

**PORTLAND PARKS BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

February 12, 2019 | 8:00 - 10:00 am  
Community Music Center | Auditorium

**Board Members Present:** Paul Agrimis, Kendall Clawson, Pat Frobles, Tonya Booker, Michelle Dedeo, Bonnie Gee Yosick, Jenny Glass, Randy Gragg, Katy Holland, Ian Jaquiss, Tamara Layden, Joe O’Leary, Jim Owens, Lorena Nascimento

**Board Members Absent:** Mary Ruble, Gladys Ruiz, Paddy Tillett

**PP&R Staff Present:** Eileen Argentina, Gregory Dubay, Katie Dunham, Margaret Evans, Brooke Gardner, Art Hendricks, Brett Horner, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, Lauren McGuire, Emily Roth, Kia Selley, Nicola Sysyn

**Call to Order/  
Approve January  
Minutes** Pat Frobles called the meeting to order at 8:07am.  
  
Pat shared that Gregory Dubay, the Director of the Community Music Center has offered to do a tour after the Board meeting if members are interested.

Pat asked for a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Bonnie Gee Yosick made a motion, Paul Agrimis seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

There were no sign-ups for public comment.

**Levels of Service –  
Parks & Natural  
Areas** Pat invited the Level of Service team to present their work.  
  
Brett Horner reviewed the “What? So What? Now What?” handout and introduced Katie Dunham, Emily Roth and Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong who have been working on the Level of Service study. He recognized the work of Anny Hsaio who had a role in this work but no longer works for PP&R. Brett also noted that Paul Agrimis, Paddy Tillett, and Bonnie Gee Yosick have been working with the Level of Service team.





Katie Dunham reviewed the outline of the Level of Service (LOS) work and how it fits into the Vision 2035 plan. The objective of the project is to identify the assets and facilities that PP&R should provide and how those assets and facilities can be equitably distributed.

Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong outlined the community engagement process that supports the LOS work. She noted key themes emphasized by community members included safety and security, culturally relevant programming, access for older adults, cleanliness, and transportation.

Randy Gragg asked if the data from the community outreach will be available to the Parks Board. Elizabeth noted that there will be a report when the work is completed.

Pat asked if the survey data was used in the development of the budget. Kia Selley responded that because the LOS project is still underway, the data has not been used in preparing this year's budget. The data will be used in the development of future budgets and other planning.

Jim Owens asked if the next LOS project would be on programming. Elizabeth shared that that has not yet been determined, but it is something that is being considered. She noted that at the end of this study, staff will produce a recommendation that incorporates what the community has said it wants and what can actually be delivered by the Bureau within current budget and other constraints.

Katie noted that about 66% of Portland residents live within a ½ mile walking distance from a park with play areas. Bonnie asked if school play areas were included in this metric. Katie indicated they were not included. If school play areas are included, about 79% of Portland residents are within a ½ mile of a park with a play area. Katie noted that they must be careful about including school play areas as some may have restricted public access.

Katie noted community support for some emerging park experiences such as fitness equipment, futsal and nature





patches. Emily Roth shared that two years ago PP&R started a program called Ecologically Sustainable Landscapes. This program looks at areas within developed parks that are underutilized and can be used to create nature spaces. The program is now on its 5th pilot project. Katie shared that in the community outreach residents indicated they want access to natural areas close to home.

Bonnie asked if staff are mapping the natural areas and comparing that map with the goals of increasing access to natural areas. Emily shared that goal of increasing access is taken into account when deciding where to place a nature patch. Bonnie asked what access metric is used for the nature patches. Emily noted they look at both where Parks is currently deficient in providing access to natural areas and where an access point can realistically be provided.

Randy asked where the funding is coming from for natural areas acquisitions. Emily noted that many of the natural area acquisition funds are from Metro, the Bureau of Environmental Services, and System Development Charges (SDCs). Randy asked what funding Parks is using to improve access. Emily noted that this funding is provided through SDCs, grants and bond money. Maintenance funding is requested of Council and comes out of the General Fund.

Pat noted that the Wilshire neighborhood raised funds for the Wilshire Park Nature Patch and that other neighborhood groups have done similar fundraising. She stressed the importance of acknowledging the contributions of those partners. Emily noted that Parks staff is looking at more sustainable funding sources and they are monitoring all costs associated with maintaining these spaces.

Katie asked Bonnie and Paul if they had anything they wanted to share about their experience working on this project. Bonnie shared that she would like to focus more on the metrics. For example, the goal to have a community center within 3 miles of each Portland resident may need to be reassessed as the city densifies. Paul shared that the work is going in a good direction. It is important to look at the





community survey and community engagement work to inform this project.

Katie asked if there were any additional questions. Jim mentioned that as the city is developed, density will be an important metric. Jim noted that this is one of the elements going into the 2020 Vision update/revision and asked how the Board will be involved in that update/revision. Brett shared that the Board is welcome to be involved in the review of the 2020 plan and asked the Board to share how they would like to be involved.

Paul noted that transportation is an important factor to keep in mind as there are many barriers to natural areas. Emily shared that when they look at radius they take into consideration the barriers as well. Katie noted that when they look at density they may have to look at what is offered in those parks and how that looks different in those dense areas.

Randy asked whether, given the limited land and increasing density, the Bureau has looked at right of ways as potential park options. He referenced Vine Street in Seattle as an example. Brett said they are looking at greenways and working with other bureaus, such as PBOT and BPS, to identify options. Katie noted that they are also looking at better pedestrian connections to parks.

Pat recommended that the team look at demographic trends to inform the final recommendations for future development. When the Vision 2035 is being developed, Pat noted that consideration should be given both to the Level of Service Parks is currently able to provide and the Level of Service that *should be* provided and identify strategies for closing the gap between what is and what we aspire to be. Brett noted that the 2035 Vision will outline aspirational goals and performance indicators will be established to measure progress toward meeting those goals. The Vision will communicate what can be done under existing financial constraints and what more can be accomplished with different financing strategies.





Brett shared that the team will come back in late summer or early fall with the completed work. They are looking at cost analysis, developing a draft recommendation for the public to review in the next public engagement phase. The Level of Service recommendations will come to the Parks Board before going to Council.

Kendall encouraged the team and Board to temper aspirations as they consider the current fiscal situation. The community needs to have a realistic vision of what can be accomplished. Brett noted they will see that when they look at the analysis. Elizabeth shared this is why they are having a conversation with the community about what we realistically can provide and set realistic expectations. Kendall advised that they manage the expectations of the public by refraining from asking the public to identify what they want when Parks can't provide many of the services/facilities the public identifies. Randy noted that this is a communications issue and staff must be transparent about the limitations Parks must work within.

The Board thanked the team for their presentation and discussion.

**Friends Group  
Presentation:  
Friends of Mt Tabor  
Park**

Pat shared that today is the first of hopefully quarterly presentations from Parks Friends Groups. These are important partnerships that provide significant support to park development and maintenance. Friends groups are natural Parks advocates and the Bureau should look for ways to support and leverage their advocacy. Pat introduced Beau Russell and Diane Redd, representatives of the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park.

Beau shared that Friends of Mt Tabor Park was formed in 2000 to improve and help maintain Mt Tabor Park. The group identifies and solves problems in the park and informs the public about the park's history and ecological health. The Friends group works with the Parks Bureau and the Mt Tabor Neighborhood Association. Beau shared some of the group's awards and accomplishments. He noted the group's current relationship with the Parks Bureau has been discouraging.





The relationship was stronger in the past. He noted that community donations have not been utilized in the park.

Diane shared her work as a fundraiser for a committee formed to establish an endowment to fund a part-time stewardship position for the park. Diane shared that the neighborhood association has been frustrated by changes in how Parks manages events in parks and noted that volunteers can no longer be involved in planning and supporting park events. She shared the committee's fundraising accomplishments and their information sharing strategy. Diane highlighted the ways that the Friends group has supported the park which included identifying an off-leash dog area and Weed Warriors efforts.

Pat noted that among other accomplishments the Mt. Tabor group has received the Spirit of Portland award, funded and staffed the Visitor Center, established the Weed Warrior program (which received national recognition) and last year alone contributed the equivalent of two-plus FTEs in the form of volunteer hours spent maintaining the park. She thanked Beau and Diane for all of their efforts and for their presentations.

Katy Holland shared her appreciation for the Friends' work at Mt Tabor and noted how the park attracts visitors from all over the region.

Bonnie thanked the Friends for their work and suggested that Kia connect them to the appropriate staff member to help improve the relationship with the Bureau. She noted there is an opportunity to leverage relationships with the community to support the Foundation and the Parks Bureau.

Jim echoed the thank you and offered to act as a mediator between Parks staff and the Friends group if that would be helpful.

Kia thanked Beau and Dianne and noted some of the many projects that the Friends and the Parks Bureau have worked on together over the past several years. She said she





understands the desire of the group to feel valued and said she would follow up regarding participation in the Summer Free For All program.

Kia also noted that there are many Friends and partner groups and the Bureau has one position dedicated to managing the relationships with those groups. The position is currently vacant and recruitment is underway to fill it. The Bureau has a spending/hiring freeze currently, but this position has been identified as essential for business function. That said, managing the relationships with Friends groups will continue to be a challenge for just one staff member. How the Bureau bolsters central operations will be important to keep in mind in future budget conversations.

Kendall noted the class and equity issues that this conversation brought up, noting that the Mt Tabor neighborhood may have more resources than other neighborhoods that are equally committed to supporting or establishing a local park.

The Board thanked the presenters for their work.

**Appoint Member Nominating Committee and Officer’s Nominating Committee**

Pat shared the rosters for the Officers Nominating Committee: Jim Owens (Chair), Ian Jaquiss, Paddy Tillett, and Bonnie Gee Yosick and the New Member Nominating Committee: Kendall Clawson (Chair), Jim Owens, Michelle Dedeo, Tamara Layden, Paul Agrimis, and Jenny Glass.

Pat asked for a motion to approve the Nominating Committees. Paul made the motion, Jim seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Portland Parks Foundation Update**

Due to time constraints, Randy will delay his Portland Parks Foundation presentation.

Randy shared the upcoming event series the Foundation is having at the Armory throughout March. He encouraged Board members to attend and to share with their networks to get good attendance.





## Director's Update

Kia Selley shared that Parks is about to begin work resurfacing basketball courts in partnership with Nike and the Portland Trail Blazers. There will be 26 courts resurfaced this summer. Soon the Bond program will be finishing it's 26th park project with the completion of the Couch Park playground.

Kia noted that staff are stretched very thin right now as Parks has imposed a hiring freeze. In addition to this, Parks leadership has directed staff to limit travel, training, and is holding back on purchasing materials and other spending as part of current Fiscal Year hold backs. Some vacancies will be held until the next Fiscal Year.

The budget team is working on the budget reduction proposals which will be presented to a subset of the Budget Advisory Committee prior to the next Budget Advisory Committee meeting on March 6, 2019. Kia thanked the Board for their time and advice. There will be an opportunity for public comment on the budget in early April. The Council Work Session on the Parks Budget Request is on March 19, 2019.

Kia noted that the new director starts on February 19, 2019, and staff are excited to welcome her. She will be focused on the budget as well as meeting staff, community leaders/partners and City leadership.

Jim thanked Kia for her work and advocacy for Parks. He noted that it is a tough job and asked if there will be overlap. Kia shared that there will be overlap with the new director. The full Board echoed Jim in thanking Kia. Kia thanked the Board for their dedication and wisdom and noted that the new director will need their support as well.

## Parks Board Meeting Adjourns

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05am.

**Next meeting is Tuesday, March 12, 2019.**

