

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

Tuesday
February 11, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Trescases, Vice-Chair Hamilton, Boardmembers Clark, Heath¹, Kumar, Synn², Unger

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Betsy Anderson, Shelley Brittingham, Toni Esparza, Nancy Harvey, Victoria Hollerbach, Shelley McVein, Camron Parker

OTHERS PRESENT: Joydeep Hazra, Betsi Hummer, Ananaya Jain, Micki Larimer

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

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

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Kumar and second by Boardmember Unger to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Vice-Chair Hamilton to approve the November 6, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

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

Ananya Jain, Youth Link Board
15335 SE 49th Pl., Bellevue WA
And
Joydeep Hazra, Youth Link Board
12915 NE 29th Street, Bellevue, WA

¹ Arrived at 6:16 p.m.; departed at 7:37 p.m.

² Arrived at 6:02 p.m.

On behalf of the Bellevue Youth Link Board, Ms. Jain and Mr. Hazra invited Boardmembers to the Annual Gumbo Night, which will be held on February 27, 2020 at Crossroads Community Center.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

Boardmembers welcomed newly appointed Council Liaison Janice Zahn to the Parks Board.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Ms. McVein provided the following report:

- City of Bellevue earned this year's Bellevue Downtown Association's Placemaking Award for Meydenbauer Bay Park. Mayor Lynne Robinson accepted the award, alongside former Bellevue Parks Director Patrick Foran. Both remarked on the collaborative efforts it took to complete the new park.
- The recruitment process to fill the vacant Parks Director position is currently underway.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Clark visited Downtown Park, noting he didn't visit as many parks as usual during December/January due to the inclement weather.

Boardmember Unger visited the following parks:

- Downtown Park
- Meydenbauer Bay Park
- Bellevue Botanical Gardens

Boardmember Kumar provided the following report:

- Planted trees in open spaces as part of her Master Naturalist Program with a local Boy Scouts group.
- Visited McCormick Park—would like more wayfinding at this park to indicate the middle portion of the park.
- Congratulations to the Parks Department for receiving the BDA's Placemaking Award for Meydenbauer Bay Park.

Vice-Chair Hamilton enjoyed the Christmas event at Crossroads Community Center and attended the BDA's Awards Ceremony. He congratulated the Parks Department for the long-term efforts that made Meydenbauer Bay Park a reality.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Chair Trescases visited the Bellevue Downtown Ice Rink and attended the BDA's Awards Ceremony.

Councilmember Zahn participated in the Christmas Ship Festival at Meydenbauer Bay Park. She was amazed at the event noting that it is a great way to bring the community together.

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

No reports.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Update on 15-Year National Agency Re-Accreditation Process and Site Visit**

Ms. Hollerbach and Ms. Esparza provided an update on the Parks Department's National Re-Accreditation process. Ms. Esparza explained that this intensive process is administered by the Commission for Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). CAPRA is affiliated with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Ms. Esparza added that this will be the fourth accreditation review for the department; it was conducted in 2005, 2010 and 2015. There are currently 175 park and recreation agencies in the United States that have achieved accreditation; the goal is to maintain accreditation status. Bellevue Parks & Community Services is proud to be one of only three accredited agencies in Washington State. Ms. Esparza noted that the accreditation process is a city-wide initiative. Agency Accreditation has been achieved by:

- Parks & Community Services Department
- Police Department
- Utilities Department
- Transportation Department
- Fire Department

Ms. Esparza stated that being accredited helps Bellevue meet a citywide initiative of excellence. It also demonstrates Bellevue's standing as a national leader in the field of Parks, Recreation & Community Services; ensures the safety and well-being of participants through standardized practices; assists the department by maintaining organization of policies and procedures; and enhances overall effectiveness, encourages efficiencies and reinforces accountability.

Ms. Esparza noted that in February 2005 the Parks & Community Services Department initially obtained CAPRA accreditation. As part of this process, the department is required to submit a detailed self-assessment report to CAPRA during every five-year cycle. The most recent self-assessment report will be submitted by April 2020 with 151 self-assessment standards and 27 fundamental standards being evaluated. As with the last process, the assigned CAPRA site visitors will be reviewing the Parks Department's report in preparation of the site visit and final

review, scheduled in June 2020. For the duration of the site visit, the team of CAPRA officials will evaluate the department's documentation, the organization, and the park system.

The role of the Parks Board throughout the Accreditation process is to understand and communicate the importance of agency accreditation; act as ambassadors of the department in accreditation efforts; and assist the department staff in policy/document endorsement.

Boardmember Unger asked how Bellevue performed during the previous accreditation process. Ms. Hollerbach said that it is rare for an organization to be at 100%. During the last accreditation cycle Bellevue missed 9 standards. The new cycle allows for an entity to miss 6 standards. Boardmember Unger also asked if various parks throughout the city will be visited. Ms. Hollerbach clarified that there is a day allocated for park visits so evaluators can see the diversity of the parks.

Boardmember Clark requested clarification on the costs associated with each accreditation process. Ms. Esparza clarified that Bellevue is not driven by the accreditation standards—Bellevue naturally keeps up the high standards. The accreditation process is among some of Ms. Hollerbach's job duties. She ensures that the project is comprehensive and consistent. It is estimated that the accreditation costs approximately \$20K (+/-) and is used to benefit the city in many ways.

Boardmember Clark asked if the accreditation process has caught errors in Bellevue's processes. Ms. Hollerbach explained that there were some old rules that needed to be revised that were identified during the accreditation process. She added that there are many benefits from consistency across the system that Bellevue did not have before the accreditation process.

Boardmembers discussed Bellevue's accreditation and Gold Medal accomplishment in 2005. Ms. Hollerbach commented on the rarity of this occurrence.

Boardmember Kumar asked if the accreditation is utilized for grant writing or federal funding requests. Ms. Hollerbach explained that not only is being accredited used for grants and funding requests but it is also a known achievement within the industry. She added that the Board's endorsement of the various plans is an important step in the process.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that the city's letterhead and information proudly display the accreditation information.

Ms. Esparza commented that the accreditation holds Bellevue internally accountable and eliminates the need for outsiders to ask deep questions because certain benchmarks of excellence have already been met.

B. 2020 Parks Strategic Plan Overview

Ms. Anderson explained that the Strategic Plan is an internal planning tool that prioritizes the department's key areas of focus over the next five years. The Strategic Plan acts like a bridge—it helps staff translate policy-level guidance from city- and department-level initiatives and plans

into actionable goals and strategies. She noted that this is the third update for the plan, which is one of the documents required for the department's CAPRA accreditation.

Ms. Anderson expressed her appreciation to the core planning team for their efforts with the Strategic Plan. Participants included: Shelley Brittingham, Toni Esparza, Alex O'Reilly, Camron Parker, Helena Stephens, Colin Walker, Angela Ferguson, and Julie Cross. In developing the plan, staff solicited input from the Board, as well as from the Human Services Commission, the Youth Link Board, and all department divisions and work groups. The Board reviewed the plan's core components in June, which were revised to reflect Board feedback on the department's vision. The Board additionally emphasized the importance of staff engagement with the plan update process and the importance of addressing access to parks and trails in the plan's goals and strategies. These suggestions were reflected in the planning process and plan content.

Ms. Anderson noted that in October, 2019, the Board participated in a retreat and offered input about the value of the department, as well as feedback for staff to consider in developing the plan's goals and strategies. Staff drafted a statement reflecting the Board's comments on the purpose and value of Parks & Community Services. In addition, the plan's guiding principles, goals, and strategies align with Board recommendations to prioritize communication and outreach, partnerships, expansion of the park system, support for human services, long-term funding strategies, and the importance of environmental stewardship. Ms. Anderson noted that a new guiding principle was added—Achieve a Common Focus Across Diverse Programs and Services—to articulate the strength of the department's structure and the fact that it includes both traditional park and recreation services, as well as human services, probation, and wraparound services. She added that the Foundation for a Healthy Community is the section of the document that defines what is meant, as a department, when the term "we build a healthy community" is used, as stated in the plan.

Ms. Anderson explained that the 2020 plan simplifies the structure of the previous plan, which identified six overarching goals with multiple sub-goals, and then strategies beneath. The core team opted to identify goals and strategies, without sub-goals, in an effort to streamline the plan's outline.

Boardmembers expressed their appreciation to Ms. Anderson for compiling all of the Parks Board's comments during the planning process.

Councilmember Zahn asked if the Well-KEPT workforce development program is included in the Strategic Plan. Ms. Anderson clarified that there is a goal to promote environmental stewardship in the Strategic Plan that would encompass departmental activities like the Well-KEPT program. She added that the Recreation Program Plan includes more detailed information to support learning opportunities around stewardship and service learning.

Councilmember Zahn also asked if environmental sustainability is included in the Strategic Plan. Ms. Anderson clarified that environmental sustainability is included in Goal #4. However, she noted that environmental sustainability tracks through all of the plan documents. In addition, the

Parks & Open Space Systems Plan addresses park facilities and environmental sustainability in further detail.

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Kumar to endorse the 2020 Parks & Community Services Strategic Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

C. 2020 Recreation Program Plan Overview

Ms. Anderson provided an overview of the proposed 2020 Recreation Program Plan. This plan was first developed in the late 1990s and guides the department's investment in recreation programming. Ms. Anderson noted that the plan has been updated approximately every five years, in step with the department's reaccreditation cycle. She added that the Recreation Program Plan establishes a specific role for the city as a recreation service provider in relation to other providers. It also advances the policy framework provided by Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan—Parks, Recreation, & Open Space element.

Ms. Anderson expressed her appreciation to the core planning team for their efforts with the 2020 Recreation Program Plan. Participants included: Brad Bennett, Shelley Brittingham, Toni Esparza, Devin Konick-Seese, Helena Stephens, and Colin Walker.

Ms. Anderson noted that while the core tenets of the plan remain relevant and have served the department well, staff has identified the 2020 plan as an opportunity to provide a few key updates to the plan's focus and structure. Notably, the plan format has been streamlined to be more user-friendly, and the plan goals and strategies have been revised to align with the City Council-adopted Diversity Advantage Initiative. The updated plan goals, strategies, and actions more strongly emphasize the importance of equity, diversity, accessibility, and cultural responsiveness in program planning and delivery.

In addition to public outreach, Ms. Anderson noted that the planning team also undertook outreach to program staff who were involved in multiple ways in delivering programs and services. Detailed information about the outreach approach is included in the plan. Feedback received during outreach and engagement was analyzed by the planning team along with data from the city's recurring surveys and performance measures to inform the development and prioritization of the plan's actions.

Ms. Anderson summarized some of the key insights from the outreach. She also discussed the guiding principles for recreation, which include:

- Health-focused
- Building community
- Culture of excellence
- Dynamic and resourceful

Ms. Anderson clarified that there are now four guiding principles in the plan, rather than six. Likewise, the overarching goals in the plan have shifted from six to four; however, the update

has been organized so that strategies and actions fall under the heading of each goal. The recommended priority goals for recreation include:

- Ensure that every Bellevue resident can access recreational opportunities and community services.
- Offer programs and services that are consistent with our guiding principles and reflect the community's interests and needs, specifically those of underrepresented groups.
- Promote community well-being through programs and services that instill a sense of belonging and inclusion.
- Foster individual health and wellness through opportunities for structured and unstructured play, exercise, and recreation.

Boardmember Synn asked if there is alignment with other departments for this plan. Ms. Anderson confirmed that there is alignment. The planning team undertook outreach to numerous city boards, commissions, and advisory groups, as well as to staff, to ensure that the plan's goals support other department and citywide plans and initiatives.

Boardmember Kumar asked about the request for additional programs to support brain health received during the outreach process, and whether people cited specific examples of programs they would like to see offered. Ms. Anderson explained that there were suggestions for continuing education opportunities. There was also interest expressed in arts and academic topics. Boardmember Kumar also requested clarification for the term "accessibility" for recreation activities. Ms. Anderson clarified that accessibility refers to all barriers to programs, and could include transportation, whether a space is designed to be accessible, and cost, as well as time of day that programs are offered. She added that accessibility also took into account universal design elements.

Vice-Chair Hamilton asked what the next steps are for the Recreation Program Plan, once approved. Ms. Anderson discussed the implementation phase of the plan. She added that this could be tied to job descriptions and job performance. It is a living document that has a shared investment—the usefulness may differ from person-to-person.

Boardmember Clark asked if a transit connector has been considered between Bellevue parks. Ms. Anderson stated that this was a concept expressed during outreach efforts. However, at the moment, Bellevue is not in a position to move forward with this concept. Chair Trescases clarified that Visit Bellevue Washington will be testing a pilot program to transport visitors around Bellevue, including to Downtown Park and Bellevue Botanical Gardens.

Councilmember Zahn stated that the plan is data-informed. She expressed her appreciation for the information and inclusiveness within the plan. She noted that there is a large demographic in Bellevue of people on H-1B visas and asked if programming is woven into the plan to help these individuals feel included in the community, including addressing transportation issues, improving partnerships, and connecting with school districts. Ms. Anderson explained that there is a lot of work laid out in the plan to hopefully nurture community relationships so that they can get those in need to the right resources. Councilmember Zahn also asked if the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park off-leash area is included in the Recreation Program Plan. Ms. Anderson

clarified that this park would fall under Goal #1 of the Strategic Plan, which addresses the preparation of the Parks & Open Space Plan.

Boardmember Synn asked if there are any strategies or actions that address partnerships within the plan. Ms. Anderson clarified that there are a number of strategies and actions that address partnerships within the plan.

Motion by Boardmember Kumar and second by Boardmember Unger to approve the 2020 Recreation Program Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Kumar to reconsider the motion above approving the 2020 Recreation Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Kumar to endorse the 2020 Recreation Program Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously (7-0).

D. 2020 Marketing & Communications Plan Overview

Mr. Walker provided an overview of the Parks Department's Marketing & Communication Plan. He noted that this is the first stop on a journey which will ultimately end in October, 2020 with the reaccreditation by CAPRA. In particular, four accreditation standards are directly addressed in the plan. Mr. Walker explained that the first three are associated with communications and public information. The fourth standard comprises the bulk and the balance of the content of the plan.

Mr. Walker clarified that tactical implementation of the plan occurs with three department-wide staff that supports staff in the community centers, ranger stations, probation offices, and other locations throughout the system. He pointed out some common themes between the Marketing & Communications Plan, as well as the department's Strategic Plan and Recreation Program Plan.

Mr. Walker noted that the 2020 Marketing & Communications Plan is consistent with the Board-endorsed 2015 Marketing & Communications Plan, with strategies and tactics largely remaining the same. He added that staff has worked hard to center the strategies on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The department's marketing model is built on a three legged stool concept of research, analysis, and outreach. Mr. Walker noted that without all three pillars working together in concert the stool would fall down. He stressed that diversity, equity, and inclusion are key to this updated plan, with a focus on identifying and eliminating barriers to participation and information access.

Mr. Walker discussed the six key strategies in the 2020 Marketing & Communications Plan, which include:

- Position Bellevue as a cohesive force that improves the quality of life and economic prospects for all residents, integrating recommendations from the department Diversity Strategic Plan in the department's marketing and communications efforts.
- Enhance the Bellevue Parks & Community Services website to increase information access and dissemination.
- Increase data collection and analysis to better understand our current and potential customer base, service gaps, and programmatic needs, with a specific focus on underrepresented populations.
- Explore opportunities to promote programs and services beyond current customer base using a combination of print and digital tools.
- Participate in citywide rebranding efforts, positioning the department to differentiate its programs and services from those offered by other service providers in the community.
- Continue to evaluate opportunities to enhance the Marketing & Communications programs.

Mr. Walker encouraged Boardmembers to submit comments on the Marketing & Communications Plan by February 25, 2020.

Boardmember Unger expressed her appreciation for customizable brochures being included in the marketing efforts. Mr. Walker encouraged Boardmembers to view the City of Calgary's website as an example of customizable brochures.

Boardmember Clark asked if there is any cross-connection with digital wayfinding and digital marketing. Mr. Walker responded that it's a project that hasn't received a lot of momentum but it is on the list to develop an online park map. Ms. Anderson added that the county is also looking at this project. Boardmember Kumar would like to see an app of Bellevue's trail system and wayfinding. Boardmember Clark also suggested that a game of geocaching or something similar be considered for the parks.

Boardmember Kumar asked if the city's rebranding process has begun. Mr. Walker clarified that funding was recently allocated to begin these efforts. Boardmember Kumar hopes that the city's brand of a "city in a park" is included in the new branding efforts.

Councilmember Zahn would like to view calendaring and scheduling more broadly. She asked if customizable brochures can include as many opportunities as possible without overlap. She also suggested that staff partner with Environmental Services on the GIS mapping. This might allow community members to adopt certain parts of a park and open many possibilities. Councilmember Zahn also recommended that opportunities for community feedback be available at the various parks throughout Bellevue.

Boardmember Kumar asked why the Parks Department is not included on Instagram. Mr. Walker explained that the city has an Instagram account but not the Parks Department. Social media channels are being evaluated to align parks marketing ideas to the city-wide efforts.

Boardmember Unger suggested that the Youth Link Board be involved in the social media discussions. Councilmember Zahn added that the Youth Link Board is looking for ways to become more engaged with Bellevue's Boards and Commissions.

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

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

The following discussion items were suggested for future meeting agendas:

- Structural and grounds presentation
- Impact of the recent King County levy on the potential aquatic center
- Update on the Grand Connection and Wilburton project.

Mr. Parker clarified that the feasibility study for the aquatic center is tentatively scheduled for June, 2020. He also noted that the Grand Connection and Wilburton project is being led by the city's Community Development Department. The project is currently ramping up and will be added to a future Parks Board agenda once there is more progress to report.

Councilmember Zahn would like to see the Multicultural Study presented to the Parks Board. Ms. McVein clarified that this is not part of the Parks Board's body of work.

Vice-Chair Hamilton asked if there is anything else that can be done to mitigate future changes to McCormick Park. Mr. Parker explained that McCormick Park is a gateway feature—there is work being done to reimage this area. Major programming changes and the function of McCormick Park are not expected to change. However, with the fire station and Transportation projects there are opportunities to reevaluate how the park is configured.

There was a question regarding scheduling sports fields and who can schedule them. Ms. Brittingham will forward additional information to Boardmembers.

Vice-Chair Hamilton noted that the Parks Board's Bylaws call for quarterly communications to City Council. He would like the Board to engage in this process to provide important and valuable feedback to Council. Councilmember Zahn noted that the Council Retreat will be held the second week of March and suggested that this would be a good time for the Parks Board to provide a year-end recap of activities and information.

Chair Trescases noted that the Parks Board is in a difficult situation with McCormick Park because the project is currently under the Transportation Department's authority and the Parks

Board has little ability for input. Mr. Parker clarified that there is coordination between Parks and Transportation staff. Chair Trescases does not think that the community is aware of this collaboration. Boardmember Kumar added that the Transportation Department should provide periodic updates about the project to the Parks Board. Vice-Chair Hamilton agreed and expressed his disappointment of the outreach efforts. He would like to be sure that the community is aware that the Parks staff and Board care about the project.

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. CIP Project Status Report
- B. List of upcoming Parks special events

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

Micki Larimer

4053 149th Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA

Ms. Larimer introduced herself to Boardmembers. She has been designated the Parks Advocate for the newly formed Eastgate Community Association.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Kumar to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).