



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
March 2, 2016  
8:00 – 11:30 am  
Lovejoy Room, City Hall**

**Board members present:** Jeff Anderson, Tonya Booker, Judy Bluehorse Skelton, Kendall Clawson, Kathy Fong Stephens, Patricia Frobes, Ian Jaquiss, Meryl Redisch, Linda Robinson, Gladys Ruiz, Christa Stout, Sue Van Brocklin,

**Board members absent:** Dion Jordan, Tony Magliano, Andy Nelson, Jim Owens, Julie Vigeland

**PP&R Staff present:** Eileen Argentina, Astrid Dragoy, Art Hendricks, Warren Jimenez, Trang Lam, Kia Selley, Jennifer Yocom

**Call to order** Judy called the meeting to order at 8:07. Judy noted that the Mayoral candidates are here for 20 minute presentations and interview session. She thanked Patricia Frobes for serving on the subcommittee to draft questions, and for acting as guest greeter for the forum.

**Approval of the minutes** Patricia Frobes moved to pass the February minutes, Kathy Fong Stephens seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

**Approval of Parks Board Comments on Title II Proposals** Judy said that she hopes everyone had a chance to look at the Title II proposals that were sent out in advance. She asked for comments. There were no comments or questions. Meryl Redisch made a motion to approve the Parks Board's letter to City Council in support of the Urban Forestry Commission's recommendations on Title II Proposals. Linda Robinson second the motion, and the Board unanimously approved

**City Attorney on Elections** Harry Auerbach addressed the Board, noting that he is from the City Attorney's Office, and he advises the Bureau of Parks and Recreation. He is here to advise on the limitations of public employees in elections. He noted that these issues will come up again as election season goes along. Oregon law prohibits public officials, other than elected officials, from opposing or promoting ballot measures or candidates. Harry reminded the board that while they are acting as Parks Board members, they are acting as public officials. He said, "In your official capacity, you cannot promote or endorse a candidate or ballot measure. As a private citizen you can do whatever you want, but you should not give the appearance of doing so as a Parks Board member. For today, you should not be saying anything that supports any particular candidate. Members of Parks staff are here, please don't put them in the awkward position of appearing to endorse a particular platform or candidate. They can give you factual information. Questions to staff should come through the Board. I assume that you have invited all candidates." Megan confirmed that the Parks Board invited all candidates, and 8 of 12 confirmed.

Harry asked Judy if the Board would you like him to stay. Judy told him that he is welcome to stay. Warren Jimenez told Harry that he prefers him to stay.

**Mayoral Candidates** Patricia Frobes noted that we have asked candidates to give 10 minute presentations, addressing four questions we sent in advance, and then there will be 10 minutes for the Board to ask follow up questions.

Patricia read the four questions sent in advance:

Vision: What is your vision for Portland Parks & Recreation for the next 20 years? As mayor, what role would you play in realizing that vision?

Values: What do you think are the most important values that should guide City leadership in making decisions that impact Portland Parks & Recreation, including decisions about resource allocation, program development and development and maintenance of parks and natural areas?

Funding: Portland Parks & Recreation is a general fund dependent bureau, which means the Bureau's funding source is inherently unstable. What alternatives would you propose to stabilize funding for the Bureau?

Community: What do you believe is the role of the Parks bureau in addressing key issues in our community, such as homelessness, gentrification, gang violence, etc.?

Judy noted that candidates were given these questions in advance, so they have had time to prepare. Judy said that Patricia Frobes will be greeting candidates and bringing them in and out of the room, but we will also need a timekeeper. Kendall Clawson volunteered to be time keeper.

**Jules Bailey** The first candidate to present was Jules Bailey.

Judy thanked Jules Bailey for taking the time to visit the Portland Parks Board. Jules Bailey asked for introductions, and Board members introduced themselves.

Jules Bailey introduced himself to the Board, noting that he is running for Mayor, currently a Multnomah County Commissioner, and long-time park fan. As a teenager, he worked for Sandy Dietrich in the ivy removal program at Forest Park. He spent much of his childhood at Mt. Tabor and Laurelhurst Parks. He sees parks as important to the health of the community, and noted that they contribute to livability. He said that Portland is at turning point. Over a million people will be moving here over the next decade. We need parks that are accessible to everyone, and throughout Portland. Jules Bailey discussed east Portland, and how parks infrastructure is needed to support communities. Looking forward at next 20 years, he would prioritize equity and access to parks. Every child, every person should have a park nearby. He stressed the importance of working to acquire land, and prioritizing network expansion. He noted that he hears the calls to increase industrial land, but we need to balance those needs. He noted that the Parks bureau has been very successful. He talked about connecting parks to housing and transportation, noting that would be one of his primary guiding principles. He also talked about clear, consistent outreach with partners and communities, noting that he has witnessed this first hand in his neighborhood for Spring Garden Park. He participated in the neighborhood planning process, parks staff reached out, and he has been engaged. He noted that we need that level of engagement in every section

of the City.

Mr. Bailey noted that Parks has an inherently unstable budget, and talked about looking at other fees to support parks, looking at the most unstable funds, and finding ways to better support parks consistently.

He noted that in looking at homelessness and gang violence, Parks has a significant role to play, but should not be a place where we are housing people who are unhoused. Tent camping is a symptom of not enough shelter housing. He said that he is working to bring 650 units online now.

He said again that he will prioritize consistent, stable funding for parks, as well as a long term vision for acquiring land. He stated that parks reflect who we are as a community, and they are part of our values.

Meryl Redisch, on behalf of the Urban Forestry Commission, asked the following question: How would your administration lead new efforts to ensure that Canopy goals and preservation of large, healthy trees is imbedded into the City's future development? For example, what role do you believe urban trees/ contribute in the context of Portland's Climate Action Plan?

Mr. Bailey noted that his plan, Climate Sustainable City, includes a section on the urban forest and urban canopy. As we see hotter summers, as we see more extreme weather events, we will rely on urban canopies. We have a lot of areas in east Portland in particular that get very hot. Canopy will cool the neighborhoods. He added that preserving the canopy is one of the most effective ways for us to address climate change and resiliency.

Linda Robinson said that Portland parks has a huge list of major maintenance projects. She asked: How would you address that at the same time that you address equity?

Mr. Bailey said that one of the things he appreciates about parks, is that the Bureau is budgeting for operations at the same time it is budgeting for capitol. Looking at how you will pay for maintenance over time. One time dollars for capitol are sometimes easier to come up with. He added that he was very supportive of the levy. He said he thinks we could do more, and that the public would be receptive. He said his administration would focus on the need for more one time dollars in capitol, so we can acquire land. He added that we need to preserve the opportunities we have when they arise.

Patricia Frobes noted that one of the challenges, if you look at what's happening on Mississippi, Williams, and Vancouver in North Portland, our existing parks will have more use. So as important as it is to acquire new land and build new parks, we also need to preserve and sustain what we have.

Mr. Bailey discussed historical relationships, Nike and others, who want to invest in our parks. It's great business. He talked about looking for opportunities to talk with private sector and build public private partnerships. Rather than throwing spaghetti at wall and seeing what sticks, he said, we need to have a conversation about

sustained funding. We are going to see demand for programming at parks. He added that people are unhappy about the prospect of losing our concerts, or other programming. We need sustainable funding instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Kathy Fong Stephens said she is interested in finding out what kind of bureau assignments you would be interested in taking on.

Mr. Bailey said that he has made a clear statement that he is not going to declare before he becomes mayor. He said he thinks it's important that the mayor is commissioner of the police. He said he has learned from his time working in the legislature, how important it is to build understanding, and work through commissioners to achieve goals. He says he will focus on working very collaboratively to make sure we have shared agenda and shared goals.

Meryl asked if he thinks there is room to improve how the commissioners and mayor works.

Mr. Bailey said that it is incredibly important for the mayor to spend a lot of time in commissioners' offices, even if there is not an ask, to come in and sit on couch, and ask about priorities and how he can help. He added that he would have the same open door policy. He noted that we've seen that done in past, and it has been really affective. Sam Adams had that policy. Vera Katz was an affective coalition builder. He said that if you go into City Hall, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is the executive suite, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is everything else, you are not going to get anything done.

Mr. Bailey closed by thanking the Parks Board members for their service.

**David Schor** Judy thanked Mr. David Schor for making time to visit with the Portland Parks Board this morning, noting that we sent out questions in advance, and we will have some time to ask more questions.

David Schor said that part of what we want to do in terms of parks and vision can be found in the guiding document, which is Vision 2020. He added that in looking in terms of getting to the end of that document, what is the next visioning process? He talked about the need for the Mayor to have a vision, and also include all of the stakeholders, and go out to the community to help that vision process, and find ways to build into plans a means to build that vision.

One problem, he noted, is unstable funding. SDC is a volatile funding process. It's great when we are in a good economic cycle, bad when the economy is bad. A municipal bank could be a powerful tool as a sustainable source. He discussed building an endowment, and finding a way to support parks with a stable funding source. On top of that funding, he said, how do we expand and make sure we have equitable access? He said that it's really amazing what we've done so far. Access to community centers, building more parks, reflective of people's support of parks.

There is more work to do, he noted, particularly in east Portland. We need to look at larger plans for the City, and how parks fit. It is all interconnected. Once funding is in place, focus on where need is. We know areas where parks are not within 1/2 mile. He discussed meeting the goal of being the walking city of the west, looking at

biking infrastructure connected with parks. Mr. Schor added that he would like to see more funding go into connectivity and access to parks, and good transit to parks. Getting to parks in the neighborhood and making sure they are accessible. It's great to put them in, he noted, but people need to know how to get there.

Overall, Mr. Schor said he is really pleased with the Parks Bureau's work. The infrastructure for transportation is a place we can make more progress. We've talked about the 40 mile loop, connecting neighborhoods together. He said he would like to put more focus on that, and would push for more walking in the neighborhoods. He would like at partnerships with Portland Public Schools. He added that may be pushed as far as it can go, and he is not sure there is room to push for more facilities. He said it is time to look at more investment in larger facilities. Not just think small, but building more substantial facilities, and take some pressure off public schools.

There is a little more we can do in terms of reaching people in the lower income bracket. We've done a lot, he said, but we may need more communication about what we are doing. It has to be communicated to people. We need to constantly remind people what is there. They forget. Until it becomes a habit for people. We've had a little decline in terms of youth participation. Looking at connecting to youth, we need to be more creative in terms of social media, so they can develop habit. Coming out of schools, into parks, build a pipeline of supporters of parks. Ultimately those people will give back to the system.

Gladys Ruiz asked: What do you believe the role of the Parks Bureau is in addressing key issues in our community such as homelessness, gentrification, and gang violence.

Mr. Schor said that part of Parks role is providing opportunities. Also, looking at fees. Even that \$5 or \$10 dollar fee is a burden for some. It is important to make sure that no one is excluded because of income. Homelessness is a huge problem, and parks has seen too much stress from that. Mr. Schor added that our city is looking at urban camping, and he think it's important that parks is excluded from that. It's not an appropriate use in our parks. He discussed restroom facilities, and the need for more access throughout the city. We've talked about developing more parks in other neighborhoods. That will help with some gentrification because it will spread out desirability of neighborhoods.

Ultimately, Mr. Schor noted, all of these things are a result of inequitable distribution throughout our city. He discussed putting pressure for higher compensation throughout the city. He noted that there is only so much we can do with our city in terms of people's income, but there is a lot we can do in terms of livability and cost of livability. He talked about affordable housing, and investing across the board. That is how people connect to their neighborhood. Gentrification and growth are in some ways inseparable, he noted, but we can spread that out. When some parts of the city are really desirable, we are pushing people out. He noted that when neighborhoods are more walkable, you start to alleviate pressures, and gang violence.

Mr. Schor noted that he is a renter in this town. He talked about looking at people's

ability to stay in their neighborhoods. Knowing people won't be pushed out, they can stay in their communities, and not get moved.

Meryl Redisch asked: What would you do internally? What sort of top down, or bottom up systems would you put in place so there is more internal leadership that looks into the community and Bureau with an equity lens? What leadership, protocols you would enact.

Mr. Schor said he would get engaged in visioning, and also with neighborhood associations. He noted that equity has a lot of different aspects. There are economic, and cultural aspects. The neighborhoods are the best to judge that. As we develop plans that would be helpful. Systems are not the only answers. A lot is about people. Bringing people in. Some of the systems are already in.

Judy asked about using the Office of Neighborhood involvement?

Mr. Schor said yes, we should use them more.

Kendall Clawson asked if he could provide more details on the question of his leadership in terms of social equality. She said that infrastructure is only one part. Infrastructure is the car. How do you as mayor drive the car? Not simply supply and demand, social equality. How do you as mayor drive that?

Mr. Schor said he was not sure how to answer.

Sue Van Brocklin asked about his qualifications to be mayor.

Mr. Schor said that he worked as an attorney at the Dept. of Justice. He comes with an understanding of the legal system, and has also been engaged in city recreation. He currently works at Portland Meadows in communications, and is engaged in the community. He noted that recreation is a big part of his life. He is a runner, and bicyclist. He added that he is familiar with the system as a user, but can't claim that he is a parks administration expert. Looking for someone who is a leader, good steward of our resources, someone who can best serve everyone in the community.

Mr. Schor added that he does want to satisfy all of the Board's concerns. He said he would like to get to know you better, and asked members to please follow up with him.

Kathy Fong Stephens asked: Why are you running?

Mr. Schor said that he started running when Mayor Hales dropped out. He thought there should be a broader conversation at the very least. He said he wanted someone in this race that he could get behind, and he didn't see that. So, he said he decided he would take that responsibility on, and put himself out there.

**Deborah Harris** Deborah Harris thanked the Board for the opportunity. In reference to the Board's question on vision, she gave a brief quote: "People of vision see the invisible, hear the inaudible, believe the incredible, think the unthinkable and do the impossible"

Ms. Harris said that her vision for PP&R will be to maintain and strengthen the parks system. Strengthen opportunities. Each community is unique. Equally distribute, but recognize that requires different costs to affectively meet those needs. Respond to changing demographics. Strengthen natural resources, focus on operational sustainability. Promote environmental justice, and equality. Reduce operating costs.

Ms. Harris added that PP&R values are comprised of 3 things, leadership (policy makers) staff (members) community (societal) – promoting community, civic pride through diverse recreation and leisure activity at the parks and facilities. Focus on healthy green communities—nurture cultural resources, promote economic opportunities, attract and encourage businesses to relocate, improve economy. Through increased economic development and tourism, we build stable neighborhoods.

Propose allocating funds to stabilize parks funding. Tax resources for stable funding. She discussed the Trust for Public Lands focus on expenditures for parks and land conservations best understanding not as a cost, but as an investment.

Ms. Harris talked about community, noting that the parks bureau is a vital part of each community being served. Role of parks bureau is key. Ownership – the heart of our communities. The heart of providing a safe, and healthy environment.

Regarding community, Ms. Harris discussed the parks bureau moving forward with the vision, plans and funding, efforts serve dual purpose. Multiple goals promote cooperation. Opens doors for greater potential.

Christa Stout asked Ms. Harris tell the Board a little bit about her background, noting that she is not familiar with her as a candidate.

Ms. Harris stated that she graduated from University Of Arkansas in Pine Bluff with a Bachelor of arts. She has been in Oregon for 25 years. She attended PSU, and received a Masters of Public Administration, with focus on diversity. Currently, she is a business specialist, and works for the State of Oregon. She added that she considers herself a public servant, not just in her current work. She said she is not a politician, but a public servant.

She added that she had been thinking about running. She sees so many issues. She said she was sitting on the railway, and felt it was time to get off the railway. Sometimes you have to move behind the walls. She said she looks at gang violence, sex trafficking, lack of affordable housing, homelessness/houselessness, our economy and our environment. A lot of our residents are not well versed on the environment. Not their fault, but we have to better educate.

Ms. Harris said that she did an analysis on livability. Looked at it and determined where the surveys were sent, and where survey return came from. She noted that the less affluent didn't respond. So, the results were based on responses from the more affluent, who have the time to respond.

Ms. Harris said that she believes positive things can happen. Sometimes we have to open flood gates, change culture. Look at communities specifically—each community. We are all the same, all human beings, but each community has unique situations and challenges, and need to be addressed separately.

Meryl Redisch told Ms. Harris that she serves on the Urban Forestry Commission, and has a question around trees: You reference green communities. Could you speak a little more about how your administration would build efforts and practices for urban canopy goals across our city as embedded in future development of the city. Climate action plan, comp plan, how would you ensure trees are part of process.

Ms. Harris said that she grew up on a farm, and trees were a very valuable part of her life. She continues to keep and grow trees. She sees and monitors things being done with trees, and not restoring our trees. She talked about making it more economical and affordable to have trees. We have Friends of Trees, ability to plant trees at a lower cost, or no cost. She noted that sometimes if a neighborhood has hedges, you have to move the hedges. If a homeowner can't afford to remove all these hedges, we lose those opportunities to keep those neighborhoods green. It costs money to monitor everything, but educating people, designating people in every community – educate in community forums, what we need to do to keep our forest green, our urban forest green.

Kendall Clawson noted that Ms. Harris talked about collaborative leadership. If you were mayor, how would you utilize a system of collaborative leadership?

Ms. Harris noted that she would make herself present in the neighborhoods. She would personally attend Neighborhood Association meetings, community meetings, personally attend and invite community to come, invite presence. When you make people feel that they are a part of what's happening, they are going to participate more. Go to communities and find out what the needs are, not just sit in my office and assume based on statistics. Not just a one time, but embrace a diverse city of people, and their staff.

Kathy Fong Stephens asked about what she feels are the biggest issues facing the parks system.

Ms. Harris said the biggest issues include drugs, families going for outing and finding drugs and paraphernalia. Violence. She said she doesn't want to focus on gang violence. All types of violence that pushes people away from the system. Finances – there is a lot that PP&R would like to do but cannot because of a fixed budget. Maintaining system, updating technology, and needing money to do that. She talked about seeking funding from other sources, earmarked money.

Other challenges include keeping the parks green and beautiful. Homelessness is top of the list. When you don't have a place to go. A home is a place where people can take you in. when you don't have a place, you have to go where you can find a place to sleep.

Ms. Harris thanked the Board for inviting her.

**Sarah Iannarone** Sarah Iannarone thanked the Board for having her, noting that it's her pleasure to be here.

Judy thanked Sarah Iannarone for coming, and noted that the format is 20 minutes. 10 minutes for you to address the questions, and then about 10 minutes for us to ask questions.

Sarah Iannarone stated that she is running for mayor on a platform of equity and inclusion. Looking at future, she said, people like you who sit on boards, people like me who sit on boards. There are a lot of people who want to live here, and we are experiencing some growing pains. We need a great leader to get us through that. We were in a similar situation 100 years ago. We were on the national stage for the Lewis & Clark exposition.

Ms. Iannarone noted that cities are looking at Portland for a model. How do we come up with public private models? Looking at sustainable and equity models. In her work at PSU, she has shared our parks with folks from China, Brazil, Japan. People are looking to us to lead, and we need a mayor to lead that. Her vision is for Portland is to be the most livable place on the planet. We can't continue to call ourselves a livable city until it works for everyone. Parks and urban greenspaces are the connectivity that binds us. We need to ensure that parks are continuous through our urban fabric. Understand the role of parks and greenspaces for livability, and climate resource. Epigenetics of women who are pregnant living next to trees. These are the conversations we need to have. Our communities will gather in a disaster in our community centers. We will need to prepare for that. Paint picture for Portlanders. Equitable access to parks for success. Creative, innovative partnerships to sustain.

She added that the values that will guide her – environmental justice perspective with regard to equity. No longer say that we can leave to happenstance that everyone has equitable access. Race and ethnicity, income – various abilities, ethnicities, different socioeconomic backgrounds – coming in our parks. Care and stewardship of our parks. Parks need to be held to highest standards of sustainability. Plants, biodiversity, make sure they will withstand flooding.

Back when Olmsted's did plan, one of the letters that went back to Boston stated, "I'm enjoying the parks here, but I fear the money will be deficient." People embrace the idea of parks, but don't always support the funding needed for that. For the last bond measure, people came out and supported.

Thinking of parks as continuous amenity. What Indianapolis has done is a model that we can look at. Private public partnerships like Halprin are important. Based on investment from adjacent property owners. Valuable greenspace. Make sure that when budget falls short, we are able to step up in ways, how do we get money into the city? Make sure neighbors are able to step up

Ms. Iannarone talked about building a pocket park in her neighborhood. They took an underutilized area, planted trees, gardens. She discussed opportunities we can look to, tiny projects all over the city where we can connect to the largest

greenspaces.

She added that she is a huge fan of Summer Free for All. She talked about making sure school children have access to healthy lunch even when school is not in session. She said she also loves it for bringing people together, make sure that people from different socioeconomic places come together.

As mayor, she stated that she will be police commissioner, and she thinks it's important that our police are not driving cars through our park spaces. She would like them to be interacting in parks on foot or possibly on horses as a better way to interact with the public in our parks.

Parks will be increasingly important with urban density. People will not always have access in their backyards, so making sure people have a park, as we expand and grow.

She thanked the Board member for their commitment, noting that's makes Portland special.

Christa Stout noted that Ms. Iannarone talk about her platform of equity and inclusion, and also that she would be police commissioner. Christa noted that racial tension between police and the community are high. How do you bring those together?

Ms. Iannarone said it is about talking – with both communities and police. We've made great strides since DOJ. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, she said, she doesn't know how we can work to have an anti-racist police force without giving them the resources they need. External pressure is not going to get them there. It needs to be a change that comes from within. They are on the frontlines. Look to police bureau as support, protecting women, looking to them as stewards and public trust – that is the role she wants to continue to improve for our police force.

Meryl Redisch noted that she serves on the Urban Forestry Commission, and her question is related to trees and canopy. How would your administration build on canopy goals, embedded in future development? What role do urban trees contribute?

Ms. Iannarone said that she is long term Friends of Trees volunteer. She loves trees – and will continue to support community efforts. She talked about making protection mandatory. The fight should be how we protect trees first. She noted that this will require clear communication about the health of our canopy. Sometimes needing to take out some, so that we can protect the growth of surrounding trees. Build understanding of how the canopy works.

Patricia Frobbs noted that she talked about Summer Free For All. Part of intention is that those activities continue to be available for communities. Sometimes, the communities that we intended to serve are not accessing. How would you promote improving access for those communities?

Ms. Iannarone said that she has a small business across from Mt. Scott Park. We

were anxious to get our first event there. She added that we can't assume that people have the resources. Maybe that means Parks invites food trucks. There are 19 languages spoken at Arleta elementary. When we talk about equity and inclusion, it's not just about giving access, but making sure they come.

Kathy Fong Stephens noted that we have a Commission system of government. What are your best skills and resources to help make that a productive environment?

Ms. Iannarone said that she will look foremost at collaboration. She said she would go in as a first time elected official, and listen. She is there to share her vision, and make sure we get there cooperatively. We will have hard conversations, build framework for that. There is an existing collaboration to address houselessness. The Mayor's campaign has gotten away from that. She added that it is important to her to not go outside collaboration.

In closing, she noted that she is new to the race, and encouraged the Board to visit [www.sarahforportland.com](http://www.sarahforportland.com). She will be sharing her answers to the Board's questions there.

**Meeting Adjourned** Judy adjourned the meeting at 10:39 am.