

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting information

Tuesday, November 12

5-7pm

Portland Building Room 216 and Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board members present:

Dr. C.N.E. Corbin, Ali Berman, Matthew Shipkey, Suenn Ho, Patti Miles, Casey Mills, Jessica Green (ex-officio), Allison Snopek, Sameer Kanal, David Staczek, Adrienne Feldstein, Bill Van Bang

Board Members absent:

Crys O'Grady, Erin Zollenkopf, Sabrina Wilson

City staff present:

Adena Long (Bureau Director), Todd Lofgren (Deputy Director), Joey Furuto (Chief Coordinator), Michelle Tran (Executive Assistant), Maximo Behrens (Recreation Division Manager), Tonya Booker (Land Stewardship Division Manager), Brett Horner (Parks and Trails Planning Manager), Jenn Cairo (City Forester and Urban Forestry Division Manager), Jamie Sandness (Recreation Support Systems Manager), Craig Ward (Recreation Support Systems Analyst)

Others present:

Megan Steffek, Elizabeth Super, Mary Mirette, Virginia La Forte, Brian Selzer, Stacie Mishler, Amber Selzer

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

Agenda Items

Public Comment

Megan Steffek submitted public comment in support of turf at Powell Park. Athletes currently have to go to Woodstock, which is much further away, is not as safe, and is often disrupted by the adjacent dog park.

Elizabeth Super submitted public comment in support of turf at Powell Park and updating the baseball field, as it currently has graffiti, no dugout, and no working scoreboard.

Mary Mirette submitted public comment in support of turf at Powell Park. She emphasized the importance of sports for students transitioning between middle and high school.

Virginia La Forte submitted public comment in support of turf at Powell Park. She was the co-founder of Grant Bowl Community Coalition and has worked with Portland Public Schools on work at Grant Bowl.



Brian Selzer submitted public comment in support of turf at Powell Park. He is a teacher at Ida B. Wells High School and would like an equitable facility for East Portland.

General Announcements

Ali Berman (Vice Chair) announced that on November 20, the Bird Alliance of Oregon is hosting a talk on the impacts and risks of the PGE Harborton Project on Forest Park. This is co-hosted with Forest Park Conservancy and the speaker is Scott Carpenter.

Ali also shared some remarks about the passing of Bob Sallinger, former Parks Board member and significant figure in the community. Portland Metro will have space at their Council session on Thursday to let community members speak about Bob.

On October 24, Suenn Ho (Board Member) went to the last session at Linnton Community Center regarding the Harborton Project. Suenn observed that many of the community members attending were residents and not necessarily experts. This made it challenging to change the experts' minds. She urged members to stay engaged in order to support the community and provide a needed voice.

Approve September and October Meeting Minutes

Casey Mills (Board Member) moved to approve the September minutes, with Suenn seconding. All voted in approval with Sameer Kanal (Board Member) and Adrienne Feldstein (Board Member) abstaining due to absence.

Sameer moved to approve the October minutes, with Patti Miles (Board Member) seconding. All voted in approval with Dr. Corbin (Board Chair), Casey, and Bill Van Bang (Board Member) abstaining due to absence.

Director's Report

November was a month full of professional industry conferences! PP&R had a great turnout of (55) attendees total of which (13) were presenters at the Oregon Recreation and Parks Association and the National Recreation and Parks Association conferences.

In October, the bureau received additional Mayoral budget guidance asking that bureaus create scenarios for both a 5% and an 8% General Fund cut for FY25-26. Given the financial outlook and uncertainty around when, if and at what rate the Parks Levy will be renewed, deep reductions will not be surprising.

That being said, on November 20, a resolution will be brought to City Council that directs the bureau to prepare a resolution for City Council to consider in January 2025 to refer a five-year local option tax levy for the May 2025 General Election to fund park maintenance, deliver recreation programs, and care for natural areas, water quality, and Portland's urban forest. While there will be no opportunities for invited testimony, City Council proceedings are open to the public, for anyone to view or attend.

Portland Parks & Recreation was elated to host Mayor-elect Wilson for his first press release at the Charles Jordan Community Center. As of Friday, the presumptive new slate of City Councilors remains just that - presumptive. While some candidates currently hold significant leads, other seats are too close to call until Multnomah County finishes counting ballots. The county has until December 2 to certify all election results.



There is a very extensive onboarding and orientation planned for the incoming Councilors that start in December and continues into 2025, including a Vibrant Communities work session and land tour scheduled for January 16-17.

The onboarding content and routes are in development, and in the meantime, we have asked staff as well as the advisory board, to refrain from communicating about PP&R and City business with any of the candidates for now.

Ali asked about Metro's plans for the former Children's Museum land. Director Long replied that Metro will be demolishing the current building and have a new building to support administrative needs for the Oregon Zoo and will include leased space for PP&R's use.

Casey and Ali discussed having intros for the Council and updates for onboarding Council candidates and new Mayor. Dr. Corbin suggested that this month's working group meetings should come up with a few bullet points to bring to the Board Affairs Working Group meeting. Director Long said the Annual Report would be a good document to serve as an onboarding resource.

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.

Community Engagement

There were no questions.

Parks Levy Oversight Committee

There were no questions.

Portland Parks Foundation Report

Jessica Green recommended everyone to read the answers to the candidates' survey, as they received over 60 responses.

Limited edition prints of the Thompson Elk Fountain art at Leach Gallery will be available.

There are many local groups of park advocates that want to do community tours with Council members, but they will wait on how to proceed.

Project Advisory Committee for George Park has been decided, led by Kidz Outside. There were questions raised about individual donor recognition ideas. Jessica welcomed creative ways to do donor recognition, especially ones that are not surrounding naming.



Access Discount and Project Connect

Jamie Sandness and Craig Ward gave a presentation on the progress of the Access Discount and the creation of Project Connect to better engage with community partners for Recreation programming.

The presentation included the growing usage of the Access Discount since its inception as well as information about the collected data of reported income and demographics of users. Project Connect is a program supported by the Parks Levy that has the Recreation team attend events hosted by community groups that are specifically chosen as a partner. These partnerships help further educate and engage community about the Access Discount and Recreation offerings.

Sameer asked for the cost to make these Recreation programs free. Maximo Behrens replied that Recreation's revenue is approximately \$15 million. The full budget is \$48 million.

Suenn asked that with 25% of the users utilizing the access Discount, is it capped? Jamie answered that there is no cap. The bureau continues to educate program users about the Access Discount.

Casey asked that for the programs and services where the discount was applied, was there a staffing strain, or just additional staff to deliver services? Jamie answered that the budget for delivery services is run on a different budget. Maximo added that there has been a lot of efforts made to inform community about the Discount so that they have the information about it in order to quickly sign up for classes and programs without spending time becoming informed. If users are walking through the steps to set up an account and use the discount during registration day, their window to claim their spots is closed.

Public Comment/Other Business

There was no public comment.

Meeting Adjourned

Ali adjourned the meeting at 7:00pm.

