

**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

October 8, 2019 | 8:00 - 10:00 am
City Hall | 1221 SW 4th Ave

**Board Members
Present:**

Paul Agrimis, Kendall Clawson, Michelle Dedeo, Mike Elliott, Pat Frobes, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Jenny Glass, Randy Gragg, Ian Jaquiss, Tamara Layden, Lorena Nascimento, Lee Novak, Jim Owens, Gladys Ruiz, Erin Zollenkopf

**Board Members
Absent:**

Paddy Tillett, Katy Holland

**PP&R/City Staff
Present:**

Brooke Gardner, Sarah Huggins, Lauren McGuire, Sonia Schmanski, Everett Wild, Jennifer Yocom

Call to Order

Board Chair, Paul Agrimis called the meeting to order at 8:02am.

Paul noted that there was no one signed up or in attendance for public comment and asked Mary Anne Cassin to share her presentation.

**Stability for Portland
Parks & Recreation
Presentation**

Mary Anne shared her presentation which included an introduction about herself and her past work with PP&R. She shared why she supports an independent parks district and why she thinks its urgent. Mary Anne asked for the Parks Board's support in her effort, their signatures on the petition, and help connecting with City Council members.

Erin asked why only five percent of parks systems nationwide are districts if they are found to be more successful. Mary Anne responded that the data point was from the National Recreation and Parks Association, and it didn't include detailed analysis. It is also just how governments have been formed.

Randy asked Mary Anne how she suggests the system would be funded. Mary Anne responded that there is a group of researchers working on identifying funding strategies. She suggested that her group would ask Council for a base amount to fund PP&R. The district may create a tax for additional funding. At this moment, they want to get the district in place.

Bonnie noted that there is a task force looking at funding options as well. She suggested looking at the library district as an example





for a Parks district. Bonnie asked if Mary Anne's group is looking at the library district's framework. Mary Anne responded that, yes, they are looking at that and meeting with the founders and those who currently run it.

Pat clarified that Mary Anne's proposal is to bring to voters in the 2020 election the option to create a Parks district with a transition period.

Jim suggested looking into special district associations as they may have advice on how to transition the system and manage the challenge of transferring power.

Kendall noted that the Parks budget is complicated and asked if Mary Anne's group had considered the challenge of the aggressive timeline. She also noted the challenge of communicating with the public about why to invest in Parks.

Lee shared his hesitation to support the district plan as proposed by Mary Anne before there is a plan in place. Mary Anne shared that they are working to get momentum, take advantage of the work being done and the research, and then build the structure. She suggested that getting the community on board will help convince Council that this is the right option.

Jim noted that the message to the community needs to be that they are getting something in return. Erin added that she would like to hear in one sentence why a park district is the right direction.

The Board thanked Mary Anne for her presentation.

Director's Report

Paul introduced Lauren who attended share the Director's report as Director Long was unable to attend.

Lauren shared an overview of the Bond Year 4 Report with the Board and the following updates:

Tribal Summit

- For the second year in a row, the Office of Government Relations is holding a Tribal Summit.
- This year the summit will take place on November 7 and 8.





- On the 7th there will be a meeting of City Leadership and Staff with the Tribal Delegates while they also hold a separate Employee Training.
- The Tribal Delegation will tour Oaks Bottom, Crystal Springs, native Gathering Garden, and Tryon Creek.
- The delegation will hold a series of meetings in the afternoon and the following morning.
- This is an important opportunity for the City to learn from Tribal Leadership and to build relationships.

Mayoral Budget Direction

- The prior week PP&R received budget guidance from the Mayor.
- **On the one hand it is a ‘stability’ budget.** No required General Fund (GF) cuts. Add requests must be accompanied by a GF reduction proposal of 50% the value of the add. For example, if we want an add of \$1 million, we need to offer up \$500k.
- **On the other hand, there are many directives for a significant body of inter-bureau work to be accomplished as part of the submission.**
- Key Directives:
 - **Priority Issue Areas:** There are 7 ‘priority issue areas’ that call out specific bureaus. We are called out in four of the seven and are indirectly implicated in two others. The overall guidance is for the called-out bureaus to submit a memo, collectively, that: a) identifies key issue areas agreed to by the group, b) identifies programs or processes where collaboration and/or consolidation will result in improved service effectiveness and/or cost efficiency, and c) an implementation plan for one or more of the proposed strategies. These memos are core deliverables associated with inter-bureau work.
 - **Homeless Crisis (Priority 1):** PP&R is called out to participate in this working group
 - **Collaborative Public Safety Budget (Priority 2):** Rangers in particular are called out here.
 - **Parks Financial Sustainability (Priority 3):** This is all us. It reflects the work that we are doing on Sustainable Future. **The Parks Board and the Parks Foundation** are specifically called out as co-collaborators.





- **Climate Change (Priority 4):** PP&R is called out to be one of the six lead bureaus to present a “Citywide proposal to maximize our impact on reducing carbon pollution”. Additionally, all bureaus are directed to present a budget “that will lead to real, meaningful reductions of carbon pollution while delivering meaningful community benefits, especially focused on reducing transportation and the built environment emissions, community resiliency and the City’s own internal practices.”
- **Mitigating Displacement (Priority 6):** We are not specifically called out. But the bureaus that are part of this working group are directed to work ‘alongside infrastructure bureau partners. This is likely a conversation we’ll be engaged in.
- **Long Term Liabilities (Priority 7):** We are not specifically called out. But it directs OMF, CBO, and the City Attorney to work with ‘relevant bureaus’ to develop and present a financial plan to address known City long-term liabilities. We are a ‘relevant bureau’.
- **Program Offers:** These continue as is.

Personnel Updates

- Galina Burley, Professional Repair & Maintenance (PRMS) Manager, and Jennifer Yocom, Community Relations Manager, will be leaving PP&R for new positions.
 - Dale Cook (the Engineering & Construction Manager) will serve as Interim PRMS Program Manager while we recruit to fill this position
 - Robin Laughlin (Bond Program Manager) will step up to manage the Engineering & Construction Team on an interim basis
- Jennifer Yocom’s position, the Community Relations Manager position, will remain vacant during the recruitment.
 - Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong will lead community engagement;
 - Kellie Torres will lead the volunteer program, sponsorships, partnerships and grants; and
 - Nicola Sysyn will lead media, communications and marketing.
 - All of these leads will report to Todd Lofgren, Deputy Director.





- The new Property & Business Development Manager, Dylan Paul will start November 4th. Dylan has over 22 years of experience working in public and private capital programs. He has a Bachelor's degree in Construction Management, a Master's degree in Public Administration, and is a LEED Accredited Professional. Most recently, Dylan worked systemwide with the University of California's procurement program.

All Staff Meetings

- Mid/late October we are holding two all staff meetings
- Focus will be on introducing staff to our:
 - new leadership,
 - employee survey,
 - sustainable future, and
 - Director's priorities and new vision

Jim would like the Board to send a letter to thank Jennifer for her service.

Approve September Minutes

Paul asked if there were comments or edits on the September minutes. Pat made a motion, Kendall seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Parks Board Work Plan

Paul had the group divide into two groups to discuss the role of the board and how they might increase board visibility.

Erin shared what was discussed in the group tasked with clarifying the Board's role. Since the Strategic Plan and the 2020 Vision Plan are the foundational documents of the Board, they would like public comment to be more meaningful and have more purpose. They suggest setting up focused issue areas that the Board would like to hear comment on and a mechanism, possibly the Working Groups, that will hear the comment and direct it to the appropriate place. They would like to have more contact with City Council and the Commissioner. They want to use their positions on the Board, as representatives of the city, to raise community voices to City Council and the Commissioner. The group would like to continue this discussion and suggested that there be a Working Group dedicated to this effort.

Kendall suggested looking at the founding documents as a template for what the role should be.



Gladys thanked Paul for having breakout sessions. She shared what was discussed in the group tasked with Board visibility. They feel that it is unclear to the community and the Board what the Board does. They suggested members go to events out in parks. She suggested that the Board should develop relationships with Friends Groups and begin attending events in the community. They feel that the Board has been marginalized by city government. They would like to meet in community centers and have staff who work in those spaces share their work with members. They would like to invite Friends Groups to Board meetings. They would like to consider if the Board should be the BAC. They would like to connect with staff on the ground.

Sonia shared that her and Everett are sharing the role of the Commissioner's office liaison to Parks. They will be circulating their contact information with the Board.

Lorena asked when members are at events and people ask questions about Parks, how do they know what the Board's position is on issues as a group? Gladys shared that she tries not to represent the group. Instead she lets people know she is a member of the Board and is listens to their concerns.

Erin asked about continuing this discussion and forming a group. Pat offered to join this group.

Gladys noted that their Working Group has been talking about where the meetings are held. The group wanted to talk about meeting in community centers. Paul noted that they will keep working on that. Currently Board meetings are held downtown every other month with meetings at community centers on alternating months.

Jim shared that he would like to create a schedule so that they really do it.

Kendall asked that Sonia and Everett make time to meet with each board member.

**Land Use/
Infrastructure
Working Group
Update**

I-5/Rose Quarter Project

In response to the Board's request to be involved in further ODOT/PBOT work on the design of covers over the I-5 freeway and other project elements involving parks/open spaces and





recreation elements, PP&R staff have been advised by senior ODOT project staff that the board could be represented on a community advisory group yet to be formed. The Working Group recommends that Jim Owens be conscripted to serve on such a group. ODOT also indicated that it is willing to brief either working group or the full Board or both.

The Working Group recommends a briefing by ODOT/PBOT be scheduled within the next six months, once the environmental review process has been clarified (EA or EIS); Jim Owens serve as the board's representation on the community advisory group to be formed by ODOT.

Broadway Corridor Project

In addition to the issues raised during an August presentation by Prosper Portland to the Board, the Working Group is concerned that the Green Loop be integrated appropriately into the preferred concept and how phasing of the project affects development of the proposed new park.

The Working Group recommends sending the comments, previously emailed to the Board, to Prosper Portland requesting that the timing of new park development be moved up in the implementation schedule.

Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project

At its August meeting, the Working Group was briefed by Multnomah County staff and its consultants on this project to rebuild the Burnside Bridge to be earthquake ready. The project has the potential to have significant effect on parks in the vicinity of the bridge and the Working Group believes that the full Board should be briefed. In the interim, the subcommittee will be investigating connectivity issues.

The Working Group recommends a presentation on this project to the full Board by Multnomah County be scheduled this winter.

Paul asked for a motion to conscribe Jim to serve on the I-5 project community advisory group. Bonnie made the motion, Erin seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

Paul asked for a motion to send the letter to Prosper Portland. Pat made the motion, Kendall seconded, and it was unanimously approved.





Alternative Funding Task Force Update

Paul shared that the third meeting of the Alternative Funding Task Force will be that Thursday. At the meeting they will have the economic modeling to look at the impact of additional tax on the community. He shared that the Bureau has done its analysis looking at funding scenarios. Keeping PP&R at its current funding level would mean a decline in programs and services and closing park elements. Maintaining current programs, services and park elements would require a significant increase in funding. Funding a parks system that fulfills current commitments to the community would require even more increase in funding.

Michelle asked if they were to pursue additional taxes, do they anticipate hitting a tax ceiling, and where it would hit - East or West Portland? Paul noted that he anticipates the projection will show it hitting in pockets, and it will hit the poorest neighborhoods most.

Bonnie asked if the analysis looks at compression with other levies? Pat noted that they are looking at a property tax and that will likely not be the solution. Paul responded that clarification is needed, but they are looking at other taxes.

Mike noted that there's a decision matrix that outlines all the different uses for the taxes. They are working to figure out the impacts. Sarah confirmed they are looking at all the impacts of the issues raised.

Jim added his concern about the Alternative Funding Task Force process. He believes this is the most important park issue, and yet the Task Force was created independent of the Board. This adds to the marginalization the Board has been experiencing, and it is discouraging. Jim disagrees with the choice to make the meetings closed meetings and to not allow the Board an opportunity to observe the meetings. Pat echoed Jim's statement.

Kendall added that these decisions create a trust issue. The Board represents the community, and when the community asks for feedback from the Board, they don't have the information they should have. Kendall shared that the Board should have been given the opportunity to select their representation on the Task Force.

Sonia shared that in forming the Task Force the intent was to bring together different expertise and representation. Meeting





attendees discussed the Task Force meetings and why they are closed meetings noting that the group is working to understand the details and legal implications of various alternative funding options that will be brought to City Council for consideration. The role of the Task Force is not to make a joint recommendation but revise alternative funding options and provide expertise and consultation in preparation for the Work Session with City Council.

Jenny shared that the Board is a representation of the broader Portland community and it is unclear why another group has been assembled when the Board is already available, has financial expertise, and has interest in taking on this work. Ian added that there has been a distancing with a chilling effect and a feeling of betrayal.

Gladys noted that though it may not be intentional, these decisions feel personal. The Board struggles with power and hearing the Task Force has been given this role, it feels like the opportunity for the Board to impact the future of Parks has been taken away.

Kendall noted that the Board is looped in during budget season when decisions are needed to make cuts, but they do not feel included in the larger role in seeking alternative funding solutions for Parks. It feels insulting that the Board was not able to select members to serve on the Task Force.

Sonia responded that she would like to discuss at some point how the Commissioner can be more engaged and address the Board feeling excluded. Jim noted that the feeling of being marginalized was an issue that goes back further than the current Commissioner. Jim shared his concern that the Board will not have a position regarding the November Work Session to offer if they are contacted by the press for comment. They cannot have a position because they were not involved.

Sonia clarified that the November Work Session will be a big briefing for City Council on the funding options for PP&R. The Board will be an important input in the Council's ultimate decision making.

**Bylaws/Public
Comment Update**

Pat shared that they will bring the bylaws update to the following Board meeting as the meeting was running long. She asked that members review the updated bylaws to discuss next month.





**Barbara Walker
Crossing Update**

Randy shared an update on the Barbara Walker Crossing progress and invited members to the opening celebration on October 27.

**Parks Board Meeting
Adjourns**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 am.

Next meeting is Tuesday, November 12, 2019.

