

**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

November 12, 2019 | 8:00 - 10:00 am
City Hall | 1221 SW 4th Ave

**Board Members
Present:**

Paul Agrimis, Kendall Clawson, Michelle Dedeo, Mike Elliott, Pat Frobos, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Katy Holland, Randy Gragg, Ian Jaquiss, Tamara Layden, Lorena Nascimento, Jim Owens, Paddy Tillett, Erin Zollenkopf

**Board Members
Absent:**

Jenny Glass, Lee Novak, Gladys Ruiz

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

Maximo Behrens, Asha Bellduboset, Tonya Booker, Jenn Cairo, Claudio Campuzano, Commissioner Nick Fish, Brooke Gardner, Sarah Huggins, Todd Lofgren, Adena Long, Lauren McGuire, Nicola Sysyn, Everett Wild

Call to Order

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

Paul asked members if they had any proposed changes to the October meeting minutes. Paul offered some minor edits and requested a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Jim made the motion, Pat seconded, and motion approved unanimously.

A letter was sent to Jennifer Yocom to thank her for her service at PP&R. It will be shared with the Board in a follow up email.

**Financial
Sustainability
Update**

Director Adena Long shared that in the recent Portland Insights Survey, access to the outdoors and natural areas was what people liked MOST about where they live in Portland, regardless of race, age, or length of residency. Portland values parks because they are the heart of a healthy community – they are where we connect with one another, and with our natural world. Portland values parks because access to parks results in better physical, and mental health. Portland values parks because our trees and natural areas improve our air quality, treat our stormwater, and will be essential in helping the City prepare for a changing climate. Portland values parks because ‘Healthy Parks’ mean a ‘Healthy Portland’.

Through the years values have translated to service levels we want and need our park system to deliver. But those service levels





aren't aligned with the funding to deliver them. Parks experienced – painfully – in last year's budget process the effects it has on the community when we are not in alignment.

For the past 20 years, the 2020 Vision has been a guide as Parks has sought to improve parks for the Portlanders of today, and the Portlanders of tomorrow. 2020 is almost here. Parks has started and will continue conversations to refine thinking about levels of service, cost recovery, the urban forest, and planning for park assets. And all those efforts will help shape an updated vision for the park system. But that vision needs to align with funding beyond an annual budget.

Adena shared that this is the conversation PP&R is hoping to have with Council on November 26: a conversation about alignment, and about opportunity looking forward to the next steps of updating the Parks vision and strategic plans.

She wants Council to know that with our current funding levels, there will be less opportunity in the future. Parks will be creating plans and a vision that by necessity will include lowering service levels. Parks will be strategic about how to do that but cannot end up in a place that is out of alignment.

Adena also wants Council to know that with more funding, comes more opportunity, as Parks does the work of setting its vision and aligning its strategic planning efforts – opportunity to plan for and be in a position to deliver the system they've been hearing from the community that they want.

Adena asked the Board to be thinking of the same questions PP&R will be asking Council: What park system should we be aiming for? If the system we want requires additional funding, which alternative funding options should we pursue?

Adena introduced Sarah Huggins, who has been managing this effort. Sarah shared an overview of the story of Parks, the three funding scenarios, and the alternative funding options. The Board thanked Sarah for her presentation.

Jim noted that this presentation isn't just for Council but for the public as well. He suggested adding a few concepts including: an explanation of how Parks got to this point; the role of Parks in





addressing climate change; and other alternative funding options that were looked at but didn't meet goals.

Paddy noted the escalation in Portland's population and suggested framing the presentation indicating that parks is serving more people with less money. Paddy noted that the tree canopy cover metric comparing the east and west sides of Portland is skewed due to Forest Park being situated on the west side. Todd responded that they will look at pulling that number but acknowledged the benefit of Forest Park in mitigating the heat island effect for west side residents. Todd added that there have been rising expectations for PP&R, but funding has not kept up to meet those expectations. General Fund has been increasing each year, but it's not enough to meet current service expectations.

Bonnie highlighted the need to look at density. A full-service community center that serves 30,000 community members will provide a different experience and access to resources than a center that serves 50,000. Adena thanked members for their comments and noted that they will look at the data and how density might be incorporated. Todd added that within the scenarios there are many options for how they are implemented.

Lorena noted that when an asset is closed there may be an increase in crime and vandalism at that site.

Ian shared that the presentation was beautiful, but what he has seen in parks is not beautiful. There is a reality that should be included in the presentation.

Kendall asked if there is a way for PP&R to partner with other bureaus especially in public safety and social service needs in parks. She noted that the presentation might include indication of PP&R's desire to work with other bureaus to reduce redundancy. It creates accountability for the entire community – these are not just a parks issues. The alternative funding methods that are highlighted may lead to concern from some communities, and Kendall suggested keeping that in mind. She asked if the food/beverage and lodging options could be combined? Kendall noted the cell phone tax is not a good avenue for alternative funding. It raises equity concerns. Adena noted, the Mayor is leading an effort to reduce redundancies. She shared that staff are aware that some community members will find some alternative funding options concerning.





Tamara suggested adding what PP&R's definition of equity is as it is referenced in the presentation and can be defined differently.

Commissioner Nick Fish thanked the Board for their great comments and questions. He noted that this is just the beginning of the process, and there will be more questions and concerns raised. Currently funding isn't keeping up, so assets will age out and close if alternative funding resources are not identified. Whichever plan is decided upon, it will require a significant amount of community support. Commissioner stressed the need to invest time building a strong foundation of community support.

Katy asked if assets owned by Metro, or other public spaces, were included when determining level of service. Katy noted that many of the scenarios will be difficult to gather support for as the city relies on visitors and income from food, beverage, and cell phone use. Katy stressed that her main concern is the maintenance of current assets. Todd responded indicating that other jurisdictions that provide public access including Metro and others on the edge of city limits are included in level of service.

Pat clarified that the alternative revenue streams would be designated just to parks. Including indication of that in the presentation might help secure faith from the community in City Council's funding the parks system.

Jim asked how the Parks Board could benefit the conversation with City Council. Commissioner Fish asked Board members to attend the Work Session on November 26 if they are able. He noted that some members will be asked to share comments at the Work Session. During the last budget season there was a suggestion to cut police to fund parks. That is a siloed approach. The Work Session is a midpoint in the conversation. It gets the other Commissioners immersed and engaged in the conversation. The Commissioner asked for continuous feedback and continued support in the future.

Jim noted his hope that friends groups have been engaged. Todd responded that friends and partners have received the notice to tune in. Engagement will come after the Work Session.

Kendall suggested that when sending invitations for the Work Session they be clear about what kind of participation community





members should expect. Commissioner Fish explained that the Work Session will be a space for the Commissioners to learn and discuss the issues. There will be other opportunities to engage the community. Kendall stressed the need for transparency. The community would like to have opportunities to engage and currently have trust issues. Adena responded that they will continue to have conversations about what the Work Session will be and what it won't be.

Paul encouraged members to attend. He noted that the reduced length presentation shared with the Board that morning was a good length for them as they have been following the issues, but a longer presentation may be overwhelming for others. Paul recommended staff may need to lay more groundwork to adequately inform Council.

Bonnie asked what other ways the Board can support other than attending or being willing to give invited testimony. Everett suggested that as they prepare for the next step, they would like to know what service level and which funding options members want to pursue.

Commissioner Fish thanked the Board for their comments, and they will be incorporated into the presentation. At the Work Session they will hear from Council what they would like to pursue. Once there is a framework, they will bring in a professional to look at the scenarios and options. The Commissioner suggested that later in the month they should reconvene and debrief. He agreed there are options that will not be pursued. They will need to be strategic when looking at what is possible. He noted they will need patience and to build an enormous amount of community support. The Commissioner thanked the Board for their participation on the Task Force and shared that he is looking forward next steps.

Bylaws/Public Comment Update

Pat noted that prior to the last meeting of the Board the updated bylaws were distributed to members. She shared that rather than wordsmithing, she would like to gather general comments. Pat noted that she strengthened the values for equity, diversity and inclusion within the bylaws. The Office of Community and Civic Life template had a few items that would fundamentally change the structure of the board and she left those changes off.





Jim strongly supported the Board having a minimum of 9 members. He asked for the distinction between the Board committees and working groups. Pat noted that committees make recommendations to the full board. Working groups make recommendations to the chair. Jim noted there is no liaison from the Commissioner's office noted. He suggested that should be added as that has benefited the Board in the past. The template from Civic Life indicates that only the Commissioner or Director can update the bylaws. Jim noted that this goes against the Board's charge.

Tamara asked if there is a certain amount of time that the Board has to fill vacancies. Pat shared that the Board has the option to keep the vacancies open if needed.

Adena thanked members for their comments and work on the bylaws update. The bylaw updates will be brought to Civic Life and City Attorney for review.

Pat noted the desire to update the Board's public comment policy. The way the Board has been receiving public comment has not allowed for a constructive response. Members would like to have a calendar of subject items and ask the community for comment on specific items on those dates. Other items need to be provided in writing a week in advance to the Board chair. Those will be reviewed and directed to staff, a working group or the full Board. All comments will receive a response. There will be a report periodically about what comments have been coming in.

Erin summarized the process. It will include reviewing the public comment request, hearing it and closing it with response. The Board would like to be more deliberate in what comment they receive. They would like to be strategic in seeking/prioritizing comment they would like to hear.

Tamara noted that she would like to hear comment that is related to the meeting's agenda items. If meetings are held at community centers, Tamara would like to have comment relevant to the community they are meeting in.

Paul thanked members for the updates and noted that it will help make comments more constructive.





Bonnie ask for more clarification about the differences between the committees and working groups. Pat clarified that the difference is that committees can make recommendations as a representation of the Board and have quorum. Working groups don't make recommendations and they do not have quorum.

Adena noted the continued concern about displacing programs at park facilities. She asked for ideas for where meetings could occur within the community. Katy offered to host the Board at the Siletz office and at NAYA. Tonya suggested the Mt Tabor Yard. Jenn offered the Urban Forestry Office at Delta Park. Kendall noted that they should be meeting at facilities where it is appropriate for the Parks Board. The spaces should be relevant to the Board. Lorena requested that they consider places that are commuter friendly especially as some members do not drive.

**Land
Use/Infrastructure
Working Group
Update**

Paddy shared that the Land Use/Infrastructure Working Group heard from the Urban Forestry Commission who requested the Boards support on an effort to expand the canopy. The amendment would eliminate the commercial and industrial zone exemption for two years. Current city code provides for payment of a fee-in-lieu as an alternative to preservation of one third of regulated trees on the property being developed.

The working group reviewed a draft letter, and comments were supportive of the language. Working group members were interested if there was an incentive for developers to keep more than the one third and if there are circumstances where keeping them is not possible. The letter will be circulated by email following the meeting.

Jim clarified that the Planning Commission and Urban Forestry Commission recommended the amendment. The letter needs to be sent prior to the next board meeting. The main concern is the temporary nature of the exemption. Jim suggested that they include in statement of support that this should be a permanent requirement not a temporary one.

Paddy noted that he will make that edit to include that comment and will circulate via Brooke.

Board Recruitment

Michelle shared that she would like to gather input from the Board on their recruitment materials. She'll bring materials to the Board review.



Erin suggested that recruitment materials should include the time commitment and that parking reimbursement is provided.

Michelle asked members how the Board reaches out to people and inspire them to be civically engaged. She asked how the group communicates who they are and what they do.

Pat suggested that the materials include the concepts of advocacy for parks and highlight that they are looking for people who bring a citywide long-term perspective.

Tamara requested the updated Board composition matrix. She is interested in looking at the matrix and focusing language on outreach to those communities they are seeking members from. They should work with folks on their limitations.

Adena suggested creating a flyer and a one pager. They might consider drafting a letter to employers regarding this opportunity for young professionals. Brooke will send the most recent recruitment materials to Michelle to fine tune.

Paul noted that since there was some extra time, they wanted to highlight the event that occurred the previous week. Randy shared that they successfully opened the Barbara Walker Crossing and days later celebrated the \$200,000 grant from Bank of America for Summer Free For All and the Mobile Lunch and Play program.

Paul noted that many members attended the Barbara Walker Crossing opening and encouraged members to keep getting out to parks events. Adena highlighted other upcoming opportunities noted on the agenda.

Katy invited members to Mt Scott Community Center on November 23 for the Native American Market and Family Day.

Parks Board Meeting Adjourns

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.

Next meeting is Tuesday, December 10, 2019.

