

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
Park Board**

7:00 PM
February 28, 2022

DRAFT MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Board Members:

Bradley Book
Brenda Spears, Alternate
Chris Kovac
Ruben Nieto (7:15pm)
Jeremy Noble, Alternate (Absent)
Jonathan Richardson
Linda Whitworth (Absent)
Zack Szablewski
Danielle Wolfrom Githens
Marlene Waxse
Ryan Reamy, Youth Rep
Sean Fan, Youth Rep

Administration/Staff:

Jeff Watling, Parks Director
Jennifer Fink, Park Planner and Project
Administrator
Matt Mechler, Parks Operations Supervisor
Milissa Ching, Department Operations
Specialist

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of January 24, 2022 Approved by Brad as amended to remove Carl.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Connie Marsh – Squak Mountain resident: Carbon credit article from Stacy Goodman regarding general fund allocation. Marsh requests the money goes to a fund earmarked for Bergsma for maintenance and care. Sporting field assessment regarding critical areas/wetlands. Critical area assessments and wetland buffer. Draft language for critical areas code re: public agency exemptions. The Parks Department should be protecting the natural environment. She would like to see detail in the code that protects the critical areas when it comes to sports fields.

REGULAR BUSINESS

- a) **Capital Financing Task Force, (I), (D)**

Presented by:

Brad Book, Park Board Chair

Last meeting 2/8. Next/last meeting 3/2.

Discussed draft recommendations at 2/8 meeting.

Three priorities: Transportation, Parks and Facilities.

The task force felt like they do not want to address new funding tools in the next few years for infrastructure.

American Rescue Plan Act: 9M to be used by 2024.

Park District considerations for future funding. Analysis work to be done.

Reviewed the mission of the task force.

Q+A between board members.

Waxe: Questions around how the community ranked priorities. Shared her thoughts regarding participation criteria and weight of feedback and limited number of task force members. Shared her feelings about how the City Council and Mayor values feedback of smaller groups and she feels it is not representative of the Community as a whole. What research has been done to represent the full picture of the tax base in Issaquah. Is there an opportunity for the Park Board to plan and be ready for federal funding requests via an ad hoc committee?

Githens: Agrees with Waxe's comments. Encourage Watling to work on the points. Disappointed to hear that Parks was pushed to the long-term funding. Feels the gaps for improvement will be too long. Would like opportunities to share the Boards thoughts with Council/Mayor.

Book encourages Board Members to vocalize their feedback to the Mayor and Council. Emails and public comment at City Council meetings would be appropriate. March 7th is the next Council meeting where the Capital Task Force will be presenting recommendations to council. March 15th is when council will begin discussing the recommendations.

Watling: Discussion will begin on the 15th and continue through April/May.

Book: The tool of a Parks District can fund as much as 10M/year towards parks. Some in the task force and City are looking to not only fund but supplant general fund shortfalls. Book reiterated that Park District should be only for future funding needs, not to replace general fund shortfalls.

Watling: Shared what a Park District is with the Capital Task Force including best practice: before it would go to voters, interlocal agreement to transparently identify that this would not be funding to supplant, but rather to augment future investments. Supplanting funding is not a best practice.

Watling: Thanked Book for his voice at the Capital Task Force. Thanked Waxe and Githens for their feedback. The Task Force is an important step for Capital funding.

Githens: In the past, as a Board, the group has provided Board supported feedback to the Mayor. Would that be appropriate now?

Watling shared options for advocacy which could include: An Ad Hoc committee can draft a letter to share with Council on the 15th. Phrasing a narrative around how a Park District may help shorten the timeline for capital park investments. An advisory vote in support of a Park District.

Nieto: Concerns on the capital timeline.

Richardson: Concerns with timeline and momentum.

Zack: If unable to push out the timeline for the Park District, would a bond measure be an option?

Watling explained mechanics of a bond measure vs. Park District.

Kovac: Is the capital discussion around prioritization for capital projects regarding general fund or new funding. Book clarified that it would be regarding new funding. Kovac shared his thoughts regarding public concern over transportation vs. parks. He sees the need to acknowledge the transportation challenges, but advocate for augmenting parks needs.

Githens Motions that

The Park Board recommends that the City Council commences the exploratory phase of the Metropolitan Park District without delay and move up the timing of the Task Force from the long term to midterm.

Kovac Second

Unanimous.

b) **Green Issaquah- 2021 review and 2022 work plan, (I)**

Presented by:

Matt Mechler, Parks Operations Supervisor

Mechler reviewed 2021 impacts of the Green Issaquah program:

- 1.75 new acres in restoration
- 308 volunteers engaged
- 876 hours volunteered
- 3,589 plants installed
- Reviewed upcoming projects and events
- Distribution of project acres by tree-age category
- Restoration strategies and tree-age categories
- 1,600 trees being delivered this week and over 200 in the nursery to plant.

Watling shared that Green Issaquah has been a priority in 2021 to launch the program with Mechler leading the program with Forterra. Milissa Ching joining project management for 2022 as the program grows. Watling shared the value of park stewardship and care and the importance of these partnerships.

Book asked if there is an expectation on an annual basis to determine work plans for the year. Mechler shared those areas are evaluated and prioritized for work to be done.

Watling shared context regarding Marsh's comments pertaining to fund allocation. Watling shared the intent is those funds are in a place where they can be directly invested into Green Issaquah initiatives.

c) **Citywide Athletic Field Assessment, (I), (D)**

Presented by:

Jennifer Fink, Park Planner and Project Administrator

Project Goal: To review all publicly owned fields in City limits and managed by the City.

- How are they currently serving?
- How can they better serve in the future?

Scope of Work

Items to Note

Opportunity for Board feedback and questions.

Board discussion

Githens: Is lighting a category? Fink: Yes, this will be considered in length of use/day.

How will this overlay with Tibbetts Master Planning Process?

Process for community feedback for use? Fink: Athletic group engagement.

Critical area studies for all fields? Fink: Cost prohibitive to do all parks, but review will take place.

Book: What about Veterans Memorial and Tibbetts? Watling: That work is being done as part of the master plan effort.

Kovac: Will recommendations include options for non-city owned fields? Fink, yes. Those recommendations will be shared.

Waxe: Opportunity to partner with other agencies on their work?

Book: Timeline to complete? Fink: Q3 2022

REPORTS

- a) Director's Report
 - Staffing and recruitment update
 - Council adopted the modifications to the scholarship program as recommended

- b) Chairperson's Report
 - Sunset Beach Picnic area and trails plan are moving forward
 - FLSSP group having a Shamrock Stroll informational walk in the park
 - Board applications were due by 5pm today
 - Board interviews in March

- c) Youth Report
 - Feb 11 – Harry Potter Night
 - Apr 23 – Dodgeball and Donuts
 - Valentine Day cards for the Senior Center
 - Annual State of Mind Conference
 - 5th Annual Triathlon in June

OTHER BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT 9:03PM