



**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

March 10, 2020 | 8:00 - 10:00 am  
The Portland Building 1120 SW 5th Ave | Room 216  
Conference Call

**Board Members  
Present:**

Paul Agrimis, Mike Elliott, Pat Frobles, Bonnie Gee Yosick,  
Jenny Glass, Randy Gragg, Katy Holland, Ian Jaquiss,  
Tamara Layden, Jim Owens, Gladys Ruiz, Paddy Tillett,  
Erin Zollenkopf

**Board Members  
Absent:**

Kendall Clawson, Lorena Nascimento

**PP&R/City Staff  
Present:**

Claudio Campuzano, Tim Collier, Margaret Evans, Brooke Gardner,  
Todd Lofgren, Adena Long, Lauren McGuire, Mayor Wheeler,  
Everett Wild

**Call to Order/Board  
Conversation with  
Mayor Wheeler**

Board Chair Paul Agrimis called the meeting to order at 8:07am.

Paul welcomed Mayor Wheeler and gave him the floor. Mayor Wheeler thanked meeting attendees for their service on the Portland Parks & Recreation Board. He noted the rare occurrence that the Mayor is the Commissioner of the Parks Bureau. It was under an unfortunate circumstance, and he shared that Commissioner Fish had asked him to take the bureau and continue the work he began. Everett remains the staff liaison to Parks. The work to find long term financial sustainability for the bureau is ongoing. He shared that he has heard from the community their concerns about losing Columbia Pool.

Mayor Wheeler shared that the board's engagement on the budget is more important than ever. Their input is critical in guiding the next steps for the Sustainable Future work. He is looking for a solution that maintains Parks for the long term. He thanked those who have served on the board for two full terms and are terming off soon. He thanked members for having him.

Jim noted the Mayor's interest in increasing access to the Willamette River, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's River Plan, and how the board has engaged in the plan's development. He asked how the board can continue to be supportive of the effort to expand river access and recreation? Mayor Wheeler encouraged members to be involved in the master plan process.





Pat asked what the Mayor's thoughts are on the parks district option. He shared that he was initially enthusiastic about the option of a parks district, but the data didn't back it up. It would create significant compression especially for Multnomah County. Council was disappointed that it doesn't appear to be a viable option. Pat noted that if it was tied to property taxes, it would not likely to be a good option. She argued that it would not have to be tied to a property tax, and there might be other ways to fund a parks district. Mayor Wheeler encouraged the board to think broadly.

Paul asked Mayor Wheeler what the options are to address the Parks deferred maintenance backlog in a significant way. Mayor Wheeler shared that there are two ways - through a bond, levy or other tax directed to the backlog, or onetime funding directed to maintenance. The Build PDX initiative can be directed to parks infrastructure. When they look at the cost of building or acquiring a facility, they need to look at the life cycle cost. If it cannot be maintained, then it shouldn't be built or acquired. There are many properties that were acquired that cannot be maintained.

Randy asked how the Mayor came to the decision to provide bridge funding for Columbia pool. Mayor Wheeler explained that over the long term the pool should not remain open. He decided that the best current option was to maintain it until there is a clear plan to replace it or provide a similar level of service elsewhere. There was a continuity plan that was started with Commissioner Fish. Adena shared that there are two feasibility studies being conducted - one on Columbia Pool and the other on Charles Jordan Community Center. These studies will help inform how to move forward in the long term. This is a bridge to get us there.

Jim asked if the Mayor plans to assign the bureau to another Commissioner. Mayor Wheeler shared that he was not decided, but it was unlikely. Having the development bureaus, management, revenue, and police bureaus, his staff is at capacity. Bureau assignment will also depend on who else is on the Council. As the new City Council is constituted, he welcomed board input and advice on bureau assignments.

Jim noted that the Parks 2020 Vision is the guiding document for board and will soon expire. He asked if there will be an opportunity to create a new vision prior to the bureau's reassignment. Mayor Wheeler deferred to Director Long. Jim





stated that if they are going to the public with a ballot measure, they need a vision. Adena noted that there is a funding request in the FY2020-21 budget for the creation of a position to manage the Sustainable Future work. This will be the backbone of the next vision. She added that staff are working to develop a report to close out the vision and strategic plan. They will identify what we accomplished, what we didn't accomplish and why, and what has changed. There has been a lot of groundwork that will help inform what the vision plan will be, but we need the Sustainable Future work to move forward now and cannot wait for a vision process. Everett added that the goal is to ensure that the next vision will be achievable. That means long term financial sustainability for the bureau.

The board thanked the Mayor for joining them.

### **Approve February Minutes**

Paul asked if there was a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. Pat made the motion, Paddy seconded, and they were unanimously approved.

### **Director's Report**

Director Long thanked everyone for being flexible with the change of venue. One piece of guidance regarding COVID-19 was to provide a call-in option whenever possible. That was not an option at Multnomah Arts Center.

Adena introduced and welcomed Tim Collier the bureau's new community relations manager. She shared that the equity and inclusion manager position was closing that day, and they would be reviewing candidates in the coming weeks.

Adena reminded the board that when Commissioner Fish took over Parks, he started the conversation about how Parks and the Bureau of Environmental Services' (BES) work intersects, where there are opportunities to leverage each other's expertise, and how to eliminate redundancies.

Todd shared that staff from both bureaus formed a joint taskforce to look at natural area management, invasive species management, and tree management. During this process they began business process mapping, and investigating the possibility of creating a position that would work with both bureaus on natural area management. BES has a tree planting program while Parks' Urban Forestry Division (UF) in addition to managing its own tree planting program, it also oversees implementation of Title 11,





provides permitting for tree planting, and responds to tree emergencies. Bureau Directors are looking at moving all tree planting under one bureau. Initial thoughts were to house it all within Parks, but both bureaus continue to consider options. Current contracts will stay in place until they expire. As they work to implement good governance and business practices, they are also educating and updating stakeholders as they move through the process. They have heard from the Urban Forestry Council (UFC) who would like trees to have a bigger role in the Parks system than they do currently. UFC would like to put more energy into preventative maintenance and to move street tree management under city jurisdiction.

Gladys shared concerns about equity in contracting. Adena confirmed that all contracts will continue until they expire. The new request for proposal will go through procurement which has an equity process. They are working to remove barriers and to invest more in trees.

Jim shared that he has heard a lot of chatter from the environmental community. There are a wide variety of substantive policy issues here. He asked that this item be a major agenda topic at the next meeting. Adena shared that there is a tentative plan to engage stakeholders that has not been rolled out yet. BES is currently moving into the Portland Building while also going through a major organizational change. Directors from Parks and BES have met with stakeholders and received and responded to correspondence. As they develop the engagement plan the board will be included in conversations.

Lauren shared that other areas where Parks is working with BES include the aging sewer and storm infrastructure in Washington Park as well as the OMSI and Crystal Springs projects.

Todd suggested one way the board might engage in this work could include at least one member participating in the taskforce work who can bring information back to the full board.

Bonnie would like to have a board member involved in the front end of decision points. Todd noted that this is an effort that was only recently initiated with Commissioner Fish and this is the starting point. Everett noted that there is no formal document summarizing how Parks works with BES. Commissioner Fish





wanted BES and Parks to work together, break down silos, and find efficiencies.

Jim noted that he was reassured to hear there is a process. He supports having one or more voting members serve on the taskforce. They should report back at the next meeting, and conversations should begin before the next meeting.

### **COVID-19 Developing Response**

Todd shared that Parks is taking guidance from Multnomah County and Oregon Health Authority. Parks emergency response team is meeting daily to discuss issues. Contingency planning includes financial impacts of closures and enhanced operations for cleaning contractors and other precautions. One major impact at that time was cancelation of all large events or meetings. The staff safety training was scheduled that week, and leadership decided the risk was too high to have all front-line staff in the same room. They plan to have the training recorded and circulated to staff. Other guidance has been to provide call-in options for meetings, and that is why the meeting was moved last minute. Authorities are advising those over the age of 60 are at greater risk and to stay home. Bureau leadership is ensuring that all staff who are eligible to telework, update their paperwork and work from home. They are also enhancing communications with content on the Parks website and an email to all customers.

Erin asked if Parks is looking at front loading sick leave for new hourly employees. Adena shared that the Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) is looking into providing catastrophic leave for those who need it. There is a broader conversation about allowing staff to take time and earn it back later. Margaret added that they are looking at labor agreements and what options there are to address this concern.

### **Public Comment Policy Update**

Pat reminded the board that there is a board public comment policy in place that includes procedures for how community members can sign up to speak at board meetings. The board policy came about in response to Commissioner Fritz's request for there to be a formal process. Prior to this there was no process. As the current policy was developed there was not a lot of thought about how to constructively respond to the comment received at board meetings. The current process hasn't been useful for speakers or for the board. Comment has been random, and there is rarely preparation or context for hearing the issue being raised.





Erin and Pat worked to come up with a procedure to request public comment related to planned agenda items. It includes a structure for folks to comment on non-agenda items as well. This may include the opportunity to share with a working group or staff member who will respond. They would like to post on the website a calendar of upcoming agenda items and invite comment on those topics. This will help the board work more strategically and proactively in seeking feedback from communities or groups who may have interest in issues on the agenda. Paul suggested that the board try it on, see how it works, and adjust. He asked for other input.

Jim thanked Pat and Erin for their work. He asked if there will be flexibility with timing. Paul responded that yes there can be some flexibility. Jim asked if there needs to be a vote for the board to overrule which comment requests to bring to the board. Paul noted the addition of a future agenda items discussion to the agenda. Feedback on the agenda is always welcome.

Adena shared concern about staff capacity in managing the new process.

Erin suggested changing the language from policy to process.

## **Finance Committee Update**

Pat reported that at the finance working group, staff have shared the process for Sustainable Future and will continue working with the board. There is a point in which staff and the board cannot support a ballot measure in their official capacity.

The FY2020-21 PP&R budget will not be cut, but this means cuts for Parks as costs continue to increase. The bureau is asking for their General Fund methodology to be changed to help fill the gap that is created by the increase in rent at the Portland building and the 1900 Building.

The board discussed how they might be able to advocate for Parks funding. Paul highlighted that there will be opportunities for Parks board and foundation board to submit letters to the editor. There might be other opportunities to engage the broader community.

Katy suggested that a logo be created for a Sustainable Future and to investigate doing a public service announcement. There should be a message going out now.





Erin suggested that a group of members volunteer to support this work to get the message out. Paul, Katy and Jim volunteered to make calls and look into what's available. Randy and the foundation would be the key fundraiser for a campaign.

Adena add that this group should include members of the Parks board and the Parks Foundation board. Randy asked if there will be public polling. Todd responded that they will be identifying a contractor to conduct polling.

### **Land Use/Infrastructure Update**

Jim shared that the Land Use/Infrastructure working group meets on the first Tuesday of the month by conference call. They discuss many issues, and he invited others to join if they are interested.

He summarized the items they are tracking including the Conway site, the Green Loop, Grant HS bowl master plan, the I-5 Rose Quarter ODOT project, earthquake ready Burnside Bridge, and geofencing for e-scooters.

Paddy attended the Planning Commission meeting where they discussed the South Reach River Plan. The board's comments were well received.

### **Nominating Committees Updates**

Tamara shared that the board application is online, and the deadline is April 10. She shared that the main feedback on the board make up is the need for youth representation, diversity, knowledge in land use and education or youth development, and parent representation. In addition, members desire knowledge about institutional structure, government, legal and philanthropy. They also noted a lack of representation from the west side and downtown.

Tamara shared that the nominating committee will include Bonnie, Paul, Erin, Kendall and herself.

Erin will send to the board a draft recruitment email template for members to use. The nominating committee will coordinate looking at what groups to reach out to.

Pat shared that she has many people in mind. Erin has created a google tracking sheet to track who the board plans on reaching out to. Katy confirmed that the announcement is open to the public not just who they are inviting to apply. Mike suggested that they post the position more broadly.





Pat shared that she will be leading the officers nominating committee with Mike and maybe one other.

## **2019 Retreat Goals Review**

Paul reminded the board that at the June retreat they identified seven goals and four priorities. They have done well on three of them but have not made progress on the community development working group formerly focused on houselessness. Paul shared his recent experience in an urban park and noted the opportunity to support the bureau.

Tamara shared that in the past they have discussed this issue, and it is interdepartmental and bigger than Parks. Bonnie noted this large issue is the focus of the Joint Office on Homeless Services. She suggested that a board member get involved with the Joint Office.

Gladys stressed the need to advocate for the people not just the physical assets.

Todd shared that every Friday social service agencies, park Rangers, and others join a conference call hosted by the Joint Office where they share information in real time. The Fire Bureau has a pilot project looking into new ways to respond. Metro has just referred a homeless services initiative. The City of Portland will be receiving a substantial amount of new public housing dollars from this initiative. Katy asked if a board member could join the conference call on Fridays.

Adena suggested that if the board is interested, they can invite the Rangers and Marc Jolin from the Joint Office to come and brief them on their work. She also suggested that the working group conduct a brainstorming session, together with select staff, to identify what issues they want to focus on. This will help her identify the appropriate staff liaison.

## **Wrap-up and Request Future Agenda Items**

Paul noted that based on the meeting discussion they will invite BES and Parks staff to talk about trees at the next meeting. Randy would like to have a standing Parks Foundation update on the agenda. He added that he hoped to see everyone at the Saturday Friends Summit and on March 30 for the City Council Candidate Forum.





**PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION™**

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**Parks Board Meeting  
Adjourns**

The meeting adjourned at 10:09am.  
**Next meeting is Tuesday, April 14, 2020.**

