



**SALEM PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
DIGITAL MEETING
December 10, 2020
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Alan Alexander
Woody Dukes
Dylan McDowell
Micki Varney
Keith Norris
David Fridenmaker
Paul Rice

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tony Caito
Diana Dickey

STAFF PRESENT

Patricia Farrell
Jennifer Kellar
Eunice Kim
Milan Davis
Becky George
Deborah Topp
Toni Whitler

1. ROLL

Members Tony Caito and Diana Dickey marked absent. Chair McDowell noted that this would be Member Dickey's last meeting. Anyone looking to apply for the opening on the Board should be directed to the website.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Varney noted that the agenda says the previous meeting was 10/8, but it should be 11/12.

Micki Varney moved to accept minutes from previous meeting. Keith Norris seconded. Minutes approved with no changes.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Wigg submitted a proposal for a path through Pioneer Cemetery. Vice Chair Varney asked what SPRAB's role in the Pioneer Cemetery was. Jennifer Kellar explained that Friends of Pioneer Cemetery does the maintenance. City of Salem has a contract for mowing and edging, and head stone repairs. Member Norris wanted to confirm it was a pending item with City Council. Patricia stated that Councilor Nordyke requested staff investigate adding a path through the West edge of the cemetery, so there is an information report that will go to Council and they will discuss it in January. Toni Whitler confirmed it is a future staff report going forward in January and she will send it to the Board.

4. BOARD ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

a. Salem Parks Foundation

Carol Snyder provided the Salem Parks Foundation Annual Report for fiscal year 2019-2020. Vice Chair Varney asked if the bottle drop account is still going on and how much profit they receive from it. Ms. Snyder confirmed it is still going on, but she doesn't have the figures on how much profit they get from it. She estimates they charge .15 per bag and .35 for

processing the cans and they receive the rest of the money collected. If you are looking for bags you can go to their website and send an email to request more.

Vice Chair Varney asked if the Salem Parks Foundation talks about the issues with the unsheltered individuals in Salem parks. Ms. Snyder said they might discuss that at the next meeting in January. She thinks many of the members have written to the city councilors with their concerns, but they haven't provided a statement.

No other questions or comments. No motion required during this meeting.

b. Update on *Our Salem*

Eunice Kim, Project Manager, Community Development Department, presented the update.

Chair McDowell asked how they are collaborating with the Climate Action Task Force. Ms. Kim stated they are working very closely together, with a lot of overlapping issues.

Member Norris asked if the expectation for the Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan is to start in 2022. Patricia Farrell said she does not think it will be ready in January 2022, but they've been keeping track of changes they will make when it's time. Toni Whitler stated the last update took 3 years.

Chair McDowell asked for the definition of a Pocket Park. Patricia stated part of the task of updating the Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan will be to define new park classifications, such as a pocket park. They can be small, left-over spaces between buildings that function as small plazas with fountains or seating areas in an urban environment.

No other questions or comments. No motion required during this meeting.

c. Public Survey about Trees

Ms. Topp stated that in October 2020, City Council gave staff direction to do more outreach and education on trees. The items that came out of the Council meeting in October were increasing tree canopy on private properties, increasing awareness of tree removal criteria, and increasing awareness for landscaping requirements.

Chair McDowell asked if the public survey will use previously decided questions from Denver and Portland surveys, or start from scratch with new knowledge. Ms. Topp stated they will use the questions that were previously decided with the SPRAB tree committee along with new questions. Ms. Farrell added that she forwarded the previously decided questions to Ms. Topp.

Chair McDowell mentioned the Benefit of Trees pamphlet that was provided and asked if she wants to talk about it now. Ms. Topp stated they recently created the pamphlet and were planning to use it at their outreach events. They were not able to due to COVID but they were able to use it with Friends of Trees. They have it available in Spanish and English. Chair McDowell mentioned the website Toni Whitler and Rob Romanek have been working on which is an online fact sheet of all the parks and services offered with great information.

No other questions or comments. No motion required during this meeting.

d. Draft Annual Report

Toni Whitler presented the draft annual report with edits submitted previously by Board members.

Member Dukes noted that Lord & Schryver conservancy, Lord & Schryver Gardeners, and Deepwood Gardeners should be added on the top of page 4.

Vice Chair Varney was wondering what the criteria is for the photos for next year's report. She added it would be nice to see more people interacting as well as more diverse individuals in the photos. Ms. Whitler agreed and said there will hopefully be more photos to choose from next year. Ms. Farrell mentioned that the person's permission is required to use the photo. Ms. Whitler confirmed they get the photos from Desktop Publishing who have permissions from the individuals in the photos.

Alan Alexander moved to approve as modified. Woody Dukes seconded.

Vote: All members voted in favor of the motion.

e. Letter to City Council Re: Unsheltered Persons in Parks

Vice Chair Varney provided the letter prior to the meeting. The purpose of the letter is to state that SPRAB previously asked to be kept in the loop on decisions regarding parks and are requesting again to participate in the process regarding decisions to provide parks as a place for unsheltered persons.

Chair McDowell stated he informed Council that a letter was forthcoming. The Board members discussed edits and changes to the letter until a final text was agreed upon.

Ms. Whitler kept track of all notes/changes and will send them over after the meeting.

Keith Norris moved to approve as modified. Alan Alexander seconded.

Vote: All members voted in favor of the motion.

f. Nominations of Officers

Chair McDowell stated that members will have the chance to run for the Chair and Vice Chair positions next month. He is planning to run as Chair again. Vice Chair Varney is planning to run as Vice Chair again as well. Member Alexander said he is very happy with them as Chair and Vice Chair. Member Rice agreed.

5. INFORMATION REPORTS - WRITTEN

a. Urban Forestry Update

Milan Davis noted that the numbers of trees planted will hopefully continue rising. Some trees around the Civic Center will be removed, including the group of ornamental pears on Liberty between the Library and Civic Center. No other questions or comments regarding Milan Davis' Urban Forestry Update.

b. Parks Planning Update

Patricia Farrell encouraged taking the Climate Action Plan visioning exercise on the website, and Bush's Pasture Park/Deepwood Gardens and Geer Park Surveys. No other questions or comments regarding Ms. Farrell's Parks Planning Update.

c. Parks Operations Update

Jennifer Kellar presented some changes since she provided the update.

- **Encampment Cleanups**

Claggett Creek Nature Park cleanup got postponed to December 15th. Last Tuesday they were redirected to two different areas instead, the first was the Bridgehead area near Front St and the outlying downtown areas. They collected about 5 dump trucks full of garbage. The second was to take care of four fires in 48 hours the unsheltered community started underneath the Mission St & 12th St overpass, where they cleaned up a lot of debris. They are scheduled to go back to Wallace Marine Park on December 22nd.

Member Norris asked what percentage of the garbage was picked up last time they cleaned at Wallace Marine Park. Ms. Kellar said it was about 20 percent of the totality of the garbage. She estimates it will take several weeks of clean up to get it all.

Member Norris asked if this was the first time a clean up was conducted since the camping at Salem parks began. Ms. Kellar stated that they did one at Wallace about two months ago, and there was a longer break between cleaning than anticipated because ServiceMaster was behind due to the wildfire clean ups. Previously they were going to clean up at least once a month before the two-month break. At this point in time Wallace Marine Park is worse than Cascades Gateway Park.

Member Dukes asked how effective the trash for cash program is. Ms. Kellar said initially when it started it was relatively successful, now they have found people getting trash from receptacles and turning them in for the gift cards.

Member Fridenmaker suggested locking the trash receptacles. Ms. Kellar stated that she's not sure if the private property owners do, but we do not lock ours so they can be used.

Member Rice noted that Ms. Kellar said the populations are growing and asked if there's any talk of a limit to the number of people they will allow to camp there. She said they provided the number of people that would comply with the Governor's guidelines with 6-ft social distancing to Council. There is concern with spreading them out to comply with the guidelines and having them spill into the developed areas where we have programs that are revenue streams for the City. She has not heard a specific number that will be the most they allow for a certain location, and it is difficult to tell how many people there really are camping at the parks.

Chair McDowell asked if the bicycle shops are using the recycled bicycle parts. Jennifer said they are not being recycled to bicycle shops because of the conditions they are in, they are recycled at City of Salem Shops building. No other questions or comments regarding Ms. Kellar's Parks Operations Update.

- **Riverfront Park North Restroom**
Engineering is looking to complete that project toward the end of January. Chair McDowell asked for the status of Pringle Creek trail. Ms. Farrell answered they hired a consultant and are looking for grants. There is no time line yet for the project.

d. Recreation Services Update

Becky George added that the virtual tree lighting was added to YouTube today. No other questions or comments regarding Becky George's Recreation Services update.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is January 14, 2021.

7. New Business

Chair McDowell stated that he met with Sarah Strahl at the Salem Library and discovered they have explorer kits. Vice Chair Varney asked if there is a kit for trees, Chair McDowell confirmed there is. Vice Chair Varney wanted to know if there was any action needed from the Board regarding the email Toni Whitler sent from Betsy Bellshaw. Ms. Whitler confirmed there was no action needed it was just an FYI.

8. ADJOURN

7:26 PM

Minutes: Michelle Starbuck/Toni Whitler