

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting information

Tuesday, May 14, 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, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Suenn Ho, Patti Miles, Crys O'Grady, Casey Mills, Sabrina Wilson, Jessica Green (ex-officio)

Board Members absent:

Adam Lewis

City staff present:

Adena Long (Bureau Director), Todd Lofgren (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, Vibrant Communities), Evan Callahan (Capital Project Manager)

Others present:

Sean Brady, Chris Helmsworth

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

Agenda Items

Public Comment

Community member Sean from Bike Polo wanted to reopen talks to work with PP&R. Currently sharing Alberta Park with four other clubs is difficult. He would like a nicer facility with boards and other amenities for bikes.

Chris submitted public comment on the discussion around the potential sale of Red Tail Golf Course. He was concerned about the precedent set if the land is sold, stewardship of the land and its natural area, and the fact that Red Tail is responsible for underwriting operating costs at the City's other public golf courses.

General Announcements

Bonnie Gee Yosick (Board Member) added a revision to the agenda – Jonathan Beckhart will take any questions regarding FSWG.



This May meeting is Jonathan's last, as Jonathan has resigned from the Board.

Vote for Vice Chair

Dr. C.N.E. Corbin (Board Chair) moved to vote Board Member Ali Berman as Co/Vice Chair. Casey Mills (Board Member) seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Ali abstaining, and the motion passed.

Approve April Minutes

Due to the mistake in sending previous minutes, the April minutes will be deferred to the June meeting.

Director's Report

The Portland Clean Energy Fund has opened another round of applications, called 'collaborating for climate action', for an anticipated \$158 million in forecasted revenues through Fiscal Year 29. Letters of intent are due May 17, if selected to continue to a full proposal, full proposals will be due June/July, with decisions issued in September. Community outreach was limited due to time constraints.

Organizations can only serve as lead applicant for one proposal this round, with application amounts ranging from \$20-100 million. PP&R staff met with PCEF staff to discuss and refine the bureau proposal and better understand the types of projects most likely to be successful, and Director Long has directed staff to propose an approximately \$75 million proposal titled 'Caring for Nature'.

The proposal includes funding for:

- Community garden operating support and garden expansion
- Restoration, habitat creation and fire mitigation
- Ecologically Sustainable Landscape Initiative and horticulture services
- Engaging East Portland low-canopy neighborhoods in community tree planting
- Park Pathway Lighting Dark Sky compliant LED conversion project

Ali commented that PCEF is heavily scrutinized, and she recommended that members follow updates on PCEF as they have a strong connection to PP&R. Director Long added that since they bringing in much higher revenue than anticipated, PCEF seems to be experiencing capacity issues.

Corbin commented that there have been feelings from the public on how they can engage with PCEF. What opportunities are available for the community to engage with PP&R/PCEF on how the funding works? Director Long responded that the PCEF team has shared in a work session on how they engage with community. This includes hiring more staff to further work with the public on the funding process.

Sabrina Wilson (Board Member) commented that as a PCEF grantee (from Rosewood Initiative), the terminology is complex. Director Long said that there could be better coordination on "matchmaking" community partners with PCEF. Ali commented that staff are very receptive to the question and work from both PP&R and PCEF and Sabrina agreed. They have been able to receive meaningful feedback and work with partners.



Adrienne Feldstein (Board Member) asked about the grants' perspective. Director commented that the programs were organized in different categories. The next step is the letter of intent, as the grant or proposal has not been written yet. Ali commented that their grant committee consisted of volunteers similar to the PP&R Board. The Committee has received 300 applications, so it is a big program to run. They needed staff to help filter the applications but are still trying to keep this community focused. Sabrina also added that PCEF's reporting has been very thorough and intense, almost to the point of taking a lot of administrative capacity, but the staff have been very helpful in order to not make this a barrier to applying.

Ali Berman commended Recreation on hosting an event that let community members try a variety of which helped boost attendance of future recreational programs.

Casey asked about the ZenDesk usage from the bureau and which working groups could be used to discuss how it's being used. PP&R will find the appropriate working group to discuss its implementation.

Claudio shared news on the Mayor's Proposed Budget that was released two weeks ago. They had a Council work session last week. Related to the budget process, there was a work session on PCEF this morning. Tomorrow, the Approved Budget will be heard and approved.

In the proposed budget:

- As a reminder, PP&R took a 5% reduction on our General Fund allocation that amounted to \$4.6 million.
- The Mayor's Proposed Budget included a little over \$11 million total in General Fund cuts Citywide.
- In addition, PP&R's budget includes an ongoing reduction of \$6 million to the Parks Levy forecast based on compression.
- Both of those resource reductions were included in the Requested Budget and moved through to the Proposed Budget.
- There is a substantial balance generated over several years as the bureau grew into the Parks Levy. That is serving as a shock absorber in the near term.
- As far as changes in the Mayor's Proposed Budget, some good news: the interagency for the Impact Reduction Program was decreased from \$2.7 million to \$1.2 million on a one-time basis.
- As Title 11 Trees private development functions move to the new single permitting function, there was a gap identified between the expenses for the program they are building and the revenues that we are projecting. That gap is being filled by Parks. The team expects that there may be an amendment that would ensure that this is a one-time subsidy to the new group and that there is the expectation that they move to full cost recovery. In the meantime, PP&R is subsidizing about \$272,000.
- \$7million offset – looking to get inflationary increase
- Make Park Rangers whole (held harmless from general fund cuts)
- Composite health benefits

Bonnie asked for clarity on the accounting process and policies on sweeping General Fund first to get the most leverage on levy dollars. Claudio replied that City Budget has now recognized this, but it will be done again next and go through relatively smoothly.



Ali asked for clarity on whether PP&R was taking on 40-45% of the City's budget reductions compared to everyone else. Also, was this typical to see for PP&R? Claudio answered that yes, it was accurate and also higher than expected. Over the years, there hasn't been such a reduction. Ali asked if there was a role for the board to take to help advocate where appropriate. Director Long replied that tomorrow with the amendment process, there is an opportunity for advocacy at Council when the amendments are being voted. Ali volunteered to submit testimony tomorrow for Council.

Working Group Reports (Q&A only)

Board Affairs

There were no questions.

Land Use & Infrastructure

There were no questions.

Financial Sustainability

Matt asked about the alternative funding options slide deck. What were the cities that opposed the Parks District? Director Long replied that it was Tualatin Hills and Bend Parks Districts.

Community Engagement

Meeting was cancelled in the past month.

Recreation, Nature, and Programming

Meeting was cancelled in the past month.

Portland Parks Foundation Report

Friends and Allies Summit is this Thursday evening.

Regarding a possible candidates forum for those running for City Council - In the past, PPF has hosted forums online for City Council candidates. There were about 30 candidates that were available. There was a selection process that included PP&R Board members and there was 8 candidates that participated overall. There has been a proposal for an ad hoc committee to discuss putting this together and provide an opportunity for community to hear from candidates' positions on parks systems. The next steps would be determining who would like to volunteer for the committee.

Bonnie added that in the past, when it was done, it was through three PPF Board members and three PP&R Board members. She noted that it cannot be the full Board participating, but a small group can provide appropriate levels of context of the relationship of both Boards with PP&R and the City as a whole.

With Jonathan leaving, that leaves an ex-officio spot available on the PPF Board.

ADA Transition Plan Annual Report

Adena introduced the topic and included additional items that the bureau has been working on in addition to this transition plan. Also, the Equity & Inclusion team will be moving to report to Kellie Torres, Chief of Staff to the Deputy City Administrator. Two years ago, Jonathan Simeone was hired as the bureau's first Disability Analyst. Since then, he has convened a committee



called Accessibility Champions consisting of 40-50 staff to discuss accessibility within PP&R work and programming. He is also working on six Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including Addressing Accommodations, Service Animals, Events, and Complaints. There is an assessment on the process surrounding accessible community engagement and making it part of the main community engagement process.

Bonnie asked if PAAC has only worked with A&D, or whether it's integrated with the whole bureau. Director Long confirmed that though the Committee has weighed in on issues related to teams within Recreation for example, a majority of ADA related inquiries is related Capital Projects from A&D.

Capital Project Manager Evan Callahan shared a presentation on the Transition Plan Annual Report.

Suenn asked what needs to be done for the parks that are already built from here forward. Director Long noted that with new projects, there is ADA consideration at the forefront. It's more about the catch-up work from within existing parks and park amenities. Evan added that internal small project renovation work also brings existing park assets into compliance.

Patti Miles (Board Member) asked if the \$1 million allocated could be scaled. Director Long answered that no, and the bureau adds supplemental funding for these. This includes hiring two carpenters that are specifically assigned to ADA compliance work.

Casey asked if any of the Levy funding would be used for this. Director Long replied that other than staffing related funding, the Levy is primarily allocated for Operations.

Dr. Corbin asked if this information could be "translated" for the general public to easily absorb. Also, are there any wheelchair accessible swings and whether there is a place to search for this? Director Long replied that yes, there is and can be found on the website under Playgrounds and Accessible Playgrounds.

Crys O'Grady (Board Member) asked what can the Board and outer public can do to advocate for additional funding? Director Long replied that with conversations on a future bond, ADA compliance and work is on the list of high priorities.

Public Comment/Other Business

There was no public comment.

Meeting Adjourned

Corbin adjourned this meeting at 7:02pm.

