



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
September 2, 2015
8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

Board members present: Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Tonya Booker, Kendall Clawson, Liz Field, Kathy Fong Stephens, Ian Jaquiss, Jim Owens, Meryl Redisch, Christa Thoeresz, Sue Van Brocklin, Julie Vigeland

Board members absent: Dion Jordan, Tony Magliano, Andy Nelson, Linda Robinson, Gladys Ruiz, Mauricio Villarreal

PP&R Staff present: Mike Abbaté, Eileen Argentina, Margaret Evans, Art Hendricks, Warren Jimenez, Trang Lam, Kia Selley, Jeff Shaffer, Jennifer Yocom

Call to order Judy called the meeting to order at 8:03 am.

Park of the Month Tonya Booker reported on August's Park of the Month, Holladay Park. She noted that it has really become activated in past couple of years. It was lively on the day she visited. Children were playing in the water, there was popcorn, and lots of activity. She had a chance to talk to Parks employees, and learned some interesting facts. She noted that 85% of Lloyd Center shoppers come through the park from the MAX. It is Portland's 3rd oldest park, and many of the trees were planted after the Columbus Day storm in 1962.

Mike added that it is a great example of how programming helps urban parks. He thanked Cypress Equities, our partners who have funded a park ranger, and park host. He noted that all of the equipment and materials in Holladay Park is paid for by the partners. He added that it was patterned after Bryant Park in NYC, which in the 90s had been overrun with criminal behavior, and people were feeling unsafe. Dan Biederman got involved in programming and transforming that park, and it has become a model for other urban parks. Cypress Equities hired him to then choreograph what is happening at Holladay, based on what has been successful at other parks they have programmed. Mike noted that he will be talking about the North Park Blocks later, and there may be some lessons learned that can be applied there as well.

Hoyt Arboretum is September's Park of the Month. There were no volunteers to report on Hoyt Arboretum, so it was suggested that Megan reach out to Mauricio Villarreal to see if he would be interested in visiting the park, and reporting back to the Board in October.

Commissioner's update No update. Megan to send out Parks Board report to Council members

**Public Testimony
Invited
Park of the Month**

Judy introduced. Michael Hayes, resident of Sellwood neighborhood. Michael noted that he is not here on behalf of any organization. He said there has been some success in implementing the 1987 Greenway plan. One portion, near his home, at the south end of trail, link between trail and SE Lynn St. is a difficult site. He noted that this area is similar to sites in South Waterfront area. Michael reported that he is here to encourage the Board, in budget planning, how that can after 28 years be formed, in the public mind. What that should be, and can be. Funding mechanism for the development of that portion. It is designated a viewpoint. He added that the site is all public property. It's going to be a City project.

Mike Abbate asked if Michael Hayes is talking about the Sellwood gap, or the part of the trail that hits Lynn St. Michael answered that it is part of the trail at Lynn St. shown as a link to the Springwater corridor. A steep embankment, so it need stairs or ramping to get up to the area. It is a nice view. He added that the only improvement currently on the site is a PBOT barrier to keep people from driving into the river, and a bench that someone from the neighborhood brought in.

Judy Bluehorse Skelton asked if he has put this idea forward to SMILE. Michael asked if someone from Parks would like to present to the committee on the Willamette Greenway Plan, and how the City plans to accomplish the recommendations. He said that they would be interested to hear from the City.

**Approval of the
minutes**

Ian noted a change in his bio in the August minutes. Julie Vigeland moved to pass the minutes with change, Sue Van Brocklin seconded, and the Board approved.

**Park Foundation
Update**

Liz Field noted that the search committee has been making good progress with the search for next Executive Director. She anticipates that an announcement will be made soon. That has been a focus of the Board. Another emphasis is Parke Diem. The Foundation has been working closely with PP&R and friends groups. We have 50 sites. Please come out. Visit our website and see the range of projects. Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th. Judy noted that the Parks Board might want to choose a site to do together.

Jim noted that it was an incredible group of candidates for the Executive Director, and recommended that the nominating committee look at that group when filling the next round of vacancies on the board.

**Chair & board
business**

Judy asked committees to report.

Tonya reported on the Equity Subcommittee. They met last week, and they had a lively discussion going back to the board retreat. One of the things they are trying to do is look at tangible items that are appropriate for them as a subcommittee to look at. Art gave them a list. They looked at three different categories: Advisory (efforts of the bureau), Advocate (board members who are interested, and want to advocate and bring resources to the board), Action (direct involvement in truly engaging communities. There is a wide range of activities, but we have questions about the depth. How can we help with that engagement? We have several efforts

going on – anyone involved in an advisory committee – look at that lens, and note who is not at the table). On hiring, it is a challenge that many public institutions have. Naming that as something that is important. The committee is interested in assisting in efforts to lessen health disparities. We look at how they break down by socioeconomic or race. She noted that it is a long list. They want to have deeper conversations about equity and fairness on the board level. One which sprung out of the board retreat – idea with every presentation, that there would be a component – how is equity and fairness a part of that. Spend some time talking about the equity component. Who do we reach out to?

Judy added that we could be thinking about asking staff to weave in that piece. Many do. Equity is equity. We can talk about diversity as well. Are we reaching out to everyone, is everyone getting a chance to have a voice – everyone that wants to. Julie Vigeland noted that four years ago, there was an ad hoc group that addressed how presentations were made. Part of that, 10 minute presentation, and 10 minute discussion. There were five guidelines. Somewhere along the way that was lost, but she noted that for every presentation – that project was to address equity. So we don't need to have a vote, she noted. That document exists. Julie noted that it probably needs updating but that was part of the affirmation statement.

Tonya said that the subcommittee has been meeting the last Wednesday at noon, so we will be sending out a doodle poll to see if there is a better time for everyone.

Sue reported on the communications subcommittee. Judy asked everyone to pull up their work plan, priorities. Sue noted that on the second page under advocacy – Parks Board role in public communication – standing committee to present a framework. Sue and Kathy asked for direction on that assignment. Kathy said we have this standing committee, and every year we talk about the Board's role in communications. One thing we took on was how community members communicate to the Board. The last couple of years, communication has been around the bond. We have big initiatives. Going forward, we need to know what are the big initiatives, and how can we frame our work, and what to emphasize.

Judy asked about quarterly meetings in community centers. Kathy noted that we talked with the BAC about that idea. Mike noted that the Commissioner has said that Wednesday mornings are difficult because of Council. She may be able to attend if we pick a different time, quarterly, out in a community centers. Judy added that this would help with the equity piece as well and we may get more public comments. It is difficult to get downtown at 8am when you are trying to get kids to school, and get to work.

Judy asked if there are any discussions we want to have about the steps on the Board priorities. Julie noted that we should maybe assign individuals to each item, but also look at them out in the community at the quarterly meetings.

Meryl noted that she would like to give an update on the Urban Forestry Commission. There are some big things going on. In August, there was a public hearing in response to an interim administrative rule related to the tree code. We had 200 people come to testify. People love their large trees and the canopy. The city should do what they can to protect those trees. The mitigation fee of \$1200 is

pitifully low. It was really good to hear from so many people who are passionate about trees. Judy asked if she should plan on giving an update every month, and Meryl said whenever something is germane.

Mike noted that there is a lot of work being done on the tree code. He added that BDS (Bureau of Development Services) is now under Commissioner Saltzman. The data that we have learned in the first 6 months might be of interest to the Board.

Jim noted that there are other bureau activities, such as urban forestry, as well as other city initiatives that may impact our ability to provide parks and recreation services. We may need a standing committee that would look at other initiatives like the comp plan, like BES stormwater plan. Jim added that we may want to look at that. One other thought on communications, Jim noted that in thinking about underrepresented communities – he has a real interest in making sure that includes youth and seniors.

Kathy added that she thinks under advocacy, you are right, that is narrow – this is a guide. The Comp plan is an example of another bureau's work that has significance to the parks bureau's work. Kathy noted that Jim named us the land use committee of the board. Something we could put together as a standing subcommittee. Jim, in particular, always has eyes on what other bureaus are doing, and how they might impact the Parks. Employment Zoning is another one.

Judy asked if that is a standing committee that we should officially start. Jim noted that Kathy made a good point – we've had an ad hoc committee, and may want to have a more permanent group.

Strategic Plan Mike noted that we gave an update back in May. We will come back with a final report on the strategic plan. The key thing in our strategic plan, it was quite ambitious. Health, recreation, access/equity, trails, asset management, sustainability. We had a total of 30 initiatives. At a time we were also passing a bond. We bit off a lot, at the end of this year, we will have completed 20 of those things. Incorporating health standards in our youth programming, Recreation Revolution, diversifying our workforce. We are not done yet, but we have made tremendous progress. Looking forward, 10 of the 30 are not yet implemented. Some are under equity. We have hired an Equity & Inclusion manager, we've tried to get funding to support that program. We made great progress on asset management, but then we lost our asset manager when he retired, and Kia Selley is working on getting a new asset manager on board. Major work on community health, and other burning things that will jump to the top of any strategic plan. What's next – a big look at our parks and recreation bureau, goals, vision. Strategic plan takes a ton of time. Rather than spend a lot of time on the next one, I'd like to focus on these things, wrap up this plan, and then start looking at a 20 year effort. Still come back in January of 2016 to look at what we have completed. As you know, we've had presentations. We've made unbelievable progress. Many things have changed. Mike added that he would love to get the Board's thoughts and advice.

Julie agreed, noting that a lot of times, you have a 3 or 5 year plan. You don't accomplish all of those things, and you start over, but some of those things don't

get to the top of the next plan. Julie thinks 2017 is the right time to start looking at a 20 year plan. If staff just finishes a 3 year strategic plan, and then focuses on a huge 20 year plan, think about the staff time involved that takes away from doing the work.

Kathy agreed. She noted that we may want to scan other types of initiatives to at least have on the radar screen, particularly partnerships. In thinking about the Lloyd Center initiative, and movements across the country in public and private partnerships. Some precursor work may need to be done on that.

Jim asked how much overtime do you have in your budget. Mike said virtually none, but everyone at this table is working a lot of overtime. Jim agrees with time frame, and noted that other initiatives that have occurred during the strategic planning. We totally rewrote the SDC program. I expect there will be others that you will want to build into the strategic plan.

Mike said that both are great examples. A big part of strategic planning is to guide focus. As a bureau, we are going to continue doing these things – we are going to run community centers, we are going to fight invasive species, provide youth programming in our community centers. Particularly on the partnership side, a lot is happening there. Holladay park is an example of something that was opportunistic. We had a choice there. We could have decided not to move it forward. It wasn't a strategic plan emphasis, but things pop up all the time. Mike noted that he is going to talk about the North Park Blocks, adding that he believes homelessness is going to be a huge emphasis moving forward, and take a lot of our Bureaus energy. It is not addressed in the strategic plan, but that doesn't mean you don't respond.

Julie added that on partnerships, since we are already partners with the Foundation, it seems like a great place to start.

ADA Transition Kia Selley introduced Sarah Huggins, senior planner, to talk about the ADA transition. Sarah reported that the City of Portland, under the leadership of the Office of Equity and Human Rights, has been updating the ADA transition. In looking at physical barriers, the City hired a consultant who has been looking at many city facilities. They identified a little over 20,000 barriers citywide. We may not have proper ramps at a community center, or we may have a hand rail in a restroom that is a few inches off. We have a lot of work. Sarah noted that they didn't look at employment facilities where the public doesn't access. They surveyed 260 sites. 20,355 barriers. 17,008 barriers scheduled. Some of those barriers were at our SUN schools, because we offer programming, but the responsibility will actually be the School District that owns the buildings. So we are working with the School Districts.

Sarah noted that one of their first steps in addressing 20,000 individual items, was to break down into groups of smaller items to fairly larger items. The team sat down with capital and maintenance staff to determine which projects could be assigned as maintenance activities (adjust door handle or a mirror), or will it be a capital project. We estimated that half will be maintenance, and half will be capital. We have put the smaller, maintenance items in as work orders, so our maintenance staff will have those orders when they go out to sites.

For capital projects, we are able to address a number of barriers by just slightly enlarging the scope of existing projects – we are adding those into bond projects, and other park improvement projects.

One of the next things we did, was think about prioritizing barriers. Each park early in the process was assigned a tier. Tier one being the highest priority. They looked at the uniqueness of individual sites, the distribution of sites, and they looked at the number of ADA complaints received in the past. Those tier one parks were assessed before the tier 3 parks. Each barrier is assigned 1-5. Is there a ramp so that someone can get into the park or the community center. Category 2 might be, you can get into the facility, but maybe you can't access the gym. Category 3 is an amenity. Category 4, above the minimum. There are some accessible picnic tables, but not all. Category 5 are historic. We may not want to change the staircase at the Pittock Mansion, but we may want to create a video to show people what the second floor looks like if they are not able to access it.

First barrier is people getting into a park, or community center. The second most commonly noted barrier is restrooms.

The plan describes process and schedule. Years 1 – 2, years 3 – 5, years 6 -10, and years 11 – 20 and the number of projects we hope to address in those timeframes. We will be looking for funding. This is an unfunded plan. It did not come with dollars attached. The Office of Equity and Human Rights will be assessing city policies and programs.

Art added that in the evaluation of policies and programs and looking at accessibility of services, we have to do a self-assessment. The Office of Equity looked at the physical barriers. Do we want to provide 100 percent accessibility, or 30 percent? So these are the type of policy questions.

Sarah noted that the assessment of rights of way was not included, and that will be the next step and will affect parks as well because the rights of way near our parks are our responsibility.

Art discussed cognitive disabilities, noting that one thing they did was bring in John McGovern. He is an ADA expert, was a parks director, has managed community centers, and is also a lawyer. There are a lot of policy decisions that courts are looking at. A number of cases in terms of how we provide service to people who need medical assistance in a community facility. Jeff Milkes has put in a grant application to assess Summer Free for All activities in terms of accessibility. Looking at bringing in a consultant to improve access to SFFA events.

Meryl asked if they will be looking at other ways to make what parks does, services we provide, more accessible. Ensuring communication, content on the web for people who are visually impaired. Those things are relatively easy. At Audubon, she noted that they have had Elders in Action come and advise on what they could do better in terms of signage, and materials they hand out. Art said that yes that will all be included in the second phase. We have looked at the physical spectrum, but we need to look at sight and cognitive barriers.

Tonya noted that her 7-year-old noted that the portable restrooms are not accessible, and was sad that people can't come to the park because they can't use the restroom.

Sarah noted that there is not a portable that is technically accessible, but there are some that come close, and we try to use those as much as possible.

Mike added that those are the ones we do try to use, especially for large events. Loos meet the standard. Tonya asked about universal design as perhaps a way to leverage resources. These benefit many people. Ramps might be useful for someone with a stroller. Look at Arbor Lodge Park, which is clearly enjoyed by everyone. Thinking about how it is accessible, but also a benefit to everyone.

Employment Zoning project

Mike discussed the Employment Zoning project as part of the Comprehensive Plan lead by Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. The Portland Plan was the foundation, and these are the code aspects of that. The state requires a certain amount of industrial land capacity. Metro is our regional government, they establish those standards. As the comp plan is being revised, Portland has a shortage of industrial land capacity. Parks is a non-industrial use – that is where it gets relevant to us.

This is a good example of the City trying to achieve multiple things. Currently in an industrial land, recreation is allowed outright. We can build on an industrial land. Under the new regulations, anything that is not employment based would need to have a special use permit.

Mike introduced Planning Manager Brett Horner, who he noted has been bird dogging the comp plan.

Brett reported that the good news is nothing has changed yet. The plan is being drafted, and is up for public comment. Mike and Brett will be going to the hearing scheduled in October. The plan will likely come to Council in Late December or early January or February.

Brett noted that we are very concerned about the language, and what is being proposed. Right now we can build a park in an industrial use zone with no problem. If this goes, we would have to pay double for the land to mitigate the loss of the land as an employment loss. We would have to get a conditional use permit, and make our case for why a park is needed.

It is a sledgehammer approach. No schools, no churches. We don't believe that parks should be a conditional use in an industrial area. We will go before the Planning and Sustainability Council in late October. We would love your feedback, because these proposed changes will make it more difficult for us to do our work.

The slough area, we have a lot of resources, and natural areas that we want to acquire in that zone. We are targeting that area. BES is concerned as well, it affects their ability to purchase and protect that land. Mike noted that Mary Anne, Judy and Jim have been involved.

Tonya asked if there is support from businesses wanting natural areas, and parks for employees to enjoy lunch, and if those voices are being heard.

Brett said that he thinks their concern is losing the land for potential employment opportunities. This has been a very political process. We have previously targeted those areas for that use. In the airport area, we targeted an area near IKEA to serve the employees who work out there. This would make that kind of acquisition really difficult. We did not have the opportunity to weigh in on language before Metro adopted the language. One thing we are looking to do is go back to Metro and see if they are willing to change the language if it is an environmentally sensitive area. We hope to change the language to allow us to buy and protect those zones without having to mitigate.

Mike noted that there are also residential areas in those zones, with no access to parks, or natural areas. Additionally, there is a huge demand for soccer fields, and sports fields. Where are you going to find land that is 40 acres to develop a sports complex? There aren't many opportunities for that type development. It has to be industrial land, or natural area and you can't do it in natural areas.

Tonya noted that there is tons of research on the increased productivity for workers when they have access nature. From an employment standpoint, this just doesn't make sense.

Brett agreed, and noted that the language reads that if you are establishing a park to serve the local need in the industrial zone, that's okay, but that is a difficult case to make. There is a push to preserve land for industrial, so if we go for a conditional use there will be a lot of resistance. It will be difficult to make our case.

Mike said for example, if Colwood had been zoned industrial. Owner asks if we would like to buy this golf course. I would be inclined to say no, we are not going to invest the energy. We might invest staff time, go through conditional use process. Worst case scenario, be disallowed. There is no guarantee we will get it, and if we do get it, there will be the increased cost to mitigate. The result is a chilling effect on any attempts to do parks & recreation, or natural areas in the industrial areas.

Sue noted concern about all areas on the map, including the Central East zone. Brett noted that inner southeast will be treated a little differently. The Brooklyn rail yard will be industrial. Sue noted that she knows people who are attempting to do a project that would include a park in that area. Mike noted that it probably will not be allowed, and neither will residential. Sue asked when public testimony will be taken on this plan.

Brett noted that public testimony will be given at October 27th meeting.

If parks board wants to make statement, Mike says we would like to use the timing on that.

Mike is hopeful that we can work with planning and sustainability on that language.

Meryl expressed concern about the affect of loss of canopy. Are there any

threatened or endangered species in the slough area, and can that be used as leverage? Brett said that he think that would have impact. You couldn't build a building on land that was a protected habitat.

Jim noted that Linda is very concerned. Total insanity. This is old school land use planning. Single use planning. Up until 20 years ago, we kept residential and commercial use separate. Now, to have one land use preclude all other uses. The concept of mitigating for public use. We are going to charge the public double for open space. I can't support that as public policy. If you look at map, we are restricting and making it very difficult to have open space on the waterways that are heart and soul of this city. That is bad public policy as well. Program doesn't take into consideration the employees and as Tonya said, and what they might want. My proposal is that you pull together a group. Use the land use ad hoc committee – open up to anyone who is interested.

Judy added that she served on the Portland plan and comprehensive plan, when this was sent out to us. Served on watershed health plan. Jim was serving on transportation. We were all meeting. This is really disturbing to see. Somewhat punitive. For the industrial land use folks to ask that we mitigate. That is the standard they have to mitigate for natural areas. It was very alarming, you can see on the map. The waterfront – folks that presented from BPS, habitat, sensitivity for water – clearly secondary to industrial land. The kind of industry they are looking at, large, single story, a few people monitoring a large warehouse. No access to stars, no open space. Judy added that this didn't just pop up. We need to be strategic. We have our work cut out for us. Judy will go with Jim to the next meeting. If you want to be involved, it's in comp plan, but not transparent. The last industrialization of the Columbia.

Mike said that Jim will convene the ad hoc group, Brett to participate if you want, will send out date and time for land use hearing in October.

Director update

Mike noted that you've probably been hearing a lot about Sequoia trees in Eastmoreland. He said that he has gone and looked at site. They are huge trees. There has been a neighborhood effort to raise \$900,000 to purchase the property from developer. We've been asked to take property if purchased. Mike noted that he has said no because it doesn't make sense for the Bureau from a maintenance standpoint.

Mike noted that he and Judy had a wonderful time at Colwood. There was some Adam Sandler controversy over his movie *Ridiculous Six*, spoof of Western – makes fun of cowboys, but also Native Americans, specifically Native American women. Judy was amazing in telling her story, growing up as a Native American woman and seeing how they are portrayed in the movie.

Judy noted that she had the opportunity to talk to her students. They decided to show the movie and use it as an opportunity to talk about it, and not hide it.

Mike reported that there have been lots of issues in the North Park Blocks, related to homelessness. There are some new initiatives in the city. Day storage of personal materials. Sharps containers, outreach for mental health issues. Mike encouraged

you the board to go to Art in the Parks on Thursday.

Meeting adjourned Judy adjourned the meeting at 9:30.