



Minutes

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Via WebEx

Thursday, September 9, 2021

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

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner McCaffrey calls the meeting to order at 6:35pm. The Board members and SPR staff introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Michelle Mesmer – Thanks SPR for their work during the pandemic. She is part of the PFM roller derby league. SPR finished painting the lines in their facilities. This pandemic has been particularly difficult on women, their league and women’s fitness in general. She understands the constraints and the many groups vying for space and she hopes SPR works to help their community.

Mike O’Shaunessy – He is part of the “Save the Stone Cottage Association” to preserve a historic structure on Alki Beach. The Stone Cottage has been saved! It is stored at Port of Seattle until a final place can be found. They have crowd-source funded and are working with Historic Seattle and SW Seattle Historic Society as their fiscal partner.

Deb Barker – President of Morgan Community Association and they thank Andy Sheffer for attending a community meeting, but devastated to hear the land-banked funding is not coming to develop the park. They would like to be

Sandy Stewart – She is a West Seattle resident and enjoys the pickleball at Delridge and Hiawatha. There is more need than there are courts to play. Seattle needs more courts.

Erika Berg – The West Point Lighthouse at Discovery Park needs to be better maintained and activated with programming.

Deputy Superintendent’s Report

Department Updates

- More Pools Reopening: Madison and Southwest Pools will reopen on Sept. 13. We plan to open Ballard & Meadowbrook pools in October.

- Specialty Gardens: The Volunteer Park Conservatory reopened on Sept. 1, with just under 75 total visitors on the first day. Everything went very smoothly, including mask wearing by visitors.
- Summer Aquatics: Sept. 6 was the last day of the summer season for our outdoor pools, lifeguarded beaches, sprayparks and wading pools. We had over 141,000 people attend our summer beaches and our lifeguards had 47 rescues and 27 first aids. Our wading pools saw over 52,000 people this summer.
- Online Open House and Survey: SPR's strategic plan engagement activity is well underway! In the first two weeks of engagement activities (from August 13 – 16), SPR staff attended and encouraged survey participation at 8 community events, surveyed visitors at 6 parks, held 3 Superintendent listening sessions with community organizations, and launched an online open house to collect community feedback. Over this time period, these activities engaged over 750 parks and recreation users. Seattle Times published [an article](#) describing the site and survey, encouraging readers to participate. As of Sunday, September 5, the online open house had over 3,500 total visitors and over 2,000 survey responses.
- Board members have also started hosting listening sessions - Kelly and Jessica facilitated a listening session with the Urban Forestry Commission and Marlon facilitated a session with the Immigrant & Refugee Commission. Thank You
- SPR is reporting out on major themes that emerge through this engagement work on a biweekly basis - both through a newsletter (sent to the Board) and by posting summarized feedback and raw data to our [Strategic Plan website](#).

Clean City Initiative

Clean Cities work continues all over the city. This is an ongoing effort to make parks clean and safe for the public to use now and throughout the busy summer months.

- In August 2021, SPR crews removed 295,560 lbs. of trash and collected 5,313 needles from 169 encampment trash pick-up locations.
- We conducted six park focus cleans at Bell Street, Colman, Kinnear, Pritchard Beach, Golden Gardens, and Lincoln parks.

Parks and Environment Division

- City Hall Park: The restoration of City Hall Park continues. Last week, rodent control was completed, and this week soil will be imported to the site with grading and prep for hydroseeding next week.
- Lifting of Stage 2 Burn Ban: In response to King County lifting the Stage 2 Burn Ban, PED staff reopened the firepits at Alki and Golden Gardens beaches last weekend.
- Lilyponds at Volunteer Park: Staff are working on a plan to drain and power wash the north and south lilyponds at the Volunteer Park Conservatory.

Planning, Development & Maintenance

- Licton Springs Comfort Station: The Carpentry Crew responded to a fire at Licton Springs Comfort Station over the weekend and quickly secured the site. The Comfort Station is a total loss, and we will be pursuing insurance to rebuild.
- Winter Prep: Skilled trades are preparing for winter including NDPES Permit compliance that involves inspecting and cleaning close to 4,000 drainage structures and testing of double check valve assemblies.
- Little Saigon Festival: PDM attended the Little Saigon Festival on Aug. 28 and engaged with the community on the future Little Saigon Park.
- Jefferson Community Center Stabilization Project: PDM issued the Notice to Proceed for the construction of the Jefferson Community Center Stabilization Project. The contractors are mobilizing onsite this week and anticipate construction being complete by early 2022.
- Hing Hay Park Gets New Ping Pong Tables: The Recreation Equipment Crew installed the first new ping pong table in Hing Hay Park last week after the portable ping pong table at Hing Hay Park was set on fire. The new tables are made of concrete and are very durable.

Recreation

- School Age Care: SPR's popular childcare program kicked off on Wednesday, September 1. We have 16 sites across the City serving 700+ youth.
- Youth Employment and Service Learning: Career Labs have wrapped up and 142 of the 175 youth participants have successfully completed the program. So far, 10 young people have reached out to staff with news of landing a job after the program's completion and success stories are still rolling in.
- Scholarships: Applications for the new scholarship cycle (June 2021 to June 2022) are now available. Income eligible families and individuals can qualify for up to 90% off programs. All details in various languages can be found on our website.
- Lake City Community Center: SPR Enhanced Cleaning Custodial and Grounds crews worked together at Lake City Community Center to prepare for this week's opening. The Lake City Community Center is open for Lifelong Recreation programs starting 9/14 and will be offering more registerable programs for ages 13+ starting the week of October 4th. This week, we welcomed back our partners, Sound Generations and Hunger Intervention Program, who provide programs, services and meals for seniors in the community.
- Northgate Community Center: On Friday, September 17 the Northgate Community Center is hosting a free "welcome back" event for all ages to re-introduce the community to the Northgate area. From 6-8pm there'll be live music, snacks, information tables, program demos, and more.
- Big Day of Play: Thank you everyone who attended and volunteered at this year's Big Day of Play on 8/21/21! This amazing community event wouldn't have been possible without support from volunteers, attendees and sponsors.
 - We had 39 volunteers from the community and from Seattle Parks and Recreation, plus more than 40 teen volunteers through the Rec'N The Streets program
 - Two stages (and the basketball court) offered a variety of fitness, music, dance and other special presentations for the public

- There were 45+ booths offering free resources, activities and more to the community, including a free vaccination clinic provided by Odessa Brown

Policy, Performance, Property

- Keep Moving Street Updates:
 - Green Lake Keep Moving Street: In early October, SDOT plans to reopen W Green Lake Way N to accommodate both a 2-way walking and biking path and 2-way vehicle traffic at reduced speeds.
 - Alki Keep Moving Street: SDOT released an online survey to get public feedback on a permanent design for the Alki Point Keep Moving Street.
- Proposed Woodland Park Zoo Agreement: On September 10, the Public Assets and Native Communities Committee will have a public hearing and briefing on the proposed new Woodland Park Zoo Society Operations and Management Agreement. SPR and the WPZ will jointly present the key terms of the proposed agreement. The agreement will be before the Committee for vote on December 7.

Commissioner Watts asks about the status of Gateway Park North in Georgetown. It is in terrible disrepair and needs a lot of maintenance. This community really needs this park. Deputy Superintendent Williams says he will email Andy, Facilities Director, and Joey, P&E Division Director to address this.

Commissioner Farmer and Commissioner Hundley would love more context around the Clean Cities data to see historical information and see the progress.

Commissioner Farmer also asks if any spaces that are being reopened have roller derby capacity? Deputy Superintendent says they typically share the same locations with childcare and that is priority. She wants Michelle to know she appreciates and understands the challenges.

Briefing: Pickleball Study

Andy Sheffer says they understand pickleball and tennis are growing in popularity and they need to reassess their facilities.

- Socialization of game increased. There is a desire for multiple courts at one site (as much as 24 courts at one location)
- Indoor facilities to ease the pressure on gyms. (unheated, covered courts)
- Resounding ask for more pickleball courts has returned and morphed into multiple courts on one site
- Sites near community centers preferred to support raising social aspect of sport

- Indoor locations at CC's close for summer camps ↑ desire for outdoor courts at these locations to continue programming

What is Pickleball?

- Fusion of ping pong and tennis
- Played with paddles and a whiffle ball
- Court < ½ the size of a tennis court
- 1 of 5 fastest-growing sports in U.S.
- Spans ages and ethnicity

Currently have 79 courts. W Magnolia and Bitter Lake each have 8 courts. Tournament play requires at least 16 courts. Geographic distribution is greater in North Seattle by 4 locations.

2 pickleball courts on 1 tennis courts is not efficient but needs to allow for run off. SPR is revisiting 2019 Pickleball Study and update it. Review growth and use for both tennis and pickleball. Analysis of lighted courts and their distribution.

This leads to locations for dedicated facilities for tennis and pickleball. Are there existing hard surface areas that could provide space for them to save cost and require less permitting.

Stripe Jefferson and Rainier for Pickleball?

Andy expresses hope that different court users can come together to support facility expansion.

The study will include testimony from both user groups. Andy is looking for support for this study. He thinks it is critical.

Commissioner Hundley loves both tennis and pickleball. They use the SPR reservation system for tennis but that doesn't exist for pickleball. He questions how it will work logistically if there is multiple uses. He volunteers to provide feedback.

The Board supports the Pickleball Study moving forward.

Capital Projects Update

Andy introduces Kim Baldwin, the Deputy Director of the Planning, Development and Maintenance division. Trades are taking ownership of projects, their status and are more acquainted with maintenance and operations of facilities they renovate.

Check life cycle assessments to ensure proper care of facilities.

Prioritize equity, life and safety in all Capital Projects. SPR depends on preventative maintenance to extend the life cycle of the assets.

Tools for prioritizing Equitable Investments – Coordinate with OPCD to see GIS mapping. Coordinate multiple asset renewals at one facility for greater efficiency.

Andy reminds the board about the stage gate process they use to ensure whether a project moves forward depending on priorities and status.

2020 Projects Delivered – Total of 48 projects, studies and programs

- Centered on equity
- Most were major maintenance, ADA, feasibility
- Staff and contractors follow strict Covid rules during construction projects.
- Citywide pools renovation projects was completed.
- Responded to community safety concerns by building stairs and railing to Burke-Gilman
- Continued ADA program to make parks and facilities more accessible.

2021 Projects going strong

- Design and development is going strong.
- Learning curve to create virtual meetings.
- Kim provides examples of Capital projects completed in 2021.

Loyal Heights, First Hill Park, Seward Park Torii Gate

Andy says that construction slowed due to the inflation for materials and construction costs. They have spent more and completed more projects than ever before. They are grappling with too much process and now they are working to streamline it. They are using data to inform their decision making. New project management software is helping them capture data and run reports quickly.

SPR is doing their first design competition. Petition will be given a stipend to compensate them for their efforts. SPR is looking for new and exciting designers.

Cheasty Mountain Bike Trail Pilot Project – South Loop Construction Update

For more information on this project, please see the website by [clicking here](#).

SPR Bicycle Use Policy did not allow for bicycles on trails in green spaces. The Board of Park Commissioners asked for a 3-year pilot project to see the environmental impacts on green spaces. It has been a long process to get the project to this point.

Cheasty Greenspace lies between Rainier Avenue and Beacon Hill. Cheasty has wetlands and steep slopes that needed to be avoided, which resulted in a revised layout. There is now a South loop and a North loop.

Currently, there are no soft surface bike trails in the City of Seattle. This is a great opportunity for cyclists in the city on the southend.

South Loop Monitoring Plan that will look at impacts to vegetation, trails and wildlife. They set up monitoring plots before construction. GSP and forest stewards have been doing monitoring already to provide data.

SPR staff will do quarterly monitoring, seeing trail erosion, illegal parking, other concerns. There will be a survey to determine user conflicts. Seattle Audubon will do bird counts to determine if they are being impacted. After the 3-year pilot is over, it will be provided to the Board and leadership for their review.

Deputy Superintendent Williams thanks David for his commitment to seeing this project through, as it has been many years in the making. Commissioner Watts agrees, this has been a long slog to get it here.

Old/New Business

Upcoming Park Board/PDOC Meeting Schedule

- September 23, 2021 next meeting

Commissioner Farmer gauges interest in writing the Park District Cycle End Report letter. She volunteered to write it but would love some support. Commissioner McCaffrey offers to assist.

The Board discusses the Strategic Plan engagement with the other City boards.

Retreat planning – Rachel and Paula to figure out a date and convene a retreat planning committee.

There being no other business, the Board adjourns at 8:35pm.