

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

8:00 - 10:00 am

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board Members Present

Alejandra Cortes, Mike Elliott, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Paul Agrimis, Randy Gragg, Katy Holland, Ian Jaquiss, Tamara Layden, Casey Mills, Alejandro Orizola, Juan Piantino, David Staczek, Paddy Tillett, Erin Zollenkopf, Jenny Glass

Board Members Absent

Lorena Nascimento, Puneh Abdolhosseini

City Staff Present

Tonya Booker, Jenn Cairo, Claudio Campuzano, Lauren McGuire, Tim Collier, Margaret Evans, Vicente Harrison, Todd Lofgren, Adena Long, Kenya Williams, Jamie Sandness, Nicola Sysyn, Tamara Burkovskaia

Call to Order/Social/Check-in

Board Chair Paul Agrimis called the meeting to order at 8:02 am and led members in a social activity.

Review/Approve September Minutes

There were no comments or notes to the October meeting minutes, and Paul asked for a motion to approve them. Paddy made the motion, Alejandro seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Director's Report

Adena shared the highlights of the past month. The biggest accomplishment was the approval of the Parks Operating Levy by 64% of voters. The levy funding will allow PP&R to improve access to and safety at parks, provide equitable recreation programs, proactively take care of assets and community centers, and open public pools, if public health authorities allow. Adena thanked the Parks Board, Parks Foundation and Randy personally, volunteers and PP&R staff for working tirelessly with the community to gain support for the levy. She also recognized an important role that late Commissioner Nick Fish played in laying the foundation for the levy work. PP&R is planning the steps for building a ramp for the levy and will keep the Board informed about what will be happening in the months to come.

Over the last few months hundreds of large, peaceful demonstrations took place in Portland parks, with some instances of vandalism and property damage. PP&R staff are working to ensure that parks are safe places for all people. Adena reiterated that she stands with Black, Indigenous, People of Color and immigrants and refugees, and with peaceful protesters.



PP&R will have a new Commissioner in January; in the meantime, Commissioner Fritz remains PP&R Commissioner.

Casey asked if PP&R has a list of priorities that will be funded through the levy. Adena, Todd and Claudio informed that PP&R is currently working with the Budget Advisory Committee on building a ramp, and the immediate priorities include scaling up human resources and creating space for the new staff to be hired, building capacity, enhancing community engagement process and planning for the Summer 2021 programming. The levy budget planning will be synchronized with the FY 21-22 budget planning. Even though funds from the levy will not be available until November 2021, PP&R we will be working on a process to access a limited amount of resources early next year through an inter-fund loan to cover near-term activities.

Paul thanked everyone who contributed to the passage of the levy and gave special thanks to Randy for leading the highly effective and successful levy campaign.

Working Group Reports

Community Development

Tamara reported on a discussion that the group had regarding the concept of where the Board is going. Specifically, they talked about:

- influential power of the Board and its committees,
- how the Board can make/influence change,
- how the Board can hear from the ground up,
- how to develop shared understanding and definitions, for example definitions of racial equity and community development, and
- what trainings are needed to bring everybody together and share knowledge.

The discussion will continue for the next 2-3 months, and the group will develop a summary and determine what support is needed, such as involvement of the full Board and, potentially, the community.

Adena suggested that Kenya and Tim continue to be involved in the discussion to provide background and basic knowledge about what the Bureau is doing. Tamara agreed that participation of Tim and Kenya helps transparency and aligning the efforts of the Board and PP&R. Paul emphasized the importance of the work done by the Community Development group as it will help the Board and PP&R deliver quality services more equitably. There is a clear need for coordination and communication between the Board and PP&R to make it happen.

Financial Sustainability

Mike advised that the meeting of the group was postponed to the next week due to a calendaring conflict. He also provided updates on the recent budget modifications that will positively impact major maintenance funding, provide funding for bathroom security, fixing the Pioneer Courthouse Square damage, the IFCC project and a full-time Levy Coordinator position. The budget process will change for the next couple of years as a result of the levy.

Land Use/Infrastructure

Paddy provided updates on several projects, such as the I-5 Rose Quarter project, South Park blocks, the South Reach Plan, Off-Road Bike Trails, Southwest Corridor, the Burnside Bridge Replacement project, and Grant Park improvements. The group also provided input for the Tree Code amendment related to exceptions to the tree removal provisions. Paddy appreciated the involvement of Commissioner Fritz with Off-Road Cycling Master Plan as she asked BPS to slow down the work until the new Commissioner is appointed. The Board had to deal with a lot of lobbying activity from both sides, the mountain biking community and the neighborhood communities, both caring about our parks, but it was disappointing that both sides were vocal in pushing their agenda and were not willing to hear each other. Since the Metro ballot measure failed, the Southwest Corridor conversations will likely to be on hold for at least two years.

Process Improvement Ad Hoc

Bonnie shared the information about recruiting members for the Parks Bond Oversight Committee – if anybody on the Board is inclined and has capacity, they should apply before the December 4 deadline. Paul noted that it would be beneficial for a Board member to participate in the Nature Investment Board.

Bonnie also informed that there is not much to report on the BES/PP&R process improvement work since Jennifer produced the draft narrative document. Bonnie has not seen the revised version yet, but as soon as the revised version is available, she will share it with the Board.

Portland Parks Foundation Report

Randy talked about PPF's essential role in passing the levy. He described the campaign carried out by the Foundation in support of the levy. The main goal of the campaign was to sway the opinion of 27 % of people who said "maybe" responding to the question about the levy during public polls. Randy expressed appreciation of the initial contribution of Commissioner Fish who laid the groundwork for the levy, the support from the Nature Conservancy, Latino Network, Labor Unions, Portland Business Alliance, Nike and many other organizations and individuals who helped with a fundraising campaign, endorsements, donations and community outreach. "Many hands made the heavy work lighter," concluded Randy.

Board Meeting Schedule

To accommodate family and other obligations of several Board members, it was decided to move the meeting time to 9:00 – 11:00 am on the second Tuesday of the month. The calendar appointment with the new meeting time will be re-sent shortly.

Follow-up on the Retreat in June

At the last Board retreat, some concerns were voiced about safety in the parks. The Board wants to be helpful to PP&R in addressing safety issues. PP&R is striving to be an anti-racist organization, and the Board is willing to provide advice and support to Parks in achieving this goal and implementing needed policies.

Todd informed that PP&R is currently working on two topics – Employee Safety and Public Safety – both came out of the employee survey. PP&R is planning to establish two work groups that will be working on these topics, and this work will be important for the levy. The Board is welcome to contribute suggestions for this work. PP&R will also reach out to culturally specific organizations regarding how levy funding can be used to improve safety for staff and park visitors and make parks really welcoming. Hopefully, some levy funding can be used to increase the number of Park Rangers. Vicente added that his group has updated the Red Book and is working on the Safe Policy, which will inform staff what is available to them in terms of safety.

Conversation with Commissioner Amanda Fritz

Paul welcomed Commissioner Fritz to the meeting. Commissioner Fritz thanked the Board members for their dedication and for the support to PP&R and the levy.

She advised the Board to prepare a briefing memo for the new PP&R Commissioner to share the Board’s agenda, successes and priorities in guiding PP&R and to invite the Commissioner to a Board meeting. Since there will be three new Commissioners on the City Council, it would be helpful to inform them all about the role and accomplishments of the Board.

Commissioner Fritz shared that she is working on an Executive Order to rename one of the parks in SW Portland to demonstrate support to the BLM movement.

Update on the Affirmation of Equity Statement

Affirmation of Equity Statement, which has been discussed at previous meetings, should reflect how the Board is going to support equity. Erin noted that the statement still needs to be refined to be more in an alignment with what Parks is doing now. Paul proposed to form a small group to work on this. Alejandra, Randy and Paul volunteered to work on re-drafting the statement and bring it to the full Board for review and discussion. If other Board members are interested in working on the statement, they are welcome to join the group.

Adena informed that PP&R is also working on the equity statement and building capacity in culturally specific organizations, and she suggested that Kenya joins a meeting of the group working on the Board Affirmation of Equity statement to provide Parks insight and share what we are doing. Kenya provided an update on the Bureau’s work on the equity statement and the equity lens tool. Parks has engaged internal stakeholders, such as DEC (Diversity Equity Committee) and FEST (Fostering Equity Support Team) and is working on the equity statement using a bottom up approach. His team will be working on communication plans on how to operationalize the equity lens tool.

Randy asked how external partners will be informing Bureau’s internal policies related to equity. Kenya said that this will happen through building robust, authentic relationships with culturally specific communities and centering equity. Tim spoke about PP&R’s current relations with diverse Portland communities and determination to build a more authentic relationship with marginalized communities. The outreach work and listening sessions related to the levy

allowed to enhance the relations with the refugee and immigrant community. PP&R is in the process of hiring the Community Engagement Manager who will lead this work and bring in people who have not been part of conversations yet.

Adena answered a question if PP&R has a framework that can help institutionalize the work on equity statement and equity lens tool. She informed that this work will follow the Parks Planning Framework, which can be introduced at the next Board meeting or subgroup meetings. This framework captures an on-going, continuous process of continuous improvement and includes five components: Where are we? What did we hear? What more do we need to know? What kind of organization do we want to be? What do we need to do?

December Agenda Conversation

Paul asked if there were any items that members would like to add to the December meeting agenda. A conversation about the Parks Planning Framework can be an agenda item. Board members are invited to propose agenda items via email to Paul and Bonnie by mid-month, prior to the meeting that Paul, Bonnie, Adena and Brooke have to finalize the agenda for the next meeting.

Paul thanked members for their engagement and adjourned the meeting at 9:51 am.