



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
August 5, 2015  
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.  
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

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**Board members present:** Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Tonya Booker, Kendall Clawson, Liz Field, Kathy Fong Stephens, Ian Jaquiss, Dion Jordan, Andy Nelson, Meryl Redisch, Linda Robinson, Sue Van Brocklin, Julie Vigeland

**Board members absent:** Patricia Frobes, Tony Magliano, Jim Owens, Gladys Ruiz, Christa Thoeresz, Mauricio Villarreal

**PP&R Staff present:** Mike Abbaté, Eileen Argentina, Warren Jimenez, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom

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**Call to order** Judy called the meeting to order at 8:05 am. She noted that there is a light out on Grand Ave, so people may be coming in late.

Judy introduced new board member Ian Jaquiss, and invited him to tell the Board a little about himself. Ian noted that he works at OHSU as a disability awareness trainer. He has been there for a year. Before that, he worked for the Trailblazers, and Oregon Disability Sports. His family loves the parks, and have enjoyed 4 movies in the parks, concerts, and free ice cream at Sellwood Park so far this summer. He is happy to be here. The Board went around the table, and introduced themselves to Ian

**Park of the Month** Judy reported on the Park of the Month for July, which was South Waterfront Greenway. She noted that the project was done in partnership with the Army Corp of Engineers, and included restoration of sensitive habitat for salmon recovery. Requirements were put in place for build out of the park. She said that it is exciting to see the restoration of the river, and creation of a gathering place for people. Judy met with Warm Springs artist Lillian Pitt, who was awarded a commission from RACC to create a 9 foot tall public art installation – River Guardian. The piece will go right on the lawn site. There were building restrictions because of the salmon habitat and the bike/pedestrian trails. Judy noted that it was exciting for her to get involved—honoring the ancestors, respecting nature, healing. Judy noted that Lillian Pitt is one of the only artists who has permission to reproduce imagery from the petroglyphs on the Columbia River. Many may recognize “She Who Watches”, which is an iconic image of the guardian, female who watches over us.

August’s park of the month will be Holladay Park. Mike said that there are a lot of exciting things happening there in terms of programming, and announced that there will be an event at Holladay Park on August 16<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Louis Armstrong playing at Lloyd center mall. The event will be from 5:30 to 9:30 pm. He noted that whoever signs up to do a scoping tour of the park, might want to check out that event. Tonya Booker volunteered to visit the park and report back.

**Commissioner's update** Patti Howard stated that there is nothing to report from the Commissioner's office. Mike noted that Commissioner Fritz is in England, and will be back for City Council on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Judy noted that she and Ian are looking forward to meeting with the Commissioner, and are working with Cristina to schedule that.

**Public Testimony Invited**  
**Park of the Month**

No public testimony

**Approval of the minutes** Julie Vigeland moved to pass the minutes, Kathy Fong Stephens seconded, and the Board approved.

**Park Foundation Update** Liz Field noted that the search process for a new Executive Director is moving forward. Since this committee last met, the deadline has passed. Julie Vigeland is Chair. Liz noted that they have a very strong pool of candidates, and will be starting interviews soon. She noted that they are on track to complete the process later this month.

Parke Diem is set for October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Liz noted that the Foundation encourages Board members to connect with groups they know. They welcome sponsors. The project list for Parke Diem will be finalized within the next week or so.

Summer Free for All has been moving forward thanks to all the work that PP&R has been doing. Liz noted that Ian Jaquiss was at Laurelhurst last week to enjoy Toy Story 2 and volunteer at the Foundation tent. She added that they would be happy to have more Board members volunteer if anyone is interested.

Linda Robinson asked if all sites have been determined for Parke Diem. Liz said that it will be determined within the next week or so. Linda asked how a site could be considered. Liz told her to go to the link on the Parke Diem website, and submit an application – very quickly since the window is closing soon.

**Chair & board business** Judy noted that the new board roster is out, and reminded the Board that they can send e-mail announcements to the group, but to not reply all to the whole group. Reply all makes it a public forum.

Judy noted that the second handout is the Advisory Committee List, and we still need Board members for two sites, including the Slabtown site, and the site at 150<sup>th</sup> and Division. Judy asked about the location of the 150<sup>th</sup> & Division property, and Linda noted that it is near the Fred Meyer. Mike said that it is a property that Parks acquired strategically due to its size and location, and the number of Portlanders it will serve who do not currently have access to a park or natural area. Meryl asked if she could present these opportunities to the Urban Forestry Commission. Judy said that involvement would be great.

Kendall Clawson asked about Slabtown, and Mike noted that Slabtown is a

nickname for a property in NW Portland, currently owned by Conway. There is a multi-block master plan that Conway had approved a couple of years ago. They have an MOU with Parks that included selling us a parcel of land to develop as a park. They are moving forward with their development, and we agreed a couple of years ago to try to match schedules. The parcel is at NW Pettygrove and 20<sup>th</sup>. Mike noted that the park master plan will involve a public involvement process. Kendall volunteered to participate in the advisory committee for Slabtown.

Julie Vigeland said that she encourages everyone to participate in an advisory committee. She noted that she went in with trepidation the first time she did it, but now she is signed up for two. It's a really great process to be involved in.

Judy reported that there are updates to the standing committees. Tonya Booker will be the new Chair for the equity subcommittee.

Sue Van Brocklin noted that they will reconvene the communications committee after Labor Day – Patricia Frobos is a new member.

Kathy Fong Stephens noted that she sent around a new draft on the work plan to Julie Vigeland and Christa Thoeresz. The second draft is ready to bring in, and Judy noted that she will distribute the draft and priorities to the Board, and they will go over it at the next meeting.

Judy said that she will send the Board priorities to Megan, and Megan will send it out to the Board. They will put it on agenda for next month to discuss. For this month, thank you to Kathy for putting together a draft of the two page report to Commissioners. Kathy noted there was one comment from Dion. Dion thought everything was great, but concentration around accessibility was not in the report. We've had a lot of discussion around that topic. Linda Robinson noted that it was mentioned that we had a presentation. Judy thought it might fall under the fourth paragraph.

Warren noted one small edit: that it is 3 year strategic plan, not a 5 year. In the same section, Kendall noted that we may want to add language on the Board's desire to strengthen communication with the Commissioner. Sue noted that it's in the first bullet, but could be stronger. It should be in the report that the Board wishes to strengthen communication.

Judy asked Mike if he will be sharing information on Neonicotinoids. She noted that Mike sent out to everyone an announcement that Parks will no longer purchase plants that have that particular insecticide use. They are linked to effects on the bee populations and other pollinators. Thanks for that, Mike.

**Ecologically Sustainable Landscape Initiative**

Mike introduced Emily Roth, and the Ecologically Sustainable Landscape Initiative, which he noted comes out of our strategic plan. The plan has 6 themes, and one of the themes is sustainability. One of the goals under sustainability is to extend ecologically sustainable landscape management practices over our entire green infrastructure. Emily has been leading an inter-bureau and intra-bureau team to look at our landscape practices, and determine strategies for moving ahead. PP&R is on

the cutting edge, and has been for years, but we are learning new things all the time. There are new initiatives, and new developments all over the country. Mike asked the Bureau, led by Emily, to look at what we could do to enhance our practices. Mike noted that this is a major piece of work.

Emily Roth reported on the Ecologically Sustainable Landscape Initiative. She noted that it has been a 2 ½ year project, and has been a top to bottom look at how we do sustainability, and what we do in city nature that could be transferred into developed parks. The bulk of the initiative was to look at developed parks and determine ways to improve their sustainability. As Mike said, there are lots of things that we are already doing really well. We are one of the only cities nationally to be certified salmon safe, which is a whole look at practices, and aquatic systems so our practices do not impact aquatic life. The goal was to look at what we already do well, and then look at next steps. Access to nature is really important for everyone. One premise of the initiative is how we bring nature into our neighborhoods, and developed parks. We've introduced the concept of habitat patch. An area where we would enhance part of a developed park with forest, or meadow, and give access for people to go through, and gather. Can we provide opportunities for people to walk close to home, and see nature, and wildlife?

The other thing we looked at is how we work together in parks and in the community. Sometimes there is a disconnect. Something gets designed, we go out in the landscape, and what we designed isn't there anymore because we couldn't maintain it. People in the field have simplified, or modified, and it's no longer in the landscape. So, we are trying to marry better what we design, what we put in the ground, and what we can maintain over time.

Another thing we looked at is trees – we have big beautiful trees, and part of the sustainable landscape initiative is planning now to create that next generation of large beautiful trees.

Emily noted that they had a core group of 15 people, and the initiative included 4 guiding principles: Site design and modification, Ecology, Operations & Maintenance, and Interaction with Community. For Site Design and Modification, they looked at selecting native and hardy species adapted to the Pacific Northwest. Under Ecology – climate change is a big topic. We are faced with it every day. How do we build resilience in our landscape? Under Operations and Maintenance, we want to include plants and resources for long term O&M. That will become part of our process. The final guiding principal is how we continue to interact with our community – create spaces that encourage public interaction with nature. Stewardship like Parke Diem, and opportunities for sustainable food in nature – like our community garden program.

Under each goal, Emily noted that they looked at premises, objectives and actions. For example – premise: underutilized lawns, our objective is to convert passive open, unused spaces to more active, natural areas – tall grass meadows, pollinator gardens, and forests. Action: We have a passive landscape, over time we would reimagine what that landscape would look like, enhance the forest, put in trees, shrubs, a bird house, places for people to enter, picnic areas and we create a landscape that becomes a diverse forest in 20 years that you can walk through right

in your neighborhood.

Linda asked about the criteria for looking at spaces to convert. Emily said that they are building in habitat patches in the new parks like Gateway and Beech. For existing parks, they have a set of criteria – they are gathering information now, and will go out and vet them. Mike noted that they will be focusing on sites that have problems. These will be small, isolated areas for demonstration sites and they will try different things. Mike noted that we can send out a link to the report.

Kathy Fong Stephens noted that she would love to see the link and feels like this is really important work.

Judy noted that this is really exciting, and reminds her of what is happening at Cully Park. It is sustainable, and re-habiting industrial areas that didn't work with nature.

**Golf Strategic Plan**

John Zoller and Eileen Argentina reported on the Golf Strategic Plan. Eileen introduced John Zoller. John noted that golf has seen a transition over the past 20 to 25 years. Golf saw a huge rush in interest throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially the 1950s and 60s, which generated a surge that grew during the 80s. There was a huge overbuild. In Portland, we had 13 golf courses (public and private), now we have 27. People thought – if you build it, they will come. Now, the golfing population is aging. More people going out of the game in the last 20 years than people coming into the game. The challenge is to change the look of the game. There have been movements nationally to make the game more appealing to everyone. There is a huge oversupply here and nationally. There is not the demand to meet the supply. One of the main elements we are trying to address in our strategic plan. One of the biggest strengths we have is low cost. We need to meet our operational needs. We need to be self-sustaining, and we build our fees based on our needs. We've made it every year. When you look at our program, we have 5 golf facilities. All unique, spread out over the system. One is in Beaverton (Red Tail) – we owned it before Beaverton annexed. There is a golf course that is convenient to everyone in the metro area. Because our operation is so big, we have economies to scale, we can provide labor at low cost. We called on staff from all 5 of our golf courses to come to assist with Colwood.

Eileen noted that we are working on outreach to underserved communities, and to make the program grow and reach people of different skill levels. In terms of process, Eileen noted that they did an assessment in June. We work very closely at the Golf Advisory Committee on needed improvements. They are looking at the future of the program. Eileen talked about the focus areas of the strategic plan – break barriers, marketing the program as a unified, City asset. We want people to have a positive experience when they come to play. We are thinking about the long term sustainability of the program.

John noted that golf can be intimidating. It's fun for him, but for someone who swings three times and doesn't make contact, it's not much fun. They need to get people to the point where they can get ball in the air, and move forward, and make it fun for them. At Colwood, they have short holes, and multiple options for challenges. They are working on making it more enjoyable for women, and kids. One thing they have done, they are working closely with Leisure Hour and First

Tee, which is a national organization. Colwood will be headquarters for First Tee – everyone will be welcome, regardless of their ability to pay, or their skill level.

Kendall Clawson noted that golf is not a cheap sport. As someone who just rotated out golf clubs, she knows firsthand that it is not a cheap sport. Not a place you can just go with yourself and a ball – it is hundreds and hundreds of dollars. She suggested a program that could use those replaced bags, noting that the equipment is more prohibitive than anything. It would be great if you could find a way for people to donate old clubs. Eileen Argentina noted that it would be great to add something like that into a bigger system to enable people to recycle.

Kendall added that it would also be good to create visibility around the golf program, and suggested having someone that's representing parks that could host foursomes. It would be fun to go out with Mike, or Mayor Hales.

John noted that they want to get people started, and want them to stay with it. Not just come to a camp, get a t-shirt and send them on their way. We want to follow them, and get them to a point where they can do it themselves.

Andy Nelson noted that he is happy to see the partnership with First Tee.

Eileen added that the Western State Golf Association - African American golf association – recently hosted their event here in Portland, and came out to play at Heron Lakes.

John talked about foot golf – a golf inspired game using a soccer ball, and a stick. He noted that some possibilities could come out of that.

Judy noted that a lot of states don't have the water to keep their courses clean, and that there has been a movement to repurpose courses in Florida. John said that there will be a lot of closures in the next 10 years. That cycle has already started.

**Renew Forest  
Park**

Mike introduced Astrid Dragoy, Natural Areas Manager, and Kendra Peterson Morgan, ecologist for the west side, to talk about Renew Forest Park. Astrid thanked the Board for inviting them back to give an update on this big initiative for Forest Park. She noted that handouts were available to pick up. The first one is the overarching document that talks about the whole initiative. The other two documents focus on two pieces of the larger initiative: reconnect and restore.

Forest Park is a 5200 acre property. As you know, it is a spectacular property - it has a species diversity that we don't see outside the Oregon zoo. Through surveys, we have over 100 bird species, 45 mammal species, 400 invertebrate species. It is not an isolated island, it is connected through public and private lands all the way to the Pacific ocean. For these reasons and more, people like you, staff like us have been asking for more funding for Forest Park. We have this great leader in Mike Abbate, and we are excited about this funding initiative to renew Forest Park.

For reconnect, Astrid noted that we have 21 entrances to Forest Park, but all are

limited in parking, no ADA accessibility trails, no bus turnarounds. We don't have a visitor center, or viewing platforms, so reconnect would create a new entrance to Forest Park. This parcel was identified, and it is a reclaimed brownfield site - repurposing former industrial sites. With Metro share funds, we acquired the property. Now we are ready to initiate. Representative Mitch Greenlick, Mike and Commissioner Fritz went to Salem and asked for funds. We received 1.5 million. We match with SDC funds, and we are working to get shovel ready for a new entrance.

On infrastructure, in partnership with BES, we are working on refurbishing culverts – which will service PP&R, as well as Fire and Police, emergency vehicles. Through our bond, we are rebuilding 3 bridges in Forest Park

Kendra talked about “restore” as the ecological component, which is a long term commitment. They will be targeting English Ivy, and other invasive species. The first project will begin mid-month in August. Handout shows location, below Pittock mansion and through Balch creek. They will be removing English Ivy - hand removal along trails, and will be using some repelling crews in the winter on some of the steep sections. The other approach is state licensed herbicide, to do spot applications, which is all part of our integrated pest management program.

Astrid noted that they have been doing outreach as well, on the 29th Kendra and others did an interview tour for the media, which included 4 news channels, and 2 radio channels. Kendra has been interviewed by the Tribune, Oregonian, and Examiner. They did a tour last Saturday with the Forest Park Conservancy, and they have a neighborhood tour coming up on the 10th. They are inviting associated neighborhoods to come together, and any other stakeholders. Kendra is working with Forest Park Conservancy, funded in part by nature in neighborhoods grant from Metro.

Meryl commented that it is great you are starting at such a visible spot. She asked if we are you letting folks at Pittock know what's going on. Kendra said that we are; we are having ongoing conversations with our friends and partners at Pittock, and others, including Audubon, and one of our community gardens. We are using our Youth Conservation Crews to do hand removal in a no spray zone. As we start moving forward, we are creating additional partnerships.

Judy commented that they are great partnerships, and asked if it is the same approach that was used at Oaks Bottom. Kendra said that it is, and that it is an approach that we use at all of our properties. Mike added that it applies to Riverview as well.

Kathy commented that she liked the handouts, and loves the image on the front. She suggested doing a similar one pager for the Golf strategic plan handout.

**Director update** Mike noted that there will be a big open house at Colwood Golf Course at 2:00 on Sunday, August 9th, as well as a movie that night. August 11<sup>th</sup> is Washington Park sponsor night. He noted that we would love to have all of you come out. Jennifer Yocom noted that there will be another reminder coming out.

Mike noted that there will be a second reading for settlement related to Recreation arbitration. It did not have unanimous support, so it had to come for a second reading. It is very important, and will move 130 people or so from non-represented to represented positions. It will cost somewhere in excess of 2 million, first group covers 4 categories, but more to come on that. It will change the way we do business, and will create better benefitted and compensated jobs.

Mike gave kudos to aquatics and fountains crew for working hard, over-time to get splash pads and fountains up and running.

**Meeting adjourned** Judy adjourned the meeting at 9:30.