

Safety and Security Meeting - August 24th 2023

Present Committee Members

Keith
Erin
Sean
Ian
Sergio
Danny
Anna
Rowan

Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves. New committee member from the Oregon Zoo today. Sean Sherrodd welcome! Anna is filling in for Becky from Hoyt.

Venue/Partner Updates

EWP (Erin and Keith)

EWP staff have continued to encounter people in crisis throughout the park. Generally will call on Rangers for help if there are no violence issues. Fires and smoke have been observed in the park, from the Rose Garden to the TriMet Plaza. Most of these have been small, possibly due to cigarettes being disposed improperly. Zoo security for example had to put out a fire on the TriMet plaza in the bark dust.

EWP staff have also been seeing a lot more coyotes in the last few weeks, even during mid-day, usually around the Rose Garden. The bear scat seen a few weeks ago was never officially confirmed, but if EWP does get any reports we will make sure to share it with this group. EWP's peak season will slow down after Labor Day. Our Field Staff's season ends on Labor Day, after that we will start prepping for the fall/winter season, including ZooLights.

WFC (Message from Chuck via email)

Chuck is not able to attend this meeting but would like to know more about the shots fired incident in the park. The committee will cover this topic later in the meeting.

Question (Sean): Does this meeting occur monthly or every other month?

Answer (Keith): The meeting schedule varies, in the peak season we try to meet a little more often (once every 6 weeks to once every other month) whereas in the slower season in January-March we might only meet once or twice. Keith will send the charter to Sean.

Question (Sean): Part of Lloyd District security, PPB was involved in that, would police be involved in this committee?

Answer (Danny): I have not seen police at this meeting, but possibly in 2015 or 2016

Oregon Zoo (Sean)

The Zoo has had some individuals that keep showing up, a pair of men who use scooters, and they hop gates to take recycling. It is now happening more frequently and it is happening late at night. Gate G is the main gate where this is occurring, that is the gate where the loading dock is.

Sean has not seen any coyotes in the Zoo but has heard of them. Any photos of bear scat try to get pictures and send them to Sean and Sean can try and get it over to the vets for identification.

The Zoo has been working on emergency drills and working with the fire department.

End of September the Zoo will be having a cider and brew fest. It is the 29th/30th of September (a Friday/Saturday). More information about this event will be out soon. There will be a max of 3k a night.

PJG (Rowan)

There was also a social media post of a bear seen on the Wildwood trail back in July, also bear sightings back in May in Forest Park.

When that shooting in the park happened, we made sure that the PJG security guard took cover inside the garden. Reminder to us at the Portland Japanese Garden that we need to have a policy. We are also trying to be more prepared with active shooter online trainings. We are working with law enforcement to possibly get training for all of our staff. Trying to provide this training in a way that is also sensitive to staff, we don't want to scare anyone.

No large park wide issues beside the break-ins and trespassers. Thankfully no one violent.

TriMet (Ian)

TriMet is in the midst of a big camera upgrade, in the elevators and in the tunnel. So we would be getting better images. If any of the park partners are trying to identify people who run down into the tunnel from the park, reach out to Ian and they can get their investigations team working on trying to get images.

We are still targeting Nov 5th for a big regional exercise for law enforcement. Looking to take over parking lot C, for that one Sunday only. It will include a chemical attack exercise on one side of the tunnel and an active shooter exercise on the other, two scenarios. We will be shutting down the tunnel all day. There will be a bus bridge from Sunset Transit

Center to Providence Park. It will add a delay for anyone going. Partners can observe if you are interested. Reach out to Ian with questions or concerns.

Will need another stop for the free shuttle and TriMet buses. To avoid civilians interacting with the exercises.

Trying to limit the activity above ground to as little as possible. If it happens it will be in Lot C and the Plaza.

It is scheduled from 6am - 8pm (0600 - 2000), trying to get more participation with fire and police. Want to get as much as we can from this training.

Question (Rowan): PJG interested in sending some staff to the drill, do you know how many slots would be open?

Answer (Ian): We have a good amount of space, just need to gear people up. Think they can accommodate a significant number of people. If we can't get enough actors might open that to the wider group. We have not had the mid term planning meeting yet for this exercise, but we will start drilling down on those details and let this committee know.

Question (Keith): I noted that in a recent email, the Hollywood TriMet elevators now require that people have a valid ticket to even go down the elevators. Is that something that could happen at Washington Park? Is that on the horizon?

Answer (Ian): Hollywood Transit Elevators were a pilot project, over 50% of the incidents at that location were centered around the elevators. The idea was that if we could just limit access to these elevators it would eliminate some incidents. Guests do have to have a TriMet hop card or RFID card to ride the elevators. I don't see it coming to Washington Park any time soon. TriMet is focusing on East Portland and problem areas; Washington Park elevators are not a big concern. Would park partners be concerned about this?

Comment (Danny): I would change it hourly if you were to implement it. As it is used and the tunnel is kind of like a public art area.

Comment (Ian): My stance to leave it open. Appreciate that input. The elevators are shutting down at night after service hours.

Question (Danny): I was not aware of the elevators shutting down at the end of the night. How long has that been going on?

Answer (Ian): The elevators were upgraded in 2018 or 2019, this allowed them to be shut down at night. We have to physically check the elevators and the tunnel to make sure people are not locked down there. Cameras can now visually sweep it. We do the sweep every night.

Overall, at TriMet we have had a lot less trespass incidents and vandalism, but that might be due to nice weather.

PP&R Maintenance (Sergio)

A lot of car break-ins in the park. Maintenance staff have been having to clean up a lot of glass due to these incidents.

Another major concern is about the shooting near Hoyt. No maintenance staff were on duty due to it being at night. And maintenance staff have heard rumors that some of these people involved in the shooting incident came from the WFC events. Some rumors have said that at the end of the events they go and vandalize other areas of the park. Not sure if that is accurate or not, but just wanted to see if anyone has any information about that.

Question (Sergio): Do partners have security that is watching guests at the end of the events?

Answer (Keith): Those are good questions, we will give them to Chuck and see what the WFC security presence is. It seemed like he didn't have more info on the shooting incident, based on his questions for this meeting.

As we move into fall/winter the cases of break-ins in the past have seemed to go up, along with more campers in the area. There have also been more cases of graffiti and other vandalism on things like the picnic tables, the memorials, and in the Rose Garden itself. These things are happening constantly, we don't know what the solution is.. This keeps happening over and over, and we unfortunately are just doing clean up. And some we can't get cleaned up without special people.

Comment (Sean): There was a program we used to use near Disneyland, they would put flyers up about keeping vehicles secure. It was a good tool. Part of the problem is that we need to train the public on how to lock their vehicle. And make sure they don't have anything visible.

Comment (Danny): I would be interested in seeing these signs, and the language and getting it more and more on everyone's website. Getting the message to every guest that is coming to the park.

Hoyt (Anna)

In regards to the shooting incident, what I have observed is that sometimes when police are involved we do not get a lot of information during or after the incident. So we don't know what happened. The communication between rangers/police officers is difficult. A way to improve communication is needed.

We do have a big event at Hoyt Arboretum on Saturday Sept 9th. There will be 120 arborists in the park doing tree maintenance and care.

Peak Session Security Issues/PP&R (Danny)

There has been more vandalism to the Holocaust Memorial, so they are looking to update and have cameras up there by the memorial. When Danny knows more he will update everyone. We currently have a trail camera, we will keep trying to use the trail camera, but it is difficult to capture good images with those. We will also be using signs around the area that people are on camera. We are watching and hoping to change people's behavior. Danny has also been working on contracts to see what kind of opportunities for other cameras that we might have. A more long term camera solution is being discussed for PP&R overall, but Danny is not involved in those discussions currently. Danny is putting up a temporary camera at the intersection between Rose Garden Way and Kingston Dr/Ave. This is a low cost test to see what we can get out of that.

Shooting incident - we don't get information that we need from the police. I do want to highlight that GroupMe worked how it was supposed to. With actionable information that got out to everyone. What ended up happening: When locking up the Hoyt Visitor Center at 9:40 Ranger Rowe observed people down by Stevens Pavilion. There seemed to be vehicles parked down by the structure itself. When the ranger went down to the area, the individuals fled into the woods. As they ran the Ranger heard a gunshot from the direction they fled in, after that another gun shot was heard. Ranger Rowe went back to their vehicle and communicated with their supervisor, 911 was contacted and the Ranger was instructed to leave the area. PP&R did not get confirmation if the police did come and investigate the area. This is not a type of incident that Rangers are best at handling or following up on. Park partners are not able to handle an active shooter. So we have staff evacuate.

Below is the write up of the incident from Ranger Rowe:

"Ranger Rowe while locking up Hoyt visitor center on 8/12 /23 at 9:40 PM while wearing my body armor. I heard a lot of yelling coming from the Stevens Pavilion. I saw 5 males climbing on park benches and moving around the structure (parkour). I communicated over the radio that I was making contact with group in Stevens. 2 vehicles were parked near the structure 1 black car Oregon plate#976mwh the other Black dodge pickup plate# 20026 Oregon with a logo on the door that read Creative Contracting. When I walked down the steps towards the group they fled into the darkness as soon as they saw me. about 10 seconds later I heard a gun shot come from the direction they had fled. 5 seconds later I heard a second shot while I was heading back to my

vehicle. I communicated over the radio my supervisor who told me leave and call 911 I left the area and reported it to their dispatch. . I also alerted people on group me about the incident.”

Question (Rowan): Did rangers find shell casings in the area?

Answer (Danny): They did not.

The South Entry project is working to finish up roadway construction. They need to move an electrical box, and they are moving it today. The reconnecting of that box is going to take a while due to PGE work that will need to be done to complete this project. Therefore Lights in Lot B and C will be out for 4-8 weeks. Assume that the road lights will be out. Danny is working with teams on mitigation of this issue.

Question (Sean): The brew fest at the end of September, will be in the evening when it is dark. Will there be a generator to have the lights on for that event?

Answer (Danny): No generator, as it would cost \$53k

Question (Keith): Will the TriMet plaza lights be on? I think whether those lights are on or not will be a significant factor regarding the safety, feasibility of those spots. For ZooLights EWP does rent some Light Plants (portable lights). Perhaps those should be considered, at the very least for those two days and times of other event usage in the evening.

Answer (Ian): I will look into if the lights at the TriMet Plaza will be on.

Question (Anna): Does the PP&R Summer Free For All team know about this?

Answer (Danny): I believe they know. I just found out about this timing myself this morning, but I have been reaching out since then

Comment (Keith): I can see why you brought this up in the meeting. There is the issue of the timing, but also the fact that this will indeed be a safety/security concern for any cars parked in those lots.

Ranger Shaudis has transferred to Forest Park. PP&R did a bid process through the union for the Washington Park positions, and none of the full time rangers took the Washington Park position. Internally, we will do some interviews and for now we are going to be putting this in the normal ranger rotation position. Ranger hours: Day shift rangers have been shifted to 6am to 4pm, and they will now have 24 hours coverage in the city overall. We are going to play it by ear and see if we can get some swing shift rangers here for the start of their shift.

Question (Keith): Do we have overnight coverage for half the week?

Answer (Danny): Washington Park is covered until 2am typically. But city wide is now on 24/7 coverage.

With this scheduling change there have been a number of incidents with the Washington Park ranger phone. Will be retiring the Washington Park Ranger phone number. Dispatch will be answering until 8pm. This will be starting in October, when the seasonal ranger hours shift. If no one answers the Dispatch number or it goes to voicemail the call should be forwarded to 311.

No updates on exclusions currently. The individuals that have been reported by the Zoo would be some people that might need to be excluded.

Security Data (Erin)

In the last Safety and Security meeting in June, data and data collection were discussed. We reviewed some PP&R data and discussed collecting data park wide and from the individual partners. To start this new idea, EWP has pulled together internal EWP data and data gathered from GroupMe posts.

This is a rough draft of a possible method for collecting and reviewing this data. Eventually it would be good to compare this data to PP&R and see what data is already being collected.

Comment (Danny): It would be a good idea to include Portland Police data. It is available to the public, and you can look at neighborhoods that the park is by/within.

Comment (Anna): It would be a good idea to have one-on-one conversations with each partner, as each destination is different. For example, the "downed tree branch" is not really something that us at Hoyt would consider to be a safety issue.

Comment (Keith): Yes that is a good idea for us to connect with each partner to see what they are looking for and what they already collect.

Comment (Danny): We should really focus on understanding what we are trying to do with this data. We should ask ourselves: Why are we collecting this data?

Comment (Anna): I do think getting this data is worthwhile, but we want to make sure we are getting useful data.

Questions/Next Steps

Question (Rowan): What is the park policy on open carry of firearms? If the person is not dangerous would the rangers check on that person? Should that be passed on to rangers?

Answer (Danny): There was an individual on the WA park free shuttle that dropped a gun on the shuttle. It is against park policy to carry weapons in the park. No policies against legally carrying weapons. Rangers are not equipped to handle guns or incidents with guns.

Keith and Erin will follow up with partners about next steps for the safety data.