



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Noise Program
 FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Carmen Rubio, Commissioner
 David Kuhnhausen, Interim Director
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NOISE REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date of meeting:	12/13/2023
Start time:	6:02 PM
End Time:	8:14 PM
Location:	Zoom - Meeting ID: 880 2876 6900

I. Meeting Attendees

	Participants	Attendance
Board Members	Mary Sipe - Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent
	Desi Wright - Professional in Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absent
	Derek Trost - Community Member At-Large	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent
	Alex Marine - Professional in Acoustics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent
	Agha Zain - Community Member At-Large	<input type="checkbox"/> Present <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absent
Nonvoting Members	Paul van Orden - Noise Control Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent
City Staff	Beth Benton – Manager Property Compliance Division	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent
	Juliette Olivella Lopez – Noise Program Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Absent

II. Introductions

The Noise Review Board Chair, Mary Sipe, started the meeting by introducing herself and conducting a roll call of board members. The City Attorney Statement of Conduct for the NRB was also read by the NRB Chair.

III. Review and approval of previous minutes

The NRB members decided to postpone the approval of minutes from the Oct and Nov meetings until next month.

IV. Public Comments

Members of the public were present during the meeting, but no comments were made.

V. Review of 2023 PIR Noise Variances

Mary Sipe made a small change to the agenda order, deciding to begin with the review of the 2023 PIR (Portland International Raceway) noise variances and move the city staff updates and reports afterward. She mentioned that the board approved four variances for events like NASCAR, IndyCar, Rose Cup, and SVRA (Sports Car Vintage Racing Association) for a three-year term. One of the conditions was to review the data from track-side and neighborhood noise meters annually for compliance with noise limits. Juliette Olivella, the noise program coordinator, was tasked with compiling and analyzing the data. Paul Van Orden, a staff member, then presented the data, explaining the challenges of aligning the data from



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different meters due to time discrepancies and physical distances. Despite attempts to synchronize the data, it wasn't feasible. Paul proceeded to present the data, showing no significant exceedances, and providing details on complaints received during the events.

Derek highlighted that the trackside logs often showed significantly lower levels of sound compared to the sound level meter data. He emphasized the importance of this observation, suggesting that the trackside logs had shown readings that were 5 dB to 10 dB lower than the equipment data. He implied that this difference raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the manual observations compared to the equipment readings.

In response, Paul suggested that the discrepancy might have been due to the trackside loggers focusing on individual cars passing by, aiming to identify excessively loud cars accurately. He explained that their hyper-focus could have led to lower recorded levels since they aimed to isolate loud cars for potential action. Paul's perspective also suggested that the discrepancy might have been due to differences in focus and methodology between manual trackside logging and automated equipment measurements.

The discussion regarding this topic revolved around potential reasons for the discrepancy between trackside manual logging and equipment data collection during races. Mary confirmed that they were not using different meters or methods, suggesting that the time-lapse could have been a factor. Juliette proposed that there might have been a delay in data transfer to the computer, leading to the trackside loggers reading quieter events trackside compared to the actual noise levels.

Derek highlighted the importance of the equipment's second-by-second data collection and acknowledged that the peaks in the human logs aligned with the data logs are possible but emphasized the extreme difference in readings. Mary expressed interest in hearing more from Ron, who disagreed with Derek's assessment. Ron defended the accuracy of human-recorded data, highlighting the challenges of logging cars accurately during races and inviting Derek to experience the task firsthand. Derek clarified that he was not criticizing the human recorders but pointing out the difference between human-recorded data and trackside meter recordings regarding sound physics and perception.

Derek noted that the logs showed no exceedances, indicating that while the trackside process tracked what was happening, the data did not match that from the meter. Ron challenged Derek's observations, asking him to review specific logs, suggesting that the handwritten logs accurately reflected the meter readings. Derek responded that across multiple events, the data consistently showed a 5 dB to 10 dB difference. Ron invited Derek to review the NASCAR event logs, prompting Derek to consider revisiting the data.

Mary highlighted the importance of focusing on the noise meter reports provided by Paul and Juliette, suggesting that logs should be used to identify specific vehicles needing adjustment or black flagging. Paul agreed, suggesting a separate discussion to explore Derek's concerns further. He acknowledged the challenges of capturing every blip with human logs but highlighted the necessity of both human logs and trackside meters for a comprehensive understanding. Mary appreciated the clarification, acknowledging



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the different roles of logs and meters in managing sound compliance. Ron elaborated on the role of human logs in identifying problematic vehicles, particularly in semi-professional races. Mary concluded the discussion, acknowledging Derek's concerns and opening the floor for any further comments or concerns.

Kevin Savoree shared his perspective on the sound monitoring process during races. He acknowledged the challenges highlighted by Derek and Ron and offered his viewpoint. He recalled a prior board member discussing the difficulty of visually identifying cars due to sound during races. Kevin emphasized that the data provided was a constant stream of sound recordings without specific car identification. He compared it to an NFL instant replay, where officials could visually analyze the same data in real-time and noted the precision of the monitoring process but acknowledged potential delays in data transmission.

Derek agreed with Savoree's observations, mentioning that data analysis revealed exceedances later in races, especially with discrete packs of vehicles passing by. Paul appreciated the discussion and suggested focusing on compliance issues and exploring Derek's question further.

Mary, emphasized the importance of considering complaints beyond mere decibel levels, mentioning the impact of duration and tone. She highlighted the need to address concert events separately due to different noise variance requirements. Paul concurred, mentioning efforts to balance the rights of the racetrack and neighboring residents. Ron sought clarification on neighborhood ambient levels during races, prompting further discussion about disparities between ambient levels and race noise. Paul acknowledged the variations in noise levels during races and the need for realistic assessment and dialogue in the subcommittee work.

Finally, Ron Huegli acknowledged Juliette and Paul's report and requested copies of the documents discussed. Derek mentioned the absence of "kitten meter data," prompting Mary to discuss potential issues with noise meter placement. Overall, the topic concluded with agreement on compliance with noise regulations and appreciation for efforts to manage noise levels effectively.

VI. City Staff Reports & Updates

Mary Sipe inquired about the recruitment process for the construction representative, mentioning Desi's departure at the next meeting. Juliette Olivella confirmed that the team had begun working on it and expected to start recruiting soon.

Paul Van Orden provided an update on the unique case involving protesters downtown. He mentioned that despite the potential court date, it was not on the docket for the day, indicating ongoing delays. Paul emphasized that such cases could take time to resolve once they entered the court system. Mary Sipe asked if the protests had stopped in Multnomah Village and downtown, to which Paul responded that there had been limitations imposed by the judge until the case was resolved. He noted that the case might involve a multi-day hearing, highlighting the complexity and time-consuming nature of legal proceedings.



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VII. General Business:

Review & approve the draft NRB recommendation to the City Council to increase Noise Program Resource Funding.

Mary Sipe initiated a discussion about the Noise Review recommendation to the City Council regarding funding and staffing. Beth Benton provided insights into the city's financial situation, explaining that the bureau had recently faced layoffs and lacked additional funding for programs like the Noise Office. She suggested that while the letter of support might be valuable later in the budget cycle, it might not be opportune currently due to budget constraints.

Derek Trost thanked Beth for her insights and emphasized the importance of raising the board's voice in support of the Noise Office, even if immediate funding wasn't feasible. He suggested that the letter could establish a precedent for future budget considerations. Beth agreed with Derek's viewpoint and clarified the terminology surrounding the Noise Office and program.

Mary Sipe and Derek Trost discussed the drafting of a letter advocating for increased funding and staffing for the Noise Office. Derek suggested including historical data since 1976 to illustrate how the office's capacity had not kept pace with the city's population growth. Mary questioned the necessity of such detailed data in the letter, suggesting a more general approach highlighting the office's growing workload and inadequate resources.

Beth Benton agreed to provide data since 1976 but expressed concerns about the feasibility of retrieving historical records due to limited staff resources. Derek emphasized the importance of substantiating claims made in the letter but acknowledged that population data could be sourced online.

Mary proposed finalizing the letter at the next meeting before Desi's departure, allowing time for feedback and revisions. Derek agreed and outlined the letter's structure, which included expressing gratitude, providing historical context, and formally requesting increased funding and staffing.

Mary suggested referencing previous recommendations for funding increases to reinforce the urgency of the current request. They agreed to review and discuss the letter further at the January meeting, aiming for a finalized version for approval and distribution. Derek suggested that board members come prepared for the meeting with feedback or suggested edits. The discussion concluded with the decision to postpone the letter's finalization to the next meeting agenda.

Public Education Program discussion & Brendy Hale presentation

Mary Sipe initiated a discussion about the public education program. Brendy expressed surprise at the agenda item. Mary proposed deferring the discussion on the public education program due to the time constraints posed by the review of Title 18 revisions.



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Derek elaborated on the educational aspects integrated into various initiatives, such as voluntary compliance forms for venues. He highlighted Brendy's expertise in information design and the potential for dynamic public engagement through the proposed educational program.

Mary suggested moving the discussion on the public education program to the January agenda, highlighting the need for effective time management and prioritization of agenda items.

Beth suggested postponing Brendy's presentation on the public education program to February due to the busy January agenda and the upcoming variance hearing. Mary and Brendy agreed.

Lastly, Mary emphasized the need to be realistic about the board's capacity, especially with the imminent departure of Desi and the arrival of new board members.

Title 18 Amendments – NRB

Mary Sipe apologized for overlooking Beth's previous presentation about the Title 18 amendments project and asked about the formation of the advisory workgroup. Beth updated on the progress of the workgroup and their plans for January meetings.

To end, the Board members agreed not to address the Title 18 amendments yet and to dedicate an hour in the January board meeting to review the assigned sections as Mary was not prepared to walk through those in the meeting, and she needed further clarification on some items with city staff. Derek Trost expressed that he was ready and understood the assignment for the meeting. He emphasized the importance of being prepared for discussions and suggested allocating specific time for discussion in the upcoming January agenda to ensure everyone was ready.

Work Plan Updates

There were no updates on the work plan.

VIII. Other business

Derek Trost provided a brief report on his attendance at a Music Policy Forum in Boise, Idaho, organized by a forum based in DC. The meeting had national representation. Derek highlighted his discussion about Portland's Noise Review Board and the noise office structure, which garnered enthusiasm and amazement from participants. He emphasized the uniqueness and significance of Portland's infrastructure for addressing community issues, especially within the music community, noting the volunteer aspect and city-funded staff as remarkable components. Trost suggested that without experiencing similar structures, it was easy to overlook their importance in other communities.

Mary Sipe decided to take some time to present the history of the Noise Review Board and the development of the work plan over the past years. She acknowledged frustrations expressed by some board members regarding the lack of progress on the work plan and addressed concerns about her leadership. She outlined the challenges faced by the board, including turnover, limited meeting time, and



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shifting priorities within the Noise Office. She provided a detailed overview of the board's meeting frequency and activities from 2017 to 2023, highlighting efforts to draft a work plan and address various issues. Mary emphasized the importance of understanding the context and showed the accomplishments and progress made by the board despite challenges. She concluded by expressing hope for the subcommittee's work and encouraged acknowledgment of the board's achievements.

Derek Trost expressed an understanding of Mary's focus on leadership but emphasized broader issues affecting the board's progress. He recounted frustrations with the lack of support and even perceived interference from the staff at the Office of Civic Life. Trost believed the process and general atmosphere hindered forward progress, despite previous patterns of inaction. He viewed the current situation as a call to action and highlighted recent efforts to streamline board meetings and assign tasks efficiently. Derek was optimistic about the future, citing a renewed resolve within the board and a more supportive context with BDS. He expressed gratitude for the leadership of the noise program staff and expressed to look forward to substantial progress in the coming year.

Mary Sipe mentioned the progress made with the workplan, particularly in consolidating 11 items into the Title 18 revisions. She also expressed gratitude for the support from the Noise Office staff and praised the clarity and comprehensiveness of the data presented every time.

Derek added that the workload should not have fallen on the Noise Office and criticized the underfunding of the office, highlighting the mismatch in responsibilities. Mary acknowledged the balance of control the Noise Office gained over data but appreciated the efforts, nonetheless. She thanked everyone for their work and expressed optimism for the accomplishments in 2024.

IX. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Document Version Control Table

Version	Author	Date	Control
0.1	Juliette Olivella Lopez	1/4/24	Creation