

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting information

Tuesday, August 8, 2023

5:00-7:00pm

Multnomah Arts Center and Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board members present:

Dr. C.N.E. Corbin (Board Co-Chair), Elana Pirtle-Guiney (Board Co-Chair), David Staczek, Suenn Ho, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Ali Berman, Crys O'Grady, Casey Mills, Erin Zollenkopf, Matt Shipkey, Patti Miles, Jonathan Beckhart, Adam Lewis

Board members absent:

Sabrina Wilson, Adrienne Feldstein, Randy Gragg (ex-officio)

City staff present:

Adena Long (Bureau Director), Michelle Tran (Executive Assistant), Joey Furuto (Chief Coordinator), Maximo Behrens (Recreation Division Manager), Jenn Cairo (City Forester), Tonya Booker (Land Stewardship Division Manager), Melody Brooks (Interim Equity & Inclusion Manager), Claudio Campuzano (Finance, Property, and Technology Manager), Margaret Evans (Workforce Development Manager), Kellie Torres (Commissioner Ryan's Chief of Staff), Laura Lehman (Senior Environmental Planner), Dawn Uchiyama (Bureau Director, Bureau of Environmental Services), Shannah Anderson (Environmental Specialist, BES), Nancy Hendrickson (Watershed O&M Division Manager, BES), Kaitlin Lovell (Planning Manager, BES), Ken Finney (Watershed O&M Natural Systems Manager, BES)

Others present:

Matthew Schick (Community Member), Kiona (Community Member), Kathy (Community Member), Jamila Dozier (New Theory Consulting), Becky Steckler (EcoNorthwest), Chris Caldwell (Catalysis), Bruce Nelson (Urban Forestry Commission)

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm with roll call following.

Agenda Items

Public Comment

Matthew Schick submitted a follow-up public comment regarding the previous PP&R permitted drone usage in non-parks property.

Kiona, a community member, submitted public comment regarding the Recreation catalogue sent out each season. She uses the Access Pass to be able to afford activities for all family members. Her challenge is that staff often do not know when physical Recreation Guides are published and when they are, it's too close to registration day. She would like them ready at least two weeks before early registration as well as a consistent timeline on when they are available.



Approve June Minutes

Elana Pirtle-Guiney (Board Co-Chair) moved to approve the minutes, with Suenn Ho (Board Member) seconding. All voted in approval and the motion was carried.

Director's Report

There was no Director's report as Director Long ceded her time to make room in the agenda for the guest presentations.

Working Group Reports (Q&A only)

Board Affairs

There were no questions.

Land Use & Infrastructure

Casey Mills (Board Member) asked about an update on the I-5 project. Director Long noted that a recent email from staff indicated that the Board would have an opportunity to weigh in on the project in the Fall.

Financial Sustainability

There were no questions.

Community Engagement

There were no questions.

Programming, Arts, Culture, and Nature Working Group

Adam Lewis (Board Member) gave a presentation on how the new working group could support and serve the Board and bureau overall. The new working group will be focused on accountability and review, strategic guidance, and staff-led collaboration, when needed.

Suenn Ho (Board Member) gave a comment about accessibility to Multnomah Arts Center (MAC) from other Portlanders. She would hope to bring some of the great programming at MAC to other centers in East Portland.

Natural Resource Service Delivery

Consultants Chris Caldwell (of Catalysis), Jamila Dozier (of New Theory Consulting), and Becky Steckler (of EcoNorthwest) gave a presentation on the current collaboration amongst PP&R, Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (BPS), and Portland Water Bureau.

Becky Steckler (EcoNorthwest) presented on an inventory assessment for Natural Resource Service Delivery that illustrated the complex and robust interrelationships between and among the various bureaus. The EcoNorthwest report also included a proposal that offered five opportunities for alignment of various program areas, things to consider and the importance of researching best practices. The proposed opportunities all centered around equitable distribution and access, and progress from least to most impactful. The most extensive and thorough opportunity is a proposal to create a Natural Resource Delivery unit – this could be a bureau, department, etc. (depending on city reorganization decisions). The terminology is meant to be undefined to accommodate future changes.



Jonathan Beckhart (Board Member) asked about timeline for this work. Director Long answered that determination will not likely happen in Fall 2023. There will be a survey sent out to stakeholders (e.g. the Board). For clarification, the Chief Administrative Officer, Michael Jordan, will share a proposed new city organization structure with community and staff in mid-September and he will present a proposed new city organizational structure to City Council for their consideration in October. There still needs to be work done before the determination is made.

Crys O'Grady (Board Member) asked about the funding that flowed between the bureaus. Disentangling different programs from the bureaus could require a lot of funding and was there analysis on this? Director Long answered that the slide of "things to consider" was important to illustrate how complicated the list is. Dawn Uchiyama (BES Director) also added that there are some components in place currently. BES is a highly regulated agency, so they already have an idea of how to map this out in the future.

Casey Mills (Board Member) asked about small group discussions – was it within each department or amongst bureaus? Director Long answered that all five bureau directors are involved as well as subject matter experts (SMEs) within the bureaus. Casey then asked if the Chief Administrator's office was involved and whether they were informed of this program. Director Long answered that Bureau Directors meet weekly and that the current CAO is a former BES director and is very familiar with the work as such.

Adam Lewis (Board Member) asked if there was comparative analysis to other cities and if there were, do the cities have similar climates to Portland? The consultants answered that this is considered future work that will take place.

Ali Berman (Board Member) asked about the programs and documents already taking place. Were there areas that did not have any bureau's ownership and/or fell through? Becky answered that there was not work done on this yet, just work that is in the inventory. Ali suggested that this was very important to look at gaps in order to move forward.

Suenn Ho (Board Member) asked how the consultants and staff ensure that this seen through? How do you measure success for something like this moving forward? Director Long answered that this was prompted by charter reform, and the bureaus saw this as good timing to this. Reporting to a city administrator in the new charter will be part of the accountability.

Dr. Corbin (Board Co-Chair) commented that opportunity 5, "Create a Natural Resources Organizational Unit", is the most appealing, as it would better integrate ecology into the city. She would like to see more about urban tree canopy and that infrastructure. What does it mean to create novel ecosystems? Communities in the front line are not able to wait 10-15 years for trees to mature and fill in the canopy. Are they seeing what a shared vision of an integrated blue/green Portland would look like? Director Long replied that there are many passionate people at these bureaus who have advocated for this for a long time in their work.

Bruce Nelson (Urban Forestry Commission) commented that there should be a differentiation of private and commercial property and whether they are part of these "Natural Resources." He also added that trees were not included in the Green Stormwater Infrastructure Services. What is expected of private property will be a tremendous influence on how public spaces will work in the future.



Elana Pirtle-Guiney (Board Co-Chair) asked about programs such as Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) that could have a big impact on this work. Director Long replied that since PCEF is under BPS, there is a lot of conversations with these programs within this scope.

Public Comment

There was no public comment, though earlier at the meeting during the presentation, Kathy, a community member, submitted testimony regarding her experience with dogs at Tanner Springs Park. Dogs are not permitted at this park, yet parkgoers still take them there. She would like to see more enforcement by Park Rangers on this.

Meeting Adjourned

Dr. Corbin (Board Co-Chair) adjourned this meeting at 6:59pm.

