

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2016

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

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Board of Park Commissioners

Present:

Tom Byers, Chair

Dennis Cook

Evan Hundley

William Lowe

Michael Padilla

Barbara Wright, Vice Chair

Excused:

Marty Bluewater

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff

Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent

Susan Golub, Policy Unit Manager

Rachel Acosta, Park Board Coordinator

The meeting is held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North.
Commissioner Byers calls the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Commissioner Byers introduces our new Commissioner, Evan Hundley. Commissioner Hundley is very excited to be joining the Board. He is the Head of School at Explorer West middle school in West Seattle. He was born and raised in Seattle and taught and coached tennis through Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Byers calls for approval of the April 14 Agenda, the March 10 and 24 meeting minutes, and the Acknowledgment of Correspondence. Commissioner Wright abstains, Commissioner Cook moves and Commissioner Padilla seconds. The Consent Items are approved.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

Cass Turnbull – Cass worked for Seattle Parks and Recreation for 11 years. She now runs two nonprofit organizations - Plant Amnesty and Tree Pac. She invites the Commissioners to an Urban Forest Symposium. She says the City's Comprehensive Plan minimizes the open space criteria. In Seattle, 35% land area is covered in concrete and impervious surfaces and private individuals own 54% of open space. She feels the City should lock up as much open space as possible because the environment and the community need it. She asks the Department to not base their goals on money available but how much will be needed for the growth.

Geness Reichert – She lives across the street from Queen Anne Elementary on Queen Anne Boulevard. The Seattle School District moved the load/unload for the buses from Boston Avenue to Queen Anne Boulevard. There are 6- 100-year-old Maples along that portion of the Boulevard, she spoke to some arborists who mentioned root compaction is not healthy for the trees. The buses do not fit in with the character of the Boulevard. She asks the Board and Deputy Superintendent Williams for assistance.

Superintendent's Report

Presented by Deputy Superintendent Williams, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Seattle Storm and Swedish Medical Center partnership – SPR and partners will be creating programming with a focus on healthy lifestyle activities at Garfield, Miller and Jefferson community centers. The Storm will hold clinics. Kick off will be on April 21.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten – SPR will be offering universal pre-kindergarten in the fall of 2017. The department is currently assessing 42 sites. It is important to help young people. SPR will hire licensed trained teachers.

Timeline –

- Piloting an outdoor preschool program with Tiny Trees.
- Working with the Seattle School District to renovate Miller Community Center to make it work for preschool.
- ARC functions as our agent of recreation programs; transitioning from unlicensed to licensed programs.

Magnuson Park Advisory Council (MPAC) – Councilmembers Juarez and Johnson, Senator Froct and Councilmember Dembowski met with MPAC regarding the large opportunity fund – \$1.6million to be matched for large project improvements. There may be an opportunity toward getting matched state funding for Magnuson Park Community Center.

Park District Oversight Committee – The PDOC approved reallocating Park District 2019 and 2020 Waterfront Park Maintenance funds to Capital Redevelopment of Pier 62/63. Between now and 2019, the funds will subsidize money set aside for the 14 land banked sites. This allows for funding to complete projects at urban village sites. The PDOC embraced the idea. Barbara says there were some comments about accessibility and transit.

West Seattle tree cutting – Jesús attended a City Council Executive session, responded to the press, and is working closely with City Attorney's Office and Prosecutor's Office regarding the tree cutting that happened on SPR and SDOT property. They are working together to decide how to proceed and what the penalty should be. SPR and SDOT would like to use the fines to educate young people to love our forests.

DSA Agreement – SPR is renewing their partnership agreement with DSA, currently in negotiations.

Donnie Chin Park Naming – Resolution from Council to the Mayor to rename the Children’s International Garden to Donnie Chin International Children’s Park.

Urban parks partnership and activation – There is funding through the MPD for activation of some of our other downtown parks. The Mayor and Superintendent Aguirre will announce the recipients soon.

Green Lake Trout – 15,000 trout were released by the Department of Fish and Wildlife at Green Lake Park before the alum treatment and less than 1% died. Marine Fish Biologists determined the alum was not the cause; but stress from transferring them into the lake. The fish showed no signs of chemical issues associated with death.

Public Hearing: Change in Hours at Cowen and Ravenna Parks

Presented by Patrick Merriam, Park Resources Manager

Briefing Paper

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 6, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Patrick Merriam, Manager, North Region Park Resources
Subject: Change in Park Hours for Cowen Park, Ravenna Park, and Adjacent Parking Lots

Requested Board Action

Parks recently completed an 18-month pilot project in Cowen Park, as well as the adjacent parking lot, that changed the operating hours from 4:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. This was done to respond to concerns regarding illegal behaviors and activities that were occurring in the park.

Based on Seattle Municipal Code Section 18.12.245, the Superintendent, in conjunction with the Board of Park Commissioners holds a public hearing and the Board makes a recommendation on whether to make the change in hours permanent. This decision is based on staff evaluation and public testimony. The Board’s vote can occur the same day as the presentation of the evaluation or at a later date should the Commissioners require additional information to make a decision.

Staff Recommendation

Cowen Park, Ravenna Park, and the adjacent parking lots meet the established criteria to permanently change the operating hours. Staff recommend approval of changing the operating hours to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. in order to continue the progress made during the pilot. This adjustment in hours, over the 18-month pilot period, reduced illegal behaviors and noticeably reduced the number of complaints and negative impacts on the Cowen/Ravenna Park neighbors and community. Seattle Parks and Recreation staff have noticed a reduction in beer bottles, and other signs of illicit activities at the parks and in the parking lots. Because Cowen Park and Ravenna Park are connected by

a path system, staff recommend that the change in operating hours include Ravenna Park. Ravenna Park was not included in the pilot.

Park Description and location

Cowen Park, located at 5849 15th Ave NE, and Ravenna Park, located at 5520 Ravenna Ave NE, are categorized as Neighborhood Parks. The City of Seattle acquired the land for these parks in 1911. Cowen Park and Ravenna Park are connected by a path system, they are popular spots for hiking and jogging. These parks also provide children's play areas, picnic areas, athletic fields, and a creek.

Issues

There have been continuous complaints about illegal behavior occurring at these parks and in the adjacent parking lots. Drinking and drug use occur around the clock and young people congregate at all hours. Neighbors and Parks staff cite four specific reasons for requesting the change in hours:

- 1) Maintenance workers are burdened with cleaning drug baggies, beer cans, broken glass, laden trash, and bio waste from the parking lot area.
- 2) Extensive graffiti is pervasive, especially when cars remain in the parking lot late at night and after the park has closed. Changing the closing time to 10:00 p.m. will enable SPD to do a sweep through the park and enforce the closure time.
- 3) Neighbors frequently call 911 because of the late night activities which often include loud and boisterous behavior, in addition to the illegal activity. A rape recently occurred at the comfort station.
- 4) Community members do not feel safe confronting those who loiter in the park after hours and the earlier closure time enables the police to confront these individuals.

Additional Information

Patrick Merriam: Patrick.Merriam@Seattle.gov

Attachments

Maps of Ravenna Park and Cowen Park

Public Hearing

No one came to testify.

Discussion

The community and Seattle Police Department requested a change in hours at Cowen Park from 4:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. This allows for the police to swing through the park before shift changes at midnight.

Most of the boisterous behavior has been from students from the University and teen groups. If caught at the park after hours, patrons would receive a penalty and exclusions for repeated behaviors.

Other measures taken to decrease disturbances in the Park include:

- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) pruning
- LED lighting installed to light up the Cowen Park play area comfort station

The crew is very responsive to the requests of the neighborhood to make it safer.

Presentation and Discussion: Community Engagement Strategy

Presented by Corey Dahl and Alma Weber

Briefing Paper

Seattle Parks and Recreation: Inclusive Community Engagement Strategies to recruit and maintain connections with underrepresented communities

While SPR conducts community engagement through a variety of means, the agency acknowledges that the current approach is not reaching large segments of Seattle's population. Current strategies are largely reaching and connecting with residents who are white, have high educational attainment, and belong to relatively high socioeconomic groups. SPR would like to foster better engagement with communities of color, immigrant communities, and other marginalized groups that do not typically interact with local government service providers.

Community engagement definition:

The process by which a resident participates in order to help shape and improve their community.

Research questions:

1. What inclusive community engagement strategies should Seattle Parks and Recreation adopt in the

Park District?

2. What tactics will help the City build and maintain relationships with underrepresented communities that do not typically interact with the government?

3. What are other municipalities and City of Seattle departments doing when faced with the task of inclusive community engagement?

Research methods:

1. Interviews - completed eight so far

- a. City of Minneapolis
- b. City of Seattle - Office of Planning and Community Development; Seattle Parks and Recreation, Office of Immigrant and Refugees Affairs, and Department of Neighborhoods

2. Published Research - three frameworks

- a. The Democracy Cube (Fung, 2006)
- b. Communication Infrastructure Theory (Kim, 2006)
- c. Computer-Mediated Communication (Albrecht, 2006)

Recommendations

Recruitment and Retention

- Engage with City Affinity Groups
- Targeted Sampling and Recruiting The Clinic Model
- Stipends for Participation
- Build Relationships with Ethnic Media Outlets
- Translation Services
- Hire Community Members

Programming

- Targeted Community Meetings
- App-based and Gamified Tools
- Community Engagement Manager
- Deliberative Polling

Areas for further research:

1. User surveys
2. Program evaluation

Presentation and Discussion

SPR's approach to community engagement starts with a commitment to racial equity. SPR drafted a Public Engagement Plan in 2013 and UW students are helping SPR realize those goals. They will reach out to communities who gave input during Legacy planning – make sure their voices are heard.

SPR staff engaged the Evans School to research community engagement strategies

Research questions:

1. What inclusive community engagement strategies should Seattle Parks and Recreation adopt in the Park District?
2. What tactics will help the City build and maintain relationships with underrepresented communities that do not typically interact with the government?
3. What are other municipalities and City of Seattle departments doing when faced with the task of inclusive community engagement?

Research methods –

Published Research

- Community Engagement – how an active resident participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future
- Democracy cube – Measuring the dimensions of who participates, how they participate, and their ability to make decisions

- Community infrastructure theory – how could SPR take advantage of networks that are in place – ethnic media programming
- Computer mediated communication – how are people communicating on line – take them from online to in person

Interviews

- Spoke with Minneapolis, MN because they have a similar immigrant population
- Used snowball effect – asking the question ‘who should we talk to next?’
- Spoke with SPR Staff, and members of other city departments, including
 - Department of Neighborhoods
 - Yun Pitre, Outreach lead for Sound Transit during MLK construction
 - Sahar Fathi, Public Outreach Engagement
 - Department of Planning and Community
 - Patrice Carroll, Outreach lead for Seattle 2035
 - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
 - Joaquin Uy, Ethnic Media and Communications Specialist

Barriers to participation –

- Professional and family commitments
- Opportunity cost: Could be working or spending time with family instead
- Childcare
- Meals
- Transportation and parking expenses
- Language and translation
- Time of day and locations
- Homogenous participation
- Distrust

Recommendations

Make sure recommendations are built into policy – The public engagement process is embedded into the SPR workflow and budget requests.

1. Recruitment and retention: get and keep people at the table; difficult to keep people engaged
 - a. Engage with city affinity groups – provide insight on how best to engage with their communities
 - b. Targeted sampling and recruiting – understand community that is there; make sure folks who are engaged represent the community
 - c. Building relationships with ethnic media outlets – authority and trust in the communities; placing ads or providing information
2. Programming – activities designed to give feedback
 - a. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) clinic model – community engagement works with existing community groups and brings departments to those communities, with translators and makes it accessible to people. Provide feedback on policy.

- b. App-based and gamified tools – provide feedback without being in a community meeting; feedback provided through a series of games.

Outcomes –

Shorter Term:

- Equitable community engagement policies in place
- SPR's budget establishes commitment to community engagement
- Underrepresented communities participate in engagement programming
- SPR's RSJI goals met

Longer Term:

- Underrepresented communities build trust in SPR and the local government
- Underrepresented communities have political efficacy
- SPR services accurately match community needs
- Community engagement is an SPR core competency

Identify for further research

Survey Park Users

- a) Ask users how they want SPR to engage with them
- b) Design survey and establish sample size
- c) Consider survey season and times of days
- d) In-person and online

Program evaluation

- a) Evaluate if recommendations are meeting desired outcomes
- b) Develop measurements for success with implemented strategies
- c) Consider how to gather data
- d) Collect baseline data for future comparison

Discussion – Community and DON seem to be managing outreach; individual departments do not necessarily have relationships.

Look at NGOs to get ideas of what they are finding works. Combine the report with communications committee to create a department action plan. Nonprofits do a great job with outreach.

One issue the Board faces is that one or two people monopolize meetings; how to make people who are uncomfortable, feel comfortable.

- Call-in community meeting – sign up before call begins
- Team of engagement to go face to face to talk with people.
- Focus groups – before meeting happens

Experiment with different ways to engage public and different communities. Evaluation phase would be important to include.

The Park Board has been discussing going on the road to meet with the communities throughout the city.

Presentation and Discussion: Art Placement Policy

Presented by Ken Mullins and Kim Ong

Briefing Paper

SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION: ART PLACEMENT POLICY ENHANCING SPACES, REFLECTING COMMUNITY, ACTIVATING SPACES, INVITING PEOPLE TO EXPLORE URBAN NATURE, AND BRINGING ART TO THE PUBLIC.

The Seattle Parks and Recreation's policy for public art submissions was last updated in 2001. While it contains important information for potential artists, it lacks formal steps for submitting a proposal. The goals of revision are to improve transparency and standardize the review process.

Research questions:

1. How can SPR make their policies and practices for public art more user-friendly and encourage artists to submit completed proposals?
2. How can SPR's policies and practices for public art promote diverse submissions?
3. How can SPR standardize their submission review process?

Research methods:

1. Interviews
 - a. Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Downtown Seattle Association, Office of Risk Management, City of Bellevue, and City of Spokane
2. Literature Review
 - a. Benefit of Public Art
 - b. Workflow Improvement Frameworks
 - c. Art Policies: Bellevue, WA; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA; and New York, NY

What we have found:

1. Interviews
 - a. Recurring Concerns
 - i. Fees, permitting
 - ii. Flexibility to deal with various parties and circumstances
 - iii. Ensuring public safety
 - iv. Managing SPR liability
 - v. Maintenance burden
2. Literature Review
 - a. Explicit requirements
 - b. Short, transparent policy
 - c. Clear points of contact

Next Steps:

1. Build a sample application
2. Develop potential fee structures

3. Revise the policy
4. Create a workflow chart

Presentation and Discussion

Goal – Clarify SPR’s policies and practices regarding consistent standards for review of visual art and artistic objects located in a Seattle park or park facility. Our recommendations must account for impacts on current park demands, safety, liability, appropriateness for a public space, and maintenance costs.

Current policy was created in 2001 – lacks formal steps for submitting a proposal; improve transparency around submission process and standardize the review.

Goal of public art –

- Enhance space
- Reflect community
- Activate spaces
- Invite visitors
- Bring art to the public

Research: Art placement policies in other cities

- Portland, OR – clear review process; criteria
- San Francisco, CA – classified based on temporary v. permanent
- Art event vs. temporary art installation – whether there is a concrete fee structure; benefit to have out of flexibility to not having concrete fee structure; share art without major expense.

Interviews: Questions get to the core of what the policy needs to answer.

Kyle Griggs, SPR staff, provides a flow chart for permit applicants so they can see how it will move through the process.

Recurring Concerns:

- Fees, Permitting
 - Should there be a fee structure?
- Maintenance Burden
 - How do we ensure that SPR does not take on too much of the cost?
- Managing Liability
 - How does temporary or low-maintenance art factor into CGLs?
- Accessibility and Clarity of Information
 - How do we best communicate all the necessary information?
- Appropriateness
 - How do we best align a definition of “appropriateness” with the Parks’ mission?

Feedback from the Park Board on criteria and process:

- What impact will the art have on current park usage?
- Spell out how these are determined:
 - How works of art are judged to fit into a space
 - How to determine the quality of art for being in a space.
- Temporary v. permanent as a distinction is important.
- Determine categories – historic/environmental, cultural, regional heritage – providing some boxes and some standards.
- How to align parks art that will align with SPR mission?
- A panel of professionals – need someone with expertise instead of just focusing on maintenance and liability.
- Allow for commemorations and reactions to events in communities
- Have artists provide resume and portfolio
- Make the application more user friendly; build a platform for people to submit requests.

Old/New Business

Commissioner Cook volunteers to the Board of Park Commissioner representative on the Park Naming Committee.

Commissioner Cook moves the meeting adjourn; Commissioner Wright seconds, and the motion carries. The meeting adjourns at 8:03 pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
Barbara Wright, Vice Chair
Board of Park Commissioners