

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

Tuesday
July 14, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Trescases, Vice-Chair Hamilton, Boardmembers Clark, Kumar, Synn¹, Unger

BOARDMEMBER ABSENT: Boardmember Heath

COUNCILMEMBERPRESENT: Councilmember Zahn

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Shelley Brittingham, Pam Fehrman, Nancy Harvey, Shelley McVein, Camron Parker, Doug Sanner, Michael Shiosaki

OTHERS PRESENT: Sally Lawrence

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.

¹ Arrived at 6:06 p.m.

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 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 (5-0).

Motion by Vice-Chair Hamilton and second by Boardmember Unger to suspend for the July 14, 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 (5-0).

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 (5-0).

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 Clark and second by Boardmember Synn to approve the March 10, 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:

Laurie Hertzler

“Please leave Airfield Park exactly as it is. It’s the last place natural open space in Bellevue. It is my favorite place to walk and I love watching each new wave of wildflowers. I feel safe there with my dog since chemicals are not used for weed control. We have lost so many beautiful spaces to artificial turf. Airfield Park is precious to me and many other neighbors. Please leave it undeveloped. Thank you.”

The Parks & Community Services Board approved these meeting minutes on September 10, 2020.

Sally Lawrence, Franja Bryant, Suzie Stockton and Hilary Barnes, Bellevue residents and Master Naturalist volunteers with Bellevue Parks
Steve Williams, Bellevue; member, Eastside Heritage Center
David Kappler, Issaquah; VP Advocacy, Issaquah Alps Trails Club (IATC)
Russ Segner, Newcastle; President, Newcastle Historical Society
Michael J. Intlekofer, Bellevue; Newcastle Historical Society Collections Manager
Randy and Dana Gaddy and Jeremy Lucas, Bellevue

“Thank you, Chairperson Trescases, members of the Parks Advisory Board and Councilmember Zahn, for your valuable service to our community.

We are residents of Bellevue and nearby neighborhoods and local environmental advocates who support a unique addition to the Coal Creek Natural Area in south Bellevue. A 12-acre parcel on the west side of Lakemont Boulevard at Coal Creek is currently proposed for a 35-home development.

This parcel has a unique place in Bellevue history and also provides a wildlife corridor connecting Coal Creek Natural Area and King County's Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. If purchased for parkland, the property would serve the public's interests in significant ways -- providing open space; focusing the city's coal mining history; and maintaining a small but important 80-year-old wildlife corridor. It is a key link between Bellevue's Coal Creek Natural Area and King County's Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park across the street.

Preserving this parcel for parkland makes sense on a regional basis as well: King County Executive Dow Constantine and others in regional government have made ongoing commitments to the adjacent Issaquah Alps to make this area a King County/Seattle urban destination for parks and open space.

The public is showing increasing interest in retaining this Lakemont-Coal Creek parcel for public and wildlife use. Since late January, more than 2000 people, more than half of them in Bellevue, have signed a petition opposing the development of this property and asking that it be conserved as part of Bellevue's Coal Creek Natural Area. The petition is online at: www.savecoalcreek.org

We will submit testimony about this parks opportunity to Bellevue City Council next week, and will request that the Council direct the Parks Advisory Board to study this opportunity.

To better prepare and inform you, we are inviting you to walk the area adjacent to the property with us. Our group (which will be small in order to observe social distancing and mask requirements) will provide information about the wildlife that use this area, about the lives of the coal miners that lived here in the first half of the 20th century, and about the role these coal mines played in Seattle's growing importance in the early 1900s, supplying natural resources to many parts of the US.

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Please let us know when you could spend an hour or more with us, to see this unique part of Bellevue. It might be convenient for the tour to take place at 6 pm on a weeknight – perhaps Tuesday July 28th? – to take advantage of long summer daylight hours after the work day is over. However, we will make ourselves available at any time and date of your choosing.”

6. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL:**

Councilmember Zahn looks forward to receiving Parks updates.

7. **DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

Boardmembers welcomed new Parks Director Michael Shiosaki. Mr. Shiosaki noted that many facilities are beginning to reopen, including Park facilities such as golf courses, the tennis center, ball fields, and swimming beaches. Community centers and play areas will reopen in Phase 3.

Boardmember Unger asked if we have considered placing out-of-order signs on the City’s drinking fountains throughout Bellevue’s parks during the pandemic.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that no-touch hand washing stations and doors be considered for park restrooms.

Construction of the NE Gateway Park project of Downtown Park is underway. This should be complete in early 2021.

Pam Fehrman has been named the new Park Planning Manager. This position was previously held by Glenn Kost. Boardmembers welcomed Ms. Fehrman to her new role.

July is Parks & Recreation Month. Boardmembers are encouraged to take advantage of the outdoor spaces.

8. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Unger enjoyed the following parks over the past few months:

- Surrey Downs Park
- Bellevue Botanical Gardens
- Mercer Slough Nature Park
- Killarney Glen Park

She also encouraged Parks staff to create scavenger hunts for the various Bellevue parks.

Boardmember Unger stressed the importance of childcare for working parents and the challenges parents are facing during COVID.

Boardmember Clark enjoyed the following parks over the past few months:

- Goddard Mini Park
- Meydenbauer Bay Park
- McCormick Park
- Ashwood Playfield
- Zumdieck Park
- Hidden Valley Park
- NE Entry - Downtown Park

Boardmember Kumar has enjoyed the summer months and spending time outside. She has been busy checking out the interconnected trails with wayfinding and GoogleMaps.

Boardmember Kumar recently became a Tree Ambassador and likes this new role.

Vice-Chair Hamilton has been following Bellevue parks online and via social media. He is also curious to see how parks will reopen over the course of time.

9. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Chair Trescases discussed some of the outdoor activities she has been enjoying, including walking South Bellevue trails. She requested an update from staff regarding the Coal Creek trail and the area referenced in the Oral Communication.

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

No reports.

11. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Elections of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Chair Trescases opened nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Chair position.

Motion by Vice Chair Hamilton to reappoint Chair Trescases as the Parks & Community Services Board Chair. Chair Trescases accepted the nomination.

Motion by Boardmember Unger to nominate herself for the Parks & Community Services Board Chair position.

Chair Trescases requested other nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Chair position. There were none. Therefore, nominations were closed.

At the question, motion carried unanimously (6-0) to reappoint Chair Trescases as the Parks & Community Services Board Chair.

Chair Trescases opened nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair position.

Motion by Chair Trescases to reappoint Vice-Chair Hamilton as the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair. Vice-Chair Hamilton accepted the nomination.

Motion by Boardmember Unger to nominate herself for the Parks & Community Services Vice-Chair position.

Chair Trescases requested other nominations for the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair position. There were none. Therefore, nominations were closed.

At the question, motion carried unanimously (6-0) to reappoint Vice-Chair Hamilton as the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair.

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

Mr. Sanner resumed the discussion of Board comments to City Council regarding Parks capital needs and the 2021-2027 CIP budget. This was originally discussed at the Board's March meeting where staff provided an overview of the City's budget process and the status of Parks levy and other Parks capital projects.

Mr. Sanner reminded Boardmembers that the budget process is a 2-year operating budget and 7-year Capital Investment Program (CIP). He noted that staff anticipates the City's financial forecast will show little new CIP funding available assuming existing revenues, debt obligations, and prior commitments.

Mr. Sanner clarified that the Park Board's role for the budget process is:

- Advisory to Council on Parks capital needs
- Review preliminary Parks CIP strategy
- Develop a Park Board communication to Council

Mr. Sanner reviewed the 2008 Parks & Natural Areas levy projects (completed and currently funded in the 2019-2025 CIP). He also reviewed the non-levy Parks CIP projects. He also recapped the June 22, 2020 City Council budget workshop where Council reviewed forecasted revenue shortfalls following COVID-19.

Ms. Fehrman discussed the following projects and budget requests:

- Parks & Open Space Acquisition/Budget: added \$1.5M per year ongoing funding 2026-27
- Airfield Park Development/Budget: added \$3.4M for 2026-27 from the Parks Levy

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- Park Planning & Design/Budget: added \$0.3M per year ongoing funding 2026-27
- Enterprise Facility Improvements/Budget: added \$0.1M per year ongoing funding 2026-27
- Parks Renovation & Refurbishment Plan/Budget: added \$6.1M per year ongoing funding 2026-27
- Bridle Trails/140th Street Park Development/Budget: no change to previously approved budget
- Mercer Slough East Link Mitigation/Budget: no change to previously approved project
- Bel-Red Parks and Streams/Budget: no change to previously approved project
- Meydenbauer Bay Park Planning and Design/Budget: added \$3.0M per year in 2026-2027
- King County Parks Levy (2020-2025)/Budget: created for approved 2020-2025 King County Levy

Ms. Fehrman also reviewed the Parks Capital Projects completed funding thru 2020. These include:

- Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase I
- Surrey Downs Park
- Aquatic Center Feasibility Study
- Newport Hills Park Development
- Gateway NE Entry Downtown Park

Mr. Sanner summarized some of the high level messages from the 2018 Board memo to City Council, which included:

- Make good on levy commitments
- Maintain existing infrastructure
- Continue to plan for future
- Emphasize specific Council priorities
- Adequacy of Parks CIP funding
- Investments support vision of “City in a Park”

Mr. Sanner asked if the above messages are still the Board’s priorities or if they have changed.

Boardmember Unger asked if the presentation considered the recent 8% City reduction, due to COVID. Mr. Sanner clarified that the 8% reduction applies to the City’s operating budget, not the capital budget. Boardmember Unger also asked that the bullet points on the City Council letter be listed and numbered in order of importance.

With regard to Airfield Park, Boardmember Unger recommended that the funding remain allocated to this project. However, she expressed concern that if purchases aren’t made now to allocate to the park, the land may not be available in the future. Ms. Fehrman clarified that the City already owns the property for Airfield Park so there aren’t any acquisition issues.

Boardmember Unger would still like Bellevue to plan for the future and be mindful of acquisition and affordability opportunities.

Vice-Chair Hamilton suggested that Boardmembers encourage Council to evaluate what Parks has to offer, particularly with COVID in mind. He thinks the memo to Council should include a reminder about the desirability of Bellevue parks.

Vice-Chair Hamilton asked if there are any park projects in progress that the department is considering that can be sped up. Ms. Fehrman discussed the progress of some projects, including the Newport Hills project. However, she cautioned that even if projects are sped up most of them are a few years out.

Vice-Chair Hamilton thinks that highlighting some of the development projects in the memo to Council is a good idea.

Boardmember Synn called attention to the seven strategic target areas identified by Council and how some of the Board priorities align with these targets.

Boardmember Kumar expressed her support of the 2018 list of priorities that were submitted to Council and suggested these be reiterated. She also expressed concern about additional budget impacts from COVID.

Mr. Parker responded to various questions from Boardmember Clark about property acquisitions. Boardmember Clark also called attention to the numerous projects that will be completed between 2021-2024. Many of these projects are in the Downtown corridor and will be in need of green space. Boardmember Clark suggested a specific priority be identified in the letter to Council to advocate for investing in parks, particularly in the Downtown corridor. There was also a brief discussion about the area from Bellevue Way to the Transit Center and private partnerships that are needed to help provide open and green space in this area.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that staff coordinate a presentation to the Parks Board about the Downtown five-year livability study. She said that this might help Boardmembers understand some of the plans for the Downtown corridor. Mr. Parker clarified that the Board participated in the Downtown Livability Initiative that was conducted a few years ago and is due for a Grand Connection update, hopefully in September.

Vice-Chair Hamilton expressed his support of calling-out Ashwood Park in the memo to City Council (i.e., Ashwood Park is a way to bring green space to the Downtown corridor). Vice-Chair Hamilton added that the bylaws recommend quarterly communications to City Council so it is appropriate for the next quarterly communication to focus on the budget.

Chair Trescases asked if Parks would be denied something that was previously approved, due to the current state of the economy. Mr. Sanner said that anything is possible but hopefully previously funded projects will continue as funded.

Chair Trescases also asked where the next phase of the aquatic study fits into the budget. Ms. Fehrman noted that this process will depend on Council's direction.

Boardmember Unger expressed interest in redirecting funds from the capital fund to the operating fund to ensure specific park service levels remain (i.e., redirecting capital funds to operating funds to keep restrooms and centers open). Boardmember Unger does not want to lose the fundamental parts of parks.

Mr. Shiosaki explained that the current general fund reductions proposed is 8%. Park-goers may notice this impact by reduced hours for centers, longer time between lawn mowing, etc. Mr. Shiosaki cautioned that the pandemic has created very uncertain times so the future is unknown.

Chair Trescases is hesitant to recommending a redirection of capital fund dollars to operating fund dollars, since there are not any major service reductions at this time. She stressed the importance of future investments.

Boardmember Synn expressed his concern with putting the list of priorities in numerical order. He views the bullets as agnostic and cautioned that prioritizing the list may impact projects. Boardmember Kumar agreed with Boardmember Synn and suggested that the list be put in priority order but remain as bullet points. Boardmember Clark suggested that a sentence be added to the memo noting that the first two items/bullets be considered essential.

Chair Trescases summarized Boardmember comments:

- Agree with priorities and messaging identified in 2018
- Tie priorities to Council strategic priorities
- Demonstrate how Parks broadly impact the greater good
- Importance of the Downtown corridor and need for green space
- Role of parks, particularly during COVID and during reopening—importance of parks and relevancy
- Meydenbauer Bay Park is a priority
- Bel-Red—how parks and trails would be implemented
- Other projects that are park-related

Mr. Parker suggested either the Board work as a group to fine-tune the letter to Council, or the Board Chair and Vice-Chair can identify the key messages and work with staff to finalize the letter. After a brief discussion, Boardmembers concluded that the Board Chair and Vice-Chair should work with staff to finalize the letter and then it should be sent to Boardmembers for comments/review, with final review/approval expected at the September 8, 2020 Board meeting.

Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Clark to extend the meeting until 8:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

12. **NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

The Parks & Community Services Board approved these meeting minutes on September 10, 2020.

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

The following discussion items were suggested for future meeting agendas:

- Communication to Council for 2021-2027 Parks Capital Investment Program (CIP) Budget
- Update on Grand Connection
- Update on Environmental Stewardship Initiative

14. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. Parks CIP Project Status Report
- B. Parks and Recreation Month Proclamation
- C. Letter from Lee Springgate re Bellevue Botanical Garden

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

None.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Vice-Chair Hamilton to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).