

**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
April 9, 2019 | 8:00 - 10:00 am  
City Hall | Lovejoy

**Board Members Present:** Paul Agrimis, Pat Frobes, Michelle Dedeo, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Jenny Glass, Randy Gragg, Katy Holland, Ian Jaquiss, Mary Ruble, Gladys Ruiz, Paddy Tillett

**Board Members Absent:** Kendall Clawson, Tonya Booker, Tamara Layden, Lorena Nascimento, Jim Owens

**PP&R Staff Present:** Eileen Argentina, Claudio Campuzano, Margaret Evans, Brooke Gardner, Art Hendricks, Adena Long, Lauren McGuire, Nicola Sysyn, Jennifer Yocom

**Commissioner's Office** Commissioner Nick Fish, Todd Lofgren

**Call to Order** Board Chair Pat Frobes called the meeting to order at 8:06am.

Pat noted that there would be an addition to the agenda with a report from the Land Use/Infrastructure working group on the ODOT I-5 public hearing.

Pat shared that a poll would be sent soon to determine a time for the June retreat. She encouraged members to do recruitment for the Parks Board. This year there will be two vacancies to fill and next year there will be four.

Pat reminded members that the Community Budget Forum on Parks would be that evening where members of the Board will be participating by giving testimony.

**Budget and Financial Sustainability** Pat noted that after the last Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) and Parks Board meetings the Board identified their desire to speak with the Parks Commissioner about the Board's role in the budget process and as part of the BAC. The goal was to discuss how they can have a more meaningful participation and add as much value as possible





in the budget development. This year's process was better than in past years, however the start of the BAC meetings limited involvement of the Board and BAC in budget development. Pat shared that the Board would like to identify ways that they can advocate for parks funding.

Parks Commissioner, Nick Fish, thanked Pat for inviting him to join the Parks Board meeting. He thanked the Board for helping to prepare a challenging budget. The Commissioner thanked Adena and the Parks team for their work. He noted the Bureau is in a time of transition which provides an opportunity to update strategic plans and business model. The Commissioner shared that he is committed to making sure the goals of the bureau are grounded and achievable. He would like the Bureau to focus on the financial sustainability plan, level of service studies, and cost recovery policy work once the budget process concludes. Commissioner reviewed the three sustainability challenges and funding shortfalls in the PP&R system which include: Capital Maintenance; Operations & Maintenance; and an Operating Gap caused by program fee dependence and rising costs.

Commissioner Fish reviewed the bureau's budget process and next steps. He suggested the Board create a small team to develop a work plan for the next year to detail how the Parks Board, the bureau and the Commissioner's office will work to leverage each of their roles and talents. He encouraged the Board to share bold ideas, like new revenue sources for Parks, including a bond or parks district and improving partnerships and philanthropic work.

Commissioner noted that the Mayor's new budget process is a step in the right direction, as it required the bureau to look at the budget from the ground up. He thanked the Board for their service and their commitment to Portland's parks and recreation.

Paul thanked the Commissioner for his comments and asked what his thoughts were on a parks district. Commissioner Fish suggested that there be a deep dive into the legal and political realities around creating a parks district. He noted





that this is the year for parks to make a case for budget funding. There is an opportunity to educate the public, evaluate the business model and look at how the community centers can become self-funded.

Pat shared that it is clear a new business model is needed. She would like to convene a task force that could include Parks Board and Foundation Board members to look at new funding opportunities as the Commissioner suggested. Commissioner Fish would like Todd Lofgren to serve as the Commissioner's office point person. He would request support from the City's legal office, and he noted his interest in the public/private partnerships piece. Commissioner shared that he spent a significant amount of time raising funding for Summer Free For All (SFFA) this year and raised nearly \$400,000. There are great opportunities with SFFA and with Randy's help, there is more that can be done.

Mary shared that the Parks Foundation is in alignment and sees that there is a huge opportunity. She shared that she would like more detailed understanding of the budget. What does it really cost to keep grass growing, for example? Commissioner Fish noted that the best time to deep dive is during the off season, June through October, and suggested that Claudio provide some briefings.

Pat encouraged the Commissioner to work with the Office of Government Relations to support the work in resolving the PERs issue at the State level. She noted that the Board would like to support that work and will be reviewing a letter on the topic later in the meeting.

Randy asked the Commissioner for information about the upcoming Metro Bond. The Commissioner shared that he has been in negotiations with the Metro President about changes to the Bond. There is concern about the inequity of Portland's share based on how it is currently proposed. Pat shared that if there is a point at which the Board can weigh in, they would be interested in supporting with a letter.





Pat thanked the Commissioner for joining the Board and his suggestion to create a task force. The Commissioner thanked the Board for having him and for their service.

Bonnie reflected that cuts cannot be made again and again, and the proposed budget solutions are just more one-time cuts. She noted that until there is a new model, there will continue to be these cuts. There is an urgency for these conversations, and the Board's role is to push this conversation forward. Bonnie also stated that, with the closure of Columbia pool, she disagrees that the proposed budget preserves equity.

Katie echoed Bonnie's comments adding that the proposed budget moves Parks backwards not forwards as North Portland is already not served very well.

### **Public Comment**

Pat welcomed Edith Mirante to share her comments with the Board.

Edith shared that she had come to the March Board meeting to share her concerns about removing trees. She shared a handout with members that included her timeline of the Sellwood Gap tree removal. This was determined necessary by PP&R to complete the Springwater Corridor. Edith suggested that PP&R plant trees where trees have been removed and proposed review of the PP&R policy for removing trees. Edith shared that she didn't feel involved in the decision-making process as a stakeholder.

### **Parks Board Letter**

Paddy asked the Board to review the letter in their packets which they received prior to the meeting. Paddy reviewed the contents of the letter and expressed desire for the Board to vote on its approval to be sent to City Council.

Gladys shared that she had concerns about the message that it could send to staff especially as in recent years seasonal staff have been brought on as permanent staff. Paddy suggested adding a paragraph to rectify that concern. He noted the urgency of delivering the letter while it is still relevant.





Mary noted that the letter is about PERs reform and not about the staff. She suggested adding language at the beginning of the letter to state clearly that the letter is about PERs reform. Mary supports the letter and suggests sending as a letter to the editor at the Oregonian. Gladys would like the letter to acknowledge staff and those impacted by PERs at the start of the letter as Mary suggested.

Pat suggests adding a sentence at the beginning of the letter that states, “This letter is about PERs reform, so we can preserve a great future for the people who work for Parks and are served by parks.” Members discussed the letter and the process.

Pat requested to motion to approve the letter with the additions of the proposed sentence and subject line. Paul made the motion, Bonnie seconded, the motion was approved unanimously. Pat indicated that she would update the letter and notify the Board before it goes to the Oregonian.

#### **LAND USE/INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP**

Paul reported that ODOT held a public hearing on the I-5 corridor project. There were about 75 people in attendance and the overall message was that ODOT had failed. Public comment closed the previous Monday.

Pat asked for a motion for a vote of the Board to confirm that the Board would like to send a representative to be on ODOT’s design group that will look at the project and how it may impact the Albina Vision.

Bonnie made the motion, Paul seconded, the motion was unanimously approved.

#### **Director’s Report**

Director Long shared that the Senior Management Team has been spending time at their weekly meetings to look at the budget impacts internally and externally in order to get ahead of these impacts.





She noted that the Budget Hearing on Parks and hosted by the City Budget Office would take place that evening at David Douglas High School.

Director Long invited the Board to attend the North Park Blocks playground opening on Saturday, April 13, and the Couch Park playground opening on Saturday, May 4. These were projects funded by the Bond.

Adena noted that the Deputy Director position was posted recently and the Recreation Manager hiring process is underway. James Allison, Land Stewardship Manager, has announced that he will be leaving the Bureau as well. The Bureau will be looking to fill his position in June or July.

## **Portland Parks Foundation Overview**

Randy gave a presentation on the Portland Parks Foundation (PPF). The Foundation was founded in 2001, has done 18 capital projects, and raised over \$13 million. Randy's presentation included some history of PPF and some of the work done since Randy came on board last summer. He reviewed what's next for the organization and the challenges and goals going forward. Randy highlighted the most recent project - the Barbara Walker Crossing over Burnside.

Mary shared that there is much more that the Foundation can do. She is excited to have Randy as the new director and to see how far they can go.

Adena shared that she too is excited about the retreat on Friday and has a lot to offer to the foundation. She shared her desire to have pointed and strategic conversations especially regarding Capital Improvement Projects and partnerships.

Jenny thanked Randy for the presentation. She noted the unique an urgent opportunity for the Parks Foundation and PP&R to partner. Jenny stated that capital projects are exciting, but equity is in programming. She hopes that the Foundation can also support programming. Jenny shared that she is excited to hear the Foundation's support for Friends





Groups as there is potential for volunteering and fundraising with the Friends Groups.

**Approve February and March Minutes**

Pat thanked Randy for his presentation. She noted the need to approve the February and March minutes and requested a motion to approve them. Paul made the motion, Michelle seconded, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Parks Board Meeting Adjourns**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:07am.

**Next meeting is Tuesday, May 14, 2019.**

