MINUTES

Attendees:
Steve Cole – At large
Joe Furia – World Forestry Center (“WFC”)
Kathy Goeddel – Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association
Anna Goldrich – Hoyt Arboretum Friends (“HAF”)
Cynthia Haruyama – Portland Japanese Garden (“PJG”)
Adena Long – Portland Parks & Recreation (“PPR”)
Dave Malcolm – Sylvan Highlands Neighborhood Association
Heather McCarey – Explore Washington Park (“EWP”)
Don Moore – Oregon Zoo (“OZ”)
Ruth Shelly – Portland Children’s Museum (“PCM”)

Visitors:
Hannah Bogenreuther – EWP
Tonya Booker – PPR
Lisa Christy – PJG
Alexa Darrow – Locl
Danny Dunn – EWP
Steve Halsasz – Travel Portland
Angie Linderman – EWP
Marlo Maroon – Travel Portland
Alex Page – EWP
Utpal Passi – OZ
Victor Sanders – PPR
Marcia Sinclair – OZ
Ivan Ratcliff – OZ
Joel Siedenburg – Locl
Krista Swan – OZ

Absent:
Kerry Ayres-Palanuk – TriMet

The meeting commenced at 8:06 am. Don chaired the meeting with a quorum present.

Announcements:

- Don shared that weather permitting he would like to do a walking tour of the construction currently taking place at the Oregon Zoo at the end of the meeting.
- Don thanked Adena for hosting Board members at the Summer Free for All in the International Test Rose Garden last week for a night of jazz.

Travel Portland
Heather introduced Travel Portland and their goal to have a cohesive Park represented on Google Maps,
correctly reflecting Washington Park and the venues within the Park. Currently, Google Maps does not correctly reflect the Park. For instance, the pin for Washington Park is located at the Explore Washington Park office. Travel Portland and Locl will help to create that cohesive Park web representation on an individual and Park wide level. Heather introduced Marlo Marron with Travel Portland to talk about the importance and usefulness of Google Maps.

Marlo shared that Travel Portland is currently going through a rebranding, including a website redesign. They are building this website to maximize the functionality of Google Maps. For example, they will pull business, organization and venue information directly from Google Maps, rather than creating and maintaining their own directly. It’s accepted that everyone uses their phones to search, including out of town visitors and a local residents. When searching via phone, 93% of the time people to search through Google and/or Google maps. Of those Google searches, 87% result in someone going to the destination searched for. Marlo explained that information must be added or corrected through Google Business Manager, which Locl can help with. Marlo used the example of a location pin incorrectly located. The incorrect pin is where Lyft/Uber will deliver passengers, who are then in the wrong place and that negatively affects customer experience. In addition to helping the venues update their information on Google Maps, Locl will provide 18 months of data on Google Map traffic (a dashboard to access multiple pages for easy management) and step--by step ways to change and fully utilize a listing.

Marlo introduced Steve Halsasz who is the Head of Research for Travel Portland. Steve explained that Google Analytics can show how long visitors are spending on a webpage or listing, what pages they navigate to on a venue’s web site, what key words the visitor used to find a venue’s web site. Data shows that there is a high correlation between people searching a business, including for directions, and visitors showing up to that business. Attractions and restaurants have a very high correlation between direction requests on Google Maps and revenue. For retail there is less of a correlation because a visitor may show up but chose not to spend money. Steve used the Mark Spencer Hotel as an example of how correctly listing and indexing an incorrectly listed and indexed venue can cause a drastic change in revenue. Steve explained that helping to correct listings is the type of work and support that Locl provides behind the scenes to help venues be more searchable on Google Maps and thereby help increase revenue.

Locl

Steve introduced Joel Siedenburg with Locl to speak about the work they’ve done partnering with Travel Portland since October 2018. Locl provides a way to quantify marketing efforts by providing data using Google Maps. In order to have accurate data, the listings on Google need to be correct. Joel shared an example of a Google search of Washington Park notating missing pins for several locations and venues in the Park.

Joel outlined Locl’s first steps to helping with clients make sure that every location has access to their business manager accounts, that accounts are verified, in the correct location, and using all 10 category options in Google Maps to maximize visibility. Joel spoke about a marketing change from needing to be the first search result to casting a wider net for potential clients and guests.

Heather will work as a point person between the venues and Locl if needed.

Joel spoke about Locl’s ability to separate out maps traffic from organic searches which is very important because a large part of organic searches is from maps and with just Google Business you are not able to see that distinction. Dave asked for clarity on what “organic” means, Joel explained that it includes anything other than direct traffic where people search specifically by name. Organic searches
would be anything related to parks in Portland, for example searches that halfway relate to the venue but are not the actual name of the venue. Adding content like photos and posts will be available for the venues to add themselves. By listing specific and correct amenities your venue will show up more often and correctly in searches. For example, by listing if your venue is wheelchair accessible or dog friendly you will show up in more searches for your target audience.

Merlo referred back to the picture of the map that was shared that had only a few pins on it. The hope is to have Washington Park show up as its own village so that visitors can go exactly where they want and have clear expectations. Don asked for some clarity on how a “village” in the Park will be made without it being too busy. There is a concern that there could be too many pins and people would have trouble finding the actual venue they want to find. Joel explained that pins can be color coded depending on their importance. Steve explained that the goal is to be a “sticky” location where people come for the day, stay and spend time and money.

Ruth asked for more clarity between the relationship between Google Maps and Lyft/Uber. Previously if Ruth were to call for a Lyft/Uber while in front of the PCM they have issues with drivers going to the OZ. Ruth wants to discuss if there is a better way for us to be more specific about the pin placement so that way rides are dropped off in the correct location. Joel explained that drivers for Lyft/Uber are using Google Maps for locating. Heather then explained that due to traffic issues within the Park, Lyft/Uber have 6 designated drop off and pick up locations around the Park. EWP worked with Lyft/Uber to shift those pins to alleviate traffic issues in the Park. Ruth expressed that it is helpful for them to know that sort of information to know that it is a purposeful decision.

Ruth asked if there is a way to know where people are originating their search from. She expressed that it would be helpful to see if say 15% of direction requests are coming from Directors Park outside of the Travel Portland kiosk. Joel said that we are able to look to the point of what zip code the search originated from. Ruth expressed a desire to see that data to help to focus in on client demographics. Cynthia noted that shuttle stops are not on the list of locations to be marked with a pin and how that is a challenge since people do not know where to park and catch a shuttle. Heather agreed that it is important and a good idea that can be addressed. Heather confirmed with each venue who the point of contact is for marketing purposes and moving forward with Locl.

Marlo said that for next steps they need to know who to follow up with at each venue and the sooner they can get started the better. Marlo shared that PJG has been part of the pilot program with great results. Lisa Christy shared that PJG had a great experience working with Locl and Travel Portland; they were able to move the ticket booth’s Google Maps pin location, respond to reviews, and manage existing pages.

Marlo wrapped up by explaining that since January 500 businesses signed up and the Park will serve as a pilot program for parks and working with the City and Metro. Heather closed by stating that Travel Portland is footing the bill and it cannot be overstated enough how much it’s appreciated.

ZooLights Pricing Increase
Victor started by referring to the printout supplied and emailed about a parking rates increase for ZooLights 2019. As in previous years, there was a discussion in the transportation committee to see what changes can be made. Victor, Heather and OZ met with Rick Williams, a parking consultant who helped with EWP’s formation. The objective is to speak with the Board and come to an agreement for this year the goal being that the 2019 Zoo Lights scheme starts September 1 since it takes time to put information into place on the app, Parking Kitty and at the meters.
Today’s objective is to speak with the Board and come to an agreement for the 2019 ZooLights scheme with a goal of having a decision by September 1 due to the time to update both the app and at the meters. One suggestion received from Rick Williams to increase parking capacity without actually increasing the number of spots is to have pricing that increases over the time. For example, each hour cost more than the hour before. The hope is that we can find the sweet spot of time spent parked, ZooLights average visit is 2.05 hours in durations in previous years, ZooLights will be nightly from 4:00 PM-9:00 PM, compared to 2018 this would change a 2 hour stay with an increase of $1.

Victor stated that the hope is to find an average time frame for guests to spend parked, ZooLights average visit is 2.05 hours in duration. As with previous years, ZooLights will be nightly from 4:00-9:00 pm. In 2019, a visitor will face a $1 increase for a 2-hour stay when compared to 2018.

Dave asked about the correlation with attendance and parking and at what point offsite parking needs to be activated. Victor stated that 2018 attendance decreased 14% from 2017 while 2018 parking revenue decreased by 5%. Don highlighted the importance of for the OZ of putting guest experience first and the belief that their guests have a total amount they will pay for the experience, and increased parking cost will play a role in overall experience. Don explained that OZ provides many community tickets for those in a lower economic level and parking access to parking needs to be considered. Don explained that there are additional levels of service to enhance the guest experience provided by EWP and supporting staff; guests interacting with shuttle drivers, bus drivers and customer service agents before they enter the venue guests that adds value to the guest experience.

The Board discussed the possibility of parking increases during the 22 peak days instead of all 45 days of the program. The challenges with this option include that peak days can be based on weather and that a change in cost could negatively affect attendance numbers to standard rate days,

Ruth expressed concern about how these changes are communicated and questioned how likely guests will visit for only one hour and if guest satisfaction will decrease because of a concern of watching the time left on parking.

The Board discussed whether it’s better financially it is better to have guests visit a short time and leave and turn over parking spaces or for guests to stay longer and spend more time and money in the venues. Don stated that the OZ is most interested in a positive guest experience. Victor, at Don’s request, went into detail about the consultation with Rick Williams and success he has had with this potential new parking scheme.

The Board discussed how a pricing change will be communicated with guests. Victor shared the possibility of additional marking campaigns to communicate the change as well the meters and updating the app to alert users of the change. The Board discussed the possibility of using electronic signs on Highway 26 and advertising the free offsite parking. Don shared his belief that most guests are looking for efficiency over savings.

Cynthia asked in reference to the ZooLights handout about the correlation of additional revenue streams and additional customer service from EWP staff during ZooLights. Is the parking revenue enough to pay for EWP’s additional ZooLights staffing costs? Don drew attention to bullet points 1 and 2 that showed revenue over $200,000. Heather shared that there is a ZooLights specific budget for EWP that can be shared with the Board if desired.
The Board discussed the potential for using different busses for offsite parking instead of First Team. Heather shared the advantage to using First Team is that if the buses are not needed, they can be cancelled the same day at no charge.

Cynthia brought up the tentative scheduling of ZooLights running on Christmas Eve and her concern that when one venue begins to make decisions like that it has a rippling effect on others. Cynthia asked if that December 24 scheduling change means EWP will have to work that night as well and how that aligns with the desired equity as a park. Heather stated that she does not plan to ask EWP staff to work on Christmas Eve for those reasons and noted, it means working on the day of December 24. Heather noted that the Board is her boss so if that is the Board’s direction it can be addressed but she is uncomfortable with that.

The Board discussed possible changes to help with parking, including Don working directly with PGE at top levels to have access to electric busses for venue events. There was discussion of charging to ride the offsite parking shuttle but not to park to help offset higher costs.

Victor stated that next steps will be to continue to talk and hopefully by the next Board meeting there will be a final ZooLights proposal. The Board discussed parking and access to ZooLights for economically disadvantaged guests and how best to maximize their time at the event compared to waiting in line to pay parking. Ruth desires to jointly market PCM and ZooLights for guests to spend time in PCM and then visit ZooLights. Dave expressed that he understands the $3, $4, $5 rate and questioned the initial 1-hour rate (who wouldn’t spend at least one hour at ZooLights). Victor shared that it was designed to mimic previous years so that the increase would be more palatable for visitors.

**Board Minutes**

There are no financial reports to review. The June and July financial reports will be reviewed at the September meeting. The Board reviewed the June 28, 2019 Board meeting minutes.

**Motion:** Cynthia moved to approve the June 26 Board meeting minutes, Ruth seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Highlights**

Heather updated the Board on the two grants that EWP is applying for (a National Science Planning Grant and a PGE grant to Electrify Washington Park). She noted that PJG and PCM are also applying for the PGE grant. Heather hoped to have a letter of support from PPR Commissioner Fish to be more competitive. She discussed that the PGE grant with 3 contenders from within the Park should appear to be coordinated. The Board discussed the process of applying for a letter of support from Commissioner Fish and a letter of support signed by the Board. After a back and forth discussion on the merits of a Board signed letter, Heather decided not to seek a Board signed letter.

**Oregon Zoo Presentation**

Don led a tour through the ongoing construction at OZ. He detailed the construction timeline and that plans are on schedule. The group walked past the condors which were exciting to see.

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 am.