



Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners
100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle 98109
Thursday, August 8, 2019
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Commissioners:

Andréa Akita, Vice Chair	Tom Byers
Dennis Cook	Jessica Farmer
Marlon Herrera	Evan Hundley
William Lowe, Chair	Kelly McCaffrey
José Ochoa	

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Lowe calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The Commissioners introduce themselves. Commissioner Hundley moves to approve the August 8 agenda and the May 9 minutes, Commissioner Byers seconds; they are approved.

Public Comment

John Higgins – He came to comment on the multi-use trail pilot project and he is disappointed there is a prohibition on class 3 e-bikes. They can go up to 28mph. Non e-bikes are allowed on trails with no speed restrictions. Class 3 bikes have more restrictions.

Tim Motzer – Tim met with CM Juarez’s staff to discuss Park District funding; the Boards need to meet with CM Juarez staff in order to advocate current .22 tax rate for Park District.

Doug MacDonald – the multi-use trail pilot is a small portion of the new issue affecting Seattle called micro-mobility. There are bikes everywhere. SDOT does not seem to care about it at all. E-scooters will be more transformative and problematic. Pilot program in Portland identified adverse impacts in parks. E-scooters are not permitted in Portland parks. This pilot needs to be done through an iterative process and coordination with SDOT.

Superintendent’s Update

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Teen Summer Musical – August 23-25 at Benaroya Hall; culmination of 9 weeks of really hard work.

Big Day of Play – August 17 from 11am to 5pm; still need volunteers

Greater Greener Conference in Denver – Parks and Recreation leaders talk about future of parks and recreation. SPR is hosting in 2023 so staff went to see how it worked.

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

SPR – condemnation and acquisition of a property near Roosevelt High School.

City Council approved acquisition of Duwamish Waterway Park and acceptance of a donation of a property in Laurelhurst called Sun Park. Christie Park art donation.

Back to school event in Beer Sheva Park – for kids to get school supplies on August 10.

Live in D5 event at Hubbard Homestead on Saturday, August 10.

Mercer Mega Block - Mayor Durkan mentioned the sale of Mercer Mega Block; create a brand-new community center. The community center will be constructed by the developer and SPR will have a 40-year lease. There will also be 170 units of affordable housing there and the developer will also provide affordable housing in other locations around the city.

King County Parks Levy passed, could Superintendent Aguirre talk about what Seattle will get out of that, since Seattle puts in about 40%? The Aquarium and Zoo get some funding from the Levy. Paula will work to get them a summary of funding from King County.

The Commissioners ask if they have heard from the Mayor in response to the letter they sent. SPR staff have not heard from them but the letter provided Commissioner Lowe's contact information.

Presentation: Multi-use trail pilot project update

Presented by Todd Burley, Sustainability Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Todd thanks the Board for their input and shares results from the Pilot period.

1-year pilot project that was partly due to new State Law allowing class 1 and class 2 electric-assist bicycles on multi-use trails. City of Seattle had a law against e-bikes on our trails.

3 main elements of pilot:

- Set Speed limit 15mph
- Education campaign to reinforce etiquette and trail conduct
- Allow Class 1 & 2 E-Bikes

Goals for pilot:

- Safety
- Clarity
- Consistency and clarity with other trail owners
- Etiquette

Outreach – most organizations support the idea and the goals of the pilot. Reached out to 40+ organizations and made presentations to 12 different organizations.

Todd spoke with SPD who provided their non-emergency number for signage. They did not hear enough complaints to create a need for enforcement.

Todd and a few interns visited three different trails, five times each during peak times and locations. They conducted surveys on site and did counts and observation.

- More bikes than pedestrians overall, but it was trail dependent.
- E-bikes and normal bikes average speed on trails was 14 mph.
- Most users share the trail respectfully.

They also provided an online survey. 1400 people surveyed; this survey was voluntary which means the data is skewed towards people who care enough.

- Cyclists provided most of the results for the online survey.
- 2/3 of respondents feel safe on the trail and their biggest safety concerns are conflicts at crossings.
- Very strong support for the speed limit on the trails.
- Most people support e-bikes on the trails.

Policy Research – What others are doing? SPR aligns with other City/Regional agencies.

Next Steps

SPR is heading in the right direction; data and public seem to support it. Other local agencies are doing similar policy changes.

SPR would like to continue the 15mph speed limit; allowing class 1 and class 2 e-bikes and continue collaboration with other regional/national agencies, and, continue education and etiquette efforts.

Todd will return to the Board in October with a policy proposal and implementation plan discussion, returning in November for a Board vote.

Board concerned with enforcement; Todd mentions a program with King County incentivizing good behavior with treats on the trail.

The Board appreciates how responsive Todd has been to their suggestions and input. The Board wonders if they can get speed readers on the trails to let people know how fast they are going. Todd responds that SDOT has reported this tends to make cyclists go faster to see how fast they can go.

Any counters to track usage data? Yes, SDOT has them on several trails. It would be interesting how bike usage increases year by year.

Is there a helmet law? Yes, but it isn't followed on bike shares.

E-scooter pilot next year; hope to include it in the policy.

Agencies need to create clarity and consistency on what is allowed on different types of trails and rights of way. The world has changed a lot since the bicycle use policy was created in 1995. Seattle needs to focus on the use, more than the technology.

Signage is SDOT's responsibility. Yard sign style that have different rules of etiquette. Increase signage on these trails and continue to boost the education. SDOT has committed to putting up the speed limit signs if SPR moves forward.

The Commissioners ask about the bikeshare haphazard parking situation. Todd replies, the City is looking to negotiate places for bike parking with the bike share companies. The bike share companies can create geofencing that continues to charge the customer until they move their bikes to an e-bike parking spot.

Public Benefit Policy

Paula Hoff, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

SPR staff are working on a Public Benefit policy. This is particularly important when considering long-term leases or partnerships. Are there different public benefit criteria for varying types of organizations? Trying to make the public benefits more consistent. There are facilities owned by SPR that groups want to come and use and SPR wants to ensure that the public are getting something out of it.

SPR is requiring lessees to report out on the public benefits. Paula reviews the criteria for public benefits and how SPR will hold them accountable.

SPR is putting this policy through a Racial Equity Toolkit.

Something that speaks to the use of SPR property by utilities needs to provide public benefit for the long-term use of the people.

Commissioner McCaffrey considers these qualifying conditions to obtaining a lease or easement.

Is money enough of a benefit for allowing utilities on SPR property?

Public Benefit report at the end of the year to publish for the Board and the public, to review.

Any organization that wants to lease property with SPR needs to commit to providing a robust public benefits plan.

After a lease concludes, there is a Request for Proposal to find a new vendor to provide services.

The public benefits need to provide services that the community would not be able to have without this partnership.

In the past, the eagerness to have a space renovated or used, SPR has entered leases that are not necessarily strong on public benefits.

How does SPR enforce the lease when public benefits are not being done? Important to clearly communicate the outreach measures taken and to whom.

SPR should maintain a collection of potential public benefit options.

Commissioner McCaffrey asks if there is a protocol for a grievance if lessees are not providing public benefits? Superintendent Aguirre mentions that the more people know about the available public benefits, the easier it will be for the public to communicate to SPR when they are not being served.

Capital improvements to dilapidated buildings should count for something. SPR definitely considers the amount of money needed to invest to renovate the buildings.

Various staff work on the contracts depending on the location.

Discussion: Retreat Planning

Paula Hoff, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Retreat planning committee: Tom and Evan Hundley

September 26 from 2pm to 8pm.

Dennis did an all-day retreat with ARC. He enjoyed the peaceful setting.

Concurrence about what kind of issues come to the Board and getting issues early before they become controversial to allow the Board opportunity to provide input and support and advocate on behalf of the department.

Hot topics – brainstorm issues that could be controversial that would allow people to participate.

Park Board and PDOC status – what does each board do? Reformulate and rethink the roles of the boards.

Old/New Business

Commissioner McCaffrey asks if the 'Women Only' Swim at Southwest Pool has been eliminated? There is a legal issue and it is on hold. The Board of Park Commissioners offers their support to add their voice advocating for those that do not have one.

Big Day of Play volunteer opportunities August 17.

ARC met with Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to discuss the future relationship of ARC. ARC wants to work more closely with SPR.

SPR is welcoming two groups of visitors – San Francisco Parks and Recreation and “Reimagine Civic Commons” to share and learn together. Paula will send those dates out to you.

Superintendent Aguirre will be teaching a class to future Parks and Recreation directors on how to lead a parks and recreation department for the National Recreation and Parks Association. This will be his second year.

Commissioner McCaffrey emailed SPR staff regarding how bathroom facilities are being remodeled with gender non-conforming in mind. She appreciated the response and said the staff were thoughtful in their approach.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 8:40pm.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____
William Lowe, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners