



# Minutes

Joint Park District Oversight Committee / Board of Park Commissioners

100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle 98109

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

## Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner McCaffrey calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The Commissioners introduce themselves.

## Public Comment

Elizabeth Riggs – Board member of the Green Lake Advisory Council and Save Evans Pool; she thanks the board members for their role in advocating for maintenance work that will be completed this spring. She thanks Mayor Durkan for the gradual replacement of the pool and community center; and, thanks Jesús for his work to maintain and replace the pool.

Steven Grayson – Amy Yee – How will selection process work for next funding cycle? Members of Amy Yee have been coming to meetings and interacting with SPR on social media. Who are the decisionmakers and who do they need to talk to? They would like to know if they need to start raising funds and to whom they should direct their funding inquiries. Demand keeps growing but they feel like they have no agency.

Tim McGarry – Major maintenance backlog for community centers; request Amy Yee Tennis Center for funding. The demand for indoor courts is there. Tennis appeals to all walks of life. They have classes for every age and skill level. Amy Yee is in an incredibly diverse neighborhood and draws people from all over the city.

Jacob Gelb – Advisory Council for Specialized Programs – They are asking for additional funds to serve more; current programs have waitlists for camps and adult programs; meaning some people cannot participate.

## Superintendent's Update

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Superintendent Aguirre responds to public comment.

Amy Yee Tennis Center and process for the Strategic Plan – SPR staff are wrapping up the strategic planning process which will inform funding for the department. After which, the Park District funding will get parceled out during an oncoming public process. Amy Yee Tennis Center is on the list and SPR is concerned about it. The ultimate decision is made by the Mayor and City Council.

Specialized programs – Jesús heard clear themes through this public process to make more parks and recreation programming more inclusive. Families and households with special needs do not feel heard or their needs addressed.

Roller Derby - Lines painted at Bitter Lake Community Center; SPR staff engaged with this new user group and came up with a plan to move forward.

Urban Triangle Park Opening – SPR worked with SDOT and businesses to bring the park right up to the businesses. It is on the corner of Westlake and Lenora.

Walt Hundley Tennis Courts were restriped.

Partnership with Seattle Preschool program will continue to expand to South Park, Queen Anne and Laurelhurst.

Soundview Playfield Synthetic Turf Conversion Delay – bids were way above projected cost, which caused a significant delay on that project.

San Francisco Parks and Recreation visit – Their executive team came to Seattle. The two departments are building a knowledge-sharing relationship. The Executive Teams held a retreat to discuss challenges and committed to continuing this relationship.

Ballard P-Patch – SPR is looking at it, but it's incredibly expensive; it is not in one of our gap areas.

Community Center hours reduction – there was a pilot project to increase hours and that ended because funding was not available; the Mayor found money to keep the pilot going for another year. While engaging with the public; engaging with a consultant to establish how many community centers and levels of service.

## **Presentation: Specialized Recreation**

Presented by Kyle Bywater, Hannah Spaulding, Recreation Coordinators, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Justin Cutler, Recreation Division Director, starts off by praising Brenda Kramer, Lifelong Recreation and Specialized Programs Manager, and the wonderful work she has done at Seattle Parks and Recreation. She is retiring soon. Justin and her staff really appreciate her character and her leadership. Justin presents Brenda with a bouquet of flowers.

Specialized programs is unique; it is not always standard or provided in Parks and Recreation departments. When SPR talks about race and social justice, it is important to remember to support and create healthy lives for people with disabilities. Other cities do not have these programs and they lack the perspective.

Justin introduces the presenters: Kyle Bywater, Hannah Spaulding and Paul

Hannah reviews the Specialized Programs Mission Statement; exceptional, accessible and affordable. These programs are based out of community centers all over the city. SPR staff are specially trained and work with families to connect them with resources.

Paul, Brian and Linda – Paul has been involved with SPR programming since he was 4 years old; he is 18 now. Paul plays basketball and flag football. There is limited space and waitlists, so they make sure to register quickly. The teen programs are new, and they are great. The summer camps are amazing! Four sessions of day camp and overnight camp; it is great for our entire family. Their daughter has been a camp counselor at Camp Long. Linda has served on the Advisory Council for the past 10 years.

Kyle reads a testimonial from the mother of a 38-year old who has been involved for about two years and whose child's life has been made fuller by Specialized recreation.

Specialized Recreation provides purposeful and meaningful recreation programming.

### Program overview

Youth programs – Some of the youth programs offered by SPR: after-school programs, teen socials, Saturday outings, and summer camps. For many families the summer camp allows them their first respite from caretaking. SPR provides safe ratios for kids at the summer camps.

Adult programs – Some of the adults' programs offered by SPR: sports; health and wellness; and Saturday outings. Many of the participants want to learn more life skills. There are waitlists.

Summer camp – earn camp for free by volunteering; create and use goals to build job skills.

Partners – Seattle Adaptive Sports and CREW. They also worked with Associated Recreation Council's equity taskforce for program funding.

Specialized recreation creates community.

Commissioner Copeland gushes over the programs, staff and affordability of the specialized programs. She emphasizes the importance of providing these services to people with disabilities.

The commissioners ask about how staff market their programs. Kyle responds that schools could be targeted more for participants; word-of-mouth is the biggest way people hear about the programs. Kyle says there is a hesitancy to do more marketing because of the already-existing waitlists.

Brenda, Manager of Specialized Recreation, has worked with many people over the years and this team is incredible.

Does there need to be a regional conversation about creating more opportunities for special needs populations? They do have adaptive sports roundtables with other local municipalities about what they are doing.

They do not have philanthropic support, but they do have a relationship with Seattle Children's Hospital.

How much bigger could the program be and how much funding would they need? Justin says they are not prepared to answer that tonight. He wants the Board to be informed about the services SPR provides. Has there been an effort to obtain philanthropic support? Yes, they receive support through their partners.

Commissioner Copeland mentions that people with disabilities are often ignored and invisible to potential funders.

## Update on the Strategic Plan

Kathleen Conner and Selena Elmer, Strategic Advisors, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Public Engagement concluded for this part of the process; they are working on developing the plan. They will return to the Board in late October and finalize the plan by December. They will start the financial plan in 2020 with a deadline of September. The engagement is continuous.

They perform a thought exercise with the Board; breaking board members and the public into four thematic strategies. They provide a reference sheet with the guiding values to lead conversations in community. SPR has come up with a slate of strategies that distill major themes that have shown up repeatedly. What are the gaps? What isn't represented?

This is a department-wide, 12-year strategic plan. It will set a direction and try to answer how to be bold and make solutions to the challenges the city is facing.

Equity driver/ Priority sharing

**Safe and Equitable City** – Criminal Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)/ lighting/ landscape/hardscape; continued maintenance and underserved/special needs access

Strategies – improve American Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility; reexamine current operating model to improve equity across facilities; use data to prioritize recreation programming, maintenance and capital investments in communities that have been historically underserved or poorly served; landbanking in future growth areas; conduct a gap analysis of current program to ensure meeting people's needs and eliminating racial disparities; teach kids to swim.

**Delivering excellent service** – include special needs and economic diversity; use racial equity lens to assess focus and services to all communities.

Strategies – enhance our organizational performance through data driven' metrics; improve transparency; higher-level strategies with bullets below of more specific strategies; be responsive to the changing needs of communities; conduct regular planning and outreach; expand services through partnerships allowing SPR to focus on what they do well; focus on efficiency and effectiveness.

**Climate and Environment** – Recognize the land as it relates to the native people as stewards; preserving greenspaces and mitigating effects of climate change and respite for communities from heat.

Strategies – preserving and restoring ecological functions to greenspaces; preserving natural assets to honor the heritage of our green spaces; fostering a connection to nature for kids; restore our urban forests to provide a natural sanctuary for people and wildlife; continue improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon footprints and access to facilities; conduct a comprehensive assessment evaluating energy performance; composting; reduction; using by-products

**Affordability and livability** – reduce or eliminate costs and other barriers; ensure geographic equity and environmental justice.

Strategies – examine effectiveness of existing mechanisms like scholarships; reduce socioeconomic barriers to access; improve connectivity in our system by pursuing creative opportunities; build capacity within the current parks and recreation system; couple the opening of new parks, facilities and assets with sufficient resources for ongoing maintenance.

Reflection – Many of the ideas are tactics; they fit neatly in the strategies. but they operate on two different levels.

**Old/New Business**

Commissioner Akita received a response from the Deputy Mayor’s Office; they will follow up. The Park Board can discuss further on October 10.

**There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:30pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly McCaffrey, Chair  
Park District Oversight Committee