

# Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, December 11, 2025

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

## Attendance

Present: Nakamura (co-chair), Diamond, Meng, Bakker, Lerer, Flinn, Baum (co-chair), Zhang, Haile-Leul, Stonecipher, Mays, Chisholm Clare

Absent: Werner

SPR Staff and Presenters: Vaughn, Hoff, Hellier, Murphy, Graves, Ciecko

## Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Baum 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.

Baum reads the land acknowledgement.

Baum introduces the consent agenda: meeting minutes from the 11/13/25 BPRC meeting and tonight's meeting agenda. Baum asks for approval by unanimous consent of both items; there are no objections. The consent agenda passes.

***Adopted: 12/11/25 BPRC Meeting Agenda***

***Adopted: 11/13/25 BPRC Meeting Minutes***

## Public Comment

The BPRC heard public testimony on the following topics:

- Concerns about little league/sports field scheduling, and field safety and availability.

## Superintendent's Report

Alex Vaughn, SPR Assistant Superintendent and Chief of Staff, delivers the report.

## Park Activation Meetings

During the week of November 17, members of SPR's Planning and Capital Development Planning Unit and other units engaged community members to explore next steps for parks impacted by activities incompatible with their intended use.

*Lake City Mini Park (November 18)*

Approximately 70 people attended the meeting and called attention to the park's historical role in serving both housed and unhoused neighbors. Attendees called for clearer communication regarding park changes and advocated for accessible activation efforts that enhance access to the Park.

*Capitol Hill: Tashkent, Broadway Hill, and Seven Hills Park (November 19)*

Around 80 people attended to discuss safety and activation efforts for these parks. While some attendees supported fencing as a potential solution, there was greater interest in a broader range of ideas, including family-friendly programming, community gardening, hygiene access, and deeper partnerships with local organizations.

*Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park (November 20)*

20 people attended. Participants noted declining community use due to safety issues, poor lighting, and limited visibility. Suggestions included redesigning the amphitheater, improving signage, and reintroducing events to make the park more welcoming and vibrant.

Across all meetings, residents were clear: activation, services, and design improvements would need to be complemented by long-term safety planning to be sustained. SPR hosted an online survey for all three sites and is wrapping up this data. We will be rolling all this information into a report and suggesting next steps to the Mayor's Office in the first week of December.

### **Westlake Park Art Relocation**

Seattle Parks and Recreation brought legislation this week to the Parks, Public Utilities & Technology Council Committee. This legislation amends legislation passed earlier this year by the City Council to include some additional work required to implement improvements at Westlake Park. You may recall that the Seattle Foundation donated money to SPR to implement these improvements. As the project to implement these improvements progressed, an artist who created a piece as part of the waterfall feature raised concerns about how his installation would be handled during the project. SPR worked with this artist to create a resolution, causing the project to exceed the budget. SPR has access to a state funding source called LCLIP (Landscape Conservation and Infrastructure Program) that has exceeded revenue expectations. This amendment seeks to appropriate those excess revenues and is not an ask for any new funding.

We anticipate the project to be completed prior to summer 2026.

### **Facilities**

*Evans Pool:* Flooding in the Evans Pool basement caused major damage and left a large mess. The operations team, along with Rec staff and the Event Services crew, worked to clean up and restore the space. Teams loaded the damaged items and equipment into a truck and cleared the basement for cleanup; pool operations staff then scrubbed the floors and organized the remaining usable supplies and equipment.

*Carkeek Park:* SPR's electric shop continues to support our Sustainable Operations team by installing car charging stations; the latest one is at Carkeek. Thanks to those efforts, we're making all community parks more sustainable, accessible, and welcoming for all.

*Operation Owl Rescue:* Sadly, a great horned owl became entangled in a kite line left among the trees outside the Urban Horticulture Facility. Thanks to a young girl biking nearby who alerted our staff, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) was contacted and

responded immediately. With support from the SPR Tree Crew and ground assistance from Northwest District Senior Gardeners, the owl was safely freed from the line. It was then transported to PAWS, where we hope it can rehabilitate its injured wing.

## **Upcoming SPR Holiday Events**

*Holiday Transformation at Volunteer Park Conservatory:* The Volunteer Park Conservatory's winter display has arrived, bringing festive botanical delights to life! This year's Holiday Display features three large faux Christmas trees adorned with beautiful decorations, over 300 poinsettias and decorative foliage, and a charming mini performance stage designed to host music events. Notably, the display does not include trains, as seen in past years. The installation was made possible with the support of our dedicated Landscape Crew. The Conservatory is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., for visitors to enjoy the seasonal display. Upcoming holiday events include Holiday in the Park on December 4 from 5 to 8 p.m., featuring free hot cocoa and treats, and visits with Santa on December 6 and December 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

*Pathway of Lights 2025 at Green Lake:* Join us for Seattle's beloved winter tradition, the Pathway of Lights, on Saturday, December 13, 2025, from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM at Green Lake Park. Stroll along candlelit paths and docks, enjoy live music from local performers, sip complimentary refreshments, and marvel at the return of hot air balloons (weather permitting). This free, family-friendly event is hosted by Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Associated Recreation Council, with generous support from local sponsors. Don't forget to bring non-perishable food donations to benefit FamilyWorks! Volunteer opportunities are available.

*Polar Bear Plunge:* Kick off the new year with a splash at the Polar Bear Plunge! On January 1st at 12 noon, join hundreds of brave participants at Matthews Beach Park for a chilly dip in the lake. Special "cubs" dive at 11:45 A.M. This free event includes lifeguards for safety, and costumes are encouraged to make the plunge even more memorable. Since its start in 2003, this Seattle tradition has grown from 300 participants to over 1,900 daring swimmers.

*Holiday Movie Night at Denny Park:* Join Seattle Parks and Recreation for a FREE holiday movie night at Denny Park! After the Holiday Lighting, cozy up with a blanket and enjoy an outdoor screening of ELF under the twinkling lights. Fun for the whole family; don't miss the cheer on Thursday, Dec. 11, at 6 p.m.! Free SLU Streetcar rides all day!

*Holiday Transformation at Volunteer Park Conservatory:* The Volunteer Park Conservatory's winter display (pictured here) has arrived, bringing festive botanical delights to life! This year's Holiday Display features three large faux Christmas trees adorned with beautiful decorations, over 300 poinsettias and decorative foliage, and a charming mini performance stage designed to host music events. Notably, the display does not include trains, as seen in past years. The installation was made possible with the support of our dedicated Landscape Crew. The Conservatory is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., for visitors to enjoy the seasonal display. Upcoming holiday events include Holiday in the Park on December 4 from 5 to 8 p.m., featuring free hot cocoa and treats, and visits with Santa on December 6 and December 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## **2025 Denny Awards**

*2025 Denny Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Stewardship:* On Tuesday, we celebrated the incredible volunteers who make Seattle's parks, green space, and community centers shine. The Denny Awards were created in 2003 to honor the valuable work done by the individuals and organizations that volunteer for Seattle Parks and Recreation – providing time, energy and resources to helping create a better parks system.

The winners of this year's awards demonstrated the following:

- Exceptional stewardship of parks and/or recreation.
- A significant commitment of time or service.
- Provide stellar commitment in support of SPR's goals to extend race and social justice,
- Support *Healthy People, Thriving Environment, and Vibrant Community*.
- Gained respect from community peers for efforts to help Seattle Parks and Recreation.

In addition to the Denny Award Winners, the department also recognized six community youth champions for volunteering their time as leaders, mentors, and service to help Seattle Shine.

### **Upcoming Events: Park CommUNITY Fund**

*YOUR Parks, YOUR Process, YOUR Choice!:*

Join the Park CommUNITY Fund workshop series this winter! The series aims to build community, power, and opportunities to advance park equity in Seattle. During the series participants will:

- Reflect on the first Park CommUNITY Fund cycle
- Co-create improvements to the park development and Park CommUNITY Fund process
- Learn how to get involved with the 2026 fund cycle
- Expand power building skillsets to achieve desired park improvements!

More information on the Workshop Series can be found at [engageseattleparks.com](http://engageseattleparks.com)

Vaughn pauses for questions from the Board.

Stonecipher asks what the next steps on park activation are. Vaughn notes that planning budgets and packaging projects are potential next steps.

[Lengthy audio-visual difficulties in the meeting room; on the meeting recording, this disruption lasts from 00:25:20 until 00:41:04]

### **Green Lake Community Center, Aquatic Center, and Play Area: Project Update**

Jessica Murphy, Planning & Capital Development Division Director, and David Graves, Strategic Advisor, deliver the report.

Graves and Murphy provide overview of project timeline, including updates based on alternative delivery model. Graves notes that the whole design process is scheduled to take until early 2027 with an eye towards project completion in early 2029.

Baum asks about the timeline for removing Evans Pool from public access. Graves notes that the final timeline for closure of the pool is not yet determined.

Mays asks if there will be any interference at all with the racquet sports courts. Graves clarifies that there will be no impact on tennis or pickleball courts, but that parking will be affected.

Haile-Leul asks for clarification on any impact to the basketball courts. Graves clarifies that, aside from resurfacing, the basketball courts will remain unaffected.

Chisholm Clare asks for details about the play area; Graves provides some detail.

Mays asks if Green Lake is the most used park in SPR's inventory; Graves confirms that, anecdotally, this is true.

Chisholm Clare asks if a retractable roof for the pool building is possible for SPR to explore. Graves clarifies that it is not.

Graves provides details about the proposed pool construction plans and project scoping. Some of the features of the current Community Center building can be reused and integrated into the new design, while other features present challenges, such as narrow hallways that may present accessibility issues.

Baum asks if the current plan includes filling the existing pool; Graves confirms that this is one option to make the current pool space a more functional multi-purpose space.

Murphy adds that much of the renovation cost of an old building is tied up in places (such as building mechanical systems) that are invisible to the public, and less capital funding is often available for visible renovations.

Murphy notes that construction sequencing and cost estimates will not be available until at least the second half of 2026, and those decisions will be made in close consultation with the contractor.

Graves notes that the presentation has already run long and pauses for questions from the Board.

Baum asks when the next update to the Board on this project will be; Murphy estimates summer of 2026.

Baum notes ongoing audio/visual difficulties for remote attendees.

## Green Seattle Partnership Strategic Plan Update

Lisa Ciecko, Ecology Team Manager, delivers the update.

My team supports integrated pest management, wildlife management, and ecological restoration. We have the great privilege of working citywide out of the Jefferson Horticulture Facility up on Beacon Hill as part of the natural resource unit. I had the opportunity to join you all here in early September to share about the Green Seattle Partnership's effort to draft an updated strategic plan. I'm here today to share the results of our efforts and explain our next steps.

Our overarching goals are to restore and maintain the forested parklands and designated natural areas of Seattle, and to expand and galvanize an informed, involved, and active community around forest restoration and stewardship.

GSP is built on a partnership model among the City, professional crews, community members, and our partner organizations.

At our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have an opportunity to make space for reflection and renewal, sharing stories to celebrate 20 years of forest care with community and deepening relationships across partnerships. We also seek to improve the partnership, centering accountability and representation and to produce specific near-term actions that focus efforts and investments.

Our approach included:

- Crafted new messaging platform and video to reflect values and priorities

- Hosted 20th Anniversary Celebration!
- Producing a 3-year action plan (2026 – 2028) with a vision for the next 10 Years

Our final stage of the ongoing strategic planning process (fall/winter 2025) calls on us to integrate plan feedback, assess intersection points, and finalize and roll out the overall plan.

Our plan was developed with a steering committee, and engaged broad participation with advisory meetings and briefings, focus groups, public survey, individual interviews, synthesis of relevant SPR/COS community engagement, and pillar workgroups.

Here is GSP's 10-year vision:

**We see Seattle as a thriving, equitable city that supports urban ecosystems and community members.** We remain committed to restoring Seattle's urban forests, waterways, and natural areas, while fostering a culture of belonging and connection that benefits the health of the Salish Sea region.

*In service to our vision, we share stewardship programming, restore ecological health, expand access to greenspaces, and reconnect people to land care. Our work is relational, guided by accountability, anti-racism, and environmental justice values that support a healthy environment for all.*

Our Strategic Plan has **3 Pillars** defined by the Steering Committee: Partnership Building, Land Care & Stewardship, and Community Programming.

**3 Workgroups** established pillar-specific:

- Visions
- Strategies
- Actions
- Outcomes

**Pillar Takeaways:**

- Affirmed mutual benefits and value of SPR's leadership
- No big shifts in programming function
- Emphasis on getting our house in order
- Crosswalks well to the SPR Strategic Plan

*Pillar: Partnership Building*

Ten years from now, our Partnership Building efforts will sustain a cooperative structure that includes pathways for accountability, inclusive leadership, and coordinated investments to meet shared goals. A clear partnership structure affirms our mutual responsibilities and shared strategies, while building space for diverse voices and accountability. The Partnership includes strong relationships with previously underrepresented communities and organizations. Additionally, diverse and sustainable funding streams support the long-term success of GSP's work.

*Pillar: Community Programming*

Ten years from now, Green Seattle Partnership's Community Programming will result in a culture of care for Seattle's ecosystems, where engagement opportunities prioritize belonging and connection, provide tangible benefits to participants, and are responsive to community relationships. School and student participation in land-based stewardship programming is strengthened and expanded event

offerings resonate with overburdened and frontline communities. Additionally, career exposure and job training programming have expanded reach and effectiveness.

#### *Pillar: Stewardship and Land Care*

Ten years from now, Green Seattle Partnership's Stewardship and Land Care work will result in urban ecosystems that are rich in life, resilient in the face of climate change, and tended by an inclusive and collaborative network that invites diverse perspectives and emphasizes continuous learning. Stewardship efforts are driven by an understanding of current ecological conditions and long-term restoration goals. Ecological restoration sites are being invested in based on the greatest needs and opportunities, using a climate justice lens. Last, knowledge sharing is facilitated to improve ecological restoration outcomes and climate resiliency, reflecting diverse perspectives.

The plan moves current committee structure to 7 small-format working circles that will lead strategy-specific actions. Partner participation is critical to success, incorporating roles in 2026 scoping conversations now. Partnership Structure Working Circles will determine long-term format.

Ciecko briefly demonstrates how the GSP vision contributes to an example action plan.

#### Deliverables Timeline:

- December 12 | Supporting Documents finalized
- December 19 | Strategic Plan Website finalized
- January 7 | Public Launch (social media, GSP newsletter, etc.)

Follow along and reach out:

- [www.greenseattle.org](http://www.greenseattle.org)
- [@greenseattlepartnership](https://twitter.com/greenseattlepartnership)
- [Lisa.Ciecko@Seattle.gov](mailto:Lisa.Ciecko@Seattle.gov)

Ciecko pauses for questions from the Board.

Flinn thanks Ciecko for the presentation. Are park-specific Friends Of groups “partners” as Ciecko and GSP defines them, or will they continue to coordinate volunteer efforts through their established SPR liaisons? Ciecko clarifies the relationship between GSP and these groups.

Chisholm Clare asks about school volunteer participation. Ciecko notes that the pandemic years strained these relationships, but this is a focus of GSP and there is a lot of volunteer activity on this front.

Stoncipher asks about GSP's interaction with the City's urban canopy goals. Ciecko provides some information about canopy goals in natural areas, species diversity, and methodology (including the use of LiDAR to determine canopy coverage).

Zhang and Ciecko discuss possibility of structuring a series of events to enhance ecological education through restoration work.

#### Old & New Business

Baum introduces and discusses proposed 2026 BPRC meeting calendar; this calendar will be added to the consent agenda for the January 22, 2026, BPRC meeting.

Baum thanks BPRC members, SPR staff, and visitors for their patience with the audio-visual issues during the meeting.

Baum adjourns the meeting at 7:31 PM.