge difference.

Galina noted that ranger presence is noted either East or West of the river, not based on precincts or zones.

Rangers are ambassadors – friendly greeters, social service providers. They enforce park rules, educate users, and seek to gain voluntary compliance. We have the authority to issue exclusions, but that is limited.

In the 1990s, we had no permanent rangers; just one supervisor and 10 seasonal rangers. In 2010, we had one dedicated ranger staffing Forest Park. In 2011, there was a conversion of private security dollars to dedicated ranger staffing. This was a political as well as administrative decision. In 2013, the conversion of bathroom lockup dollars went to seasonal rangers. In 2014, with the Washington park parking (TMA), we were given dedicated revenue for rangers. We currently have 14 rangers on daily duty, 7 permanent, full time, 7 seasonal.

All permanent rangers are assigned to parks west of the river. Three are assigned to Washington park. Based on revenue, rangers are tied to specific parks. Our capacity east of the river is limited. When tracking community calls for service – 60+% come in for issues east of the river, while ranger allocation is only 14%. We have capacity at customer service center for ranger dispatch. Calls for service on the west side is 36%, though ranger allocation west of river is 86%. Even though staffing is dedicated to west side, mostly in developed parks, not in natural areas, we do have one dedicated ranger to Forest Park. When researching and tracking trends, it's difficult to say if we are getting less calls for service on the west side

because we have more coverage.

As ambassadors, we provide information about social services, shelters, things of that nature as well as issuing exclusions.

Using the auditor's survey, we are able to track data on how safe park users feel. Residents feel safe walking alone during the day – city wide improving, but north Portland and east Portland has declined over the last few years.

We track based on east and west, but also each park. By month – we track the number of education and positive contacts. During the Summer months, we have huge jumps in positive contacts – as many as 15,000 in peak months. Educational contacts, which might be “please don't smoke in parks,” also jumps in peak months.

The number of warnings, and exclusions, also increases in peak months, but are small numbers compared to positive and educational contacts.

We also track nuisance abatement – litter, disposal of hypodermic needles, vandalism and graffiti. Rangers respond to camping contacts – people call in and report camps, and we send out rangers. Tony Magliano asked who does the clean-up. Galina said that it is a hybrid approach – it depends. Could be rangers if it is a small camp; the City has a central contract for big clean ups.

Galina noted that we have seen a 50% decrease in crime in Washington Park (citing police data) – we are talking to police about unpacking that data. In Holladay Park, we have seen positive use trends as well.

Galina noted that in their March presentation, they asked Council for more flexibility from historic commitments to patrol Forest Park and Central Business District. We need to add additional resources east of the river. Council hasn't taken action, but we hope to come back to them.

Kathy asked about training, and how the Board as advisory might be helpful.

For ranger training specifically, we have a comprehensive 3-tier model. Because our goal is to educate someone, and gain voluntary compliance, rangers are trained in verbal persuasion skills. In addition to mandatory 1st aid and other safety trainings, our rangers are trained in inclusion, and equity, as well as knowing what other agencies are addressing. We do follow up trainings. All FTE's are recertified – laws, regulations that impact our work. They receive professional development for emerging issues. One focus this year was on mental health issues. How it could play a role in someone's behavior in parks.

As an advisory board, Galina said that she hopes the Parks Board will consider safety, security of parks as high priority and advocate for rangers east of the river, and encourage people to report to us, what they are seeing in the park. She said to use the park, and report what's going on. It makes a huge difference to us to allocate resources.

Kathy noted that this deserves some attention, and will put it on our priority list.

Judy thanked Galina for the overview, and noted that she feels it is a priority as well. She added that she hears a lot in community, out with PSU students, and also out with 3 and 4 year olds. From the reports that Sue and Galina gave, it is pretty clear that the east side needs more rangers. She added that she would love to learn more about the budget, and what is still being considered.

Galina added that she has joined the International Ranger Federation, and noted the training for National Parks focuses on a respect for nature, and Rangers as urban naturalists. She is looking to explore and tap into interpretive training. She noted that it is important for Rangers to know about the parks they are in, so for example in Washington Park, they can talk about the Japanese garden, and the rose garden, and be more interpretive to be able to educate.

Galina added that our Commissioner has been so supportive of the ranger program.

Tim Crail noted that in the budget, the request for additional rangers was not included, but the conversion of seasonal to full time was in the adopted budget – there will be some additional flexibility. He added that this is a priority for the Commissioner.

Kathy thanked Galina.

Director's Update Kia Selley introduced herself as PP&R's Asset Manager. She oversees planning, development, and asset management. For the Director's update, she noted that City Council approved a new fee schedule and SDC methodology approach. This is really significant for the Bureau. It will go into effect July 2016. Kia thanked Jim Owens for sitting on the task force, and testifying. She thanked Kathy too for testifying. She added that it was not a slam dunk, and a lot of work went into it.

Kathy said that she understood the Mayor in particular wanted to look holistically at SDCs.

Tim Crail said that the Mayor wants to look not just at cost of fees, but all the fees that the City charges, and how that affects affordability.

Jim Owens added that no definition has been given to the exercise yet.

Kia said that she wouldn't consider it a roll back from this approval. For the first time, we will recover 100% of the cost of development. 88% will come from SDCs, we always get other types of donation. Also, fees will be calculated on a per capita basis. Interesting exercise that Riley Whitcomb and others came from. They will charge on size, regardless of type of housing. They won't be charging for campus units. Another change is that Parks can now use funds to build and expand community centers as well as maintenance systems.

Kia noted that in July, we will reconvene the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) to go in depth into budget decisions, and close the loop on the budget process.

The Parks tour is June 12th, from 9 – 2. Everyone will meet at IFCC. More to

come from Megan

Meeting adjourned Kathy adjourned the meeting at 9:35 am.