CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday
February 10, 2015
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Grindeland, Vice-Chair Evans, Boardmembers Heath, Powell, Van Hollebeke[1]

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT: Boardmembers George, Kumar

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Robinson

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Patrick Foran, Nancy Harvey, Victoria Hollerbach, Glenn Kost, Shelley McVein, Lorrie Peterson, Terry Smith, Helena Stephens, Cathy Von Wald

OTHERS PRESENT: Po Bodin, Nishi Jain, Marian Kennedy, Dwight Schrag, Carl Vander Hoek, Stu Vander Hoek

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Grindeland at 6:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Boardmember Powell and second by Vice-Chair Evans to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Boardmember Powell and second by Vice-Chair Evans to approve the January 13, 2015 Parks & Community Services Board Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

[1] Arrived at 6:05 p.m.

4. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Dwight Schrag, 1106 – 108th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

On behalf of the Ashwood community, Mr. Schrag strongly recommended an open process for the 2015 Ashwood Park Master Plan Update. He requested that Boardmembers consider the needs of the neighborhood, community, park users, and impacts to residents to ensure the process follows Bellevue's planning standards.

Mr. Schrag views the communications regarding Ashwood Park to be haphazard in recent years. He added that full transparency and an open public planning process are vital and should not be a surprise to neighborhood residents.

Mr. Schrag encouraged Boardmembers to keep Ashwood Park "Green" and requested that a formal agenda item be included during next month's meeting agenda to begin discussion about the desired uses for Ashwood Park.

Mr. Schrag provided a copy of his presentation along with a proposed format for the Agenda Item.

Po Bodin and Nishi Jain, Bellevue Youth Link

On behalf of the Youth Link Board, Mr. Bodin and Miss Jain invited Boardmembers to the 17th Annual Gumbo Night event, which will be held on March 11 at Chair Grindeland's home.

Mr. Bodin and Miss Jain discussed Youth Link's upcoming Youth Link University program that will commence on March 5 with a School of Business. The program will run for approximately 3-4 months and currently has 22 students registered.

Stu Vander Hoek, #9-103rd Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Mr. Vander Hoek requested that Parks staff research what the 1984 Draft EIS and 1986 Final EIS states for the Downtown Park, relative to parking needs and supply. Mr. Vander Hoek expressed his concern about the Gibson study and questioned why a demand study was not conducted considering the 1984 EIS did not include the SE corner of the park. He noted that the Gibson Study indicated that parking was approximately 58 percent full on average. However, he does not agree with this data because he can go to the park nearly any day in the summer and find the lots full. When lots are full, spillover impacts the business neighbors negatively, as well as park users.

Mr. Vander Hoek provided a copy of his presentation.

Carl Vander Hoek, #9-103rd Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

On behalf of the neighboring stakeholders of the Downtown Park, Mr. Vander Hoek requested an opportunity to have productive input with an interdepartmental approach for Downtown Park's successful planning and completion.

Mr. Vander Hoek explained that the neighboring stakeholders strongly believe that the expanded use at the park and the added appeal will compound an already difficult parking situation in and around Downtown Park. He requested an updated consideration of the economic and transportation impacts that includes public involvement in order to benefit Bellevue and improve user satisfaction.

Mr. Vander Hoek explained that over two dozen local businesses, organizations, and community leaders have viewed the current Downtown Park plans and share the following General Principles of Agreement:

- An observed current shortage of public parking supply in and around Downtown Park already adversely affects residents, local businesses, and property owners.
- Planned Downtown Park improvements and expansion (the NE Corner Gateway and Inspiration Playground) and expected city growth should all be considered to determine future public parking demand and define an adequate supply. Park use and city growth far outstrip factors that were considered in the Park Master Plan EIS or Gibson Parking Study.
- Parking management can and should be improved in the park. To date, stakeholders have received mixed messages on parking management and monitoring.
- Downtown Park contains viable options for additional public parking.
- Parking must be in close proximity to its uses.
- There was very little public outreach and awareness about the parking plan in the "Complete the Circle" project. A concerted effort should be made to include input from residents, businesses, and property owners prior to finalizing the Downtown Park expansion plans.
- Many users do and will drive from other parts of the city and region to enjoy the park. Convenient public transportation alternatives are limited to bring users to the park and surrounding areas.

Prior to any changes at Downtown Park, Mr. Vander Hoek requested the following actions be taken:

- Take an active interdepartmental approach to review the proposed plans and alternatives to achieve multiple objectives of various departments and address concerns of the public.
- Update the Park Master Plan EIS and Gibson Parking Study. This update should reassess traffic and parking and specifically consider: 1) current and future growth and land use patterns around Downtown Park; and 2) changes to the park design and uses, including the NE Corner Gateway, Inspiration Playground, increased community desire for greater size/frequency of park events and inclusion of "active" park uses.
- Perform a detailed analysis to determine the construction costs and timing impacts of parking alternatives to ensure adequate public parking.
- Develop and adopt a well-defined public parking policy prior to any changes at Downtown Park.

- Involve the public and stakeholders in the implementation process so they have an opportunity to identify issues, concerns, and solutions in a way that provides productive input to the city.
- Determine if convenient public transportation alternatives appropriately service the park and surrounding areas.

Mr. Vander Hoek requested that the Parks Department collaborate with its neighbors and other city departments, and help develop a comprehensive public parking solution for the Downtown Park and surrounding areas. He also provided a copy of his presentation.

5. **CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Councilmember Robinson discussed recent City Council activities, including:

- Kids Quest Museum acquiring the former Doll Museum property.
- Discussions regarding turning the Eastside Rail Corridor into a trail system.
- Reviewing the Downtown Livability Study.
- Property acquisition opportunities in the Newport Hills community.

6. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION:**

Chair Grindeland encouraged Boardmembers to attend the following events:

- There will be a joint Boards and Commissions forum on February 25 to review the draft Comprehensive Plan.
- Youth Link Gumbo Night will be held on March 11.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Heath made the following report:

- Enjoyed the Bellevue Aquatic Center.

Boardmember Powell made the following report:

- Visited the Mercer Slough Nature Park.
- Visited Kelsey Creek Farm.
- Visited Robinswood Park.
- Visited Lewis Creek Park.

Boardmember Van Hollebeke made the following report:

- The Old Bellevue neighborhood construction projects are booming. The contractors have done a great job of keeping the Downtown Park accessible during the sewer line construction project.
- Visited Mercer Slough Nature Park to view the identified land for the proposed land swap.

8. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

No report.

9. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. Parks Re-Accreditation Update

Ms. Hollerbach explained that accreditation is a process for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations by comparing practices to generally accepted professional standards. The Parks & Community Services Department initially obtained accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) in February, 2005. As part of this process, the Department is required to submit a self-assessment report to CAPRA every five years. Bellevue's most recent self-assessment report will be submitted in March, 2015. Agency accreditation has been achieved by Bellevue's Parks Department, Police Department, Police Dispatch, Utilities Department, and the Fire Department.

Ms. Hollerbach noted that some of the benefits of being accredited include:

- Meets citywide initiatives of excellence.
- Demonstrates Bellevue's standing as a national leader in the field of parks, recreation, and community service.
- Ensures the safety and well-being of participants through standardized practices.
- Assists the department by becoming more organized.
- Enhances overall effectiveness, encourages efficiencies and reinforces accountability.

Ms. Hollerbach summarized the accreditation standards, which are a statement of desirable practice as set forth by experienced and recognized professionals. The standards are an indirect measure of effectiveness. If desirable standards are practiced, then a desired outcome is achieved. There are ten categories of standards for the accreditation process.

The Park Board's role during the accreditation process is to:

- Understand and communicate the importance of agency accreditation.
- Act as ambassadors of the Department in accreditation efforts.
- Assist Department staff in policy/document endorsement.

B. Acquisition Program

Mr. Foran described Bellevue's history as a City in a Park that values and preserves its natural environment. He described the city's parks and open space as a system of natural habitats that complement the urban landscape resulting from deliberate planning over many years. The goal is to have all Bellevue residents live within one-third of a mile from their dwelling to a park.

Mr. Foran highlighted key parks property acquisitions from the 1950s through 2008. Properties acquired since 2008, through levy and grant funding, total 28.8 acres and include two Bridle Trails neighborhood properties, a Newport Hills property, an Eastgate property, expansion of the Mercer Slough Natural Area, expansion of the Coal Creek Natural Area, and parcels in the Bel-Red corridor.

Mr. Foran said policy guidance regarding park acquisitions is provided through the Comprehensive Plan and the 2010 Parks and Open Space System Plan. He described the funding mix through 2008, which was 42 percent through the real estate excise tax (REET), 24 percent from the General Capital Investment Program (CIP), 24 percent through leveraging (e.g., partnerships, grants, etc.), and 10 percent from voter initiatives. Since 2008, 61 percent of funding is from voter initiatives, 18 percent is REET funding, and 21 percent is through leveraging. Primary leveraging resources are the King County Conservation Futures program and the King County Parks Levy. Other sources include the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, Federal Land and Water Conservation funds, Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) funds, and private donations.

Mr. Foran described plans to create a gateway into Downtown Park at Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street, which will complement other development occurring in that area. Other downtown projects are the NE 2nd Street linear park and, potentially, a future acquisition in the northwest quadrant.

Mr. Foran said the Safeway parcel in the Bel-Red corridor has been acquired for parks use, and additional acquisitions are anticipated. The city contemplates using incentives for developers to provide park amenities in both the downtown and the Bel-Red corridor. Another strategy will be to visualize right-of-way easements as park experiences. With all of the construction and development occurring around Downtown Park, Boardmember Van Hollebeke suggested that there might be more opportunities in this area where parks have a direct economic benefit to the neighboring businesses.

Mr. Foran said waterfront access continues to be an important part of the acquisition strategy. Bellevue has approximately 14 miles of waterfront on Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish with only 12 percent in public ownership. He noted acquisitions related to planning for Meydenbauer Bay Park, including the acquisition of an apartment complex, and acquisition of the former Bellevue School District site adjacent to Airfield Park in the Eastgate area in recent years.

Mr. Foran described the concept of Bellevue Byways, which utilizes rights-of-way and builds additional park-like experiences (e.g., gateways, neighborhood identity, exceptional streetscapes, arboretum, changing seasons, historical and cultural, scenic beauty, and fit and active Bellevue). In addition, he described an idea of enhancing the park-like experience along West Lake Sammamish Parkway, which connects to a number of existing parks and recreational facilities. The corridor was originally intended to provide recreational access to the shoreline of Lake Sammamish. Only three public access areas remain: Vasa Park (private/paid access), Idylwood Beach, and Camp Sambica. Mr. Foran suggested providing new points of public access to the lake along the parkway.

Boardmember Powell encouraged planners to think about linear parks, as well as create incentives for "fee in lieu of park" opportunities for developers. She expressed her disappointment that the Newport Hills neighborhood parcel was not purchased by the city.

Boardmember Heath expressed his appreciation for the efforts underway and future visioning for parks. He added that the process of getting to the end results that were presented is commendable. How this is accomplished is equally important as what is achieved.

Vice-Chair Evans views the parking situation in and around the downtown corridor as a continued challenge. He agrees with the Parks Department investing in parks, not parking. He stated that the Downtown Park is a necessary park for people living in downtown Bellevue. In addition, Vice-Chair Evans encouraged the city to work with developers to identify creative parking solutions.

Chair Grindeland expressed her enthusiasm for the gateway concept discussed and future park plans.

10. **BOARDMEMBER COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:**

A. Bridle Trails Neighborhood Park Update

Project is complete. No report.

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. Future agenda items

Boardmember Van Hollebeke requested a future agenda item be added to include an update on ad hoc committee meetings and outcomes regarding completing the circle for Downtown Park.

Boardmember Powell requested an update regarding the Ashwood Park Master Planning process. Mr. Foran explained that this process will most likely begin in 4Q15. The first stage will be a briefing to the City Council. Then, the Board and community will be engaged.

12. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

A. CIP Project Status Report

B. Memo from Paul Inghram (PCD) re Joint Boards and Commissions Meeting

C. Email from Sue Anna H re Kelsey Creek Farm staff

D. Email from Kim B re Kelsey Creem Farm program

E. MyBellevue response from happy resident

13. **INFORMATION:**

A. List of upcoming Parks special events

B. Next regular Park Board meeting—March 10, 2015, possibly at the Bellevue Youth Theatre—Crossroads

14. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Stu Vander Hoek, #9-103rd Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Mr. Vander Hoek expressed his dissatisfaction that Boardmembers did not address his concerns raised during Oral Communications at the beginning of the meeting. He requested a response to his concerns and stated that taxpayers do not get to enjoy Downtown Park because there isn't available parking. Chair Grindeland explained that the Oral Communication phase of the meeting does not include an open, two-way dialog.

Boardmembers will work with staff to address Mr. Vander Hoek's concerns.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Powell and second by Vice-Chair Evans to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).