

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

Tuesday
September 10, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Trescases, Vice-Chair Hamilton, Boardmembers Clark, Heath, Kumar, Unger

BOARDMEMBER ABSENT: Boardmember Synn

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Zahn

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Betsy Anderson, Jennifer Ewing (Community Development), Pam Fehrman, Nancy Harvey, Shelley McVein, Camron Parker, Michael Shiosaki

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

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

2. **TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS**

Chair Trescases announced that there are a few procedural items that need to be addressed. Because in-person meetings are prohibited by the Governor's emergency order concerning the Open Public Meetings Act, the Board will be holding its meetings remotely for an unknown period of time. As a result, there are several provisions in the Board's Bylaws that need to be suspended temporarily. The first provision concerns the Boardmembers' ability to participate remotely. The second provision concerns the Board's process for accepting communication from the public. In addition, to allow the Board maximum flexibility to structure its agendas during the time period while the Board holds meetings remotely, the provisions in the Board's Bylaws related to the order of business should also be temporarily suspended.

Chair Trescases noted that the preamble to the Board's Bylaws provides that if the Bylaws do not address a procedure such as rule suspension, then the Board may rely on the City Council's Rules of Procedure, Resolution 8928, Section 13 of Resolution 8928, which allows a City Council procedural rule to be temporarily suspended. When suspension is requested and no objection offered, then the Board Chair may announce the rule as suspended.

Motion by Vice-Chair Hamilton and second by Boardmember Kumar to suspend—until such time as the Parks & Community Services Board is no longer holding its meetings

remotely—the provisions of Article V, Section G of the Board’s Bylaws concerning remote participation by Boardmembers, in order to allow all members to participate fully in this meeting. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Motion by Vice-Chair Hamilton and second by Boardmember Kumar to suspend for the September 10, 2020 meeting only, the provisions in Article VI and Article VII of the Board’s Bylaws concerning oral communications from the public and to allow for public comment to be provided in writing and read during the Parks & Community Services Board meeting. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Motion by Vice-Chair Hamilton and second by Boardmember Unger to suspend—until such time as the Parks & Community Services Board is no longer holding its meetings remotely—the “Order of Business” provisions in Article VI, Section D of the Board’s Bylaws. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Boardmember Kumar and second by Boardmember Clark to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Kumar to approve the July 14, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Parker read the following oral communications submitted to the Parks Board:

Barb Carey
37 103rd Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

“I am writing in regards to pickleball in the Bellevue parks. One tennis court can serve four people at a time. That same tennis court can easily and inexpensively be made into three pickleball courts which would be able to serve twelve residents at a time. This is a much more efficient use of the space for the public good considering the exploding interest in pickleball and the decreasing participation in tennis.

Crossroads Park is one example of two tennis courts that are underused. One of them could easily be converted to three pickleball courts. If this were done, I think you would be astonished to see the constant use of the pickleball courts. In almost all locations, people are always waiting their turn to get on the court. I know there are many courts in the park system that could offer this same opportunity for repurposing.

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Please consider adding more pickleball courts to the Bellevue parks and/or repurposing existing tennis courts as you establish a long-term plan for their use.

P.S. It is not enough to paint pickleball lines on current courts, using existing tennis nets. Pickleball nets are lower and designated courts need to be established.”

Ilana Long

16170 SE 16th St., Bellevue, 98008

“I am a Bellevue resident, teacher, mom, and pickleball enthusiast. I want to urge Bellevue to build more pickleball courts for this; the fastest growing sport in America. Also, a great way for those of us in our 50s and older to stay in shape and make social connections.

Please consider making more places indoors and outdoors, where we many enthusiasts can play.”

Lisa Leong-Tsang

“I am a member of the pickleball community and would love to see more courts in our city. Currently, we have been using the courts at the International School and the BSD recently had all the portable toilets removed from their locations districtwide. They told me the reason for this was cost and vandalism that occurred in the past. Because they have gone to distance learning, there are no plans to bring the Honey Buckets back, unless we pay for them ourselves (at \$291 per month). There are other limited pickleball courts, 1 at Hillare Park, but other than that, I don't know of any others. As the weather gets colder, we would move inside to play at one of the community centers like Crossroads, South Bellevue, North Bellevue but with the pandemic, it is unknown that they will reopen for drop in sports in the fall.

We would love to see a few more places that have unused tennis courts be converted to pickleball, because of the popularity of the sport. I know that I speak for a few hundred other pickleball enthusiasts who live in Bellevue. Thanks for considering our request in your budget for the upcoming years.”

Leslie Geller

“I am writing to ask that you support Bellevue acquiring the 12-acre property as an addition to Coal Creek Natural Area. This property is a proposed site for the park point development ("Park Pointe Planned Unit Development" file number 19-121109-LL, Bellevue Planning Dept.).

I live in Eastgate and frequently walk the trails in the Coal Creek Natural Area and across Lakemont Blvd. into Cougar Mountain Regional Park. It is so great to have such a large area of woods with abundant flora and fauna, so close to my house. It's such a beautiful area to walk in and let nature surround me. If the Cascades were closer, that's where I would be hiking. But as I don't often have time to make the trip up to the pass, I relish the availability of the Coal Creek Natural Area and Cougar Mountain Regional Park. It would be a complete shame and a ruination of the peacefulness of the woods

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were this 35-home development to be approved. Not to mention its many deleterious impacts on wildlife, noise, traffic, and safety, particularly given that Lakemont Blvd. is sort of a speed corridor. I agree with all of the points made on the Save Coal Creek website, <https://www.issaquahalps.org/save-coal-creek>. I signed the petition months ago, when it was posted.

I will be attending the Zoom meeting of the Parks & Community Services Board this Thursday, September 10.

Thank you so much for considering purchasing this critical parcel and preventing another housing development in the middle of a natural area.”

Neal Hines

6448 129th Pl. SE, Bellevue, WA 98006

“Thank you for continued work during the stressful times. I write to express support for exploring options for bringing the two parcels adjacent to Coal Creek Natural Area at Red Town into the Bellevue Parks system. These parcels are being considered for 35 homes by the developer, Isola. I wrote a 12 page letter to senior planner Peter Rosen at the city with quite a few concerns after reviewing the technical reports by the developer.

I strongly believe the public deserves a public hearing on the proposed development. These two parcels sit squarely within a historic area that is heavily used by hikers, wild life enthusiasts, and people who just need to see and experience open space and imagine Bellevue's landscape as it used to be. The development would majorly detract from the open space, aesthetically, and I also feel there are risks to the potential home owners (these are geotechnical & ground subsidence risks from the abandoned mine tunnels). Please consider a public hearing. I realize during these times, gathering is not permitting. Please don't allow the development to proceed if a public hearing does not happen. I very much feel the city will look very bad if a development like this proceeds without the public having a due say in the matter. Although I know various campaigns are going on (e.g. save Coal Creek), I write to you primarily as a concerned resident and huge supporter and user of Bellevue Parks. Again, thanks for all your work. These words are not meant as criticism, but rather an effort of support about how we can further the identity of Bellevue as a 'City Within a Park.'”

David Kappler

Issaquah Alps Trails Club

“Before the Issaquah Alps Trails Club was formerly formed in 1979 we were working on the creation of a large regional park on Cougar Mountain and the adjoining lands associated with May Creek and Coal Creek. We started with less than 50 acres on Cougar, the Nike radar site and the location of the actual missiles. Along May Creek and Coal Creek we had lands acquired through one of Jim Ellis's early Forward Thrust initiatives.

King County made significant additional acquisitions in the Coal Creek basin and the land was eventually transferred to Bellevue with King County having plenty to do on the over 3,000 acres they had on Cougar Mountain.

Bellevue has made significant improvements to their Coal Creek Natural Area and in working with other jurisdictions we have used the bridge work done in the park as an example of what we would like to see in other parks. But there are three major areas of concern that Bellevue needs to address. All centered where the two parks meet on Lakemont Blvd.

During times of drought many of the creeks and wetlands in the county park dry up and the need for animals to access water in the natural area is crucial. The present wildlife "corridor" is crossing the high speed Lakemont Blvd. at a curve with very poor site distances and guard rails.

The crossing for humans from the only existing parking being the Red Town Trailhead in the King County park the city park users have to cross this same high speed corridor with site distance issues. Since the city has no parking where the two parks join and county parking is limited by wetlands, creeks and steep slopes parking is a huge problem. Acquisition of the former Milt Swanson property could help to improve the wildlife crossing situation, improve the human access to the city park and provide some city parking on dry level land. Interpretation of the area's history could be greatly increased as well.

Please strongly recommend to the City Council to acquire this property and thus benefit future generations with a park that is safer for wildlife and people, has some parking and could showcase the history of the area and unbelievable accomplishments that have gone in to creating perhaps the largest park in the country adjoining a major urban area. (If you can stop by the park over the weekend, especially in the morning hours you can see the parking problem and if you find parking do carefully cross Lakemont and enjoy your Coal Creek Natural Area and contemplate how this merging of great parks can have a bright future if actions are taken under your care.)"

Chair Trescases encouraged Boardmembers to read the additional communications that were included in the Board materials.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL:

Councilmember Zahn provided the following report:

- July - celebrated 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The first public hearing for the budget and CIP was held.
- Council voted to approve the purchase of 5.25 acres of property on the north side of Mercer Slough Nature Park.
- A thorough Study Session on the Aquatic Center Feasibility Study was conducted. Sites under consideration were Airfield Park, Bellevue College,

Lincoln Center, and Marymoor Park. After discussion, Council ruled out Lincoln Center and Marymoor Park as potential site options.

- King County has published an East Link Light Rail video that shows the recent construction progress.
- Boardmembers are encouraged to evaluate how events can move forward in the current COVID environment to give people opportunities to connect, while social distancing.

Boardmember Unger encouraged Boardmembers and staff to identify activities that can bring people together in a safe manner. Other Boardmembers agreed—Boardmember Kumar used the example of tree tours.

7. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Shiosaki provided the following report:

- Trail and park usage has been heavy; as well as pedestrian and bicycle volumes.
- Beach parks have been popular with lifeguards present.
- The Wilburton Park Soccer Field was recently opened - artificial turf and track were renovated.
- A 5.25-acre parcel was recently acquired for the park system, just north of Mercer Slough Nature Park.
- The reaccreditation for CAPRA is underway—virtual visits will happen next week.
- A survey will commence next week to name the new Newport Hills park.

Mr. Shiosaki provided history and context describing Parks & Community Services' interactions with prior and current owners of property near the Coal Creek Natural Area that has been highlighted in public comments to the Board the past two months. Parks staff will continue to track the project as it moves through land use review and will keep Boardmembers informed. Mr. Parker discussed the land use process underway for this development, including public outreach/meetings that have occurred through the Development Services Department.

Boardmember Unger asked if the Parks Board would have a role in the purchase of the Coal Creek Natural Area, if the seller were interested in selling. Mr. Shiosaki said that the Trust for Public Land is taking the lead in communicating with the current property owner. Boardmember Unger stressed that it's difficult to find natural areas to develop as parks. She feels the Coal Creek Natural Area is very important for the city.

Boardmember Clark asked if extensions were provided for the accreditation process, due to COVID-19. Mr. Shiosaki clarified that the process has been ongoing and Bellevue was advanced to the next steps of online visits. Boardmembers commended staff for undertaking this process.

Chair Trescases expressed her support for the city to pursue ownership or partnership opportunities for the Coal Creek Natural Area property.

8. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Unger enjoyed the following parks over the past month:

- Surrey Downs Park
- Downtown Park
- Meydenbauer Bay Park
- Bellevue Botanical Gardens
- Kelsey Creek Park

Boardmember Unger asked when the Meydenbauer Bay Park pier will reopen. Mr. Shiosaki clarified that this was closed due to lack of social distancing. Boardmember Unger also asked when the Sound Transit 112th and Main Park naming process will begin. Mr. Shiosaki will research and get back to her.

Boardmember Clark enjoyed the following parks over the past month:

- Downtown Park
- Goddard Mini Park
- Chapin Property

Boardmember Clark visited the Spring District and is very interested to see how parks will serve this area.

Boardmember Kumar enjoyed the summer months and spending time outside. She noticed a significant amount of dry underbrush throughout the parks. She suggested that signs be posted about the vegetation being dry and for park visitors to use caution.

Boardmember Kumar had a concerned citizen talk to her about the pesticides being used in the city. She then spoke to city staff and was informed that herbicides are used during specific times of the year, rather than pesticides. She suggested that this information be added to the city's website about when and where the herbicides are used. Mr. Shiosaki suggested that a presentation be provided to the Board about the city's policies for this.

Vice-Chair Hamilton enjoyed the following parks over the past month:

- Spiritridge Park
- Downtown Park (particularly the new project)
- Meydenbauer Bay Park
- Coal Creek Natural Area

9. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Chair Trescases discussed some of the outdoor activities she has been enjoying, mostly out of state. She requested that a report be provided about the Spring District plans, as the project progresses. She requested an update from staff regarding the Coal Creek area, specifically the property referenced in Oral Communications.

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

No reports.

11. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Environmental Stewardship Plan Update**

Jennifer Ewing, Environmental Stewardship Program Manager, provided an overview of the process and goals for the update to the Environmental Stewardship Plan, the City of Bellevue's sustainability plan. Ms. Ewing also sought input from the Parks Board on the draft actions in the plan related to parks.

Ms. Ewing explained that the Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) formally began in 2007 with a mission to implement continuous change, learning, and innovation in practices that drive the organization and the larger Bellevue community toward achieving the ESI vision. Over the last five years, the ESI's work has been guided by the 2013-2018 ESI Strategic Plan. Ms. Ewing stated that this plan contains 57 actions related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water, mobility and land use, ecosystems and open space, and materials management and waste, addressing the city's municipal operations and the community as a whole.

Ms. Ewing clarified that Council's 2018-2020 vision priorities include Priority #11 related to the ESI. It states: "Review the progress of the Environmental Stewardship Initiative and analyze additional steps that the City may wish to take to achieve its environmental goals (e.g., tree canopy)." Ms. Ewing added that the 2013-2018 ESI Strategic Plan is being updated in response to Priority #11, and the new plan is referred to as the Environmental Stewardship Plan.

Boardmember Kumar requested clarification on the neighborhoods that are under consideration for the environmental equity assessment. Ms. Ewing explained that it depends on the area (i.e., some areas have a lower percentage of tree canopy than others; the environmental equity assessment would also take into consideration neighborhood metrics such as walkable access to parks, etc.). In evaluating proposed action N.4.2, Boardmember Kumar also suggested that the benefits be evaluated against the drawbacks for potential park impact fees. Action N.4.2 addresses the funding strategy to achieve open space goals and states "Consider strengthened code requirements, land use incentives, or fees on new development to expand the park system and increase walkable access to parks and trails."

Boardmember Kumar would like to discuss pet-waste composting and consider piloting a project in one of the dog parks. She added that Mud Bay recently purchased a composting company so there may be opportunities to work with local businesses.

Vice-Chair Hamilton commended Ms. Ewing for her presentation and for the outreach process that was undertaken for the Environmental Stewardship Plan update.

Boardmember Clark asked if the metrics for measuring walkable access should be reevaluated. He also wondered if the goal of 100% for people to have walkable access to parks is too high. Ms. Anderson clarified that there are some walkable access gaps identified in Bel-Red, the north area of Wilburton, and Eastgate/Factoria, among others. She added that City Council has encouraged staff to think boldly in the development of goals for the Environmental Stewardship Plan, hence the goal of 100%. She said that Bellevue is unique for having a more aggressive goal for walkable access, measuring 1/3-mile distance to a park or trail access point vs. the 1/2-mile metric that is more typically used. Ms. Anderson clarified that the metrics are being reviewed to evaluate distance; however, that doesn't necessarily evaluate the condition or quality of the access, for example whether there are sidewalks, hilly terrain, etc. Parks staff are working with Transportation staff to map accessible, comfortable cycling and walking routes to parks and hope to include that mapping in the analysis for the 2022 Parks & Open Space System Plan update.

Councilmember Zahn echoed the comments that have been made. She stressed the importance of how to reduce single-use waste. She also noted that park and open space is important for areas that have multi-family homes and not as many pocket parks. She wants to be sure sustainable materials are used for future parks. Ms. Ewing will evaluate with staff ways to reduce single-use waste and expand organics collection in parks. There is also language being encouraged for the Plan to include sustainable materials. Ms. Anderson added that demographic mapping analysis is being considered to help evaluate the park system more holistically as part of the upcoming Parks & Open Space System Plan update.

Boardmember Clark asked if there are public/private partnerships to encourage tree planting. Ms. Ewing discussed a tree giveaway program as well as opportunities for residents/volunteers to perform plantings.

Chair Trescases expressed her enthusiasm about the Newport Way sidewalk project to improve nonmotorized access to South Bellevue Community Center. She also discussed a spring/fall clean-up program held in her neighborhood where large yard waste stations are offered. However, this year, Bellevue won't allow the bin for this event. She said that this shows the importance of the EIS and the cross-departmental planning effort to encourage coordinated efforts.

B. 2021-2027 Parks Capital Investment Program (CIP) Budget

Ms. Fehrman called attention to the memo included in the Board packet that included Board comments for the 2021-2027 CIP budget to City Council.

Boardmember Kumar suggested that commas be added to bullet #5.

Boardmember Clark expressed his appreciation for incorporating the Board's comments in the Council memo. He asked if the importance of outdoor activities should be stressed in the memo, particularly during COVID. Boardmember Clark noted that there are also many companies moving to Bellevue. Boardmember Clark suggested that this be included in the memo to demonstrate the necessity for parks, in particular stressing the importance of the economic impacts in the third to last paragraph of the memo.

Vice-Chair Hamilton called attention to bullet #5 and suggested that Ashwood Park be specifically called out. Other Boardmembers agreed and suggested that Ashwood Park be called out in its own bullet. Mr. Shiosaki expressed his concern that no additional green space will be allocated to Ashwood Park so it may be unnecessary to specifically call attention to Ashwood Park. Chair Trescases explained that the current Master Plan for Ashwood Park is outdated so the Park needs attention. There was general consensus to include a separate bullet point about Ashwood Park.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Unger to approve the proposed 2021-2027 Parks Capital Investment Program memo to Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers with any subsequent changes /edits relating to Ashwood Park and the economic impacts of parks to be drafted by staff and approved by the Board Chair. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

12. **NEW BUSINESS:**

Vice-Chair Hamilton would like to form a subcommittee (no more than three people) to prepare quarterly communications to City Council. Boardmember Clark volunteered to be part of the subcommittee.

13. **PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:**

The following discussion items were suggested for future meeting agendas:

- Aquatic Feasibility Study Update
- Integrated Pest Management Presentation
- East Rail Project Update
- COVID-19 Response in Parks System

14. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. Parks CIP Project Status Report
- B. Letter to Mayor Robinson regarding Bellevue parks and trails

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Vice-Chair Hamilton to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).