

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting information

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

5:00-7:00pm

Portland Building Room 216 and Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board members present:

Dr. C.N.E. Corbin, David Staczek, Jonathan Beckhart, Adrienne Feldstein, Matt Shipkey, Ali Berman, Adam Lewis, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Suenn Ho, Patti Miles, Crys O'Grady, Casey Mills, Jessica Green (ex-officio)

Board Members absent:

Erin Zollenkopf

City staff present:

Adena Long (Bureau Director), Todd Lofgren (Bureau Deputy Director), Michelle Tran (Executive Assistant), Joey Furuto (Chief Coordinator), Maximo Behrens (Recreation Division Manager), Tonya Booker (Land Stewardship Division Manager), Melody Brooks (Interim Equity & Inclusion Manager), Lauren McGuire (Assets & Development Division Manager), Jenn Cairo (City Forester and Urban Forester Division Manager), Claudio Campuzano (Manager of Finance, Property, and Technology), Kellie Torres (Chief of Staff, Commissioner Dan Ryan)

Others present:

Matthew Schick (Community Member)

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

Agenda Items

Public Comment

Matthew Schick returned for public comment, has relayed that nothing has changed since he last gave public comment.

General Announcements

Crys O'Grady (Board Member) notified the Board that the Governor's task force of recommendations for improving downtown, with a few points affecting the Parks bureau. This includes the utilization of park rangers amongst downtown parks.

Approve November Minutes

Casey Mills (Board Member) moved to approve the minutes, Crys seconded. Matt Shipkey (Board Member) abstained due to a previous absence. All voted in approval and motion was passed.



Director's Report

Last month, it was requested that PP&R provide updates on the City's government transition moving forward.

Director Long shared with the Board how the City Council's approved resolution 37635 - the resolution that approved the revised organizational chart - will influence the budget requests.

Upon approval through the City Council's budget process, the new organizational chart takes effect July 1, 2024, with the possibility of hiring an interim city administrator next year. The interim city administrator would work closely with current City Council members, who will oversee the new service areas until Portland's new form of government officially launches January 1, 2025.

[Resolution 37635](#) added Citywide Operational Natural Area and Tree Management to the service area with Parks & Recreation and the Portland Children's Levy and City Arts.

Additional resolution language stated that "as part of the FY 2024-25 Budget, all City bureaus should align natural area and tree management positions, funding, and services to an "Operational Natural Area and Tree Management Unit" with Parks & Recreation, not including the Bull Run Watershed management."

In the coming weeks and months, PP&R will work with BES to build requested budgets responsive to the Council resolution and then the City Council and Mayor will finalize and approve the final budget this spring and early summer.

Together with Director Uchiyama and project managers Laura Lehman and Shannah Anderson, there have been several meetings to discuss next steps, including with Chris Caldwell from Catalysis who facilitated previous sessions. The team is working on a Roadmap and draft Work Plan outline that will be shared soon.

Following the November 1 City Council hearing and resolution, the Permit Improvement Team is moving forward with the next set of milestones for the Single Permitting Authority project.

The project management team has been working over the last two weeks with permitting staff in each of the bureaus to assess and move towards the following objectives:

- Identify what is in and out of scope for the single permitting authority
- Complete the groundwork for further exploration and concrete ideas on who, and how, they organize the new entity
- An opportunity for bureaus to provide best case scenarios for their work groups to be organized and operate in a new entity
- Develop how groups will come together to optimize the business process for customers and staff

These discovery sessions have been incredibly useful for gathering data and insights.

In early December, the project management team brought together subject matter experts for an all-day work session:

- Consider and refine scenarios of which functions and teams are essential for inclusion in a high functioning, customer focused process that provides equitable access as well as consistent, predictable, and timely services.
- Provide recommendations and options for the new structure to Michael Jordan, the CAO.



Adrienne Feldstein (Board Member) asked about what has been said so far about any future cuts since there are expected higher administration costs. Todd Lofgren answered that bureaus expect guidance from the City Budget Office sometime this month. There are no answers on that at the moment. He reiterated that unspent funds from the Levy stay in the Levy.

Adam Lewis (Board Member) said that there was an uptick in swim registrations and Goldenball – were those programs at capacity this year? Maximo Behrens answered that the numbers reflected on the fact that they were able to increase staffing in both Goldenball and the Aquatics program. Director Long also added that they increased the wage for Aquatics staff, which hadn't changed since 2018. Maximo said that the program also reflected an expansion of program offerings in indoor and outdoor pools.

Suenn Ho (Board Member) asked about the capacity and changes now that Mt. Scott is closed. Director Long answered that there are no cuts to staff – they are being reassigned to different areas and they are trying to navigate the changes in programs. Maximo added that though there is finite space, there continues to be various expansions and accommodations in programming. Director Long said that the pool season at Peninsula Park and Pier Pool will be expanded. The hours at Peninsula will also be extended since it's one of the few outdoor pools with lights.

Casey asked if a new capital bond would be considered even with the new taxes added by City Council and the Governor. Todd answered that the next coming weeks will have more results.

Working Group Reports (Q&A only)

Board Affairs

Casey said that there was a draft letter enclosed in the packet to send to the County. He called for a vote to send to the county. Elana moved that the Board sends the letter to the MultCo Commissioner, Crys seconded. All voted in favor except for Suenn, who abstained.

Land Use & Infrastructure

Lauren McGuire gave a brief update on Darcelle XV Plaza. PBOT will start demolition this winter. They have been working with PPF and PSU on design. There is a partner downtown, Clean and Safe, who will help with activation. She shared a map on the possible design expansions.

Suenn asked about what the opportunity to utilize the fence for art or some other similar use. Lauren said this is still in debate and just an interim design. David commented that he is still concerned about the fence being built. There is a disconnect on what the general fence might actually look like when built and the fencing of a public space. Lauren replied that she will have Project Manager Ross Swanson give some 3D renderings.

Patti Miles (Board Member) asked from Lauren to state why we need a fence. Lauren commented that Clean and Safe does not want to continue a partnership with us if there is a fence. Surrounding businesses have also asked for a fence installation.

Elana Pirtle-Guiney (Vice Chair) added comment that after seeing the debate with Grant Park about fields being closed off, it could be problematic to have this downtown. Todd replied that most public parks are closed overnight. Director Long added that the Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed by Clean & Safe, so the claim that the partnership will not continue is not necessarily true.



Dr. Corbin (Board Chair) commented that this could be a slippery slope to privatization and how the plaza could be permitted out to the point it would not be accessible to the public. Lauren replied that there is a limit on how many events that could occur in a year. Todd added that they want as many events as possible that are free and open to the public. He said that the city could be more descriptive on the type of events that would need to more open to public.

Patti said that the fence will likely not keep people out and gives a false sense of security.

Sabrina Wilson (Board Member) commented that there should be engagement on how the fence will be perceived by the public, regardless of the intent.

Adrienne asked if there was data on the cleanup services needed in other areas such as the Waterfront to gauge how much would be needed. Todd replied that what is being discussed with Clean and Safe is about cleaning services and security. They would be the ones enforcing park rules and cleanup.

Suenn commented that it would also be important to capture what Darcelle may have wanted in spirit for the Plaza.

Financial Sustainability/Budget Advisory Committee (BAC)

Bonnie Gee Yosick (Board Member) report that the first BAC occurred in November and the deck for that will be included in the next board packet. The December BAC meeting was postponed, and there will be a January BAC.

Community Engagement

There were no questions.

Programming and Recreation

Adam said the first meeting will be in January.

Portland Parks Foundation Report

90% Elk drawings were sent to the Portland Water Bureau (PWB). Tomorrow, PWB and PPF will be presenting to City Council on putting out a bid for Construction. PPF is currently focused on end of year fundraising.

Sabrina asked about the Leadership transition update. Jessica replied that the Recruitment Committee that they are still debating next steps.

Traditionally the PPF Board has an ex-officio member represent the PP&R Board. She noted that it is different than most ex-officio positions in that the member would have voting power.

Parks Levy Annual Report

Claire Flynn gave a review of the Parks Levy Annual Report.

Corbin asked to have some more disaggregated data about race and its breakdowns. She also asked if the levy helped pay for community members to hold their own programs. Todd replied that there are a variety of ways that some events are able to get the rental fee waived. There are also community grants given and the bureau has requests for grant applications. They are also welcome to speak with their Customer Service team at any time to explain their program.



Bonnie asked about program expansion and capacity for program expansion, particularly in Aquatics. Are there goals for Recreation expansion? Are the limits more workforce related, facility related, or other factors? Todd answered that there is a goal to have a full-service Community Center within 3 miles of every Portlander. Currently, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to meet the lap capacity standard in the city. Director Long added that with the potential 2nd grade swim program that could help. There is already staff working at the pools, the barrier previously was just about transportation and getting permission from families for kids to leave school for swimming.

Public Comment/Other Business

There was no public comment.

Suenn Ho asked about recent reports of dog walkers being attacked. Director Long answered that there was an increase in park patrolling and there haven't been future reports.

Crys made a comment about Darcelle XV – Clean and Safe has done community engagement. Places like Delta Park have fencing around their sports. She said as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, it would be difficult to speak on Darcelle's behalf.

Director Long notified the Board that there have been decisions around funding allocations of SDCs so there will be press releases sent out.

Corbin asked about data on bus stops. Ali commented that she leads accessibility outings for the disability community and there are few places on bus stops to areas of nature.

Meeting Adjourned

Corbin adjourned this meeting at 6:52pm.

