

02-26-24 Park Board Minutes

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Park Board**

6:30 PM
February 26, 2024

MINUTES

Tibbetts Manor, 750 17th Ave
NW, Issaquah

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Park Board Members:

Chris Kovac, Chair
Marlene Waxse, Vice Chair (Virtual)
Zach Szablewski (Virtual)
Andrew Eliquen
David Liu (*Excused Absence*)
Nicholas Lee (*Absent*)
Brenda Spears
Katie Bell (Virtual)
Tim Motely (Virtual)
Ryan Olson, Alternate
Bradley Book, Alternate (Virtual)
Andrew Myers, Alternate (Virtual, joined
6:56)

Environmental Board Members:

Jamie Finch, Chair
Don Mcquilliams, Vice Chair
Nancy Davidson
Anne Newcomb
Prajakta Ghatpande (*Excused Absence*)
Tom Anderson
Alix Lee-Tigner
Janet Wall, Alternate
Dixie Blair, Alternate (*Excused Absence*)
Joy Lewis (*Excused Absence*)
*Ashwin Manoharan (*Absent*)
*Ashwin Kannan (*Absent*)

*Youth/young adult member

Administration/Staff:

Hasanthi Piyasena, Department Operations
Specialist
Stacy Vynne McKinstry, Sustainability
Manager
Robin Spear, Park Planning and
Development Manager
Jeff Watling, Parks and Community
Services Director
Dan Hintz, Urban Forest Supervisor
Nick Horn, Civic Spark Americorps Fellow

Community Members / Guests:

Sanvi Madan, Youth Advisory Member
(Virtual)
Arsheya Thakkar, Youth Advisory Member
(Virtual)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kovac called the meeting to order at approx. 6:31 PM
Roll call for both boards was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kristi Tripple (by email) - Kristi Tripple expressed support for the work being done for the UFMP and how it aligns with community values. She expressed interest in including questions in the survey around food forests, community food production, sustainable food initiatives and balancing tree canopy with community gardening.

Connie Marsh (by email) - Connie Marsh gave comment on the themes for the Park System Plan Update and suggests using the language from slide 5. She asked questions about low impact development and stormwater code and would like habitat, wildlife and Issaquah's role in protecting salmon more present (within the plans). She also gave comment that the UFMP is too focused on trees and should include the variety of plants, ground cover, understory plantings and wildlife that make up a forest.

REGULAR BUSINESS

a) **Urban Forest Management Plan Update (I,D)**

Presented by:

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Dan Hintz, Urban Forest Supervisor

PlanIT Geo, Inc. Consultants

Urban Forest Supervisor, Dan Hintz introduced the update for the Urban Forest Management Plan(UFMP) and co-led the presentation with consultants from PlanIT Geo. They reviewed drafted goals and strategies and the engagement work completed already through the UFMP and went through survey topic options with both boards. They also presented preliminary findings on the riparian study performed through the UFMP analysis. The boards had questions and comments including:

- Connecting with PSE, Bonneville Power, ISD and HOAs to get the survey out and connect with surrounding land owners to provide education about trees
- The importance of the understory and non-native species within our urban forest and a request to include survey questions around this topic
- Include resources like pruning, root care, watering through this effort and partner with existing resources with other agencies and non-profits
- Including the Front Street properties and other public lands in the riparian study
- What is the model for what a “healthy forest” looks like for Issaquah, ex. # of tree species to help guide our goals
- Note about unbiased survey questions and do our plans line up with anticipated funding

Park System Plan Update (I,D)

Presented by:

Robin Spear, Park Planning and Development Manager

Park Planning and Development Manager, Robin Spear led the board through some further iteration of themes for the park system plan update that balances vibrancy and resiliency. Director Jeff Watling led discussion around the active recreation needs and wants from the community and our balance with protecting open and natural spaces. He emphasized that our park system can and should do both and these are not in competition. He reinforced the amount of parkland dedicated to community and neighborhood parks and open spaces as noted within the park classification update and analysis done through this plan update. Spear then went through next steps and timeline. The boards had questions and comments including:

- Issaquah’s great carbon sequestration efforts and ties to ICAP and how this could be emphasized as unique in the plan and including solar/clean energy options within our parks
- Include wildlife corridors within the plan, emphasis to include this within system resilience theme
- Comments on low impact development and green infrastructure and balancing tree canopy goals and developing parks
- Noting 85% of open space within our system is great but we are lower in benchmarking as compared with other communities in terms of community and neighborhood parks. Clarification that our goal is not to reduce that 85% percent but seek to find ways to add active parks that does not take away from our current open spaces.
- Multimodal transportation and tying efforts to Green Necklace initiatives in the plan and balancing with other related transportation plans
- Connecting parks and trails and other parts of the city to help support ICAP goals
- Adding more interpretive elements through events and signs or a visitor center for our parks to help with education efforts
- A want to add nature within the themes, within a title, to promote resiliency
- Make sure that when developing a park to compliment the natural landscape, areas are designated to show both the protection and active use, ex. Confluence Park
- Looking at where within the city properties we can tie UFMP, ICAP and tree canopy goals, suggestion for Sammamish Cove as being a location
- Building partnerships with ISD for field use
- Looking at where development is happening and transit connections for active park development and making great use of what we already have
- Looking at the materials used when developing parks and the carbon impact they might have

REPORTS

a) Environmental Board Reports

Stacy Vynne McKinstry mentioned sending council updates directly to the Environmental Board by email, a climate planning grant was received from DOC for \$280k to supplement city funds towards planning and facilitation work, reminder that city wide board and commission recruitment is open and encourage others to apply, volunteer recruitment for the Sustainability Fair on March 30, and the next regular meeting for the Environmental Board is March 13, 2024.

Jaimie Finch mentioned follow up from the board retreat and some proposed changes that will cover the feedback from survey and comments from the retreat and will be discussed at the next meeting.

b) Park Director's Report

Jeff Watling touched on continued partnership and relationship between city park staff and State Parks given their recent staffing updates and their desire to stop the master planning update that was underway and reset back to the 2007 master plan as the anchor, emphasizing their environmental role, more to come after they update their State Park Commission later in the summer. He also gave an update on three projects that are impacting Sammamish Cove and our role as stewards of the space to make sure the projects enhance the natural space.

c) Youth Representative's Report

Sanvi Madan and Arsheya Thakkar reminded the board of several upcoming events including the State of Mind Conference on March 9, plans for a hackathon in May, a career explorations event on April 20, a middle school dodgeball event on April 26 and applications for next year's board will open soon.

d) Park Board Chairperson's Report

Chris Kovac will send out a calendar of events by email.

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approx. 8:39 PM.

The next Park Board meeting is currently scheduled for March 26, 2024.