



Board Workshop
March 16, 2023, 8:30pm – 12:30pm
Oregon Zoo Education Center

Minutes

Attending

Steve Cole – at-large
Joseph Furia – World Forestry Center (“WFC”)
Kathy Goeddel – Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association (“AHNA”)
Anna Goldrich – Hoyt Arboretum Friends (“HAF”)
Cynthia Haruyama – Portland Japanese Garden (PjG)
Dave Malcolm – Sylvan Highlands Neighborhood Association (“SHNA”)
Heather McCarey – Explore Washington Park (“EWP”)
Billie Moser – Travel Portland (“TP”)
Heidi Rahn – Oregon Zoo (“OZ”)
Victor Sanders – Portland Parks & Recreation (“PPR”)

Absent

JC Vannatta – TriMet (“TM”)

Guests

Keith Baich – EWP
Lisa Christy – PjG
Danny Dunn – PPR
Passi Utpal – OZ
Hallie Wilkerson – EWP

Ten Year Partner Highlights

- Kathy (AHNA): The Portland Water Bureau is in progress of replacing the current reservoir with a new underground reservoir and have served as a model by working with the neighborhood to come up with a design and function that could be enjoyed for years to come. The new reservoir will offer public access while supplying water to the city and the project is expected to be completed in 2025.
- Cynthia (PjG): The Cultural Crossing in Portland Japanese Garden officially opened six years ago and was meant to serve the already growing visitor audience. When the Garden opened in 1963, it planned for a capacity of 30,000 visitors annually. Today, it experiences over 300,000 visitors each year. The Cultural Crossing was built to stand the test of time so guests could enjoy for many years to come.

- Dave (SHNA): All is well in Sylvan Highlands and the EWP board packet and financials were shared at the most recent neighborhood board meeting. There are many highlights to be thankful for including the lovely Park that people care for and the lack of houseless present near the neighborhood.
- Billie (TP): The Tourism Improvement District, which is a fee on hotel rooms and overnight stays, has been a very large success for the organization in the last ten years. It has generated very stabilized funding and the organization would not be where it is today without this implementation. An increase in international flights has also reflected Portland's growth and the attention that the City of Portland has brought.
- Heidi (OZ): There has been a significant transformation of the Oregon Zoo in the last decade. 150 million dollars was invested to fund Zoo expansion projects including the Education Center, Polar Bear habitat, Elephant Land and more. Many of these changes were influenced by guest feedback while continuing to focus on the animals. It is worth acknowledging the difficulty of the pandemic years and despite losing 30% of staff, the Oregon Zoo has managed to adapt and come out in a stronger position than before.
- Steve (at-large): Our neighborhood community association has experienced a very successful grant program that raises money for the 501c3. This money is put towards home tours, local newsletter, and nearby charter schools. The program has raised about \$350,000 in the last ten years and continues to be a significant accomplishment.
- Victor (PPR): There city of Portland is amidst a change in government, and it has been a delight witnessing the transition from an internal perspective. Directors and commissioners are working together to tackle large-scale problems across the Bureaus. The Local Option Levy has been a positive for Portland Parks & Recreation and the Rose Garden project has come to an end while the South Entry project begins.
- Anna (HAF): Growing financial stability over the last ten years has been crucial for the organization. The addition of the Washington Park Free Shuttle has brought more visitors to the Arboretum, contributing to their overall growth and allowing for programs on a regular basis. The organization has begun looking into investment options for a new visitor center, and the pandemic years have built confidence to move forward.
- Joe (WFC): The WFC has been guided by the vision that forest sustainability depends on a conversation with many, as forest health impacts us all. This vision has been maintained throughout the pandemic and the transformation reflects the current makeup of the board, which is now represented by 30% non-forestry folks. The intention for the organization is to be a center where individuals outside the forestry world can feel empowered to discuss forestry topics.

Ten Years of EWP

Heather thanks the board for their contributions and reminds everyone how much stronger the Park has become thanks to all this groundwork. There have been many changes and updates to the Park when comparing to her first week at EWP. In 2021, we celebrated 150 years at Washington Park and the Board unanimously approved the One Park vision. Recently in 2022, the Board approved the Brand Toolkit and 90% Wayfinding Plan furthering this vision.

An overview of the Service Delivery Plan Report is presented, which breaks into five focus areas of access and circulation, visitor services, marketing and communications, internal organization, and identity. Access and circulation data show that post-COVID, visitors drive to the Park in a greater percent than pre-COVID numbers. This emphasizes the need for a conversation behind parking options throughout the Park. EWP's shuttle service for intrapark, as well as off-site, are incredibly economical in terms of cost per ride when comparing to other local transit options. The ridership for Line 63 is currently low, but EWP will continue to promote the service and advocate to TriMet the importance of this service.

A few highlights for visitor services includes EWP's on and off-site customer service programs, as well as the distribution of parkwide maps in both English and Spanish. We continue to promote marketing efforts throughout social media and the website, which now offers a public parkwide calendar. In 2022, there were partnerships with Bill Walton, Vive NW, and KGW to promote transit options and Line 63. To further the efforts of the Washington Park Brand, EWP also hired a GIS intern to create an online tool where all signage in the Park is mapped and linked to the appropriate page of the Brand Toolkit.

An overview on the Annual Transportation Report is presented; this report has been completed annually since 2014 using consistent methodology created with Portland State University. EWP has plans to conduct an off-peak survey in February the following year and many of the venues are in favor of this to help highlight local visitors.

Heather reviews the Washington Park Strategic Operations Plan to check each task's current status and what is still in progress. A few successes include a park identity system, parkwide marketing plan, wayfinding plan, and continued progress in EWP's internal organization. Victor points out that certain action items listed in this plan such as an Enhanced Maintenance and Amenity Plan and Funding Model Study, falls under PPR's jurisdiction. He thinks conversations are needed to confirm intentionality behind EWP's time focused on these projects.

Looking ahead, EWP will focus on access and circulation endeavors such as wayfinding, permitting, and electronic signs for the south parking lots. The organization will also move forward with a few equity programs funded by the Metro RTO grant program. This includes an upcoming program that provides free TriMet passes for guests to access the park, as well as a pilot program for a free shuttle service dedicated to venue-supported community groups. Other goals include continuation of the Park Brand, as well as a fundraising plan for the future.

Transportation Access Plan

In reference to the Transportation Access Plan, there are two main outcomes. The first includes an return on investment study for more parking opportunities focusing on the areas of the lower field near the Children's Playground, as well as the off-site lot. It is also worth a conversation with PPR to consider the feasibility for more parking in the south end of the Park.

Heather introduces the capital project priority exercise which contains projects taken from the Master Plan that are transportation related. This will give EWP and PPR a sense of what projects the Board feels should be prioritized and moved to the next phase of information gathering. There is in-depth discussion regarding the controversy behind the Master Plan and how it was not favored by a portion of the public and nearby stakeholders. It is also brought to everyone's attention that the completion of these projects may depend on one another, and it may be difficult to prioritize one project without the consideration of another.

EWP Board Roles and Experience

The next phase of the presentation includes reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the EWP Board, Five-Parties, and Park committees. It is emphasized that although board members are representing EWP and the One Park vision at board meeting, it can be helpful for individuals to share the concerns of their own organizations throughout the process. This topic is opened for discussion and suggestions to determine what board members would like to achieve out of designated meeting time moving forward.

Dave acknowledges that the five-party agreement felt as an exclusion of the neighborhood associations and isolates the information, such as expenditures of the Trust Fund. There is appreciation of EWP's transparency with all reports and internal projects but would like to expand the discussions and examine other Park structures to benefit from their strategy.

Billie agrees with these points and appreciates regular partner updates as a stakeholder who is not present in the Park. Potential discussions include analyzing comparable parks to be inspired by best practices. The written reports, websites, and resources that are available for the board are fantastic.

There are suggestions behind hosting the board meetings at different institutions so on-site visits do not take up extra time out of everyone's schedule. Events such as One Park where all staff are welcome to attend serves as a strong opportunity.

The frequency of board meetings will remain at every other month and will remain a hybrid of in-person and on-line meetings.

Suggestions behind bringing other groups into the Park are discussed to inspire the board, as well allow these groups to experience the Park and build an opportunity to provide context.

Inviting the City Council to our Park is a favored idea, potentially during the annual presentation.

Consent Agenda, Minutes, Financial Reports, and 990 Form

Motion: Steve moved to approve the agenda, October minutes, financial reports, and the 990-tax form, Joe seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

NOTE: Technical difficulties arose during the vote to approve the Wayfinding Plan in the October, 2022, where Director Long was not present during the vote.