Explore Washington Park Board Meeting  
Thursday, April 9, 2020  
via Zoom  
Minutes

Present:
Joe Furia – World Forestry Center ("WFC")
Kathy Goeddel – Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association ("AHNA")
Anna Goldrich – Hoyt Arboretum Friends ("HAF")
Cynthia Haruyama – Portland Japanese Garden ("PJG") via conference call
Heather McCarey – Explore Washington Park ("EWP")
Don Moore – Oregon Zoo ("OZ")
Ruth Shelly – Portland Children’s Museum ("PCM")
JC Vanna – TriMet

Absent:
Steve Cole – at large
Adena Long – Portland Parks & Recreation ("PPR")
Dave Malcolm – Sylvan Highlands Neighborhood Association
Travel Portland Representative

Guests:
LeiLani Barney – EWP
Danny Dunn – EWP
Angie Linderman – EWP
Utpal Passi – OZ
Victor Sanders – PPR

The meeting commenced at 3:06 PM. Don Moore chaired the meeting with a quorum present via Zoom.

Motion: JC Vanna moved to approve consent agenda, Joe Furia seconded and the motion passed.

Updates:
Cynthia Haruyama (PJG) shared that PJG currently has a small staff still on and each person is taking care of responsibilities from many positions. PJG tried to remain open longer since they are an open venue space in hopes of serving the community as an outdoor space to use and to keep staff employed. March 15th is historically when PJG is at the lowest point for cash flow in the year and relies on the spring and summer months to build back up their revenue. PJG laid off all but essential staff and remaining staff took a pay cut. Garden maintenance and security are still on site working. PJG is providing health care insurance for laid off employees through May and hopes to reinstate employees onto payroll by June and are considering different scenarios to bring staff back. They are confident that as an outdoor space visitors will return more quickly and are considering ways to run the care and shops to help build back lost revenue.

Victor Sanders (PPR) updated the Board that he’s worked with incident command since March 15, bringing together people from different areas of the organization. PPR converted community centers into shelter spaces. The recreation side of PPR is completely shut down and many seasonal and recreation staff members have been
laid off. Adena Long is running incident command. Victor spoke with Heather McCarey about decreased parking revenue and how thin margins may potentially become as the shut down and shelter in place orders remain in effect. The City will need to have two budget processes due to the circumstances.

Anna Goldrich (HAF) shared that HAF kept all staff working and moved to all staff working remotely. HAF is looking into the Paycheck Protection Plan (“PPP”) since it does not rely on admissions as an organization but instead donations, rentals and the gift shop and it is very hard to predict revenue streams. Anna has concerns for the maintenance of the Park and vegetation as normally there are many volunteers who help to keep the Park well maintained. Plants and vegetation will continue to grow and there are now fewer people onsite to do needed work. HAF is down one horticulturist so there is only one full time staff maintenance person for 200 acres. Anna stressed an importance to think about the plants and vegetation as well within the Park. HAF is working to bring programing online such as preschool programs, nature journaling and bird identification workshops; so far people are signing up and engaging with the programing.

Ruth Shelly (PCM) shared that PCM had to unfortunately lay off 48 people and reduce hours for the remaining 22. Of the remaining 22 staff members, 19 are teachers and are doing distance learning with students. The other 3, including Ruth are managing everything else. PCM applied for loans and PPP. The PCM Gala was cancelled and it’s PCM’s largest fundraiser and that will be difficult. They are looking to launch online fundraisers in May including Giving Tuesday. Ruth shared that they are trying to do their best and feel a strong sense of solidarity with the other venues.

Joe Furia (WFC) shared that WFC kept everyone currently on the payroll. Some staff are unable to work remotely but are receiving PTO through. WFC extended the closure through April 30. Only 1 person is in Merlo Hall at a time and there is a schedule to avoid accidental overlaps. Contractors are on site doing previously scheduled work. WFC applied for PPP. Events are being canceled into July; August events are rescheduled to later in the year or even 2021 as there is so much uncertainty.

Don Moore (OZ) shared that OZ closed mid-March and is planning a fundraising push through the Zoo Foundation for Giving Tuesday as well. OZ expects to be closed through June especially with the Governors order to keep schools closed for the remainder of the school year. OZ will probably open with limited visitation and distancing in place on the train and carousel and is considering limiting attendance. OZ may operate about half the normal amount of food carts and concessions and hopes that next year will be more normal. Don spoke with a Convention Center representative and they do not believe they will be back to normal capacity until 2021/2022; PDX is down 95% of travelers.

JC Vannatta (TriMet) shared that TriMet is considered essential and is still operating at a reduced level of service. TriMet provided spacing for riders to social distance themselves, including signage on seats so people know where to sit and where not to sit. TriMet is running many essential personnel. Most administrative staff are working remotely and doing what they can to keep operators and drivers safe. Drivers and operators are given masks and busses and trains are being sanitized twice daily. JC is on an advanced planning committee and they discussed the possibility that nothing will be normal until this fall. Currently TriMet has 200 employees who are sick, not all are COVID but it is a freighting situation.

Washington Park Recovery

Heather shared that she recognizes this is a very difficult time but there is some excitement in thinking that when the Park reopens we will be stronger than before. Heather has been reflecting and thinking on how EWP is at its core in service to the venues and visitors in the Park. A revaluation on what that looks like even amongst the many unknowns we know that the Park will help the community to heal by providing visitors a safe space that is outside and allows for connection to nature. Thinking about how we will help the community heal we will;
prioritize staff and visitor health, maximize support to venues, and provide safe and adequate access. EWP is considering both short- and mid-term goals and initiatives.

Short-term messaging will include that the Park is amazing, but now is not the time, please stay home but continue to support the Park and its venues. EWP distributed a press release and video and several media organizations picked it up. EWP is looking at ways to highlight each venue as a way to bring the Park to the community. EWP will try to share moments happening in the Park and share them within the community, highlighting the venues’ videos and social posts.

In the mid-term (2021), the Park will celebrate its 150th anniversary and PCM its 75th anniversary so a marketing campaign will be developed to create excitement and push visitors to venues. Existing programs and marketing strategies are in place to encourage visitors to visit during off peak times.

We should examine attendance curves to determine if we can help to lower the attendance peaks. Historically, 20% of visitors use transit to get to the Park. We predict visitors will be hesitant to use transit as we open up. If all visitors drive we need to determine how to get them from offsite parking safely to the Park. There have been discussions for timed ticketing, operating the shuttles differently and learning from TriMet’s experience. One idea is to eliminate all day parking and it needs more exploration. Heather hopes to have EWP create a recovery task force with a representative from each venue so that we all can work collaboratively and support each other Park-wide. Ruth complemented EWP on the virtual tour; PCM loved it and shared it. Ruth underscored the support EWP is able to provide the venues working with reduced staffing.

Victor shared that Adena Long is on board with a task force and is currently part of the discussions on how to best handle safety at the International Rose Test Garden (“IRTG”). PPR is considering timed ticketing but the IRTG is such a porous space. Adena is excited about the steps EWP is discussing. JC expressed his and TriMet’s support where they are able to provide it. JC expressed a plan to share the virtual tour once things “calm” down. TriMet needs to use social media for less immediate notifications to changes in service or protocols. Joe asked about the scope of what is being considered for recovery. Heather shared that everything is on the table and that she has been in discussion with Glacier National Park who does timed ticketing even though there is no fee.

Cynthia wants to be part of the task force and explained that PJG is currently undergoing a change in their point of sale software that would include the ability to do timed ticketing but as things currently are they do not have the capacity to make the transition in their original time frame. Cynthia expressed an interest in timed parking as PJG could control how many visitors come in a certain time but the IRTG can be shoulder to shoulder on a nice day.

Joe is concerned about getting rid of all day parking as that create an issue for events taking place at WFC and other venues like OZ. Heather explained that we always consider access points to the Park (shuttles, overflow parking, parking management) but there may be a great need to pull more tools into help increase access and think about visitors who would have been shuttle riders now driving and how we can provide access with increased cars. Heather noted a need to balance the push for visitors to venues and public safety and healthy.

The Board discussed the schedule for the task force, when it’s appropriate to meet again and when venues plan to reopen if allowed by the state.

EWP Budget:
Heather presented the draft Fiscal Year 20/21 budget. The draft budget is not too different than in years past. The Washington Park Transportation and Parking Management Agreement (“WPTPMA”) amendment (a.k.a. six party agreement) is very nearly signed, and when that is done EWP contract can get paid in the full allocated amount. Thanks to Victor and all directors for working to get that completed. Victor worked on different projections for revenue and it’d be helpful to get a trust fund forecast soon. For this budget draft, we assume EWP will be fully
funded as in the WPTPMA amendment. On the listed revenue for TMP there is money that has been allocated that EWP will move into Q2 FY2021 and EWP will evaluate as we get closer if the timing is right to move forward with the project as planned. The allocated amount for the TMP will be moved new financial year from the current year.

Regarding carryover cash flow analysis, that assumes we are running shuttles in June, which we know may not happen but it is budgeted for. We also plan to keep $480,000 (three months’ operating costs); we can carry over about $50,000 into FY20-21. If we don’t operated shuttles in June we can carry over those funds as well.

In the budget’s program side the only update is a $150,000 special project for a marketing push for the whole Park. Other program areas remain about the same. High-level expenses include $460,000 for the intrapark shuttle, the same amount as last year. When examining ridership data, we could possibly provide daily service year round at the same amount. This will help us to lobby and work with TriMet to change service for Line 63 to include service to downtown. Contract marketing support includes a website update as well as design for collateral and ad buys. EWP is exploring options with Lamar including wrapping a MAX train, bus ads, items at the airport and other regional ad buys. Miscellaneous contract includes $80,000 for the TMP. We already paid $20,000 to Sparks & Sullivan.

As this is a first draft, revenue may change. We will need to approve a budget by June 30.

The Board discussed changes to Line 63.

Victor shared that the trust fund is taking a big hit. PPR stopped major maintenance projects and moved some ranger costs to be paid by the disaster cost center to help ease the cost burden to the Park. There is talk to close some of the Park gates on roads to lessen crowds within the Park, especially as roses begin to bloom. The South Entry Project is still moving ahead, PBOT and PPR want capital programs to keep moving forward so that the City can continue to support construction moving along.

Heather concluded that it was nice to see everyone and work together for the progress of the Park. Don shared his appreciation for all those involved with the WPTPMA amendment.

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 PM.

Updates sent by Board Members following the meeting are included below.

Portland Japanese Garden Update

• Since February 29, PJG began to implement workplace recommendations from the Oregon Health Authority, continuing to make daily changes until it became apparent that PJG could no longer provide a safe environment for staff, volunteers and visitors.

• PJG closed to the public March 17.

• On March 19, PJG laid off 98 staff and retained a skeleton crew of 15 people all who took a significant pay-cut. So far, PJG has maintained health insurance for our entire original staff.

• With living collections, multiple buildings, and a relatively porous perimeter, some of our skeleton crew necessarily work on-site and practice strict social distancing. The remainder of the skeleton crew is teleworking from home.

• PJG applied for a PPP loan.

• Depending on the lifting of the Governor’s stay at home order, we’re developing reopening scenarios for June 1 and July 1.
When PJG re-opens, we assume that it will be in a modified form which may include social distancing in both the gardens and indoor spaces which will, in turn, impact programming and events.

Upon re-opening, PJG anticipates a 50% (or more) reduction in earned revenues during the critical months of our high season (mid-March to mid-November) in which we earn 82% of our annual income which in turn supports 80% of our operating budget.

Portland Children's Museum Update

- PCM closed to the public March 14.
- PCM laid off 48 staff and reduced the hours of 19 Opal School staff on March 21. Ruth is leading a three-person business continuation team, being paid part time.
- PCM applied for the PPP and Emergency Incident Disaster Loan.
- PCM cancelled our April 25 gala and plan to do an online giving campaign May 1-5, culminating in Giving Tuesday.
- Depending on the lifting of the stay at home order and the restrictions on large gatherings, PCM is developing reopening scenarios for June 1 and July 1.
- PCM may start summer camps in our building in advance of being open to the general public, where we may start with timed ticketing.

Oregon Zoo Update

- OZ closed to the public due to Covid social distancing in mid-March.
- OZ Foundation is targeting the Covid-directed Giving Tuesday on May 5 for additional philanthropic help this year.
- OZ will be closed through June, although we will try to return to “modified open” status if government direction permits.
- When OZ opens the gates and is in “modified open” mode, expect limited visitation on pathways, the train and carousel; buildings will remain closed for some period to be determined, as they were during our “modified open” mode earlier in March.
- OZ assumes limited admissions for any events.
- OZ’s revenue assumption includes reducing projections to 50% of normal for food carts and concessions.

Hoyt Arboretum Friends Update

- HAF closed the Visitor Center on March 12 and staff began working from home on March 16 to make room in our building for essential Park staff.
- HAF applied for a PPP loan and, if we receive it, will be able to keep all staff for the next month. If not, HAF will consider cuts in hours or layoffs.
- Because HAF relies on donations from supporters, we’re keeping people engaged through virtual programs and photos and videos from the Park.
- HAF is concerned about the care and maintenance of the Park and our collections due to limited PP&R staff and no access for volunteers. Normal operations are made possible with the support of many regular volunteers who help care for trails and plant collections.
TriMet Update

- TriMet continues in operations and is classified as an essential service.
- As of April 5, TriMet reduced the level of service because of a dramatic dip in ridership (roughly 60%).
- TriMet is actively monitoring ridership so that riders are able to “socially distance” themselves while on board.
- TriMet put up various signs on vehicles to encourage social distancing and wearing face masks.
- TriMet increased cleaning of all touchpoints on our vehicles and stations.
- TriMet launched www.trimet.org/health as a repository of information for all we are doing regarding COVID-19.
- TriMet’s general manager is working to avoid layoffs for as long as TriMet can. Some positions were repurposed. For instance, seven on-street customer service representatives are now delivering for Meals on Wheels using TriMet vans to help our community.
- TriMet is begun developing plans for when ridership begins to increase.