

Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2015

Chairperson Norma Hernandez called meeting to Order at 6:45 am.

Present- Norma Hernandez, Jessica Schleif, Andrew Fick, Tammy Loughran, Eric Halverson, Peter O'Farrell, Grace Laman, and Howard Rub

Absent- Jim Holen and Joe Miltengerger

Guests- Drew Herzig

Staff- Angela Cosby, Erin Reilly, Matt Baum, Jonah Dart-McLean

Approval of Minutes

1. Andrew Fick noted the following corrections to the March minutes:
 - a. Under What do you hear –**Andrew Fick** heard from an Alderbrook resident...” Under New Business Item 12 – ~~“Eric Halverson~~ **Andrew Fick** announced...”

Public comments

1. There were no public comments.

President Hernandez

- A. What do you hear- Andrew Fick said he heard the event at The Column was an improvement over last year. He was unable to attend, but appreciated the City's partnership and support for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Tammy Loughran said 60 to 65 people attended the Earth Day event at Gray School Community Garden and everyone seemed excited about the garden. Refreshments were available, but the event remained trash-free; the trash can was empty at the end of the day. President Hernandez attended the CHIP-in event at Tapiola Park, which had fewer attendees than last year. She estimated about 40 volunteers attended, but noted it was hard to track how many people were present because there were many families playing at the park. Director Cosby said 63 people had signed up to volunteer. However, volunteers were coming and going.

Employee Recognition

1. Recreation Coordinator Erin Reilly recognized Katie Junes as the April employee of the month for doing such a great job working in the Daisy Room of Port of Play. The Daisy Room is the most challenging because the children are potty training. After working for the City for only four months, Ms. Junes has implemented great ideas to engage the children and increase their learning.
2. Terra Patterson and Norma Hernandez recognized Angela Cosby. Today is the two-year anniversary of Ms. Cosby's employment with the City. Ms. Cosby works tirelessly and is a great leader.

Old Business

- A. Tammy Loughran gave an update on the Parks Foundation. The OK run fundraiser will be on June 14th in the afternoon. A location is yet to be determined and event planning continues. The Foundation's goal is to raise \$3,000 this year. Other fundraising and awareness events being discussed include Parks in the Dark, Capture the Flag, movies, and other events. President Hernandez encouraged everyone to promote the OK run, noting that the event raises scholarship money for children who cannot afford to participate in programs.
- B. The Parks Lawn and Plant Management Task Force update was given during New Business Item B. The Board proceeded to New Business Item A at this time.

New Business

- A. Director Cosby announced the maintenance division now had a full staff. She welcomed the new Grounds Coordinator Matt Baum. Mr. Baum introduced himself to the Board.
- B. Jonah Dart-McLean gave an update on the Parks Lawn and Plant Management Task Force meetings, which was included in the agenda packet. Draft recommendations were presented to the Board for consideration. Director Cosby said based on feedback from the Board, Staff would prepare a summary for the Board to consider at their next meeting. Upon Board approval of the summary, recommendations would be forwarded to City Council.
- C. Director Cosby gave an update on the Column restoration work, which was presented to City Council by the Friends of the Astoria Column at the April 20th City Council meeting. The work will be done through the summer, causing the Column to be closed during the month of June. Site improvements will include new LED lights and paver repairs. So far, the Friends have received commitments of \$500,000 in donations for this \$1 million project. She offered to email relevant documents, which included biographies of the artists and other people on the restoration team, to anyone who wanted more information. Drew Herzig added that Friends Board members have indicated they found Ms. Cosby easy to work with.
- D. Director Cosby gave the maintenance project report, noting spring came early and Staff has done a great job keeping up with the work.
- E. Director Cosby gave a report on the CHIP-in program. The next event is May 17 at Oceanview Cemetery from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. This will be the first large scale event at the cemetery.
- F. Director Cosby gave the Special Projects report. Registration for Run on the River has already doubled over last year and registration will be open for another month. The food vendor might not be able to accommodate such a large number of people, so Staff is considering a crab boil. Volunteer recruitment for the event has already begun.
- G. Director Cosby gave an update on Lil Sprouts and Port of Play, noting the Easter event was a success.
- H. Director Cosby reported on the recreation center, programs, fitness, and athletics. 5,000 eggs were used at the Annual Easter Egg Hunt and use of hard-boiled eggs instead of plastic eggs went well. This will be the second year of the volleyball program for 3rd through 6th graders. Adult fitness is beginning to slow down, since people are exercising outside now that it is spring. Therefore, the schedule will be modified to accommodate lower attendance. Staff thanked the school district for allowing Staff to cook the eggs for the Easter egg hunt in the middle school kitchen.
- I. Director Cosby gave the Aquatic Center report, noting that some of the pumps are beginning to wear out and will need to be replaced. The facility is 14 years old, but these mechanical issues will only affect the pool for 12 hours at a time. A new main pump will be delivered this week and it should only take a few hours to replace. Staff has a backup plan if the pump fails before the new pump arrives. Staff worked with the hospital and physical trainers in the area to get recommendations on replacing some of the exercise equipment. All of the equipment has been ordered and the old equipment will be sold.

Upcoming Events

1. Director Cosby updated the board on upcoming events.

Non-Agenda/Miscellaneous Business

1. President Hernandez said she recently spoke to Mayor LaMear, who did not want the Parks Board and Staff to be discouraged about the dog park. The dog park project has been postponed, not cancelled. The mayor recognized that a lot of work had gone into the project. However, it will not be financially possible for the City to move forward this year. Mayor LaMear did not want anyone to feel his or her input was not needed, not wanted, or was ignored. The

Board discussed the public's perception of the decision to postpone the dog park and the way the decision was communicated to the community. President Hernandez said Mayor LaMear understood how the community, the Board, and Staff feels about the decision, but her hands were tied. Ms. Schleif believed it would be beneficial to have a Council member on the Parks Board to facilitate better communication between City Council and the Parks Board. However, she understood that in the past, Council believed the Parks Board was influenced too heavily by the Councilors who also served on the Parks Board. President Hernandez said she told the Mayor this has caused a disconnect between Council and the Board and they will continue to discuss the issue. She hoped to have an update for the Board at the next meeting. Peter O'Ferrell said he believed the process was very deliberate and transparent, which led to an appropriate decision. The Board continued to discuss public perception and why the community believed there was a lack of communication from the City to the public about the decision to postpone the project. Board members agreed that the Parks Board, Friends of the Dog Park and other invested parties should have been notified of the decision before it was announced publicly. The Board and Staff also discussed how City Council Goals and the budget process affected the decision.

2. Director Cosby said the sea lion barricade has been working well and Staff will make it a permanent structure. There were groups of people gathering along the trestles to watch the sea lions, creating a dangerous situation. However, sea lions will not attack as long as they have an escape route. She encouraged the Board to spread the word that people should avoid the sea lions.
3. The Board discussed the issue of people from driving cars along the Riverwalk. Drivers have been accessing the Riverwalk by driving across the bright yellow bollards. They discussed possible causes and solutions, which could affect nearby businesses and the trolley.
4. Drew Herzig announced the Sexual Assault Awareness Walk along the Riverwalk on April 30th would begin at the 6th Street Pier. Participants should meet at the county building at about 4:00 pm. More details would be announced next week.

Next meeting will be held Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 6:45am at the Astoria Recreation Center.