

Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, November 13, 2025

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Meng, Zhang, Baum (co-chair), Nakamura (co-chair), Flinn, Chisholm Clare, Stonecipher, Werner

Absent: Diamond, Haile-Leul, Bakker, Mays, Lerer

SPR Staff and Presenters: Bang (WPZ), Tabares, Diaz, Vaughn, Hoff, Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Nakamura calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and provides logistical instructions for in-person and remote attendees.

Commissioners and SPR staff introduce themselves.

Nakamura reads the land acknowledgement.

A quorum of BPRC members not being present, Nakamura defers approval of the consent agenda until after Public Comment.

Public Comment

The BPRC heard public testimony on the following topics:

- Behavior at Denny Blaine Park;
- Information about Ridge to River Coalition

A quorum of members now being present, Nakamura introduces the consent agenda: meeting minutes from the 10/9/25 BPRC meeting and tonight's meeting agenda. Chisholm Clare moves to approve both items; Baum seconds. Nakamura calls for a vote to approve; the vote is unanimous in favor of approval.

Adopted: 10/9/25 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Adopted: 11/13/25 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Superintendent's Report

Anthony-Paul (AP) Diaz, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, delivers the report.

Green Seattle Partnership Celebrates 20 Years: On October 30th, the Green Seattle Partnership celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a vibrant event at Magnuson Park. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal, a partner gallery showcasing GSP's growth, and engaging plant-themed activities. Special thanks to Miguel Ramilla, Councilmember Joy Hollingsworth, and Muckleshoot Tribal Historian Warren KingGeorge for sharing their insights and appreciation.

In Seattle, it is too dry to plant trees on Earth day, so instead we plant trees on Green Seattle Day when rains return!

Across the city, local organizations and volunteer Forest Stewards hosted and facilitated restoration work parties for community members. As stewards of their local neighborhood forests, these leaders manage the restoration in these spaces, whether it be removal of invasive species, planting trees and other understory plants, or mulching and watering previously planted plants.

Salmon Run Season Begins at Carkeek Park: The annual Pipers Creek salmon run at Carkeek Park is underway, with the first fish spotted on October 27th. Numbers will continue to grow through early December. To support the Salmon Stewards weekend education program, Northwest District staff have opened viewing windows along Pipers Creek, providing visitors with an up-close look at this incredible natural event.

Teaching our youth about the environment: I would like to highlight some of our recent Environmental Education partnership programs for youth and families.

These programs include:

Color Your Fall at Carkeek Park: a vibrant event celebrating autumn's beauty.

The Secret Life of Spiders at High Point Community Center: kids, parents, and two seniors curious about managing spiders in their homes, joined to explore the fascinating world of spiders.

Salmon Viewing at Longfellow Creek: In partnership with Delridge Community Center, community members participated in this program, connecting with nature and learning about the salmon lifecycle.

Family Garden Club at Garfield Community Center: Participants joined this partnership program, with only two weeks of the garden club left for the year. The group transplanted kale, chard, and pansies. They also harvested the last of the green tomatoes, which were cut, breaded, and fried into a delicious treat for the kids.

These programs brought over 250 community members together for education, exploration, and hands-on fun!

Salmon Stewards at Carkeek Park: It was the first weekend for Salmon Steward volunteers, who engaged with over 200 visitors on Saturday and Sunday at Carkeek Park. Every weekend day in November, we will have Salmon Stewards standing by to answer questions and educate visitors about salmon lifecycles, habitat needs, and more!

Join Seattle Parks Environmental Education Team, Carkeek Watershed Community Action Project, and Seattle Public Utilities at Carkeek Park to witness the return of the Chum to Piper's Creek. Every weekend day in November, we will have Salmon Stewards standing by to answer questions and educate visitors about salmon lifecycles, habitat needs, and more! Last year, we had a record number return. This fall has been a little dryer so far, but we are seeing more and more come in with the rains.

Don't miss the Salmon Celebration Day on November 22nd, 2025, from 11am-2pm. We will have music, education booths, donuts, salmon dissections, and more!

Cheasty North Loop Trail now open:

A commemorative event marked the completion of what's been described as Seattle's first forested mountain-biking and pedestrian-trail pilot project.

The new system includes a 1-mile, one-way bike trail; a 0.4-mile multi-use trail; and a 0.1-mile pedestrian-only connector, all designed to reduce impacts on wetlands, steep slopes, and wildlife habitats.

The project started as part of the Parks & Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund process in 2012. The three-year pilot project consisted of two phases: the South Loop, which was completed and opened in 2022, and the North Loop, which is now open to the public.

The Cheasty North Loop reflects the best of what happens when community members, nonprofits, and the city work together. We are proud to celebrate this milestone and look forward to seeing families and neighbors enjoy these trails for years to come.

Turkey Bowl Week: The holiday season is a time for connection, gratitude, and community. We are thrilled to continue a beloved tradition by hosting our 11th Annual Turkey Bowl Week, a series of free events designed to bring people together and support families throughout Seattle and our surrounding communities. These events are about more than just a meal; they are an opportunity to engage, connect, and make a positive impact together.

Free Turkey Giveaway: On Tuesday, November 25, from 9 AM to 6 PM at Rainier Beach Community Center. To help families prepare for their holiday celebration we will provide 150 turkeys to families in need on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last. Registration is required ahead of time.

Free Community Dinner: Rainier Community Center will be hosting a free community dinner on Wednesday, November 26th from 6:00 to 9:00pm. The dinner will be catered by the fantastic Snazzy eats. All are welcome to attend and enjoy an evening of food and connection.

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the season, support one another, and strengthen the bonds that make our community so vibrant! More information on other Turkey Bowl Week events can be found on our website.

Many Seattle Parks and Recreation facilities will be closed for one or more days in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The following facilities and services are closed on both Thursday and Friday:

- Community centers, including registered and drop-in programming
- Teen life centers
- Environmental learning centers
- Indoor swimming pools
- Green Lake Small Craft Center
- Mount Baker Rowing and Sailing Center

Facilities open on modified schedules include:

- Seattle Japanese Garden, Volunteer Park Conservancy, Amy Yee Tennis Center and Golf Facilities
- All Parks and Boat Launches will remain open during their regular hours

More information on specific hours can be found at parkways.seattle.gov

We would like to wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with gratitude, joy and time with loved ones.

I'd be glad to answer any questions Board members may have.

Meng asks for an update on capital improvements underway at Schmitz Cove[?] Park. Diaz notes that he does not have those details handy and will get back to Meng with additional information.

Zhang asks if the turkey giveaway is always in the Rainier Beach neighborhood, or if that event rotates locations. Diaz is unsure and offers to find out.

Baum asks for an update on the Camp Long restoration project. Diaz notes that some funding has been secured, but initial mitigation and demolition has not yet begun and that will inform the remaining planning and budgeting process.

Nakamura asks if monies from the FEPP levy remain separate from General Fund, or if those are combined. Diaz clarifies how the levy is disbursed to SPR.

Partner Spotlight: Woodland Park Zoo – Long Range Facilities Planning

Katie Bang, Senior Director of Facilities and the Built Environment with the Woodland Park Zoo, delivers the presentation.

The zoo is launching a Long-Range Facilities Plan to become the Northwest's premier center for wildlife conservation—where people connect with animals and each other to make their day and a difference. This plan will guide development for the next 20 years, serving as a flexible framework to keep the zoo a must-see destination while meeting the needs of animals, people, and the environment.

The Long-Range Facilities Plan will guide physical development at the zoo for the next 20 years. The plan:

- Builds on the strengths and relevant features of the current zoo and its historic plans
- Innovates to meet the future needs of animals, people and the environment
- Embodies in physical form our mission to save wildlife and inspire everyone to make conservation a priority in their lives

The final product will resemble a conceptual site plan and include cost estimates and recommendations for sequencing to fulfill this vision over a 20-year timeframe. This will be the third long-term physical development plan for the zoo, following plans in 1976 and 2004.

What are the strategic drivers of this plan?

Animal Wellness: Every animal has their N.I.C.H.E. at Woodland Park Zoo. To sustain and recover species, we commit to providing for their Nutrition, Interaction, Choice, Health and Environment needs now and into the future. Our care extends beyond individual animals to support generations and populations.

Conservation: The zoo protects, restores and sustains forests and other key habitats, and helps to halt and reverse species loss. We devote advocacy and scientific research to make change that lasts, rooted in our physical campus as a place to model our commitment and bring together people to participate in the cause.

Extraordinary Experiences: The zoo creates unforgettable, up-close experiences with wildlife that build life-long empathy for animals. We motivate environmental values and create conservation connections that can power lasting change. Here people have fun and share precious time with nature, friends and loved ones so they can make their day and a difference.

Accessibility and Inclusion: The zoo will broaden access and belonging by welcoming all to experience nature through our commitment to reducing barriers, using universal design and developing more inclusive and responsive experiences and facilities.

Sustainability: Our 92-acre urban forest will be a living model of an ecosystem in balance. We will use green infrastructure systems and practices that reduce and regenerate resources, creating resilience to and reducing impact on climate change.

Bang introduces key members of planning team and explains planning team organization chart and overview of planning phases.

Preparation Phase: Current internal zoo preparatory planning exercises will be completed by summer 2025. Plans will act as inputs to provide strategic direction for Long-Range Facilities Planning process. The Board Task Force will have opportunities to learn about key plans through regular Board or Task Force meetings and updates.

Community Engagement Phase:

Front-End Input | Summer 2025

- WHAT: Early input on community needs, experiences, and values
- WHEN: Before conceiving starts (Summer 2025)
- WHO: Internal and external audiences; outreach to historically marginalized communities through Humming Voices following Racial Equity Analysis
- HOW: Online survey, focus groups, community tabling, etc.
- WHY: Understand community expectations and aspirations to inform process and plan

Thought Leadership Input | Summer 2025

- WHAT: Input from regional and industry leaders, subject matter experts
- WHEN: Before conceiving starts (Summer 2025)
- WHO: Thought leaders in City government, transit, sustainability, zoo planning, etc.
- HOW: In-person or Teams interviews
- WHY: Gain perspective on relevant regional and industry context that can inform planning

Formative Input | 2026

- WHAT: Feedback on concepts for refinement
- WHEN: As conceiving takes shape (Spring – Summer 2026)
- WHO: Internal and external audiences; return to previous audiences as follow up
- HOW: Formats to be defined by consultant

- WHY: Validate, refine and continue conceiving

Upcoming phases include an iterative conceiving phase (Fall 2025 – Fall 2026) and Submittal Phase (Dec. 2026-), culminating in review and approval by City Council. Ongoing communications with City Council and SPR will continue through all phases.

Meng asks what the exact deliverable(s) submitted to Superintendent in 2026 will entail. Bang clarifies.

Baum asks for clarification of BPRC role in future process, whether advisory, approval, or something else. Diaz notes that SPR staff are involved in planning process and BPRC will serve advisory role.

Baum asks for additional, high-level information regarding management and operation arrangement between zoo and SPR. Diaz clarifies and provides some insight into master services agreement.

Stonecipher adds context to SPR-WPZ agreement from her experience working with public-private partnerships.

Nakamura notes that the zoo's free ticket opportunities are a great public benefit for Seattle families.

SPR Human Resources Division Overview & Updates

Desiree Tabares, Director of SPR Human Resources, and members of the SPR HR leadership team deliver the presentation.

Tabares provides high-level overview of SPR departmental HR relationship to key organizations within the City, including:

- SPR Superintendent's Office
- City Attorney's Office
- Mayor's Office
- Seattle Human Resources
- Labor Relations & HRIU
- Ethics & Elections Commission

Team members share the current HR organization chart, 2025 priority work, and demographic breakdown of SPR hiring and staff.

We experience high levels of employees in crisis. How do we care for employees?

Resources include:

- Leaves
- Employee Assistance Program
- Care Team 1:1 Check-ins & Resource Sharing

Situational Awareness to support a proactive, caring approach:

- Employee needs
- Operational needs
- Holistic wrap-around support
- Career Development Support

Staff shares the top 5 improvements/things working well within the division, including:

- Increase in reporting
- Management is connecting earlier in situations
- Engagement and application of training
- Becoming more consistent in how we execute our practices
- Overall collaboration with HR & Management

Lastly, staff provides brief overview of SPR HR's signature programs, including Supervisor 101, SPR's Mentorship Program, the Gender Inclusivity Training Team, Youth Hiring/Internships, Creating a Safe Culture, and the apprenticeships program.

Chisholm Clare asks if SPR teams have opportunities for cross training (with different teams/regions). Staff discuss opportunities for crews to expand experiences and knowledge.

Werner asks how much collaboration and coordination occurs between departmental HR departments. Tabares clarifies that the larger departments of the City have internal HR groups, and those teams align policies under the guidance of Seattle Human Resources. All of those groups meet regularly.

Stonecipher asks for an update on hiring. SPR staff provide general update, noting that there has been a slight uptick in application numbers.

Baum asks for update on apprenticeship program. Staff provides update; general consensus that this is a successful program and that staff would like to see this program expand.

Baum asks for clarification on the term "workforce equity". Staff clarifies.

Old & New Business

Baum asks about BPRC retreat planning. Diaz suggests early 2026 for retreat.

Nakamura adjourns the meeting at 7:51 PM.