

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
February 22, 2018

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:

Andréa Akita  
Tom Byers, Chair  
Dennis Cook  
Marlon Herrera  
Kelly McCaffrey  
Rachel Anne Williams

Excused:

Evan Hundley  
William Lowe, Vice Chair  
Barbara Wright

**Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff**

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent  
Paula Hoff, Strategic Advisor

The meeting is held at 100 Dexter Avenue North. Commissioner Byers calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Commissioner Byers calls for approval of the Consent Items: the February 8 Agenda, January 25 and February 8 meeting minutes; Commissioner Cook moves, Commissioner Williams seconds and the Consent Item is approved unanimously.

**Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

Melissa Hall – PFM Roller Derby; SPR has advised the roller derby group that they will not be able to use the gym space at Magnuson Community Center, the roller derby community is upset about the lack of communication and the disregard for their programs and participants who feel they are being shunned. The Superintendent has not responded to their concerns. The community has submitted a grant proposal with Recreation for All. Melissa introduces Amy, the PFM Roller Derby President.

Amy Davis – Members of the PFM Roller Derby club attended the Magnuson Park Advisory Council meeting to testify during public comment. The board members spoke and said they would work with SPR to find time in the gym. PFM received an order to

leave the gym from the Superintendent. They are hoping the Superintendent will review the correspondence and information he requested and rescind the order to leave. The other spots at Magnuson were not conducive for roller derby.

Jonathan Mark – Jefferson Park Youth Golf Clubhouse. There was no public involvement for this project until it was too late for any significant changes. The request for proposal process delegates public process to a partner. The process is flawed especially with severe backlog on facilities maintenance. He feels it is generational warfare to create all of this debt for future generations.

### **Superintendent's Report**

*Presented by Holly Miller, Acting Deputy Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation*

Magnuson Park –

Roller Derby were asked to relocate to open gym time for drop-in community use; good purpose but difficult for the roller derby program. PFM tried out different facilities. SPR has offered PFM time at the gym from 7:30-9pm for March and SPR staff will look for community center gym time. SPR staff are looking for space that accommodates their needs.

The Board has a letter from 3 Washington State Legislators requesting SPR work to expand programming for people who live in and around Magnuson Park. SPR wants to ensure they are serving the community that lives in the park.

Are there adjustments can be made quickly to target the immediate community?

The Washington State Legislature did come through with \$2million towards the Magnuson Park Community Center.

Long-term plan for managing the park. The Board received a letter from community members who were concerned with housing issues and program offerings for residents. SPR will hire a consultant to make recommendations for organizational structures to manage the parks for all needs/uses. A managing partnership that would allow for a more holistic approach.

In the interim, SPR will examine the short-term needs – keep the Board up to date. There are exciting long-term possibilities.

Contract referenced in the letter does not involve SPR but the Office of Housing.

Park District Strategic Plan – scheduling a briefing for the Mayor; she will have direction for the department. Deputy Superintendent Miller will inform the Board and the Park Foundation to ensure everyone is on the same page.

King County Land Conservation Initiative – Ballot measure to lift the levy lid to 6.2% which would give them capacity to fund part of this plan. This is a large effort to preserve high value open space in King County. Proposal totals \$4.1 billion in 30 years; there is a path forward to pay for many of the identified projects. Many of the cities have submitted their proposals. Seattle needs to be increasingly innovative considering open space; in the context of this plan, there needs to be criteria developed that shows these are legitimate uses as open space. Want to make sure the City has access to some of the revenue sources with more flexible funding. The County Council will need to vote on this on May 11 so SPR is hoping to brief the Mayor soon.

Commissioner Byers provides background – King County wants to bond against this revenue stream to do big acquisitions. As property value goes up, the rate of taxation has fallen below what was originally authorized, this means the County is collecting the same amount of money but if they applied the historic rate, they would get more money.

Conservation Futures Tax has limited uses written into the code language, the money can only be spent on preserving natural open spaces. This is not the case in Seattle; the lands SPR needs to redevelop are redemptive and not in their natural state. The County needs to make the funding relevant to the cities' needs.

The city has some leverage. Commissioner Byers hopes the Park Board will advocate for Seattle. The criteria for identifying projects has not been identified yet.

Deputy Superintendent Miller thinks a potential option would be to develop a Memorandum of Agreement to define the relationship between the City and County. Funding equity acquisitions is part of the \$1.89 billion gap.

Department work plans - Developing high level work plans for the next year for each division. Acting Superintendent Williams will use the plans to bring the Mayor's Office up to speed on challenges and opportunities. There are 3 categories:

- Basic operations – Shift to preventative maintenance, renegotiating Associated Recreation Council master contract, and hiring a new Human Resources Director;
- Planning for the Future – strategic planning process for next 6-year spending cycle; Magnuson Park business model
- Budget and Operating Efficiencies – SPR may have to make some cuts; minimize impacts of cuts on park users and preserve basic services. The last recession was devastating. The Park District is helpful. The department will look to consolidate work functions. SPR may need to rely more on partnerships – The New Localism by Bruce Katz, state and federal governments will not be reliable for funding; heavier reliance on partnerships to provide programs and services. Shift some work to CIP; use Park District interest earnings for projects.

Personnel changes

Kelly Guy is no longer serving as Recreation Division Director – she has done a good job developing a structure to assess impacts of what SPR does for people. She increased access and participation to underserved communities.

Hired Darryl Cook to run the partnership program for the department; looking at taxonomy of existing partnerships. What are SPR needs and how might they be addressed?

### **Presentation: Natural Resources Unit Showcase**

*Jon Jainga, NRU Manager*

Urban Forest Tree Crew has been very busy; hit the year running on a lot of trees. They are working to identify aging and dying trees; they are seeing an improvement in the amount of trees coming down on their own; preventative maintenance program seems to be paying off.

### 2017 Year in Review

Natural Resources Unit is a citywide service unit. The different branches of NRU are the following:

- urban forestry – arborists and tree crew;
- gsp and natural area crew – forest restoration;
- hort, specialty gardens,
- landscape and turf crew – professional gardeners, 2 active greenhouses – NRU propagate all of the flowers, hanging baskets in Pioneer Square and along the waterfront; unique gardens – Kubota is starting a master planning process; 2 landscape crews that help gardeners; turf crew renovate and maintain natural turf fields and synthetic turf;
- Seattle Trails, Youth Green Corp – Chukundi started the all-volunteer corps – teach them basic trail work/renovations, provides job experience.

Jon provides some numbers about the work his unit has done in 2017:

- 3,976 maintenance and pruning tasks;
- 586 tree failures is a decrease from previous years because of preventative maintenance
- 195 after-hour response calls - Jon shows examples of tree clearings the work crew have handled.
- 696 work orders completed by the tree crew;

### Green Seattle Partnership

- Goal: 2005 to 2025 renovate 2500 acres
- 2017 Stats: 78,000 hours of volunteer time equalling \$2.36million
- Restored 173 acres last year
- 16,350 youth volunteer hours
- Planted 164,177 native plants

Currently 1520 acres restored; need to restore 980 more to reach the goal.

Jon thanks the partnerships who are dedicated and passionate forest stewards.

Plan is being formed to maintain the acreage that has been restored.

### Specialty Gardens

Japanese Garden – over 103,000 visitors; 1570 participants in programs at the Japanese Garden. There is a soft opening on March 1 and a ceremonial opening on March 4

Volunteer Park Conservatory – 96,000 visitors last year.

Jefferson Greenhouse propagated 80,000 plants. 22,000 were perennial or native plants for GSP restoration efforts.

### Horticulture and landscape

Trails – 125+ volunteer projects with 35 volunteer groups. The trails crew was featured in the National Recreation and Parks Association magazine. Disney and NRPA funded a grant and SPR trail crew received funds to do a new Viewlands Trail at Carkeek Park.

Duwamish Head Greenbelt – The illegal tree cutting resulted in an \$800,000 settlement total. it's enough to start restoration of trees cut along the green belt. Jon feels the money is good, but does not make up for the lost environmental benefits those trees provided. He provides the statistics below:

152 trees lost =

- Intercepted 119,000 gallons storm water run-off
- 4 tons of carbon dioxide filtered
- 39,520 pounds clean oxygen produced;

The community will have to wait 10-12 years to see those same benefits come back.

Green Lake Park – Duck Island; \$30,000 settlement for restoration. SPR received the amount they asked for and that is what it cost to repair the damage.

Jon says there are 2 more cases of illegal tree cutting. The cases referenced above are not dissuading people from cutting down trees on public lands.

### 2018 Preview

- 2001 Tree Policy Update- The old policy doesn't meet industry standards. The view policy will be rewritten with updated best practices and in conjunction with the Viewpoint Taskforce.
- Master Plan for Kubota gardens
- Draft soft surface trails plan
- Colman Park Vegetation Management Plan

- 3 turf projects - major maintenance for athletic fields.

When tree crews take a tree down, they will leave a snag when they can to create a habitat; lay the tree trunks down in chunks for nutrients. If unsafe SPR hauls them out and surplus them. Not good enough to mill or lumber but they are trying to think of creative solutions.

Does anybody measure wind? UW, NOAA, and SPU meteorologist watch the wind and other climate activity. When they review the data they are seeing some correlations that could be helpful in future planning efforts.

Any effort from parks to be safety conscience? Yes, on social media sites; SPR discourages users from going into greenspaces.

The Board is really impressed with the work of the Natural Resources unit.

### **Discussion: The Roles of the Board of Park Commissioners/Park District Oversight Committee**

*Commissioners Kelly McCaffrey and Marlon Herrera*

It is not entirely clear to the public about what issues go to which board.

Reviews the possible options to refine their roles. The Board feels there is merit to what both groups do separately.

There is overlap when it comes to spending since the Park District is funding related. There are redundancies because of the roles of the Boards in oversight; and the staff will work to combine meetings when possible.

In keeping with the Ordinance, PDOC wants to take on more of a performance oversight and accountability role.

To illustrate the confusion the public has with the two boards, Susan mentions the Off-Leash Area Plan – which was only reviewed by the Park Board but didn't get reviewed by PDOC, but uses 100% Park District funding.

Seattle Transportation Benefit District does not have a second board for their transportation district.

March 20 PDOC and Park Board combined meeting.

The Boards should be combined in order to be less confusing – member of the public.

**Old/New Business**

**There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:15pm.**

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Tom Byers, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners