

**Friday, June 12, 2020**

1:00 – 3:30 pm

Zoom Virtual Meeting

**Board Members Present**

Punneh Abdolhosseini, Paul Agrimis, Kendall Clawson, Alejandra Cortes, Mike Elliott, Pat Frobbs, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Jenny Glass, Randy Gragg, Katy Holland, Ian Jaquiss, Tamara Layden, Casey Mills, Lorena Nascimento, Alejandro Orizola, Jim Owens, Juan Piantino, Gladys Ruiz, David Staczek, Paddy Tillett, Erin Zollenkopf

**City Staff Present**

Brooke Gardner, Todd Lofgren, Adena Long

**Call to Order/Introductions**

Board Chair Paul Agrimis welcomed new board members and reviewed the agenda. The board will review accomplishments of the past year and plan for the year ahead. Paul acknowledged the fraught time with the pandemic, national response to racism, and the chaotic time to be doing board work.

**Getting to Know You**

Paul asked members and staff to share responses to the following questions: Where did you grow up? What do you love about your home and why? And how would you like to make your service on the Board more meaningful?

Attendees shared their responses. Responses to the third question focused on four themes with an overarching desire that we make the working groups as relevant as practical:

- **Financial Sustainability:** Sustainable future for Parks by pursuing an operating levy, care for park assets and not close/reopen elsewhere and help keep parks system financially sustainable.
- **Community Engagement:** Be more strategic in utilizing public comment. Be proactive listeners and take action. Reorient towards community with a focus on building relationships with community and increasing board visibility. Think critically about what can be learned from voices in the community. Consider the next generation and youth in the development of policy and listen to their voices. Be transparent to each other and community. Amplify community voices through engagement. Communicate the story of parks' impact on families, and that parks are needed not only during pandemics but all the time. Optimize contributions and keep community members at the center.
- **Equity:** Think about what it means when systems are working for some and not others. Evaluate how city employees (especially employees of color) are being served. Keep the park system equitable.



- **Board Functions:** Listening to each other better. Support each other's ideas and give space to those who do not often have the opportunity to share. Push when you need to push and don't wait to be asked. Assume power and leverage as a board member. Engage more with the bureau and get involved in processes. Provide a long-term vision.

### **Director's Remarks**

Adena welcomed new members and thanked the members leaving the board for their leadership and support during a very challenging first year at PP&R. The board was just starting to get into a groove as the pandemic came on. Adena would like to continue to look at where board expertise aligns with operational areas. The bureau can use guidance and feedback. Adena noted the time and shared her remarks to the board by email following the meeting.

### **Homework Assignment Breakout**

Paul asked the board to discuss the 2019 Retreat Notes and Progress and the May 12th Land Use & Infrastructure Report to Board in breakout rooms.

### **Breakout Team Reports**

The Parklane Team shared that the most far reaching goal from last year's retreat was sustainable funding for Parks. The bureau has funded the sustainable future position. They noted that the board working groups provide a sharper focus throughout the year such as leading the comments on the ODOT I-5 plan. These groups could provide more influence in other areas by reaching out and forming partnerships with other agencies. They would like to continue engagement with the Parks Foundation and the option to join Adena on Field-Day-Fridays. Strategic thinking and vision planning may be difficult as there is uncertainty with the potential upcoming vote on Parks funding. They would like to see the Land Use/Infrastructure group be more proactive rather than just reactive. They would like to see review of top initiatives at each meeting to track progress. There should be a workplan with goals and time frames so it can be measured.

The Gabriel Park Team discussed the focus on sustainability, the difference between a levy and a bond, and what that each would mean for Parks. They discussed the successes of the board subcommittee and recruitment committee. They would like to improve interaction with friends' groups. The board has engaged with some groups, but they need to improve engagement with follow up. They suggested inviting them to engage in subcommittees or advisory groups. They would like to support the creation of a friends group within the East Portland community. They would like to increase board visibility with a clearly defined identity and agenda. They are interested in how they might use social media for engagement. The Land Use group is very active and working independently. The board needs to look at the Community Development group, what they want it to be doing, and who would like to serve on it.

The Cully Park Team echoed the previous comments noting that serving on an active working group adds to members' experiences on the board. Right now, the only two working groups that are active are the Finance and Land Use groups. Some accomplishments include work on

updating the bylaws, updating public comment procedures, continuing work on sustainable future, and appointing great new members.

The Forest Park Team noted that working groups need staff support. They noted the work of the Land Use group on the ODOT I-5 plan, the active Finance group, and the need for more information sharing with the full board, not just with the work groups.

### **Sustainable Future Update**

Todd shared a review and update on the PP&R Sustainable Future work. Last Fall PP&R held a work session at City Council to give background on the funding issues the bureau is facing. Director Long and staff presented different funding mechanisms for parks systems around the state and three different service levels over 15 years: decline, maintain, and fulfill. Coming out of the work session, PP&R was directed to look at a general bond, levy, and food and beverage tax. Each year the budget must be balanced, and the City forecast only goes out five years. Problems often arise in year six and beyond.

The first scenario is no new funding which will mean declining service levels and physical assets will continue to decline over time. One in five things in the park system will be closed over 15 years. The second scenario is new funding to maintain the status quo but wouldn't increase our service levels and we would still have many inequities including the unequal distribution of urban forest, affordability of programs, and geographic distribution of centers and parks. The third "fulfill" scenario includes new funding to meet service level goals – deliver what Portlanders want and need. This is the first time PP&R has set numbers to these scenarios. Council rejected the first scenario which is the reality Parks is operating under today. Council gave guidance to seek options for the second and third scenarios.

Due to the pandemic, Parks is in a worse situation than initially reported for that first scenario. This fall the City will have an annual budget process again. Pools and community centers are closed this year. The bureau laid off and/or did not hire nearly 2000 employees. We are not serving the community in community centers and we are not doing free park programs this summer. One thing that PP&R program that will continue this summer is the Free Lunch + Play program. It will be expanded five times its' historic service level with a focus on underserved areas. Staff who would be working at community centers have been redeployed to support this program. The most immediate needs are operations and maintenance. There is a \$500,000 deferred maintenance gap that grows each year. The Mayor has directed PP&R to look at the feasibility of levy and bond. The bureau has hired a pollster to investigate voter interest in and support of a bond or levy. PP&R will be reviewing the report soon. PP&R will be engaging the board and community throughout this process. The Foundation will share how the board can be involved. A measure could go on the November 2020 or May 2021 ballot. There are many measures coming in November.

Randy shared that the Portland Parks Foundation is trying to get a jump start on whatever may happen in November. They have assembled a tight work group to move rapidly depending on how the Mayor feels about moving forward. The Foundation is working on raising money for

additional polling if they want to move forward. They would like at least one board member to serve on the work group with the Foundation. They are remaining optimistic despite it being an extraordinary period of change. Randy acknowledged how phenomenally nimble PP&R has been during this time of change. In order to get back to the task of being a Parks Bureau, there needs to be an injection of money. There is an opportunity to expand the equity reach of bureau if the dominos fall in the right way. Jules Bailey the new Portland Parks Foundation Board Chair has been involved in local and state politics and other members of the Foundation Board have knowledge needed to support this effort moving forward.

Paul stressed the importance of passing a levy in November to provide Portland with a recreation program next year. Todd noted that Recreation has a \$35m budget and 75% of it is revenue generated by user fees not being collected now. Without this revenue recreation will not be able to start back up unless they receive alternative funding.

Randy added that if the levy moves forward, it's not clear there can be a Council champion given those running for reelection. It is intrinsically important to round up folks to support the ballot measure. A work group will be forming to move the levy forward for the fall election with a spot for one Board member. This will be an all hands on deck effort to pass the levy and have a Summer Recreation program in 2021.

### **Thank You to Outgoing Board Members and Wrap-up**

Paul noted that there are four great members leaving the board this year. Paul thanked Gladys, Jim, Kendall, and Pat and shared his appreciation for their leadership and advocacy. Pat shared her reflections from her experience on the board, and she thanked Jim, Gladys and Kendall as well. Bonnie shared what the board put together for outgoing members.

Jim shared that he has served on several boards and commissions. Serving on the parks board was really cool, and he noted that working with those on the board and dedicated staff on heart felt work, and seeing kids and families in parks, that's what it's about.

Kendall noted that there is a lot in front of this group. People show up because they care about parks. She is walking away with a greater understanding of the parks system. Kendall reflected on her unexpected connection with Pat, thanked Jim for his dedication and friendship, and noted that Gladys always had something to say for folks who don't usually have a chance to speak.

Paul shared that he has drafted a statement in response to the social injustices that have been happening. He will make some edits and will send the statement out.

Paul thanked everyone for attending the retreat and noted the next meeting on July 14. He asked members if they have comments on the agenda, to let him know. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.