

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday
January 9, 2024
6:00 p.m.

Via Hybrid

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Clark, Vice-Chair Clima; Boardmembers Chou, Kronoff, Trescases, Valverde

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes

STAFF PRESENT: Shelley Brittingham, Pam Fehrman, Shelley McVein, Camron Parker, Jera Gilmore, Kate Nesse, Michael Shiosaki, Colin Walker, Ryan Walker

OTHERS PRESENT: Saghar Amini, Heidi Dean, Leslie Geller, , Betsi Hummer

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Chair Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Clima and second by Boardmember Trescases to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Kronoff and second by Boardmember Trescases to approve the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

Motion by Boardmember Kronoff and second by Boardmember Trescases to make the following amendment to the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes:

Page 2/Oral Communications

Larry LaPlant expressed displeasure with the Wildwood Off-Leash Dog Park that opened in June; stating that the park is a nuisance with the park usage drastically changing, no parking, odor, mess, dog owners not abiding by park usage hours,

and many other problems, ~~etc.~~ including failure to meet the criteria for off-leash dog areas as stated in the Pop-up Dog Off-Leash Pilot Program document. Mr. LaPlant asked that the Wildwood Off-Leash Dog Park be eliminated as a long-term dog park solution.

At the question, motion carried unanimously (5-0, with Boardmember Chou abstaining) to approve the amendment to the main motion.

At the question, motion carried unanimously (5-0, with Boardmember Chou abstaining) to approve the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes as amended.

4. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Chair Clark reviewed the guidelines for Oral Communications (Ordinance 6752).

Betsi Hummer

Betsi Hummer expressed appreciation to Boardmembers for all of their hard work, specifically with Airfield Park. Betsi Hummer said that the Board has purview over the streetscapes throughout the community, including pruning. These help make Bellevue a City in a Park.

Betsi Hummer encouraged Boardmembers to pay close attention to the Comprehensive Plan Update. She also called attention to the Garden Apartments on 140th Avenue. These are market rate apartments and inclusive. However these are very distant from most parks.

Betsi Hummer requested a tally of all of the open spaces throughout the city and how they can be preserved as open so a situation like Coal Creek Parkway does not happen again, and mentioned a wetland area on 148th between Main and NE 8th/NE 10th as an example.

Saghar Amini

Saghar Amini expressed appreciation for the pop-up dog park at City Hall. It is such a popular concept that the City of Seattle has also started a similar project. Saghar Amini said that there are still people that utilize Ashwood Park as a dog park.

5. **CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Councilmember Stokes said that Council recently made their appointments to the various Boards and Commissions for the city. Former Parks Boardmember and newly elected Councilmember Dave Hamilton will be the Parks Board's new Council Liaison. Councilmember Hamilton will assist the Parks Board with the Comprehensive Plan Update, among other items.

Councilmember Stokes enjoyed his time working with the Parks Board. He will continue to hear updates from Councilmember Hamilton, while focusing on Eastrail and the Grand Connection.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Michael Shiosaki, Parks & Community Services Director, provided an update of the Parks Department's 2023 accomplishments, including:

- Capital Programs
 - Bridle Trails Valley Creek Park construction completed—grand opening may be held in late 1Q24 or early 2Q24
 - Acquisitions of 17 new acres of park land, including additional property along West Lake Sammamish Parkway to provide for future access to the lake
- Levy Implementation
 - Improved ground maintenance up to the standards that were set pre-Covid
 - Restrooms reopened all year round
- Maintenance
 - Approximately 8,000 trees planted throughout the parks system
- Special Events included: Bellevue Botanical Garden d'Lights celebration with a record attendance of over 81k people

Boardmember Trescases asked if additional data can be obtained from the online ticket sales for Garden d'Lights (i.e., where people are from).

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmembers expressed their appreciation to Councilmember Stokes for his contributions to the Parks Board and Department.

Boardmember Clima attended the Bellevue Botanical Garden d'Lights celebration. She also explored various parks with her dog, including Woodlawn Park, and looks forward to the MLK Service Day on January 15, 2024 at Wilburton Hill Park.

Boardmember Trescases attended the Bellevue Botanical Garden d'Lights celebration. She also expressed her deepest sympathy regarding the recent passing of beloved fellow Parks Boardmember Debra Kumar and long-time Parks advocate Barb Williams—other Boardmembers expressed condolences.

Boardmember Valverde attended the Bellevue Botanical Garden d'Lights celebration. She also visited the Downtown Park Ice Rink, and is looking forward to the upcoming MLK Health Fair at Crossroads Community Center.

Boardmember Chou attended the Ellis Brother naming event at Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center. The Ellis Brothers made a significant impact on the city and parks system.

Boardmember Chou also enjoyed the Bellevue Botanical Garden d’Lights celebration with a few Bellevue Essentials Alumni.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Boardmember Clark recently noticed fewer dogs at Ashwood Park, possibly due to the pop-up dog parks throughout the community. Boardmember Clark also echoed Boardmember Trescases sentiments about the loss of Debra Kumar and Barb Williams. They have both left a huge void in the community.

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

No report.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Comprehensive Plan Update**

Kate Nesse, PhD, Community Development Senior Planner, and Ryan Walker, Parks & Community Services Senior Planner, said that Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan provides the roadmap for growth in the city. Washington State’s Growth Management Act (GMA) directs counties and cities to periodically update their Comprehensive Plans. Updates to the policies in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space element are focused on meeting the needs of a growing, diverse population, ensuring the city has the flexibility and resources to respond to future needs, and supporting a functioning ecosystem.

The state Growth Management Act (GMA) directs cities and counties to update their comprehensive plans every 10 years. The current update must be adopted by December 2024. Within the state of Washington, the GMA framework outlined in RCW 36.70 and 36.70a ensures consistency and coordination between jurisdictions. Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan is guided by policies in King County’s Countywide Planning Policies and Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC’s) Vision 2050 and Multicounty Planning Policies. The Parks & Community Services Board is directed by city code to participate in this process by, “preparing, reviewing and recommending comprehensive plan updates” in cooperation with the Planning Commission. The Comprehensive Plan provides framework for the following:

- Parks & Open Space System Plan
- Department Strategic Plan
- Recreation Program Plan
- Human Services Needs Update
- Department Diversity Strategic Plan

Initial proposed policy edits were presented to the Parks Board in November 2022. Feedback from the Board is summarized based on the section it is related to. This is followed by a list of the proposed primary changes in each section. Attachment A in the Board Packet contained the strike/underline of all policy changes in this element, including minor edits.

Boardmember Clima asked if the feedback from the January 20, 2024 event will be provided to Parks Boardmembers, prior to the February 13, 2024 Board meeting. Staff said that the hope is to have Board approval of the changes at the February 13, 2024 Board meeting so the recommendations can then be forwarded to the Planning Commission. Staff will have a summary of the January 20, 2024 community feedback available at the next Board meeting.

Policy Discussion

- Can the policies be revised so that they are measurable? *Response: the Parks and Open Space Systems Plan, Recreation Program Plan, and other plans are where the policies would be implemented. This would be where measurements are appropriate for these items.*
- PA-1: What is “scenic character?” *Response: This came in part out of the original PA-5. Original PA-5 was moved to PA-1, which refers to what can be seen from the public road.*
- PA-2: What does “keeping pace” mean? *Response: Developing parks in the same amount as growth. PA-3 also relates to this.*
- PA-3: Will underserved be targeted more than others (e.g., Factoria)? *Response: The city cares about all neighborhoods, and wants to make sure that parks are distributed equally. If there are opportunities for acquisitions, this is also taken into consideration. The goal is to keep ahead of growth.*
- PA-3: May want to highlight the largest opportunities in the area for the underserved. *Response: The Comprehensive Plan and the Parks & Open Space Systems Plan shows the walkability, park acreage, as well as results of what was found. More investment was given in the underserved areas on the Parks levy.*
- PA-4: What does “offering parks with multiple functions and implementation of shared use facilities” mean? *Response: Different types of activities may be offered in the space. The goal is to provide a balance across the city/system and put needed facilities in accessible locations. This could also include a redesign.*
- PA-16 is an existing policy that didn’t change but has the private facilities that supplement the system either physically or via programming. These should have standards. *Response: The linkage could be a mode of transportation (i.e., van) or other concept of the public system being enhanced by private offerings.*
- PA-16 and PA-13 seem similar. *Response: Staff will evaluate these two to see if there is redundant language.*
- What is “mobility and movements” in PA-5? *Response: This is from the street level. Mobility refers generally to movement, not a specific mode of transportation.*

- Can PA-16, PA-5, and PA-13 be consolidated? *Response: Staff will evaluate these policies to determine if there is redundancy.*
- Add “scenic character” to the glossary.
- Can “with consideration” in PA-3 be changed to more forceful language?
- Can “acquire and develop waterfront property” in PA-8 be changed to reference “bodies of water?” *Response: PA-8 specifically targets lakes. However, PA-7 addresses natural areas.*
- Appreciate how PA-5 is reworded. Can “mobility” be viewed through a safe lens as the highest priority, before any pedestrian and bicycle verbiage? *Response: Safe modes will be emphasized if there aren’t undo implications from doing so.*
- PA-3 should provide stronger emphasis to underserved areas. After a brief discussion, Boardmembers decided to keep the emphasis as is and staff will check back with Boardmembers at the February Board meeting to determine if any additional edits need to be made.
- Why is the word “land” instead of “resources” used in PA-24 and PA-25? *Response: The intent is to be more specific in this policy. After a brief discussion, there was consensus to keep “resources” in the policy.*
- The term “region” is problematic in PA-25. This should be added back in or changed to “Bellevue.”
- The change to PA-32 made it more narrowing—culturally specific is too narrow. Need to encapsulate this in a broader term. Don’t eliminate “culturally specific” but maybe reword to “and meet the needs of a diverse population.”
- PA-26 and PA-27 split the non-profit and public school districts. However, PA-28 combines these two entities. Need clarification. *Response: Lists are examples but sometimes they are read as exhaustive. May want to remove the list altogether.*
- For consistency, should PA-26 and PA-27 be combined?
- Private and non-profit entities should be included in the glossary.
- All stewardship changes were agreed upon by Boardmembers.
- Mixing and/or creates a logic standard in PA-43. *Response: This will be clarified in the glossary and the same term will be used in this policy. Staff will also evaluate the policy and potentially reword.*

Motion by Boardmember Valverde and second by Boardmember Clima to extend the meeting until 9:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Discussion continued:

- May want to confirm that the new verbiage in PA-46 is not limiting. May want to add “park use” to the glossary (or term for non-park use). Boardmembers suggested that clarifying language be added to specify non-park use in the policy.
- May want to incorporate the term “adaptive reuse” in one or some of the policies.

Boardmember Trescases requested additional clarification regarding the reference to “historic preservation” that was included in the staff memo.

B. Northwest Arts Center

Jera Gilmore, Northwest Arts Center, and Shelley Brittingham, Parks & Community Services Assistant Director, presented information about the Northwest Arts Center. Established in 1970, the Northwest Arts Center serves a growing number of culturally diverse customers through art-focused programming, community events and facility rental use. The Center mirrors the needs of nearby neighborhoods by offering curriculum and program opportunities that flow with the educational calendar. During the school year, classrooms are filled with afterschool enrichment opportunities for kids and a combination of day and evening options for adults. Camps are offered during mid-winter and spring breaks as well as summer day camps. The team also manages the planning and production of the Bellevue Family 4th of July event.

Jera Gilmore responded to questions from Boardmembers.

Motion by Boardmember Kronoff and second by Boardmember Clima to extend the meeting until 9:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

C. Park Board Approval of Fourth Quarter 2023 Report and Communication to Council

Boardmembers reviewed the fourth quarter 2023 report and communication to Council. They requested that the memo include an expression of gratitude to Councilmember Stokes for being the Parks Board Council Liaison, and a welcome to Councilmember Hamilton.

Motion by Boardmember Trescases and second by Boardmember Clima to approve the Fourth Quarter 2023 report and communication to Council substantially in the form presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

11. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

12. PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

Camron Parker said that the January meeting agenda will include:

- Continuation of Comprehensive Plan Update Discussion

The Parks & Community Services Board approved these minutes on February 13, 2024.

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

A. Parks CIP Project Status Report

14. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held February 13, 2024.

At 9:10 p.m., Chair Clark declared the meeting adjourned.