

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

Tuesday
June 8, 2021
6:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

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

COUNCILMEMBER PRESENT: Councilmember Zahn

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Rick Bailey, Geoff Bradley, Pam Fehrman, 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.

Chair Trescases announced that there are a few procedural items that need to be addressed. She 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 Trescases 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 Clark and second by Boardmember Unger to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Boardmember Synn and second by Boardmember Unger to approve the May 11, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

4. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

5. **COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL:**

Councilmember Zahn provided the following report:

- Interviews were conducted for the Parks Board vacancy. A recommendation to City council is expected in the near future.
- Council voted to accept the American Rescue Plan Act Fund. Bellevue will receive \$20.1 million. More information can be found on the City Council web page.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Shiosaki discussed the following:

- The Downtown Park NE Corner Gateway Project recently opened. A special thanks was extended to Ken Kroeger for his leadership with the project. The Grand Connection art piece should be installed in August/September. A public grand opening celebration is anticipated for this fall as well.
- Amazon is donating \$1.4 million to the City of Bellevue, which includes \$1 million for the City's Human Services Fund, \$289,000 for neighborhood enhancement projects and \$150,000 for parks improvements.
- The Bellevue Youth Theatre held its live production of *The Mad Hatter's Mad Tea Party*, which was a huge success.
- Day camp registrations are going well. Staff recruitment and training is a priority.
- Life Guards will be on duty at select parks—life guard recruitment is ongoing.
- City Hall is expected to reopen in early fall.

Boardmember Unger asked if there will be a July 4th Celebration at Downtown Park. Mr. Shiosaki said that there are still discussions ongoing with the Bellevue Downtown Association. However, the Governor's office has yet to provide direction on large events so a decision has not been made.

Boardmember Kumar asked for a rendering of the future art piece that will be placed at Downtown Park. Ms. Fehrman will forward this information to Boardmembers. Boardmember Kumar also asked if guided canoe trips will be offered at Mercer Slough. Mr. Bradley clarified that these will not be offered during the summer. However, Swaylocken Boat Launch will be open for launching and canoe rentals are available at Enatai Beach Park.

Boardmember Clark asked when the Board will be allowed to meet in person and conduct a retreat. Mr. Shiosaki clarified that the schedule depends on the Open Public Meetings Act for reopening and group gatherings.

Chair Trescases said that the REI boathouses and rentals are already very active and providing classes and tours. She also said that she hopes the Amazon donation is in addition to current funding. Councilmember Zahn said that previous donations from Amazon were in addition to

Human Services funding. This was also the case with the CARES Act funding. She doesn't anticipate a different approach for the recent Amazon donation.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Vice-Chair Hamilton visited the NE Gateway Entrance at Downtown Park and was impressed by the water feature. He also walked through Keeney Park, which seemed like a little oasis in the middle of the City to him.

Boardmember Kumar visited many parks throughout Bellevue, including the NE Gateway Entrance at Downtown Park. She recently hiked Coal Creek Natural Area Trail and expressed concern about the fast traffic near the crossing to Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. She asked if there are plans to install a crosswalk. Mr. Parker will research improvements for this area and provide additional information. Boardmember Kumar expressed her appreciation to the Parks Department for all of their efforts throughout the pandemic to keep the parks and trails at a high standard.

Boardmember Synn visited the NE Gateway Entrance at Downtown Park. He looks forward to the opening celebration. He also asked about Northtowne Park and where the new piece of equipment will be placed. Staff will follow up on this question.

Boardmember Clark recently visited the Newport Hills site and looks forward to visiting the NE Gateway Entrance. Boardmember Clark visited several other downtown parks and hopes that the focus will remain on completing Ashwood Park.

Boardmember Unger enjoyed paddle boarding at Meydenbauer Bay and Chism Beach Park. She also visited a few other parks in the downtown area. She called attention to a wayfinding sign pertaining to 2020 that needs to be removed (near Wilburton Hill Park). Boardmember Unger suggested that the neighborhood associations be encouraged to have gatherings and help clean up the parks. She also asked if new trees have been planted at Surrey Downs Park. Staff was unsure about the tree plantings and will follow up with Boardmember Unger.

Boardmember Unger suggested that signage be added to the waterfront parks to indicate where community members can launch small watercrafts (i.e., paddleboards).

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Chair Trescases is anxious to visit Downtown Park and the South Bellevue Park and Ride.

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

No reports.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair**

Mr. Parker explained the process for elections.

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

Chair Trescases nominated Vice-Chair Hamilton as the Parks & Community Services Board Chair. Vice-Chair Hamilton accepted the nomination.

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 appoint Vice-Chair Hamilton as the Parks & Community Services Board Chair.

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

Chair Trescases nominated Boardmember Unger as the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair. Boardmember Unger accepted the nomination.

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 appoint Boardmember Unger as the Parks & Community Services Board Vice-Chair.

B. **Forest Health Assessment**

Geoff Bradley, Natural Resource Manager, explained that the City of Bellevue Natural Resource Division provides site management of approximately 2,000 acres of undeveloped forested public open space properties within the City of Bellevue. These open space properties are geographically distributed throughout the City and consist of upland forests, lowland forests, steep slopes, meadows, shorelines, wetlands and riparian corridors. These properties are managed for a wide variety of community benefits including recreation, wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions such as stormwater retention, air and water filtration and carbon sequestration. Mr. Bradley noted that the Natural Resource Division Forest Management Program is less than 10% of Bellevue's overall land base.

In 2008, the Natural Resource Division recognized the need to analyze the health of these open space properties to assist in prioritizing management goals and to help allocate resources more effectively. Rick Bailey, Forest Management Program Supervisor, said that this led to the implementation and development of various forest health assessment models that were available

at the time, including the use of the Urban Forest Effects Model (UFORE) and creation of the Forest Condition Assessment Model (FCAM). These plot based assessment models provided the Natural Resource Division with good baseline information, however, they did not provide a comprehensive inventory of the entire open space system. Mr. Bailey added that data collection also proved to be labor intensive which made follow-up sampling and monitoring unfeasible due to limited resources.

Mr. Bradley said that Bellevue's natural areas are not pristine ecosystems; rather they are lands that have been disturbed by human intervention for over 100 years.

In 2013, the first edition of the Forest Landscape Assessment Tool (FLAT) Field Manual was published and made available for use. Mr. Bailey noted that FLAT provides a mechanism of performing a rapid assessment of ecological conditions of undeveloped forested land that is less labor intensive and more cost efficient compared to more traditional models. Most importantly, FLAT provides a comprehensive baseline assessment of an agency's entire open space system and can be readily adapted for monitoring progress over time. Mr. Bailey noted that several public agencies in the Puget Sound region have successfully used data collected through FLAT to develop forest stewardship plans, prioritize restoration funding and efforts, and monitor restoration success over time. The availability of this rapid assessment model provided the Natural Resource Division a tool to efficiently evaluate the ecological conditions of all managed open space acreage, and as such, the decision was made to proceed with implementing FLAT here in Bellevue.

Mr. Bailey discussed the following phases:

- Phase 1: Habitat Management Unit (HMU) Mapping
- Phase 2: Ground Proofing & Data Collection
- Phase 3: Matrix Analysis & Priority Ratings
- Phase 4: Natural Resource Stewardship Plan
- Phase 5: Site Specific Enhancement Plans

Mr. Bradley discussed the refined Bradley Method, which focuses on prioritizing restoration efforts on lesser disturbed habitats.

Boardmember Kumar asked if the FLAT Field Manual is utilized by other entities. Mr. Bailey confirmed that the model is utilized by other entities. Boardmember Kumar also asked if the most critical restoration areas are a high priority. Mr. Bradley clarified that these areas are not the focus and priority because of the magnitude of some of the projects but mitigation opportunities are always being evaluated.

Boardmember Unger asked if the consultants for this project help identify problem areas and provide estimates for the work. Mr. Bradley said that the consultants clarify the areas of need and help prioritize them. A separate consultant will assist with restoration.

Boardmember Clark asked about the budget range for some of the sites. Mr. Bradley provided some examples. He added that Forest Management receives a budget each year. The projects and focus areas are identified and then prioritized. Boardmember Clark also asked how forest

safety is modeled and about estimated timescales for evaluation and remediation. Mr. Bailey responded that evaluations will be conducted every 10 years. There is also data available through the Green Cities Partnership.

Chair Trescases asked how the funding would be leveraged with other funding sources. Mr. Bradley said that the standards help, as well as applying various tools identified.

Mr. Bailey said that as population, traffic, and housing densities in Bellevue continue to increase, so will the need for healthy open space and natural areas to help mitigate the effects of urbanization. Urban forests provide tree canopy that helps intercept and detain storm water, buffer land uses, conserve plant and animal habitat, and protect air and water quality. To ensure that these benefits continue, the public forests must be managed with the same skill and diligence as any other community resource. The implementation of this FLAT project and production of a Natural Resource Stewardship Plan reflects the City's commitment toward delivering a healthy open space system for the benefit of current and future Bellevue residents

C. Newport Hills Park Naming

Ms. Fehrman reviewed Parks staff's proposed name options for the Newport Hills site, the City Council's recent guidance on park names for the site, and next steps to support Park Board's future deliberations towards recommending a name for Bellevue's newest neighborhood park.

Mr. Fehrman explained 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 further explained 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 said 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 new Newport Hills area park website (over 1,200 community members are notified when the website is updated). Staff also worked to update the Newport Hills Community Club website, Next Door, and posted a sign at the new park site requesting participation in the park naming survey. There were 203 survey responses received indicating the preferred names of: Newport Hills Neighborhood Park, Ringdall Park, Newport Hills Sunset Park and Newport Woods Park.

After thorough deliberation, Ms. Fehrman reminded Boardmembers that the Board passed a motion to recommend the name "Borghild Ringdall Neighborhood Park" to Council based on the following:

- Borghild Ringdall's significance as a female historical figure and contributions to Bellevue by initiating the first hot lunch program in the School District;
- Park location adjacent to Ringdall Middle School; and

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- A name that is familiar to the neighborhood but does not duplicate existing Newport Hills park names.
- Ringdall was the neighborhood's second name preference.

Ms. Fehrman said that at their May 3, 2021 meeting, Council provided supplementary park naming guidance for the new park. Council directed that the park name selection:

- Not be named after a person;
- Not duplicate existing park names;
- Include Newport or Newport Hills in the name;
- Include 'glen' or 'meadow' as a name option; and that
- Additional outreach be conducted to the Newport Hills neighborhood.

After Council deliberation and staff review, the following name recommendations include:

- Newport Hills Sunset Park
- Newport Woods Park
- Newport Glen Neighborhood Park (Council suggestion)
- Meadow at Newport Hills Park (Council suggestion)

Boardmember Clark discussed the research he conducted about park names, including the term "glen," which he defined. After conducting his research, he expressed concern about the proposed names (i.e., Sunset is used in South Bellevue; Glen is also used elsewhere; and then there is also Meadowood Park). Boardmember Clark said that Council asked for creativity yet some of the suggestions are a bit restrictive. The park design was a compromise based upon the use requests from the community. Therefore, he suggested "Newport Commons Neighborhood Park." Other names Boardmember Clark suggested include:

- Glade at Newport Hills
- Newport Hillcrest Park
- Newport Hills Woodlawn Park
- Forest Haven at Newport Hills

Boardmember Synn asked for clarification on Attachment 1 in the Board packet, guidelines for naming a park (Resolution No. 8229). He said that Attachment 1 needs to be revised before additional community input is requested. Boardmember Synn is concerned that the community will not feel heard if a concrete process is not identified and followed. He added that the original process was followed and it will be confusing to go back to the community without revising the process first.

Mr. Shiosaki said that there are specific guidelines that City Council put in place. The Parks Board abided by the guidelines. He does not think that there is a change to the naming guidelines but Council requested additional feedback.

Boardmember Synn said that the initial guidelines were followed and the guidelines given by Council go against the guidelines set forth in Resolution No. 8229. Councilmember Zahn said that Council discussed the naming policy and potential revisions. The letter to the community needs to state that there is a narrower naming criteria. Boardmember Synn responded that the guidance provided is based upon Council preference versus the process outlined.

Vice-Chair Hamilton and Boardmember Unger expressed their support for Council's direction on the park naming.

Boardmember Synn expressed frustration because the original input from the community was taken into consideration for the Parks Board recommendation and then Council limited the list.

Boardmember Kumar said that there appears to have been a conversation with Council that takes the Parks Board outside of the identified guidelines. Councilmember Zahn explained that some of the proposed park names were suggested by people that do not live within the Newport Hills community. Boardmember Kumar asked how the neighborhood survey data was collected. Ms. Fehrman clarified that there weren't any requirements for who could recommend the park name, which is consistent with past practice.

Boardmember Clark validated Boardmember Synn's concerns and agreed that the appearance of seeking additional community feedback may not be well received by the community. However, he does not think the Resolution is being violated. Chair Trescases suggested that the Board review the names previously recommended by the community and then narrow the list by removing reference to people's names. She is also not opposed to adding suggestions if they relate to the park.

Boardmember Synn said that an open process needs to be provided—the community needs to know that the process was followed, Council provided suggestions; the list needs to be presented to the Newport Hills community and then the process will guide the park name. Boardmember Synn reiterated his concern about the park naming criteria not being followed.

There was a general discussion about the board naming process versus the process identified by Council.

Boardmember Synn suggested that the community feedback be removed and then have Council vote on the park name between the two names that they already selected. Chair Trescases clarified that Council asked the Parks Board to reengage the community.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Kumar to extend the meeting until 9:00 p.m. Motion carried (5-1).

Councilmember Zahn said that she is opposed to having Council make a final decision without community feedback.

Chair Trescases asked if the park names identified above should be presented to the community for feedback or if additional names should be added to the list. Boardmember Clark expressed concern with the list presented. Boardmember Unger added that the proposed names are confusing, particularly regarding geographical location (i.e., Sunset, Hilltop, etc.).

Boardmember Kumar said that her preference is to recommend the community names that were already suggested, along with the two Council suggestions. She does not want to remove any of the community name recommendations for the park.

Chair Trescases said that Council requested that “Newport” be included in the park name. Boardmember Kumar reiterated her request to maintain the community name recommendations. She said that if names need to be removed she would prefer to remove Council recommendations, prior to community recommendations.

Chair Trescases would like to add Councilmember Clark’s suggestion to the list of considerations. Boardmembers reiterated their concerns about using “Sunset” or “Hilltop” in the park name causing geographical location confusion.

Councilmember Zahn suggested that an explanation of why certain names were eliminated be included with the additional communication so there is transparency and people feel heard.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Unger to recommend Foresthaven and Newport Commons Neighborhood Park as the park name at Newport Hills

Motion by Boardmember Unger to amend the main motion and remove “Newport Commons Neighborhood Park” from the list of consideration and add Newport Woods Park.

There was no second for the amendment to the main motion. Therefore, the motion failed.

At the question, motion failed (0-6).

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Unger to recommend the following proposed name options for the Newport Hills site for community consideration:

- **Newport Glen Neighborhood Park (Council recommendation)**
- **Meadow at Newport Hills Park (Council recommendation)**
- **Newport Woods Park (Community recommendation)**
- **Newport Happy Trials Park (Community recommendation)**
- **Newport Hills Woodlawn Park (Parks Board recommendation)**
- **Forest Haven at Newport Hills (Parks Board recommendation)**

At the question, motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Staff will prepare a concise memo to community members as to why additional feedback is being requested.

The Parks & Community Services Board approved these meeting minutes on July 13, 2021.

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

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

None.

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. Parks CIP Project Status Report
- B. Wildlife Outreach on Social Media
- C. Email from 05/04/21 re Newport Hills park name
- D. Email from 05/17/21 re Ashwood Park

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Synn to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).