



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Haygood, Fletcher, Wille, Kuntz, and Robbins

Commissioners Absent:

Thompson, Otto, Piland, and Panter

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

Guests:

Angela Hult (Kuni Foundation)

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Haygood called the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) regular meeting to order at 4:38 p.m. in the Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and online via Microsoft Teams. Commissioners Thompson, Otto, Piland, and Panter were absent.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the April 17, 2024 meeting minutes by consensus.

Item 3: Public Comment

None presented.

Item 4: Fruit Valley Playground Master Plan Approval

Terry Snyder opened by acknowledging the support of Angela Hult and Robyn Shuey from the Kuni Foundation.

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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Snyder presented an overview of Fruit Valley Park, a 6-acre neighborhood park in west Vancouver serving over 1,000 households. It is known for its beautiful natural environment with many large trees. Current amenities include a playground, sports court, community garden and large open lawn area.

The Kuni Foundation donated \$1 million to build an inclusive playground at Fruit Valley Park. The playground will honor the legacy of community leader and mother, Elizabeth Austin.

Community engagement began in summer 2023. Hundreds of neighbors helped select the playground theme. Online surveys helped identify the specific pieces of equipment and design features. The project has strong community support.

Inclusive play environments encourage strong physical, mental and social development in all children. The playground theme is Play Like a Bird, highlighting the natural beauty of the park setting and supporting bird habitat and conservation education.

Snyder gave an overview of the playground design and key inclusive features, including accessible rubber surfacing, full support seat and harness on track ride, spinning equipment with level entry, sensory spaces with instruments, sculptures and quiet retreats, and water play.

The timeline after PRAC approval, document preparation, and permitting in 2024 aims to begin playground construction in winter or spring of 2025. Playground construction completion and opening celebration are anticipated for summer through fall of 2025.

Fletcher acknowledged that the donation from the Kuni Foundation was an incredible help to the cause. Haygood asked if the basketball court would remain, and Snyder confirmed that it would. Snyder confirmed that the water feature can be winterized and turned off in the winter. Haygood commended the fence enclosure feature as an amenity for special needs students, and a positive safety feature for inclusive play.

Future park considerations include the Fruit Valley Community Center, a small, City-owned building in the park that was open for limited event rentals through the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association. A recent assessment deemed the building in very poor condition, so it will be removed during construction of the new playground.

Kuntz moved to approve the Elizabeth Austin Playground design and construction plan at Fruit Valley Park. The motion was seconded by Wille and unanimously approved.

Angela Hult (Kuni Foundation) thanked the team for the great care that went into working collaboratively with the community. She commended the team and the City of Vancouver for being an amazing partner and championing inclusion.

Item 5: High-Level Review of Biennium Budget

Dave Perlick and Katherine Stokke highlighted that the PRCS department learned this month that the City of Vancouver has a projected budget deficit for the next budget cycle, 2025-26. The City is developing strategies to address this gap and find more revenue opportunities.

The directive for PRCS is to target a 15% savings by exploring revenue opportunities and taking a creative strategic approach to maintain our services. The 2023 Budget to Actuals summary demonstrated that our current management of expenses and revenue is strong. Stokke gave an overview of the cost and revenue breakdown, showing that last year we came in under budget on expenditures and over budget on revenues. The stewardship of financial resources will serve us well as we prepare for the next budget cycle.

Kuntz inquired about budget cuts having varying percentages across different departments. Perlick informed the commission that public safety, utilities, police and other departments deemed with priority functions will experience smaller budget reductions. Haygood asked to clarify whether extra revenues flow back to the PRCS budget. Stokke confirmed that it flows back into the General Fund to impact cost recovery and free up funds for other priority items.

To best preserve current staff, we are keeping all current staffing vacancies unfilled to maximize savings while we address this situation.

Perlick highlighted that overall, our capital program is not impacted at this time. Capital projects are budgeted based on existing resources, so we are in a position to continue budgeted projects.

Council is looking at additional revenues and has indicated interest in exploring the Cultural Access Program and defining how this funding source could be applied. Haygood added that this program could support a number of organizations.

The budget baseline is coming soon. Staff will continue providing updates as soon as possible to allow commissioners to prepare for coming discussions. Please reach out with questions, and staff will continue to provide timely information as we can.

Item 6: Director's Report

Perlick congratulated Commission Chair, Jaynee Haygood on receiving the Wager V-Formation Flyer Award. It was wonderful to celebrate her at the recent Parks Foundation luncheon, along with former PRAC liaison Syble Crow, and current Culture, Arts and Heritage Commissioner, Linda Reid. We are so grateful to have such dedicated volunteers advocating for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services in our community. The McClaskey Family Foundation was also honored for its significant financial support for our Summer Playgrounds Program over the last decade. Citywide Volunteer Coordinator, Hailey Heath, received the Tributary Award for outstanding contributions to environmental stewardship and community empowerment.

All of our youth summer day camps are full. While we are encouraging folks to join the waitlist, we are also pointing folks toward the partner camps that we are coordinating with a variety of local organizations.

We will be removing the existing restrooms at Marshall Park later this month to install new Portland Loos, which will open this summer. We will continue to have portable toilets at Marshall Park until the new loos are open.

Fisher Basin Sports Courts are closed for repairs, resurfacing and restriping; they will re-open next week.

We had a successful Spruce the Couve weekend with 120 volunteers! There was significant downtown cleanup and new flowers were planted. Huge thanks to the volunteers and the Volunteer Programs team for an amazing day of community service!

We are excited to welcome our colleagues from across the state to Vancouver next week for the [Washington Recreation and Parks Association \(WRPA\) Conference](#). As this year's hosts, we have been working hard to organize educational and fun social activities and events to support the conference and make sure attendees have a great experience in Vancouver.

Save the Date for the [Juneteenth Freedom Celebration](#) on Saturday, June 15th in Esther Short Park. We partner with the local nonprofit Odyssey World International Education Services on this free community event.

It was proposed that PRAC will not hold a June meeting based on the workplan. We propose to cancel and move items to the July meeting. Commissioners agreed and staff will follow up to confirm.

Item 7: Chair Report

Haygood shared personal stories about a successful Spruce the Couve and encouraged folks to volunteer next year. She thanked staff for the new PRAC nametags and announced a reminder about the Bee Pollinator meeting on 6/4 at 4pm online.

Haygood proposed to meet Perlick offline to discuss approaching contacts at partner organizations (Evergreen School District, Vancouver Public Schools, and Parks Foundation).

Item 8: Evergreen School District Report

None presented.

Item 9: Vancouver Public School Report

None presented.

Item 10: Open Discussion & New Business

Kuntz recommended a follow-up with Perlick regarding securing the proper certifications and maintenance of Leverich Park disc golf amenities. It was suggested that we discuss a framework, budget, and up-to-date system if we are approached by sponsors interested in donating disc golf equipment to other parks.

Wille participated in the Earth Day weekend events at Fort Vancouver, the Grandmother Camas site, and the Rising Generations Powwow.

ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.