



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Haygood, Thompson, Striplin, Wille, and Robbins

Commissioners Absent:

Fletcher, Luce, Piland, and Panter

Staff Present:

Perlick, Snyder, Gutierrez, Donovan, Nilo, Baynard-Cooke, Stokke, Burton, Miletich, Meade, Guzman, White, Hull, Tubberville, and Brosius.

Guests: None

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Haygood called the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) regular meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. in the Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and online via Microsoft Teams. Commissioners Fletcher, Luce, Piland, and Panter were absent.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the January 15, 2025, meeting minutes by consensus with no changes.

Item 3: Public Comment

None presented.

Members

Jayne Haygood

President

Angilo Fletcher

Vice President

Jeremy Robbins

Jenny Thompson

Stephen Wille

Valerie Striplin

James Luce

AJ Panter, VPS

Cale Piland, EPS

Vacant, Parks Foundation

**Parks, Recreation and
Cultural Services
Department**

P.O. Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668
360-487-8311
TTY: 711
cityofvancouver.us

To request accommodation or other formats, please contact:

Alicia Nilo | 360-487-8311 | TTY: 711 | parksrecculture@cityofvancouver.us

Item 4: Parks Capital Updates: Oakbrook Park and Fruit Valley Park

Roman Gutierrez (Park Developer) and Terry Snyder (Park Development Manager) gave an overview of the current park updates at Oakbrook and Fruit Valley.

A review of Oakbrook Park highlighted the 13.6 acres in central Vancouver with a natural setting featuring a grove of Oregon white oak trees. The park was reclassified in the 2022-2031 Comprehensive Plan, with robust community engagement throughout 2022. The master plan and phase 1 were approved in December of 2022, with construction slated for Fall 2023 but pushed back three times. The Nature play area was added in 2024 after the original playground was removed.

The Phase 1 plan includes a Wetlands-themed inclusive play area, 4 new pickleball courts, a nature play area, a Portland Loo restroom, sidewalk along 99th Avenue, widening of NE 99th Avenue for street/ADA parking, and native planting on the southwest side of the park.

Construction begins on February 24th, with the west side of the park closed through September for playground, loo, and pickleball installation. Project completion is estimated for fall of 2025 with a park reopening celebration.

Robbins shared kudos for the team's communications and work around the updates happening at Oakbrook. Wille inquired about the property on the other side of 99th, and Gutierrez confirmed that it is a stormwater facility with potential for wildlife space. Robbins asked if the paths leading to the tennis courts are part of the upgrade; Gutierrez referenced court and path resurfacing as an internal discussion for the next Phase. Haygood inquired about whether there would be any tree removal; Gutierrez confirmed there would be none removed. Haygood expressed concerns about the street parking, and it was confirmed that the road would be widened for additional space. Striplin asked if there will be plaques to identify the native plants as an educational component; Heath will be working on educational signage on plant identification.

A review of Fruit Valley Park was given, highlighting 6 acres in west Vancouver featuring large trees and a community garden site. The park serves over 1,000 households. The project includes an inclusive playground replacement funded by the Kuni Foundation. The playground will honor the legacy of community leader and mother, Elizabeth Austin. Community outreach was launched from summer 2023 – winter 2024, with a Play Like a Bird theme to highlight the park's natural beauty. The project was approved by PRAC in May of 2024.

Elizabeth Austin Playground design features accessible rubber surfacing, a track ride with full support seat and harness, spinning equipment with a level entry surface, sensory spaces with instruments, sculptures, and quiet retreats, clear edge definition, water play, and a climber with a transfer station.

It was noted that the city-owned community building in the park was previously open for limited event rentals through the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association. A recent assessment deemed the building in very poor condition, and it will be removed during playground construction.

Neighbors will be updated on the construction timeline in February – March, with playground construction set to begin in April with the building removal through June. Project wrap-up is estimated through July-August, with a playground opening celebration estimated for the end of summer.

Striplin noted the focus on the community building and asked about solutions for alternative usage; Snyder and Perlick confirmed that the building has not seen much community use of that building in recent years. Snyder confirmed to Robbins that the fence height will be about 42". Haygood shared appreciation for the enclosed space where small or special needs children can play. Snyder will have nature-scaping planned, with no tree

removal; we are anticipated to plant 2 new trees. Robbins asked if there would be repaving of the surface of the paths; Snyder shared that we would not, as they are still in fine condition. Wille noted concern about construction vehicles driving onto the green spaces, and Snyder highlighted the dedicated curb area.

Perlick shared that progress is happening for grand opening celebrations taking place later this fall.

Item 5: Vancouver Arts Hub Update

Stacey Donovan (Cultural Services Manager) shared an overview on the Vancouver Arts Hub (VAH), reuse study highlights, and current activation strategies.

The project objectives are to create a unique community asset that cultivates and grows space for the arts in Vancouver.

Reuse study highlights include open and accessible spaces that host artist talks, gallery spaces, gathering spaces, and a potential coffee shop. Programming could include a wide variety of workshops, classes, camps, and community rentals that support several art forms.

Current activation: The City is partnered with local nonprofit, theARTScentered to help launch a test run of the site. The VAH responds to a need being voiced by artists and community members who want the City to invest in growing space for arts and culture. More information is available on the [City Website](#) and [theARTScentered](#). The VAH is activated 32 hours a week for a wide range of activities, including ballet, modern dance, youth theater, Aztec dance, fiber art, Folklorico, and more. Every first Friday, Christine (theARTScentered director) launches a different cultural activity.

Next steps include continuing to host temporary activation, launching a mid-2025 RFP for design phases, establishing an advisory group from the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission, beginning roof replacement/addressing safety issues in 2026, and identifying funding streams.

An open discussion was held. Wille asked about the flooding issues in the basement; Donovan shared that they redid all of the bathrooms and removed all of the carpet and replaced walls. Robbins asked about ADA; there is an elevator, a ramp in the front and the back of the building, as well as accessible bathrooms. During the redesign, the elevators will be added in a more accessible place. Striplin expressed excitement for the opportunities for arts programming here in our own community, and opportunities to showcase our own underserved communities. Equitable access is one of our priorities in our interim activation, and beyond.

Haygood appreciates the accessibility of the space; she asked about potential for a green roof; Perlick, we will look at that as an option as the next phase of the design, review the scope, roof solar as well, consider modernization for use and following the City's values. Donovan highlighted that we are taking experts' and artists' needs into consideration as we plan the final design of the building. When a director is hired for the space, they would curate the art. Striplin asked about activation to cycle in equitable contracts for coffee artists, food trucks, for small, local vendors. Donovan confirmed we will do a fair RFQ for the vendor to run the coffee shop.

Item 6: Director's Report

Perlick highlighted another successful Valentine's Ball event at Pearson.

Picnic shelter reservations for summer opened Feb. 5 and Community Gardens opened Feb 19.

The March session of swim lessons at the community centers has opened this week.

In all cases, we are offering registration to city residents first and implementing an increase in non-resident fees in 2025.

Lastly, Perlick shared the City Manager's [statement](#) on the City's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Item 7: Chair Report

Haygood shared about Clark Conservation District's affordable native plant sale; she spent her weekend planting 45 native plants!

The Parks Foundation announced their Florence B Wager awards are open for nominations. Thompson added that they are hiring a Development Director.

Item 8: Evergreen School District Report

None presented.

Item 9: Vancouver Public School Report

None presented.

Item 10: Open Discussion & New Business

Robbins is excited about the accessible parks that are happening to make people feel welcome; he appreciates the work. He also commended the City for having an ADA coordinator on staff. Wille expressed appreciation for folks working for parks and pride in the work, as well as appreciation for the mayor. Striplin echoed gratitude for the wonderful work and thanked the PRCS staff for readily answering questions.

ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Public Notice: Stacey Donovan and Christine Richardson (theARTScentered) hosted an optional tour of the Arts Hub building following the immediate adjournment of the February PRAC Meeting. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), there was no PRAC business conducted during this separate tour.