

The Parks & Community Services Board approved these meeting minutes on June 13, 2023.

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

Tuesday
May 9, 2023
6:00 p.m.

Via Hybrid

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Hamilton, Vice-Chair Clark; Boardmembers Clima, Synn¹, Trescases

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Stokes

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Camron Parker, Mariam Sarwary, Michael Shiosaki, Brad Bennett, John Soriano, Pam Fehrman

OTHERS PRESENT: Nathan Devine, Heidi Dean, Mary Ellen Hundley, Court Olson, Alex Tsimerman

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

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

Chair Hamilton called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Clima to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Clima to approve the March 14, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (4-0).

4. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

Nathan Devine

Nathan works for Bellevue School District at Interlake High School. There is a lack of lacrosse fields for students. Nathan has suggestions on how to increase field availability

¹ Arrived at 6:16 p.m.

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and access for lacrosse players. Currently, the high school team practices between 7:00-9:00 p.m., which is too late for students.

Court Olson

Court Olson reminded Boardmembers that various reasons were provided at the February 2023 Board meeting as to why the parking and picnic shelters at Airfield Park should not be carried into the woods in the NW corner of the park.

In light of oversights in the prior Concept 2 drawing, and the neighborhood concerns for preserving the forested area of the park, Court Olson asked the Parks Board to amend the February action to reference a properly scaled and corrected park plan that includes picnic shelters in the open area, rather than secluded in the woods.

Alex Tsimerman

Alex Tsimerman expressed dissatisfaction with the government.

Heidi Dean

Heidi Dean lives in the Newport Hills neighborhood and expressed concern with the amount of cars parked and visiting Newport Hills Woodlawn Park. It was suggested that signage be added to encourage park users to park at Ringdall Middle School.

The Newport Hills community would like to have their community ice cream social at the park and Heidi Dean would like to reserve the space but is uncertain how to make the reservation. Staff will follow up with Heidi Dean regarding the ice cream social.

Lastly, Heidi Dean said that there was a disgruntled park user referenced during a previous Parks Board meeting. The park user has been cooperative with no incidents.

5. **CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:**

Councilmember Stokes said that Council is reviewing the conceptual drawings for Airfield Park to finalize the park plans, while considering public input. Boardmembers are encouraged to continue to listen to the community so the designs can stay on track. Lastly, kudos were given to the Arts Commission for their assistance with the art piece at Downtown Park.

A Commendation was read for Boardmember Synn, whose term on the Board has expired.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Michael Shiosaki, Parks & Community Services Director, presented Boardmember Synn with a framed picture of Downtown Park as a token of appreciation. In addition, Boardmembers and staff expressed their appreciation to Boardmember Synn for the valuable contributions to the city and Board.

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Michael Shiosaki informed Boardmembers that the Downtown Park Grand Opening Celebration has tentatively been set for June 24.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Clark expressed appreciation to Court Olson for providing a tour of Airfield Park, and the schematic drawings prepared. Concern was expressed about the parking situation at Newport Hills Woodlawn Park. Lastly, Boardmember Clark said that Boardmembers need to keep in mind the unofficial off-leash dog park at Ashwood Park when next steps are considered for the park.

Boardmember Trescases would like staff to investigate the potential adjustments needed to accommodate lacrosse at some of the sports fields. Enthusiasm was also expressed for the new major sports league coming to the eastside (Cricket).

Boardmember Clima attended the Sheep Shearing event on April 29, and visited the Newport Hills Woodlawn Dog Park—parking adjustments are needed at the dog park. Boardmembers are encouraged to attend the upcoming World Migratory Bird Day event. Lastly, Boardmember Clima noted that 19 people recently completed the Bellevue Naturalist event last month.

Boardmember Synn expressed appreciation to staff and fellow Boardmembers for the amazing accomplishments while serving on the Board.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Chair Hamilton expressed enthusiasm for the new professional sports team coming to the eastside—hopefully, the team’s name will include “Bellevue.”

Chair Hamilton visited the art feature that was recently placed at Downtown Park.

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

No report.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Robinswood Tennis Center**

Brad Bennett, Parks & Community Services Manager, introduced John Soriano who is the Manager at Robinswood Tennis Center.

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John Soriano said that Robinswood Tennis Center has received national and regional recognition for its comprehensive programs and outstanding community service. It is owned and operated by the City of Bellevue and has full cost recovery, market based pricing, and community based programs. The tennis center operates year-round, 7 days per week in the fall, winter, and spring (the center does not operate 7 days per week during the summer months).

The Robinswood Tennis Center opened in January 1973, and underwent a major renovation in 1986. Programs offered include youth, adults, senior, adaptive and wheelchair tennis programs. The tennis center also hosts a variety of events.

John Soriano highlighted some of the partners/sponsors of the tennis center.

Some of the challenges of the tennis center include:

- Aging Facility
- Limited Indoor Court Capacity to meet demand
- Limited Parking
- Limited Restrooms/Locker rooms

Some of the opportunities of the tennis center include:

- USTA Grants
- Special Events
- Inclusive programs
- Auxiliary Programs – outdoor park sites

Discussion:

- What is the difference between the air bubble and hard cover? *Response: The air bubble is less expensive and a temporary structure—not ideal. The hard cover is a permanent structure.*
- Is the center at capacity and/or looking to expand? *Response: Program registrations sell out in minutes. There are many programs with waiting lists. In addition, COVID created some staffing challenges. Usually, any programs that are offered are full.*
- Is expansion a possibility? *Response: It is something worth evaluating; however, there are also parking challenges.*
- How much does the bubble cost? *Response: Approximately \$300k in 2018.*
- Has staff reached out to high school tennis teams for coaching assistance? *Response: Yes. However, there is a greater need for a higher skill level of coaching.*
- How does the tennis center compare to other facilities? *Response: Robinswood is a medium sized facility and there is still demand to fill courts throughout the region.*
- What are the operating hours for the facility? *Response: Hours were provided.*

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- Does the tennis facility pay for itself? *Response: Yes. The facility covers its costs. The 2022 budget was approximately \$800k—the facility generated over \$1M.*
- How could the facility expand and/or how many courts could be added? *Response: Could cover the outdoor courts. A permanent structure would be the ultimate goal. However, expansion of the tennis center was not identified as a high priority in the Parks & Open Space Systems Plan.*
- Council needs an informational session about the tennis center.
- There was a discussion about the demands for tennis and pickleball.

B. CIP Project Overview

Pam Fehrman, Planning & Development Manager, said that staff have been working on a sequencing plan and initiating work on new levy and CIP projects. Some of the projects include:

- **New Park on Main Street**
This park has been constructed by Sound Transit as part of Sound Transit’s mitigation for use of a portion of Surrey Downs Park. The construction of the park has been complete for a while. Sound Transit is currently maintaining this park site until the property is transferred to the city. The work remaining for this new park will involve public engagement to determine a name for this new park, culminating in a recommendation from the Parks Board to Council. Currently, the estimated date for property transfer or initiating a naming process is unknown.
- **NE Gateway Project**
Council Priority #6 is to complete construction of Phase One of Meydenbauer Bay Park by 2018 and the Downtown Park Gateway by the end of 2019, and synchronize with the Grand Connection. The Downtown Park - NE Gateway and Plaza were completed and open to the public in 2021.

After funds were approved for a major public art piece, Arts and Parks staff formed an artist selection committee that included city staff, the design team, arts professionals, and chairs from both the Arts Commission and Parks Board (Mark Van Hollebeke). In January of 2018, the Arts Commission approved the selection committee’s recommendation of Mr. Fornes to receive the commission. The artist then prepared conceptual diagrams of the proposed installation and worked with the design team to integrate the art into the site plan.

The celebration of the Downtown Park NE Gateway, Art, and Grand Connection to Downtown is in the process of being planned and is tentatively set for June 24.

- **Recommended Bellevue Airfield Park Master Plan**

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Working to complete environmental documentation to support environmental review. Once complete, Council will be asked to adopt the updated Master Plan, hopefully before the end of this year.

- 2023 Renovation Work Plan
There is approximately \$5.8M in the 2023 budget for CIP. Examples of renovation projects include:
 - Robinswood Tennis Center
 - Newport Hills Park synthetic turf replacement
 - Eastgate Park pedestrian pathway (plan view was shown)
 - South Bellevue Community Center Zipline/Challenge Course Repair and Renovation
 - New Bridle Trails Neighborhood Park
 - Bellevue Botanical Garden – Tateuchi Yao Pavilion
 - Off leash dog area pop-up facilities

- Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 2
The timeline for Phase 2 of the Meydenbauer Bay Park project is approximately 18 months.

- Mercer Slough Nature Park
Images were shown of the old Winters House, prior to the Sound Transit project, and the current house with the train tracks, and two tunnels for Sound Transit, the new parking lot, and a single lane heading down to the old farm building.

- Mercer Slough Farm Stand
The new farm stand is estimated to be complete in 2024. This is part of the Sound Transit Project, as the project cut off public access to the existing farm building. Parks is building the new farm stand building with partial funding from Sound Transit.

The farm stand is approximately 1,750 square feet, and includes two external restrooms, an enclosed but unconditioned produce space, a main conditioned produce space, with balcony office above.

- Ashwood Park Master Plan Update
Ashwood Park was a joint venture between the City of Bellevue and the King County Library system and was purchased in 1986.

The first priority is to update the Master Plan for Ashwood Park. This will involve Public Outreach, concept development, and feedback from the Parks Board and City Council.

Camron Parker highlighted some of the recent property acquisitions, including:

- Coal Creek/Cougar Mountain Open Space

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- Discussion:
- Eastgate Neighborhood Mini-Park
 - Newport Hills Woodlawn Park addition
 - Need better street signage for the Mercer Slough Farm Stand and Winter's House.
 - Ashwood Park is a troubled spot for an unofficial dog park. Need to determine the community need at this park.
 - What is the life span for turf fields, particularly the Newport Hills sports turf?
Response: 10-15 years.
 - Eastgate accessible path—is the goal to make it so people can get from Newport Way to the community center? Will there be lighting? Want to make sure that it is a safe space/pathway. A wooded path may not be the safest option. *Response: Yes. This will be considered.*

C. Park Board approval of first quarter 2023 report and communication to Council

Boardmembers reviewed the First Quarter 2023 Report and Communication to Council that was included in the Board packet.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Trescases to approve the First Quarter 2023 Report and Communication to Council substantially in the form presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

11. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Remote Participation Approval

No requests.

12. PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

Camron Parker said that the June meeting agenda will include:

- Board Elections
- Update: Crossroads Community Center/Bellevue Youth Theatre
- Update: Wilburton Comprehensive Plan

13. OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Parks CIP Project Status Report

B. Email, RE: Airfield Park Opposition to the proposed pool and parking lot (03.27.2023)

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- C. Email, RE: Inclusive Playgrounds—Hidden Valley Park (03.28.2023)
- D. Email, RE: Preserve and Enhance Downtown Park (04.02.2023)
- E. Email, RE: Outstanding Park Employee (04.04.2023)
- F. Email, RE: Funding for Development of Unneeded, Over-Sized Bellevue Aquatic Center (04.25.2023)
- G. Email, RE: Airfield Park (05.01.2023)

14. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

No new speakers.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The next Board meeting will be held June 13, 2023.

At 8:06 p.m., Chair Hamilton declared the meeting adjourned.