

Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2011

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Antoinette Angulo
John Barber
Terry Holme, Chair
Jourdan Keith
Diana Kincaid, Vice-chair
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor

Commissioner Holme called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and reviewed the meeting agenda topics. Commissioner Kostka moved approval of the agenda and the minutes from the June 23, 2011 meeting as presented. Commissioner Kincaid seconded the motion. The vote was taken, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reported on the following items. To learn more about Seattle Parks and Recreation, see the website at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Off-leash Area. Dr. Jose Rizal Park: The Off-leash area at Dr. Jose Rizal Park is being reduced in size in an effort to increase safety and use of the park. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is constructing a bicycle path adjacent to the park which will connect to the existing Mountains to Sound Greenway. SDOT will install and pay for new fencing to enclose the off-leash area. This is part of an effort to clean up the park area and to activate more positive use in the park. Since much of the park is on a steep slope the off-leash area was reduced to make best use of the flattest surface area. The Mayor's Office is also interested in cleaning up "The Jungle" where there is a history of illegal behavior.

Steinbrueck Park - Letter to Park Board from Maryls Erickson. The primary reasons for not allowing a new sign in Victor Steinbrueck Park at this time are:

- 1) Parks has a Levy project to improve physical and visual access to and through the Park that will begin in 2013; and
- 2) the park's pivotal role as a key link to the waterfront which is to be determined by the overall waterfront planning process now underway.

We feel that it is not the right time to move forward with any permanent features at this site as we don't know what the design proposal will be after the public planning and design process is complete. The fact that the grant-funded sign would be owned by others is an encumbrance which could make its future removal or relocation unlikely or difficult if the design for the park doesn't have the sign in the same location. It is advantageous for Parks to bring in one proposal for the park renovation that reflects the community vision, rather than piecemeal requests in the next couple of years. Parks staff recommends waiting until the planning for the Levy project is complete.

Building 11. The City Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee held a hearing two weeks ago and considered amendments to the Building 11 ordinance. There has been a lot of discussion among Councilmembers working on amendments. The hope is that the legislation will be adopted by the Committee on July 21.

Building 30. Parks is working with the Department of Planning and Development on the idea of phasing renovation of Building 30 for artists' studios and event space. The full project cost is \$8.5 million; the idea is that event revenue could pay some renovation debt service.

Volunteer Conservatory Next Steps. Department leadership met with the Friends of the Volunteer Park Conservatory last week to explore ideas for the future of the Conservatory. The facility is often targeted for budget cuts and the Mayor is interested in looking at long-term options. The Friends of the Conservatory agree that 2013 will be the year to make long-term decisions, such as moving towards self-sufficiency. The Department will be spending \$50,000 to hire a consultant to develop a business plan, and the Friends group is hiring a fundraising consultant. In addition to operating expenses, the facility needs \$3.5 million in capital improvements.

Budget Process Update. The Department's operating and capital budget proposals were submitted to the City Budget Office on July 8. Over the course of the summer, the Mayor will be making tough decisions among competing City priorities. On September 26, the Mayor will send his proposed budget to City Council. It is on that date that we will be able to communicate with affected employees, the Park Board, and the public about the details of the proposal.

Community Center SLI. The Community Center Statement of Legislative Intent response was delivered to the City Council earlier in the week.

Downtown Parks Summer Programming. Programming is now in full swing. ARTSparks art installations and performances in Occidental Square have gotten lots of positive response, especially the "yarn-bombing" of the trees, which has been covered by KPLU, Crosscut and other media outlets. Starting in Westlake next Tuesday, July 19, we have the first of 18 nights of social dancing in various downtown parks, including Westlake, Freeway, Occidental, and the Olympic Sculpture Park. Container gardening classes for apartment dwellers began in June and will continue through the summer, happening in Victor Steinbrueck, Cascade, Freeway, Belltown Cottages, and Cal Anderson. The park concierge program has become a robust program this year, with 7 concierges rotating shifts at Occidental, Freeway, Westlake and, new this year, Victor Steinbrueck Park. Activities will begin to slow down at the end of September. The full calendar is in the Summer Brochure and at www.seattle.gov/parks/downtown

Parks/SDOT Westlake Corridor Vision. Councilmembers Bagshaw and Rasmussen are interested in having a better connection between downtown and Lake Union on Westlake. Parks will be working with the Seattle Department of Transportation on this project, looking at plans previously developed as a starting point. The project will extend beyond Westlake to Terry Avenue and 9th Avenue.

Amy Yee Tennis Center Proposal. In addition to the recent expansion of the outdoor tennis courts at the Amy Yee Tennis Center, there are plans to add five additional indoor courts. The expansion would move the

parking lot uphill to the east. The original plan was estimated at \$15-16 million; this is too high, so a scaled down proposal is being developed.

Athletic Field User Group Summit Meeting. This event will bring together representatives of many athletic user groups. It will be July 25th from 1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Mayor's Office

Rainier Beach Community Center. All of the bids for the construction of the new Rainier Beach Community Center are below the engineer's estimate. The selection will be announced shortly.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to two minutes each and will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. The Board's usual process is for 10 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. Two people testified.

Barb Balden is active with the Ballard Homes for All Coalition. The Coalition is interested in establishing a safe parking program in Seattle which provides safe parking places for homeless people who live in their cars. The program will be modeled after a successful program in Eugene, Oregon.

Jean Darsie continued the presentation on a safe homeless parking program. The Ballard Homes for All Coalition is doing outreach to property owners, the City and churches. There is a large number of homeless car campers, and the number is growing. In Eugene, a non-profit organization administers the homeless parking program, and provides support services for the homeless. The Eugene program allows one to three cars per lot, spread out across the City, with access to toilets and waste disposal. There were significant cost savings in Eugene: in the first year of the program it was estimated that the City saved \$300,000 in policing costs. The Coalition would like to consider Park parking lots for a Seattle program.

Responding to a Commissioner question, Ms. Darsie explained that Eugene initially established one large lot for the homeless parking program. However, this proved hard to manage, so they moved to multiple lots with just a few vehicles permitted in each lot. The managing non-profit screens program participants and requires that minimum insurance requirements are met.

Briefing: Race and Social Justice Initiative

Ron Harris-White and Desiree Tabares briefed the Board on Parks Race and Social Justice Initiative.

Written Briefing Paper

Requested Board Action

This briefing is a mid-year update on Seattle Parks and Recreation's Race and Social Justice Initiative work. There is no action is required.

Project Description

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) envisions a city where racial disparities have been eliminated and racial equity achieved.

Summary

2011's RSJI mid-year report has focused on providing specific examples of Parks and Recreation's application of the Racial Equity Toolkit (a set of methods to achieve racial equity in the community within our lines of business, along with results). Presentations can be supplemented by more in-depth information on overall progress in written form.

The following are examples of use of the Racial Equity Toolkit and their results:

1. Environmental Learning Center (ELC): Core Team Member Belinda Chin and Change Team Member Christina Gallegos used the Toolkit to analyze a proposal to consolidate ELC Education Staff to one area of the city. They developed an in- depth report using the Toolkit questions that concluded it would be inequitable to have all Education Staff in just one area. Both the manager of their sector and Director of their division agreed with the findings and did not make those proposed changes.
2. Committee of Administrative and Technological Support (CATS): Change Team Co-Lead Sebastian Wilson and RSJI Executive Sponsor Ron Harris-White trained CATS members on the use of the Toolkit prior to the mid-year Budget Issue Paper (BIP) writing process. The Toolkit questions became a focus for analyzing proposed mid-year budget cuts. A main factor in using the Toolkit is to get information from a variety of people and perspectives. CATS members solicited the assistance of the Change Team Co-Leads and RSJI Executive sponsor in responding to some substantial mid-year BIPs.
3. Executive Team: The Executive Team spent several hours, using the Toolkit questions as their guide, discussing all proposed 2012 budget cuts. A few members stood as proponents for the use of the Toolkit in the face of opposition or doubt. Although the results of their discussion are not public information, there is consensus that, no matter what is adopted, the Executive Team was intentionally focused on racial equity when making decisions.
4. Human Resources Unit (HRU): Change Team Co-Leads Desiree Tabares and Sebastian Wilson trained the HRU on the Racial Equity Toolkit. As part of the training, HRU practiced using the Toolkit on policies and procedures that they are currently reviewing. They plan to use the Toolkit as part of their process from here forward when updating or writing policies and procedures.
5. Associated Recreation Council (ARC) Board: Our largest non-profit partner, ARC, has plans to receive the Toolkit training in September 2011. Having a partner interested in RSJI and its tools is a significant achievement.

2011's RSJI mid-year report also captures Parks & Recreation's work as it relates to community inclusive engagement.

The following are examples of efforts to achieve racial equity in the community from January – June 2011:

Internal Speakers Bureau:

The purpose of the internal speakers' bureau is to build trust between management and staff, as well as provide face to face informational update presentations to department work groups. Change Team Co-Leads Desiree Tabares and Sebastian Wilson and Executive Sponsor Ron Harris-White presented to more than 20 different work teams and reached approximately 50% (450 employees) of DPR's work force. Presentations were made to:

Youth and Teen:

1. Community Learning Center Programs
2. Seattle's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative
3. Teen Top Chef
4. Scholarship Program
5. Youth Development Fund Grant
6. Community Center Gardens Pilot - Park's Urban Food Systems

Adult:

1. Conservation Corps
2. Speaker's Bureau
3. Title V Program
4. Food & Fitness for Immigrant/Refugee communities
5. Community Center Gardens Pilot - Park's Urban Food Systems
6. Change Team Community Food Drive

Citywide:

1. Healthy Parks, Healthy You
2. Park's Urban Food Systems
3. Park Ranger Program
4. Equal Distribution of Park Maintenance
5. WMBE Vendors
6. Community Parks Program
7. Partnership with Duwamish Clean-up Coalition for River Fest
8. Use of Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide

Partners:

1. Aquarium:
 - a. Salmon Homecoming partnership with Tribal Schools
 - b. Citizen Science
 - c. Coastal America
2. Associated Recreation Council:
 - a. Implementing a Change Team consisting of their Child Care directors
 - b. Cultural Competency Language on Performance Evaluations
 - c. Support in offering affordable programs for all Seattle residents
3. United Africa Day
4. REWA – Domestic Violence Prevention Training

Additional Information

Ron Harris-White: ron.harris-white@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing/Discussion

Ron Harris-White and Desiree Tabares introduced themselves. Mr. Harris-White is the Executive Sponsor of Parks Change Team; Ms Tabares is a member of the Change Team and also a member of the city-wide Race and Social Justice Core Team. The Change Team works closely with the Office for Civil Rights. A city-wide goal for 2011 is increased emphasis on the Racial Equity Toolkit. The Toolkit is a lens for evaluating what the department does. It asks for data regarding neighborhoods to assess whether a policy or action will lead to racial inequity. The social justice aspect of the Initiative is just as important as the racial aspect for the Change Team. In fact, Parks and Recreation is the second largest provider of social services in the City. Commissioner Angulo noted that when race and income are overlaid with geography, there is a strong relationship between race and income.

It is especially important to use the Toolkit with the Budget Issue Papers (BIPs). The Department, in using the Toolkit for budget decisions, is trying to mitigate disproportionality – to see if budget impacts are fair. This year

Parks Executive Team formally evaluated BIPS with the Toolkit. For other Parks work, while using the Toolkit is not required, it is a Parks and Recreation value.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Keith, Mr. Harris-White explained that Parks main partner, the Associated Recreation Council, sits on the change Team and has adopted the values of the Race and Social Justice Initiative. ARC staff were trained on Race and the Power of an Illusion and they are starting their own Change Team. Other partners, including the Aquarium and Cascade Land Conservancy, are instituting Race and Social Justice programs. Commissioner Keith asked whether the Toolkit is used in the evaluation of request for proposal submittals. Ms. Tabares responded that the city-wide Core Team is looking into requiring use of the Toolkit for contracts.

Commissioner Angulo asked how the Change Team assessed the impacts of the Initiative. Mr. Harris-White responded that the Change Team is accountable to the Superintendent and the Mayor's Office to complete the items on the RSJI Work Plan. In the early years of the Initiative, Work Plan tasks were vague, whereas now there are more specific, measurable items. In addition, the Initiative is accountable to the City Council and Parks staff will be presenting to the Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee on July 21.

Commissioner Kincaid asked whether there is an evaluation of service delivery to different neighborhoods. Mr. Harris-White responded that the City has identified "challenge areas" to focus on. Initially the RSJI had an internal focus – to eliminate institutional racism within the City structure – but will be moving to an external emphasis in the future.

Commissioner Kostka asked whether the Initiative considers special populations and the disabled. Mr. Harris-White responded yes, noting the Food and Fitness program that focuses on seniors and the department's Special Populations programs.

Commissioner Holme noted that the environmental checklist required for building permits parallels the Racial Equity Toolkit. Like the environmental review, users of the Toolkit should be required to show evidence of their evaluation. He also noted that the "Everyday Democracy" program (formerly called "Learning Circles") provides learning tools for organizations and could be a resource for the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Commissioner Holme stated that the degree/extent of social service Parks and Recreation provides is an important story to tell.

Board Discussion

Committee Assignments and Committee Reports

The Board discussed Board committee assignments. It was decided that Commissioner Angulo would shadow Commissioner Ramels at Associated Recreation Council meetings. Commissioner Keith will shadow Commissioner Kostka at the Central Waterfront Committee meetings. Permanent transition to these committees will be discussed at a future Board meeting. As no Board member is available to sit on the Golf Steering Committee, the Board will seek a non-Board member to act as a representative of the Board for that Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Diana Kincaid, Vice-Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____