



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Haygood, Wille, Thompson, Robbins, Fletcher, Striplin, and Luce

Commissioners Absent:

Piland, and Panter

Staff Present:

Perlick, Brosius, Snyder, Meade, Donovan, Burton, Heath, Miletich, Baynard-Cooke, Tubberville, Stokke, Nilo, Hull, White, Guzman, Gutierrez [check online attendance]

Guests: None

Item 1: Call to Order

Chair Haygood called the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) regular meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. in the Aspen Room at Vancouver City Hall and online via Microsoft Teams. Commissioners Piland, and Panter were absent.

Perlick introduced interim PRCS attorney, Sara Baynard-Cooke.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the November 20, 2024, meeting minutes by consensus with minor 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

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Item 4: Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services 2025 Work Priorities

PRCS Director David Perlick introduced the 2025 PRCS Priority Workplan. Guiding Policies include the City's Core Values (established by City Council), focus areas of the Strategic Plan, Community Goals in the Comprehensive Plan, and best practices guided by industry standards. Priorities in the department's work will reflect alignment with the 2025-26 Budget, Comprehensive Plan implementation, and Council-Directed new initiatives.

Recreation Division:

Recreation Program & Facility Managers Angela Brosius and Andy Meade gave an overview of the Recreation Division and its supporting roles. Facilities include the Firstenburg Community Center and Marshall/Luepke Community Center. 2025 Recreation priorities include personnel changes, which highlight position reductions with unions, seasonal/part-time planning, and an Aquatics Coordinator transition. Facilities will prioritize ongoing maintenance investments. Programs and services will include the implementation of resident and non-resident fee increases, adjustment to program operations to align with reduced staffing level and maximized variety of offerings, and enhanced registration check-in efficiency with new technology.

Parks Division:

Parks Development Manager, Terry Snyder gave an overview of the Parks Division, which manages assets that include 2,246 acres of Parks land, 82 parks, 28 natural areas, and 20+ miles of trails. 2025 Parks program priorities will include the hiring of a new Construction Manager position, the acquisition of the Vancouver Innovation Center (VIC) Park, and the planning and design of current capital projects. Snyder shared a high-level construction schedule for projects in 2025-2026.

An additional Parks program priority will be to hire a new Trails Planner position to maintain and expand our trails program. In 2025, Parks will prepare for a Park Impact Fee (PIF) review in preparation for a non-resident PIF implementation. It was noted that we will be preparing for significant grounds maintenance reductions in 2025 due to budget impacts.

Cultural Services Division:

Cultural Services Manager Stacey Donovan shared an overview of the scope and team roles within the Cultural Services Division. Facilities and assets include the Vancouver Arts Hub Building and 29 public art features. Volunteer Program priorities include streamlining work to focus on PRCS volunteer engagement, enhancing activation and management of existing Naturespaces sites, managing community gardens, and preparing for the program impacts from the 2026 grounds maintenance reductions.

Special Events will launch a new Permit Specialist position, implement a permit fee increase, continue summer concerts and movies with an abbreviated schedule, and support other City-sponsored, partner, and permitted events. Priorities from the Culture, Arts & Heritage Commission include the establishment of a new tax-funded cultural access program, advancing the Arts Hub building design plan while continuing the initial activation efforts, and the Vancouver Arts & Music Festival.

Administration Division:

Perlick highlighted the Administrative Division, which specializes in performance metrics, budgeting, support, and communication.

Chair Haygood spoke to the PRAC Commissioner duties that come with the role. These include advising department staff, making recommendations to City Council, advocating for park and recreation issues among decision makers, and connecting with the community by providing information about PRCS. In addition, commissioners can get involved by creating and reviewing policy, attending department events in the community, connecting with community partners and organizations, and advocating at City Council and other community meetings.

The floor was open for discussion. Robbins commended the work at Oakbrook Park and Natureplay area, noting the project's momentum as much needed and heavily used. He expressed excitement and gratitude for the work.

Thompson expressed excitement over all the projects happening in the next year and asked what the program's impact would look like at both community centers. Brosius highlighted that some of the highest impact areas will manifest in fees, teen camps, transportation for the hike program, dance classes, and scholarship limitations (residents only). However, the majority of our programming will likely not see a significant impact. As we work through the year, we will be able to identify new opportunities for working smarter with what we have.

Fletcher inquired about programs with waitlists. Perlick shared that we have strong numbers of registrants and waitlists and are looking for opportunities that serve the whole community. Our new software program adds new incentives to keep membership and monitor programs.

Wille commented on Naturespaces program and park maintenance and the interdepartmental coordination between Public Works, Grounds, and Parks to maintain natural areas. He highlighted the natural resource aspect needed at parks in addition to open lawns and play equipment and recommended repairing corridors and wetlands/sensitive lands. Donovan confirmed that, while we are prioritizing staff capacity and budget, the City is taking all these lenses into consideration.

Striplin inquired about scholarships for low-income families and opportunities to work with other organizations and institutions to open pathways for memberships. She also asked about the direction with teen camps. Brosius shared about the YOP, Youth Opportunity Pass, as a drop-in resource for teens. Meade added we are offering a summer all-access pass for two months with opportunities for distribution at school districts.

Luce referenced the previous County-City Parks board and encouraged continued coordination efforts. He inquired for further knowledge about how to advocate for PRCS funding, given the increased cuts. Luce suggested coordinating use of the pool in the Heights to supplement pool demand at the Centers. As a regular at MCC, Luce expressed staffing concerns for the fitness center supervision, advocating for people with disabilities to more easily access the equipment. Meade confirmed that we intend to staff the fitness desk.

Haygood shared that, given the challenges faced with budget cuts, she is impressed with what PRCS has accomplished in thinking strategically. She commended the recruitment team that hires seasonal PT staff, as she is very impressed. She expressed enthusiasm for the Trails Planner position. As a suggestion for outreach, she recommended the Pokémon Go community as an opportunity in our east-side parks.

Item 5: Director's Report

Parks

- The new playground at Homestead Park is open for play and already getting positive reviews from neighbors. The park is in east Vancouver's Cascade Highlands neighborhood.
- There is an online survey open through Monday to get community feedback on ARPA improvements at The Downs Neighborhood Park. The plans include a new picnic shelter, half-court basketball, irrigation and security lighting.
- We'll be asking for City Council to approve the bid for Phase 1 construction at Oakbrook Park on January 27. Once approved, we hope to have work started in February with plans to be back open in the fall.

Recreation

- January 1 marked the beginning of fee increases and the residency verification requirement. I want to highlight the exceptional work of our customer service representatives who have spent a lot of time guiding customers through these changes.
- Reminder that community centers will be operating on MLK Day holiday hours from 10am – 7pm on Monday January 20.
- The AARP free tax aide services will start February 3 on Thursday and Fridays at MCC. In-person and online appointments are encouraged, walk-in service is available.

Cultural Services

- The Special Events team is looking for local food vendors and performers who are interested in participating in our summer event season. Information and interest forms are online at cityofvancouver.us/events.
- The new full-time Permits Specialist position has been posted on the City website and we are accepting applications through January 22. If you know someone interested in starting a career in event management and logistics, encourage them to apply!
- On January 23, Kiggins Theater is hosting a free screening of "Hold My Beer" a scripted comedy-drama about an autistic young man from Vancouver who discovers a passion for craft beer and embarks on a mission to open his own brewpub. It was filmed in Vancouver and was funded in part by our Vancouver Culture, Arts & Heritage grant program.
- Tickets for the Family Valentine's Ball are on sale on the City website. Families can choose to attend February 7 or February 8. We're also recruiting volunteers for both nights.

Item 6: Chair Report

Haygood shared about the recent ivy pull project in local parks, and thanked the organizers.

Item 7: Evergreen School District Report

None presented.

Item 8: Vancouver Public School Report

None presented.

Item 9: Open Discussion & New Business

Luce requested facts on Parks Budget cuts, and Haygood suggested requesting talking points from Perlick. Striplin thanked staff for the presentation and expressed her excitement for the new workplan. Fletcher shared that he spoke to Leadership Clark County to join with other boards/commissions around advocating for parks on a local level.

ADJOURNED

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.