

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

9:00 - 11:00 am

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

Punneh Abdolhosseini, Paul Agrimis, Alejandra Cortes, Mike Elliott, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Katy Holland, Randy Gragg, Ian Jaquiss, Tamara Layden, Casey Mills, Lorena Nascimento, Juan Piantino, David Staczek, Paddy Tillett, Erin Zollenkopf

Board Members Absent

Jenny Glass and Alejandro Orizola

City Staff Present

Maximo David Behrens, Jenn Cairo, Claudio Campuzano, Cynthia Castro, Tim Collier, Margaret Evans, Brooke Gardner, Vicente Harrison, Eder Katembwe, Todd Lofgren, Adena Long, Lauren McGuire, Commissioner Carmen Rubio, Ken Rumbaugh, Maija Spencer, Kenya Williams

Call to Order/Review/Approve December Minutes

Board Chair Paul Agrimis called the meeting to order at 9:02am and requested a motion to approve the December minutes. Paddy made the motion, David seconded, and they were unanimously approved.

New Parks Commissioner Carmen Rubio

Paul introduced the new PP&R Commissioner, Carmen Rubio. Commissioner Rubio thanked the Board for their service and shared the value of parks to the community and to her personally. Commissioner expressed their commitment to expanding PP&R services for all Portlanders. The Board shared introductions.

Shelter to Housing Continuum (S2HC) Letter

The Board recently drafted a letter to the Planning and Sustainability Commission regarding the S2HC. The position expressed in the letter did not receive full consensus and in the development of the letter many perspectives were shared. Paul included time on the agenda to discuss the issue.

Bonnie shared that while they do not support unfettered camping in parks, they should push local government to think outside the box to address the housing issue. PP&R is supporting the effort by offering community centers as shelters and supporting meal delivery, but Bonnie would like to push the envelope for other solutions while minimizing impacts on PP&R resources.



Tamara shared that she did not support the letter because it wasn't clear if people living in parks would be removed as a result. She agreed that they should push the envelope for solutions.

Punneh works with folks who are houseless living on METRO property, and they often get left out of the conversation when it comes to equity. Punneh highlighted the need for drastic, bold changes to support these individuals and would like to discuss this more.

Randy was caught off guard with this letter. The Parks Foundation wanted to submit a letter. He felt uneasy about the letter when they didn't have time to provide a thoughtful response.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability has been working on a S2HC proposal. The proposal to include open space came from the Planning Commission fairly late in the process. Adena raised the issue and pushed for this effort when she became aware of the proposal for open space. Paul did not want to be asleep on this issue as it impacts PP&R and would be a permanent change.

Juan and other Board members feel they do not have enough information on the housing issue to have an educated decision on the topic and requested more data on the issue rather than touching briefly on it and moving on. Juan thought the letter was appropriate. Homeless folks need help, but other Portland residents deserve to feel safe using parks.

Working Group Reports

Community Development

The group did not meet in the past month. Tamara has started developing a proposal. The group will meet before the February Board meeting and will have feedback from participants.

Financial Sustainability

The working group met last week, and the agenda included a review of the budget planning process, the ongoing budget monitoring process, a look at the burn rate (revenue and expenses). The fiscal year is 42% complete and 32% of expenses have been realized and 47% of revenues have been realized. At their next meeting, Asset Manager Chris Silkie will provide an overview of the known asset portfolio condition. The Mayor's budget guidance for fiscal year 2021-22 includes a 5% General Fund reduction for large bureaus but PP&R will backfill any shortages with levy funds. The Budget Advisory Committee is meeting before the requested budget is submitted on January 29. A letter from the BAC will go to Council and will include Board input. PP&R is hiring a Sustainable Future Manager and Levy Coordinator in February.

Land Use/Infrastructure

The working group met last week and received a presentation on the Burnside Bridge Replacement Process. The decision on the bridge type is underway. Randy and Paddy are on the design committee, and the committee is narrowing down the best options. They won't know what the bridge will look like until June. Paddy's main concern is ensuring access to and from the Eastbank Esplanade and pedestrian crossing access. ODOT is proceeding with the I-5

corridor project. The issue for PP&R has been that proposed freeway covers should not be considered park land. Work on the I-5 project will not begin until March at the earliest. Another topic the working group discussed was Level of Service for parks and they suggest moving away from the metric of distance to a park to the metric of density to ensure an equal share of services accessible. The downtown neighborhood association has applied the South Park Blocks for historic landmark designation which would restrict the park to its original design. This is directly in conflict with the Green Loop design in the South Park Blocks Master Plan. The Historic Landmarks Commission will be reviewing the nomination on February 19. Public comment will be accepted until then. Bonnie suggested the Board submit comment. Paul Bonnie and Paddy will draft a letter for the Board to review.

Process Improvement Ad Hoc

Bonnie had no update on the process improvement. The tree planting narrative went out last month. Process improvement will continue in other functions that affect the two bureaus.

Affirmation of Equity Statement

Alejandra worked with Tamara and Casey on reviewing the Affirmation of Equity Statement. They have two versions that will be sent to Kenya for feedback. They will bring one or both drafts to the board for discussion.

Portland Parks Foundation Report

After a year of incredible pivots from a completely different set of initiatives, the Foundation ended up in good shape. They kickstarted a meal delivery program, held their first Friends and Allies Summit successfully, raised \$100,000 in the final month of the year, gained 100 new donors, increased the number of donations, and converted dollars to operation and ended the year in the black. They will hold another Friends and Allies Summit in April. The Green Dreams series will return on March 15 with the theme reinventing downtown. Following each lecture, they will have a town hall for activists working in this space. The Foundation is working on restarting the conversation around O'Bryant Square and an idea for a festival along the Park Blocks. They are returning to the campaign they started last year before COVID hit focused on branding Portland as the City of Gardens in anticipation of American Public Gardens Association coming to Portland. The Foundation created an online guide to all public gardens in and around Portland. They hope to bring a Proclamation to Council to announce Portland as the City of Gardens. The levy has changed the landscape and provided an opportunity to think about what the next generation of what PPF should be. With a newly expanded Foundation Board they have an opportunity to reinvent the Foundation and collaborate more with the Bureau.

Sustainable Future Listening Sessions

Tim thanked the board for time to share recent listening sessions held with BIPOC community members. The Community Engagement team traditionally worked with community members to identify what they need when the Bureau develops or redevelops a park. As we do the Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland work, they will be more engaged with community to understand what the community needs and learn if the Bureau is meeting those needs.

Maija Spencer shared an overview of the Sustainable Future Listening Sessions. Overall themes included: safety in parks at night; lighting; people experiencing homelessness; lack of Rangers/Security; open drug use and paraphernalia; and cleanliness of parks. The team learned that Recreation fees are a barrier for 73% of listening session participants and communities would like more free family friendly events like Summer Free For All. They learned that requiring paperwork for scholarships or discounts make it difficult for residents to access resources. Community members requested more culturally specific recreation for multi-generation households. The Bureau will work to offer culturally specific outreach, marketing, and events. The team also heard a lot of appreciation for PP&R and programs. The team shared an overview with the Bureau's Senior Management Team and will meet with Bureau divisions to help guide programming decisions. Additional listening sessions will be held with other communities, youth, older adults, and those living with disabilities. Ken Rumbaugh ran through a community listening session reenactment.

Lorena noted that BIPOC communities are diverse and one person of color does not represent the perspective of the whole group. She added that there needs to be a safe sense of place for folks to feel welcome. Art within a park for example should connect to the culture of those who live close to the park.

Erin asked why they are holding the listening sessions via Zoom and why they are not using other outreach options like surveys to reach more Portlanders.

Tim highlighted the need to use Zoom during the current pandemic and Maija added that traditional survey methods attract middle aged white women. They are intentionally engaging with people who do not traditionally fill out surveys. As weather improves, they may hold sessions in person outdoors and socially distanced.

Tamara asked if compensation was offered to participants. Tim noted the limitations City staff have in their ability to compensate participants; however, PP&R was able to compensate partner organizations who were able to provide compensation to participants.

Tamara noted that safety in parks was highlighted, and that might mean different things to different communities. She asked the team to tune into the nuances and diversity within BIPOC communities. Tim responded that they will be having a lot of conversations with people throughout the community. They want to hear from individuals within specific communities as they anticipated major changes one way or the other with the levy measure. They are at the beginning of the conversation, building stronger partnerships, and pulling more specific information that is nuanced. They saw themes across the sessions and will take them back to work groups to see if there is enough to make changes to services and programs to meet the community's needs. This is an ongoing year after year process.

NRPA Memberships & February Agenda Conversation

Paul shared that the Bureau has memberships with the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association and City Parks Alliance that the Board can utilize as well. There are six National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) memberships available through the Bureau as well. Paul suggested that the Board Chair and Vice Chair receive NRPA membership and asked the Board to consider who from the Board might receive the additional four – potentially the chairs of the working groups. Mike, Paddy and Tamara offered the membership to others who may be interested.

The February meeting agenda may include the Affirmation of Equity Statement.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 am.