



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Mar. 20, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Haygood, Fletcher, Wille, Thompson

Commissioners Absent:

Kuntz, Robbins, Otto, Piland, and Panter

Staff Present:

Perlick, Cook, Gutierrez, Guzman, Burton, Stokke, Meade, Brosius, Donovan, Heath, Nilo, Hull, C. White, R. White, and Tubberville

Guests:

Katherine Kelley, Casey Liles, and Shilpa Mallem

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Haygood called the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) regular meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and online via Microsoft Teams. Commissioners Kuntz, Otto, Piland, and Panter were absent.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the February 21, 2024 meeting minutes by consensus.

Item 3: Public Comment

None presented.

Members

Jayne Haygood

President

Angilo Fletcher

Vice President

Jeremy Robbins

Mathew Kuntz

Jenny Thompson

Stephen Wille

Kerry Otto

AJ Panter, VPS

Cale Piland, EPS

Vacant, Parks Foundation

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Item 4: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update

Perlick introduced Katherine Kelley (Policy Advisor), Casey Liles (IBR Delivery Manager), and Shilpa Mallem (IBR Design Manager).

Mallem and Liles gave an overview of the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update. The project is a critical connection linking Oregon and Washington across the Columbia River. The Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation are jointly leading the IBR Program.

Purpose and needs include 1) Safety, 2) Impaired freight movement, 3) Congestion, 4) Earthquake vulnerability, 5) Inadequate bike & pedestrian paths, and 6) Limited public transportation. There is additional emphasis on equity and climate are key priorities for the project.

The team presented a high-level program schedule with upcoming work items. Shilpa highlighted the latest updates and modifications of the program. Alternatives and options in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement are currently being researched.

Wille asked if IBR is coordinating with environmental agencies so as not to interfere with environmental elements – Mallem confirmed that is correct. Fletcher asked the total estimated cost of the project – approximately \$6 Billion. Haygood asked for the estimated time of completion, and Liles is developing the summary of the delivery plan; it is an estimated 10+ years over the duration of the program. Liles explained that it will be built next to the I-5 Bridge while aiming to minimize impacts on interstate travel. Haygood commended the community outreach efforts for this project. Wille asked about stormwater treatment –Liles confirmed that all areas will be treated in this program.

Kelley notified the commission that they will be back in 4-5 months to share with PRAC about design updates and public engagement reflections.

Item 5: Recreation Staff Conversion Plan

Perlick gave an overview of recreation staffing challenges and impacts. As wages increase nationwide, our pay must remain competitive to retain staff. Without appropriate staffing, our programs cannot operate. Factors impacting our Aquatics include a decreased number of applicants for temporary positions and a national lifeguard shortage.

To mitigate this, our short-term solutions have been to increase pay for temporary staff, expand recruitment and training, and redeploy regular aquatics staff to support pool and program operations. Due to these efforts, new lifeguards have been hired, former lifeguards have returned, and most pool hours and classes have been restored.

For the long-term, a framework has been developed to convert key temporary positions into regular benefitted employees. Other roles will continue to work well within the City's new temporary staff guidelines.

The estimated annual cost for this conversion is \$1.6 million with a targeted \$500k associated revenue increase. This lowers our current cost recovery target from 72% to 55%.

Staffing conversion budget phases include adding Customer Service roles. The 2024 Spring Supplemental will include Aquatics roles and limited Parks and Events support roles. There is a strong commitment to retaining service levels throughout the process.

Item 6: Baseline Budget Calendar

Katherine Stokke gave an overview of the recreation staffing conversion, including a background of recent department budget history for the past 6 years. A lot of research and planning has been completed to address these issues.

The Operating Budget includes staffing, supplies and services, community centers and recreation planning, special events, volunteers, cultural services, and general department administration. Stokke highlighted the impacts of the Operating Budget to Actuals. We have been able to increase our revenue each year since the pandemic.

The Capital Budget includes land acquisitions, park development and redevelopment, major repairs and replacement, some staff time, and capital grants. The Capital Budget to Actuals reflects carryforwards and the rising cost of materials.

Stokke shared the Budget Development Timeline with all important upcoming dates. It was noted that we will return in May with key themes that will guide our budget requests that reflect our growth going forward.

Item 7: Director's Report

Due to time constraints, Perlick announced that the director's report updates will be emailed to commissioners.

Registration for summer recreation activities will open on April 17. We're introducing something new this year, where people who live within Vancouver city limits will be given 24-hour priority registration access. Those who live outside city limits will be able to register starting April 18. People who live within Vancouver city limits directly support our programs through their property taxes. As interest in our programs continues to grow throughout Clark County and beyond, Vancouver taxpayers will now have access to both the early registration window and lower program fees. Visit the [Recreation Fees and Residency webpage](#) on the City's website for information and FAQs.

Our senior recreation programs are being celebrated in a number of local publications. The City sends out a printed newsletter to households in Vancouver each quarter. The February edition featured a write up on how senior clubs and fitness classes are helping to combat isolation. The April edition of Clark County's Senior Finder magazine will include a story about how Firstenburg member Ann Wygal has found friendship, support and a renewed sense of purpose through her participation in senior fitness programs. The magazine will also feature a story about our popular Forever Young hiking program.

A Call for Artists is now open for the [2024 Vancouver Arts and Music Festival](#), Aug. 2-4. People can apply for the juried art shows, community stage performances, and art vendor booths. Artists of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Please share this information with any artists and performers you know. Applications are available on the Festival website.

Community engagement began last week to replace the playground at [Homestead Neighborhood Park](#) in East Vancouver. The current play equipment at the park was installed in 1991 and is ready for an upgrade. The playground theme includes a whimsical cloud and kite design. Neighbors are being invited to follow the project webpage on Be Heard Vancouver and participate in an online survey to select equipment and refine the design. Construction will begin late summer/early fall of this year.

The playground at Arnada Park is going to be closed starting at the end of this month and will reopen in May. We will be removing an old zip-line that is part of the existing play equipment and replacing it with new equipment designed for ages 2-5. The rest of the existing play equipment is in working condition and will stay

in place but the zip-line was identified as needing to be removed, so we worked with the neighborhood association to select what will go in its place.

Save the date for Earth Day, April 20, which will be a big day of celebrating Vancouver's indigenous communities. In the morning our Special Events team will be supporting the annual Chief Redheart Memorial Ceremony at the Fort. In the afternoon, Volunteer Programs is cohosting a community planting event with native plants, as part of the installation of a new spirit totem called "Mother Camas" by Yakama Tribe artist Toma Villa. We'll have a lot more information about these events coming out in early April.

Item 8: Chair Report

Haygood announced that April is Native Plant Appreciation Month and expressed interest in contacting school districts to spread awareness.

Item 9: Evergreen School District Report

None presented.

Item 10: Vancouver Public School Report

None presented.

Item 11: Open Discussion & New Business

Wille expressed interest in an update for the Bee City USA program. Haygood added that representatives from Bee City USA meet on First Tuesdays.

ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.