

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting information

February 11, 2024

5-7pm

Portland Building Room 216 and Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board members present:

Dr. C.N.E. Corbin, Ali Berman, Suenn Ho, Patti Miles, Casey Mills, Allison Snopek, David Staczek, Crys O'Grady, Matthew Shipkey, Jessica Green (ex-officio)

Board members absent:

Sabrina Wilson, Bill Van Bang, Erin Zollenkopf, Adrienne Feldstein

City staff present:

Adena Long (Bureau Director), Todd Lofgren (VCSS Deputy Director), Joey Furuto (Chief Coordinator), Michelle Tran (Executive Assistant), Maximo Behrens (Recreation Division Manager), Jenn Cairo (City Forester and Urban Forestry Division Manager), Claudio Campuzano (VCSS Finance, Property and Technology Manager), Mike Grosso (West Lands Manager), Robin Laughlin (Capital Renovation Program Manager), Brett Horner (Park & Trails Planning Manager), Marty Stockton (Senior Parks Planner)

Others present:

Anika, Michael Hernandez

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

Agenda Items

Public Comment

Anika submitted public comment regarding Portland Bike Polo, a nonprofit that plays at Alberta Park. She advocated for the use of Alberta Park's bike polo activities. Courts are currently too small to hold any qualifying tournaments (the needed dimensions are 140x180 feet). There is a growing demand for bike polo and their group currently drives down to Eugene in order to have some of the world's best bike polo players practice. The requirements for retrofits include having boards on the sides and bottoms of the courts, as well as lighting.

Michael Hernandez also submitted public comment as a supporter of bike polo. He has travelled internationally to play. In order to have proper courts in a safety aspect would require at least 4-foot boards on the sides. San Francisco is a great example of bike polo courts for surfacing. In Eugene, there has been heavy rains that were only partially obscured by the freeway. Ideally, having bleachers for both players and spectators would be helpful.

General Announcements

Dr. C.N.E. Corbin (Board Chair) let everyone know to send any feedback about the Board Annual Report draft by January 20.



Approve January Meeting Minutes

Suenn Ho (Board Member) moved to approve, Patti Miles (Board Member) seconded. All voted in approval, with Matt Shipkey (Board Member) abstaining, and the motion passed.

Director's Report

January 1st was a big milestone as far as the government transition is concerned, but that wasn't the end, and it's been a whirlwind ever since. Now, the City is entering the next phase of its transition to a new form of government and organizational structure, while simultaneously facing a \$100+ million budget gap. As such, City leadership is exploring ways to streamline core services and ensure the most effective use of resources.

This year, they will re-set citywide strategies and staffing models for the following areas: procurement, human resources, technology, budget and business operations, communications, engagement and equity. Work has already begun in some areas and many subject matter experts are being engaged in the processes. In many cases, this reset will result in elevating these functions to the service area level rather than the bureau level and it may mean moving positions across service areas, bureaus and programs.

Another concept under consideration is dissolution of the Vibrant Communities Service Area, and reassignment of VC bureaus and offices to other service areas. I sent an email regarding this on Friday. This concept will be included, along with other ideas, in a package of budget options Administrator Jordan will release at the end of February for community feedback. And as you know, Mayor Wilson will propose a balanced budget in early May, and City Council will amend and approve a budget in June. There was a possibility that incoming Council and City leaders would refine the organizational model that was designed last year. That process is now being heavily informed by the City's financial challenges. These changes are either in progress and under consideration, and the bureau will continue to keep you apprised.

Dr. Corbin (Board Chair) asked about morale amongst staff right now with these changes. What lessons were learned in the first go-around that could be implemented to ensure not too much work was done futilely? Director replied that the dissolution is only conceptual at this point and so morale varies.

Crys O'Grady (Board Member) asked how much of a cost savings would the dissolution be? Director replied that there would be removal of some offices that are currently supporting the service in order to meet the funding gap.

In the Oregonian story on February 4, the City Council President will not be taking up the Parks Levy referral this May but will defer a proposed ballot measure to a later date. Quote from the story: "The parks levy is imperative to supporting the parks system — from swim classes to basketball courts," she said. "Placing the parks levy on the November ballot will allow the council and the community more time to thoughtfully consider how we continue supporting a parks system that meets Portlanders needs." Partners, Portland Parks Foundation and the Intertwine Alliance are interested in supporting options the Parks Levy's future and have been in discussions.



Relatedly, the Parks Local Option Levy Year 3 Annual Report and its Levy Oversight annual report was presented and unanimously accepted by City Council on January 15th.

Corbin thanked Crys and Casey Mills (Board Member) for generating the letter for the ad hoc committee on the Levy.

The City Administrator's Budget is set to come out on/about February 28 and then the Mayor's Budget is set to come out on/about May 1. If the Parks Levy is renewed at its current rate, \$.80 per \$1,000 of assessed value, PP&R will need to implement reductions of about \$23 million in FY 25-26 and an additional \$27 million in reductions in FY 26-27. This is about 25% of PP&R's current operating budget. The team will provide an overview of the current projections and any further information we receive regarding the City Administrator's Budget at the Financial Sustainability Working Group meeting on February 20.

On January 21, Mayor Wilson addressed Portland City Council highlighting concerns about the new federal administration's immigration enforcement plans. The mayor emphasized Portland's commitment to its sanctuary city status and called on city councilors to support the community by sharing resources, encouraging legal aid, and fostering understanding of immigrant rights. He urged collaboration with local organizations to protect undocumented families. Despite potential federal consequences, Wilson reaffirmed Portland's dedication to standing with its immigrant residents and upholding the city's values of freedom from fear and sanctuary from federal overreach. City Administrator Jordan has shared a one pager with all staff on how to interact with Federal Immigration Agents. A guide and one pager has been prepared and shared with all staff on how to interact with Federal Immigration Agents

Casey asked how much federal funding the city receives? Director replied that there was quite a bit, mostly through one-time grants, rather than regular allocations. There hasn't been any halting of funds so far, but there are concerns about tariffs on construction materials and upcoming capital projects. Casey asked about the percentage of federal funding that is used for PP&R. Todd mentioned that there are only a few grants so financial exposure is limited.

Included in the packet is also an executive summary of the Blue Green Deal that will be submitted to PCEF. There are multiple parts to the proposal that could be partially or wholly accepted by PCEF. Materials will be submitted to PCEF by February 20. Laura commented that the decision would hopefully be made by the March 20 PCEF meeting, and hopefully be folded into the budget. This would be additive to the budget, not filling in gaps in the budget.

Working Group Reports (Q&A only)

Board Affairs

There were no questions.

Land Use & Infrastructure

There were no questions.

Financial Sustainability

There were no questions. Casey highlighted a link to a map of the city with all the Parks facilities listed.



Community Engagement

There were no questions.

Nominating Committee

Casey, Crys, Bill, and Suenn will be serving in the Nominating Committee.

Culture, Nature, and Recreation

Ali will be sending out a doodle to meet and discuss a big picture on goals for the working group.

Portland Parks Foundation

George Park project is currently on hold due to fundraising and project delays.

Elk Fountain is on schedule to return by end-of-year. PPF is selecting stones from the original quarry this week.

PPF has been in conversation with the City and Intertwine Alliance about the levy referral in November. There will be strategy discussion for communications to the public. Jessica has participated in two community-led parks tours for District 4 and District 1 Councilors as hosted by the Portland Parks Alliance. This group was heavily focused on sustainable funding for parks and finding alternatives to levies, as well as the maintenance backlog.

Service Equity Tool

This presentation by Brett and Marty was shown to the Land Use and Infrastructure working group initially and they felt it necessary for the full Board to review.

After much discussion, Brett and Marty will bring the next phases of developing the Equity tool to the Board for additional feedback.

Dr. Corbin asked what the markers of success would be. Brett replied that the ultimate goal would be to even out the heat map of park assets. Year by year, it would be best to see how quickly the impact would be with the dollars invested. The next steps would be to go to the communities to see priorities. The Equity tool is merely an initial score that is a starting point.

Public Comment/Other Business

There was no public comment.

Ali thanked Suenn for attending the public testimony on January 29 on behalf of the Board.

Meeting Adjourned

Corbin adjourned the meeting at 6:57pm.

