



# Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Apr. 17, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

### Commissioners Present:

Wille, Kuntz, Thompson, Fletcher, and Robbins

### Commissioners Absent:

Haygood, Otto, Piland, and Panter

**Staff Present:** Perlick, Donovan, Snyder, Douglas, Nilo, Meade, Brosius, Cook, Burton, Stokke, Hull, Guzman, C. White, Gutierrez, and Tubberville

### Guests:

Stacey Donovan, Sean Douglas, Angela Brosius, Andy Meade, Melody Burton, and Roman Gutierrez.

### Item 1: Call to Order

Vice Chair Fletcher called the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) regular meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. in the Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and online via Microsoft Teams. Commissioners Haygood, Otto, Piland, and Panter were absent.

### Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the March 20, 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: Summer Event & Recreational Programming**

Perlick highlighted that community interest is quickly outgrowing our capacity to deliver programs, however we are working to maximize our impact. Meade and Brosius (Recreation Facility Managers) gave a high-level debriefing as we reach program capacity and make new changes.

Recreation programming is designed for all ages and abilities, bringing the community value. We offer free and fee-based programs with scholarships available to eliminate barriers. We also provide critical childcare for working families when school is out, including day camps. Our program supports public health and safety and prioritizes programs for vulnerable, underserved populations.

Full-day camp programs are operated by PRCS staff and are scholarship-eligible with payment plans offered. Summer Playgrounds Camps are free, outdoor camps operated by PRCS staff, and provided at no cost to people who live within specified school boundaries with lunch provided. There are diversified offerings for youth, teens, adults, seniors, and people with disabilities. Partnerships help address challenges and fill gaps with innovation as interest in summer programs will exceed community demand this year.

Our community center facilities are important resources in the community, with ongoing memberships and 3,000 drop-in visitors a month. New Summer Youth Passes and pool use are popular programs offered. The centers also host graduation parties and private rentals and serve as a safe, free public space during heat and wildfire emergencies.

Kuntz asked about community interest in the payment plan; Perlick confirmed that upwards of 50 resident families opted into the payment plan. Thompson asked about hiring returning staff for the summer; Meade explained that there can be difficulty rehiring staff for the same position, based on the ability to retain them outside of the summer season. Folks who are interested in returning are strongly encouraged to contact us as we hire for the summer season.

Donovan (Cultural Services Manager) and Douglas (Special Event Permitting Manager) gave an overview of the Special Events Team, City-sponsored events, City partnered events, and permitted events. Summer Concerts include the Waterfront Concert Series at Waterfront Park and Sunday Sounds Concert Series at Columbia Tech Park. Summer Movies are featured on Fridays at dusk in parks across the city, taking program events into different neighborhood parks. Cultural Event Partnerships include Juneteenth, Family Play Day, Vancouver Arts & Music Festival, Dia de Muertos, Holiday Tree Lighting, and Menorah Lighting.

WRPA is hosting its annual conference here in Vancouver this May. PRCS staff and Anna Cruz (Vancouver Ballet Folklorico) will be presenting on Illuminating Community through Cultural Event Partnerships.

Douglas highlighted permitted event growth and challenges; interest in summer programs will exceed what we can offer. Permitted Events, Shelter Reservations, and Park Use Permit requests have increased beyond the levels we experienced pre-pandemic. To help manage public expectations and prepare for the future, we have included 1 FTE in the supplemental budget request, and 1 FTE in the 2025-26 biennium budget request.

Kuntz inquired about building metrics on the percentage increase of requests year after year to make a case for the budget requests. Douglas confirmed this year we'll have over 112 permitted events so far. Donovan agreed to get commissioners the requested metrics information; Kuntz offered to be behind staff to support all FTE requests. Kuntz asked if the pavilion used at the waterfront concerts is an inflatable temporary stage/band shell; Donovan confirmed that it is City-owned and that we also rent it out to other events.

Commissioners were asked to share summer job and volunteer opportunities for camp staff, aquatics staff, and special events staff.

#### **Item 5: Oakbrook Park Communications Update**

Burton gave an overview of the history, project background, and master plan approval. The park was reclassified in the 2022-2031 Comprehensive Plan, with robust community engagement facilitated throughout 2022. The master plan and Phase 1 were approved by PRAC in December 2022. Planned construction in Fall 2023 was pushed to Spring 2024 to have the playground removed. Further delays pushed construction to Fall 2024.

Gutierrez shared about the modifications to the Phase 1 plan and the revised Phase 1 graphic. Features include a new wetlands-themed inclusive play area (taller play mound with slide and ramp, new rope climber, seat walls, shade trees, and new shrubs), added a Natureplay area to be expedited for neighbors (log climbers and stump steppers on the east side of the park, shooting for July 2024), 4 new pickleball courts (reoriented), Portland Loo restroom, sidewalk along 99<sup>th</sup> Ave (widen NE 99<sup>th</sup> Ave, fire access and legal street parking), habitat restoration and improvements, native planting areas, and a picnic shelter.

Next steps were shared on an updated communications timeline. After the PRAC update, PRCS will notify neighbors, followed by Nature Play Area construction, and Phase 1 Construction will begin in fall 2024 with an estimated completion in summer 2025.

Kuntz inquired whether the setback of the project was budgetary-driven, or due to staffing limitations. Gutierrez confirmed delays were due to the permitting process, including the widening of the street. Robbins asked about 99<sup>th</sup> Street expansion; Gutierrez confirmed it will be expanded across the whole property. Robbins expressed that neighbors are hoping to see progress; the mailings are an effective way to keep everyone up to date; he will advocate and spread the word on project updates. Burton added that in addition to a mailing, the project webpage will be updated later this week. Robbins expressed appreciation for the team's research for this project, especially around pickleball solutions to set us up for the future.

#### **Item 6: Director's Report**

Update Summer registration opened at 7 a.m. today for people who live within Vancouver city limits. This is the first time we've offered a 24-hour priority registration window to city residents. People who live outside the city limits will be able to start registering tomorrow.

As expected, it's been less than 12 hours since registration opened and our youth day camps are filling quickly, and some weeks are already full. This highlights how important these summer recreation programs are for local families. It was emphasized that this is a critical area where the community need far outpaces our capacity right now.

We're working on installing the Portland Loos at Esther Short Park and looking forward to having those open later this spring. In May we will also remove the existing restrooms over at Marshall Park and install new Portland Loos, which will open in the summer. We will continue to have portable toilets at Marshall Park until the new loos are open.

A new piece of play equipment for ages 2-5 has been installed at Arnada Park to replace a track slider that was no longer safe to use. This small improvement project was a collaboration between our parks team and the Arnada neighborhood association. The effort was led by a community member who identified the need for equipment that is appropriate for younger children at Arnada and helped fundraise and advocate for the project. It's a great example of how small changes can still have a big impact.

## Upcoming Events

- We are excited to be celebrating Earth Day with Indigenous communities at three free public events on Saturday, April 20. · From 10 a.m. to noon at the Fort, the Nez Perce Tribe is hosting their annual Chief Redheart Memorial Ceremony, honoring Chief Redheart and his band, who were imprisoned there from 1877-78.
- Then join Fourth Plain Forward and Naturespaces for Grandmother Camus Unveiled, from 1 to 4 p.m. at St. Johns Blvd. and Q St. This event will unveil a new welcoming figure carved by Yakama Nation artist Toma Villa. This public art piece represents Grandmother Camus, who out of profound love for her grandchildren, transformed into camas bulbs to save them from starvation. The program will start shortly after 1 p.m., followed by food, dancing, a community resource fair and family activities. · You can close out the day at the [Rising Generations Powwow](#), presented by the Native American Parent Association of Southwest Washington at Clark College O'Connell Sports Center. There is a grand entry ceremony at 6 p.m. with dancing, vendors and food until 10 p.m.
- Save the Date for [Spruce the Couve](#) on May 11, our annual downtown volunteer cleanup event. Flower planting shifts are already full, but we still need people to sign up for the cleanup activities. You can sign up on the City's website calendar.

Reminder, we are hosting the [Washington Recreation and Parks Association conference](#) here in Vancouver, May 21-24. This is a fantastic opportunity to connect with other parks and recreation agencies from across the state and learn about the latest trends and best practices in our field. Our staff will also be hosting a variety of tours and workshops during the educational component of the conference.

### **Item 7: Chair Report**

None presented.

### **Item 8: Evergreen School District Report**

None presented.

### **Item 9: Vancouver Public School Report**

None presented.

### **Item 10: Open Discussion & New Business**

Robbins asked about a curb cut at Marrion Park Playground to allow a wheelchair user to access the park. Snyder will look into it and work with Transportation to see what can be done. Wille expressed that he is looking forward to attending all of the weekend events. It was suggested that the PRAC members get nametags to show representation at events.

## **ADJOURNED**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.