

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

Tuesday
September 14, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Hamilton, , Boardmembers Clark, Giampetro, Kumar, Synn, Trescases

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT: Vice-Chair Unger

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Zahn

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Shelley McVein, Camron Parker, Mariam Sarwary, Michael Shiosaki, Pam Fehrman, Ryan Walker

OTHERS PRESENT: Jagan Nemani, Barbara Carey, Dena Fantle, Randy Gaddy, Neal Hines, David Kappler, Sally Lawrence, Susan Pappalardo, Steve Williams

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

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

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

Chair Hamilton announced that there are a few procedural items that need to be addressed. He explained that 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. Chair Hamilton reminded Boardmembers that the Board's Bylaws regarding remote participation and the order of business have been suspended until such time as the Board is no longer holding its meetings remotely.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Trescases to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Approval of the July 13, 2021 meeting minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

4. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Randy Gaddy

7242 Lakemont Blvd. SE, Bellevue, WA

Mr. Gaddy expressed his support of the Parks & Open Space System Plan 2022 Update. He would like the list of future property acquisitions to include the Isola property near the Coal Creek natural area. Mr. Gaddy said that this property would complement the natural area well and should be kept natural and shared with the public.

5. **COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL:**

Councilmember Zahn provided the following report:

- Thanks to the Parks Board for the Second Quarter 2021 Report and Communication to Council.
- The sixth annual Eastside Welcoming Week is being held September 10-19, 2021. Welcoming Week in East King County brings together new immigrants and long-term community members in a spirit of unity, education and celebration through sharing of cultural traditions, art, dance and community.
- The Bellwether pop-up art show and market will be held on September 18, 2021.
- Council received an update on the Environmental Stewardship Plan.
- Council requested the Parks and Community Services Board review and make a recommendation on a proposal, made by a Councilmember, to rename the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center in honor of Jim Ellis.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Shiosaki discussed the following:

- The public works contract was recently approved and hope to start construction soon at the new neighborhood park in Newport Hills
- Summer Camp Update: 63 different types of day camps were offered during the summer months with 150 sessions for ages 5-18. There were approximately 1,519 camp participants—kudos to staff for no known COVID cases during these camps.

There was a brief discussion regarding the availability of community centers. Mr. Shiosaki discussed some of the programs that are open.

Chair Hamilton asked when the art installation will occur at Downtown Park. Mr. Shiosaki anticipates the installation will occur in late 2021, with a grand opening in Spring 2022.

Boardmember Kumar asked when the REI Boathouse rentals will close for the season. Mr. Parker clarified that the REI Boathouse at Enatai Beach Park is closed until next spring, while rentals at Meydenbauer Beach Park continue into September.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Giampetro recently hiked the Enchantments and then enjoyed Weowna Park. She also attended a recent Lake Hills neighborhood meeting.

Boardmember Kumar enjoyed many trails throughout Bellevue. She also visited other areas throughout the Eastside, which highlighted Bellevue's value even more. Boardmember Kumar worked in Weowna Park with the Bellevue Naturalists program—passersby expressed their appreciation to how well Bellevue maintains the trails and parks.

Boardmember Synn recently visited Phantom Lake, while his son enjoyed fishing.

Boardmember Trescases visited the Redwood National Park during the summer months. She also provided kudos to the Parks Department for the wonderful youth camp offerings.

Boardmember Clark enjoyed many of the downtown parks. He asked if the Parks Department is involved in construction sites and discussions about the availability of sidewalks during construction, particularly in downtown and the Spring District. Mr. Shiosaki added that the Parks Department isn't involved with these projects; however, it speaks to the need for park acquisitions and stream corridors to connect in the downtown area and Spring District. Councilmember Zahn suggested additional wayfinding for construction projects.

Chair Hamilton recently enjoyed Lewis Creek Park and Hillaire Park. He also attended the Lake Hills neighborhood meeting and commended Ryan Walker and Michael Shiosaki for their presentations. Lastly, Chair Hamilton expressed his appreciation to Boardmember Trescases for all of her efforts as the Board Chair over the past two years.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

No report.

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

No reports.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Parks & Open Space System Plan 2022 Update**

Ryan Walker, Planner with Parks & Community Services, explained that the Parks & Open Space System Plan is one of the long-range policy planning documents for the Parks & Community Services Department. The current plan was last updated in 2016 and is on a six-year schedule for renewal and adoption by the City Council. The POSSP guides staff and the Board when making recommendations to the City Council on the acquisition, development and management of parks and open space citywide. It is also a foundational tool in developing the department's Capital Investment Program, used by the city during budget processes to set priorities for projects that preserve, enhance, or expand Bellevue's park and open space system.

Mr. Walker reminded Boardmembers that at the July 2021 meeting, the Board heard context on the purpose and content for the plan as well as the project timeline. The meeting also featured discussions related to trends in community demographics, level-of-service, and the vision and objectives established for the parks and open space system in other strategic planning documents. During the discussion, the Board provided insight on important elements to consider during the plan update including equity in access and availability of parkland, partnerships that will help expand opportunities, challenges in providing park facilities in urban locations, and continuing to build on walkability and trail linkages throughout the city.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Trescases to open the public hearing for the Parks and Open Space System Plan. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Dena Fantle

South Bellevue Resident

In 2019, Ms. Fantle talked with Bellevue planners about creating a non-motorized watercraft storage facility. As demand has grown, so has interest for storage. Since Bellevue offers storage for motorized boats, Ms. Fantle requested that storage be made available for non-motorized watercraft. She said many of the waterfront parks could accommodate this type of facility.

Jagan Nemani

WCAS Seattle

Mr. Nemani said that there are 200+ kids that play cricket throughout the area some kids have even made it to the national team. However, there are few cricket grounds available in the community. The facility at Robinswood Park is great but not built as a competitive court—competitive grounds have specific turf requirements. Mr. Nemani would like proper facilities for cricket competitions made available to the community. He said a player from Morrisville, North Carolina played in a national cricket event and broke three records. This ended up putting Morrisville on the world map for cricket.

Steve Williams
Bellevue Resident

Mr. Williams was the King County Park Manager for Coal Creek Park until it was acquired by the City of Bellevue. He said that there is a proposal for 35 private homes from Isola Homes. Mr. Williams requested that this property be preserved as a corridor between the two parks. He added that this is a tight corner for traffic and would allow a pedestrian crossing further north than on the corner, where it is currently located. Mr. Williams discussed the history of this property and asked Boardmembers to approve this critical acquisition.

Neal Hines
6448 129th Pl. SE, Bellevue, WA

Mr. Hines expressed his appreciation for the shared goal of making Bellevue a *City in a Park*. He added that the diversity of Bellevue parks is a tremendous asset. The community values open space and it's come to a point at the Isola property where it is important to protect this area from development and pollutant run-off. The Isola property sits in the middle of the area and near the watershed. Mr. Hines said that the wildlife corridor is critical habitat. He encouraged Boardmembers to preserve this space as open space, rather than a housing development.

Sally Lawrence
104 174th Pl. NE, Bellevue

Ms. Lawrence is a volunteer Master Naturalist and former employee of the State Department of Ecology. She thanked parks staff and Boardmembers for the beautiful parks throughout Bellevue. She also expressed her support of the goals of the Parks and Open Space System Plan.

Ms. Lawrence urged Boardmembers to evaluate acquisitions that contain multiple benefits, including preserving history and protecting wildlife. She would like the Coal Creek area protected. Ms. Lawrence added that Coal Creek has the most promise for recovering salmon habitat; however, the health is precarious with the increasing number of housing developments.

Ms. Lawrence encouraged the Board and parks staff to work with other jurisdictions to keep the Coal Creek area a natural park so the wildlife can be preserved.

Susan Pappalardo (SPLASHForward)
Kirkland Resident

Ms. Pappalardo is the Co-Founder and Board President of SPLASHForward. Together, with the City of Bellevue, SPLASHForward is moving forward to address the community need for an aquatic facility. Ms. Pappalardo said that the challenges are great, and health and wellness is essential to rebuilding today's economy.

Ms. Pappalardo said that research has been shared with the city and a working concept plan is being developed. The next steps include exploring partnerships and design development. Ms. Pappalardo noted that there is interest in public funding and other grants will be considered in supporting this project. SPLASHForward is committed to reducing barriers for aquatics.

Barbara Carey
37 103rd Ave. NE Bellevue, WA

Ms. Carey said that pickleball is a social sport that creates a social atmosphere for all ages and ethnicities. She encouraged Boardmembers to consider a pickleball complex of courts.

Ms. Carey said that Bellevue International High School is currently the only facility with pickleball courts available. She noted that these will go away when construction begins at the school. Therefore, pressure for playing pickleball will be intense. Ms. Carey said that Kirkland repurposed some of their tennis courts to pickleball courts, resulting in a huge increase in the court usage.

Ms. Carey encouraged Boardmembers to repurpose some of the courts throughout the city, like at Crossroads, to pickleball courts. She feels that these types of courts are important for Bellevue's future.

David Kappler
Issaquah Trails Club

Mr. Kappler said that there is a Jim Ellis Fund for Land Conservation that was recently established. He suggested that this fund be considered when evaluating options for preserving the Isola property. By obtaining this property and preserving nature, the crosswalk could be moved north to provide additional safety to pedestrians—additional parking could also be added.

Mr. Parker noted that 31 emails were received regarding feedback for the Parks Plan—26 of the 31 emails were supportive of pickleball courts and 5 of the emails were in support of acquiring additional open space, many of which referenced the Isola property.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Kumar to close the public hearing for the Parks and Open Space System Plan. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Boardmembers expressed their appreciation to all of those that submitted comments and spoke to provide feedback to the Board.

Board Comments:

- Engagement and demographic break-down is great.
- Worth looking into the land acquisition at the Isola property.
- Should add trash cans and dog baggies throughout parks.
- Need to evaluate cricket and pickleball requests—is there data available?
Want to be sure space is optimized.

- Pickleball is a high priority as well as cricket. Should evaluate Lakemont Park—maybe some of the tennis courts can be repurposed, as well as some of the courts at Robinswood Park. *Response: Indoor pickleball is offered at several of the community centers.*
- How is lower income defined? *Response: federal poverty guidelines.* When parks and open space is evaluated, is access considered in the walkable service analysis? *Response: The elements factored into “accessible” were reviewed.*
- Bellevue does trails well—quality care/maintenance of parks and open spaces well—a high bar has been set.
- Need to address the demand for dog parks. Parks not intended to be dog parks are being used that way.
- There are current changing demographics—need to consider this system-wide and be responsive.
- Appreciate all of the perspectives.
- Is there an understanding of who is not expressing their interests—what voices in the community are not being heard?
- There are areas in Bellevue that need more parks. These areas need to be evaluated and multi-complimentary uses should be considered (i.e., indoor fields below lower story buildings, etc.).
- With the new professional hockey team, street hockey may also be of interest to some community members.
- Process and outreach is critical—the Board has a duty to be engaged in these.
- Owned spaces, like Ashwood Park, should be on a fast-track for development.
- Partnerships are a critical component to accomplishing goals.

B. Newport Hills Park Naming

Ms. Fehrman reminded Boardmembers that in December 2018 the City Council approved the 2019-25 CIP Budget that included \$3 million to plan, design and construct a new neighborhood park in Newport Hills. The park planning process began in May 2019 and concluded with a Parks & Community Services Board recommendation and Council’s support of a park plan in December 2019. Ms. Fehrman added that during the planning process, the community was asked to suggest names for the new park. Park name options consistent with park naming policies resulted in 22 potential park names.

To help narrow name options and understand the community’s preferences, Ms. Fehrman noted that an online survey was conducted. The request to participate in the survey was sent to those who had signed-up to be notified of updates on the City of Bellevue and Newport Hills area park webpage. Staff also worked to update the Newport Hills Community Club website, Nextdoor, and post a sign at the new park site requesting participation in the park naming survey. Ms. Fehrman said that 203 survey responses were received indicating the preferred names of: Newport Hills Neighborhood Park, Ringdall Park, Newport Hills Sunset Park and Newport Woods Park. After thorough deliberation, Boardmembers passed a motion to recommend the name “Borghild Ringdall Neighborhood Park” to Council

At their May 3, 2021 meeting, Ms. Fehrman said that Council did not select a name for the new park, however provided supplementary park naming guidance directing the park name:

- not be named after a person;
- not duplicate existing park names;
- include 'Newport' or 'Newport Hills';
- include 'glen' or 'meadow' in a name option; and
- preferences be informed by the Newport Hills neighborhood.

Then, at the June 8th Parks Board meeting, Boardmembers supported next step processes and selected the five final name options based on community, Council and the Board's name recommendations.

A name preference survey was created and communicated that a popular voting exercise would not be the basis of name selection; however, both the Parks & Community Services Board and City Council would appreciate including the community's preferences in their deliberations. One survey was mailed to each household in the Newport Hills Subarea at the beginning of August. Community feedback for the new neighborhood park name, in order of preference, included:

- 1=Newport Hills Woodlawn Park
- 2=Meadow at Newport Hills Park
- 3=Newport Happy Trails Park
- 4=Newport Glen Neighborhood Park
- 5=Forest Haven at Newport Hills Park

Boardmember Clark expressed his support for the popular vote of "Newport Hills Woodlawn Park." Boardmember Kumar agreed; Boardmember Trescases preferred a name that did not include "Newport Hills" at the beginning of the name but supports the majority of Board opinions. Boardmembers expressed their appreciation to staff for their assistance with the park naming process.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Synn to recommend approval to the City Council that the Newport Hills Park be officially named Newport Hills Woodlawn Park. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

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

Mr. Parker said that the October Board meeting will include:

- A retreat type of agenda.
- Parks & Open Space System Plan update continuation.

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

A. **Parks CIP Project Status Report**

Boardmember Synn asked when the next aquatic center update will be provided. Mr. Shiosaki responded that this is forthcoming.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Clark to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).