



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

4:30 p.m.

Vancouver City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Haygood, Robbins, Wille, Thompson, Striplin and Luce

Commissioners Absent:

Fletcher, Piland, and Panter

Staff Present:

Perlick, Johnson, Stokke, Snyder, Heath, Burton, Nilo, Meade, Brosius, Donovan, Hull, Cook, White, Guzman, and Tubberville.

Guests: Katherine Kelly, Lori Severino, Jamie Beyer, Kyle Roslund, Casey Liles, Shilpa Mallem, Brittney Jackson

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. Haygood introduced new commissioners Valerie Striplin and James Luce. Commissioners Fletcher, Piland, and Panter were absent.

Item 2: Approval of Minutes

PRAC approved the September 18, 2024, meeting minutes by consensus.

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 3: Public Comment

Guest Brittney Jackson is a community member involved at the Marshall Community Center, sharing that her strong sense of community there has been vital to her friendships and weekly health. Jackson expressed concern that certain adult classes may be completely cut from recreational programming, and was curious about the decision-making process to make these difficult cuts. She suggested implementing fee increases and exploring other nonessential areas that might be considered for reduction to allow these programs to continue.

Haygood thanked Jackson for sharing her testimony, noting that the budget overview will be discussed at tonight's meeting.

Item 4: Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update

Katherine Kelly (Policy Advisor) and Lori Severino (Senior Planner) from the Community Development Department introduced the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) Program. According to the program schedule, the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) was released for a 60-day public comment period from September 20 – November 18, 2024.

Kelly and Severino shared an overview of the Draft SEIS, which impacts 13 resources listed within or near the program area.

The team highlighted key findings related to Parks and Recreation, Trails, the Community Connector, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Old Apple Tree Park, Marshall Park and Community Center, Luepke Senior Center, Kiggins Bowl Sports Fields and Stadium, as well as temporary effects near the sites.

Severino summarized the staff's analysis and preliminary comments on the Draft SEIS, including the concerns about the shared use path connection taking up too much space. Discussion prompts were presented before the commission:

- **What are your thoughts about the conclusions related to parks and recreation in the Draft SEIS?**
 - Commissioners felt that the conclusions were well-pointed and agreed with the concern regarding the safety of the size of the spiral connector. Haygood recommended addressing planting logistics with Urban Forestry. She also suggested considerations and solutions to suicide prevention on the bridge. Haygood and Luce asked for clarification on the Old Apple Tree path, outlined by the IBR team.
- **What do you think about staff's preliminary comments?**
- **How do the various design options align with City goals and policies related to parks and recreation?**
- **Are proposed mitigation measures sufficient to mitigate impacts to parks and recreation resources?**
 - Luce asked to define what sufficient measures would imply. Wille asked if mitigation is going to be included in the project process, or if it would be an add-on; Kelly shared that the team is creating formal frameworks of the mitigation during the design process.
- **Any additional feedback?**
 - Striplin asked about partnerships with local naturescaping folks to see about the rehoming of trees that may not be able to be saved to promote more naturescaping and best pollinator practices; Kelly shared that this would come at a later stage of design, and will be factored in as a consideration.
 - Striplin also recommended incorporating some cultural honoring as well as paying homage to ancestral lands.

Severino highlighted the official ways to submit a comment on the Draft SEIS before the deadline.

Item 5: Vancouver as a Bee City USA

Jamie Beyer (Urban Forestry Commission) and Kyle Roslund (Chair, Vancouver Bee Project) introduced the Bee City USA project to support plant reproduction and spread awareness about the decline in pollinators. They were joined by Meg Johnson and board members for support.

Pressures on pollinators include pesticide use, climate change, air pollution, among other factors. Bee City USA is about bringing communities together to sustain pollinators (over 3,600 species of native bees) by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides.

Impacts include the increase in availability of native flowering species, providing appropriate nesting substrates, finding alternatives to harmful pesticides, and educating others on the issue. Bee City USA is in over 200 cities, almost 200 campuses, and in 46 states, plus DC and Puerto Rico.

Benefits to the program include community building, improvement of food production, healthy neighborhoods, supporting local businesses, expanding a national network, expert support, and local support for bees and other pollinators. The team shared the application process, program goals, and commitments.

Haygood asked the cost to do the annual fee, and Roslund answered that it is \$500 in addition to small soft costs. Wille expressed his enthusiastic support for this project. Luce asked how private landowners were engaged in this program; Roslund answered that Bee City USA has education and engagement, as well as the provision of free wildflower seeds.

Motion: Luce moved for the commission's vote of support for the Bee City USA Initiative. The motion was seconded by Thompson and unanimously approved.

The City Council meeting is scheduled for October 28, where you can provide support during public comment.

Item 6: High-Level Budget Update

Perlick gave an overview of the 2025-2026 Recommended Budget for Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services (PRCS). The projected deficit of \$43M results from inflation across all costs and softening of many revenues. The PRCS department includes four divisions: Parks, Recreation, Cultural Services and Events, and Administrative.

Staffing impacts include a variety of changes, including the reduction of 4.5 FTE positions and the creation of 3.0 new positions.

Fee and residency impacts include an updated cost recovery policy to prioritize services for Vancouver residents. All fees will be raised by appx. 10% to address increased operating costs and inflation. Fees increase from 15% higher to 25% higher for non-residents. PRCS will maintain the scholarship program, limited to Vancouver residents.

Parks and Trails impacts will focus on completing priority capital projects, exploring other acquisitions, implementing a Trails program, the addition of new Trails staff, and reductions in the Grounds Maintenance budget. This will impact park service levels for restrooms, garbage collection etc., in discussion with Public Works.

Cultural Services will maintain core services and special events with strategic reductions and leaning. This includes the continued support of the Vancouver Arts & Music Festival in 2025, completion of the Arts Hub design process, the adoption of a new sales tax committed to arts and culture and added staff capacity to

achieve this work. Thompson noted that the sales tax would enhance and add vibrancy to our community and hopes that the funds will be allocated for their intended purposes.

Recreation impacts include preserving community center hours for drop-in use, maintaining high-use amenities including pools and fitness centers, continuing high-priority programs, reducing/eliminating/contracting out other programs, eliminating fleet vehicles, reducing monitoring and customer service support, and reducing staff capacity based on program and service changes. Luce expressed concern regarding temporary staffing at the fitness centers; Perlick outlined staffing changes and the decision-making that impacted that process.

Administration impacts include the elimination of the vacant Recreation Services Manager position, elimination of vacant support staff positions, and a reduction in funding for supplies, services, and travel. It was reiterated that as we get through the adoption of the budget, PRCS has a very full workplan with the opportunity to improve our movement forward.

Perlick presented the timeline for budget review and implementation. The next steps include the October 28 City Council Capital Budget Workshop, followed by a first reading on November 4, and a Public Hearing & Adoption on November 18.

Haygood encouraged commissioners to email Perlick with any further questions.

Item 6: Director's Report

Given the shortage of meeting time, Nilo will send the Director's Report items to commissioners via email.

Item 7: Chair Report

Haygood shared that she testified at Monday's City Council meeting to speak on Parks and Watershed issues. Commissioners were encouraged to advocate for the Parks budget at the 11/4 meeting.

Item 8: Evergreen School District Report

None presented.

Item 9: Vancouver Public School Report

None presented.

Item 10: Open Discussion & New Business

Wille commended the Old Apple Festival. Luce asked for clarity regarding the addition of new FTEs in the budget, and Perlick shared more about the drivers of those necessary positions.

ADJOURNED

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