

Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting information

August 14, 2026

9-10:30am

Portland Building Room 202 and Zoom Virtual Meeting

Board members present:

Jacob Karson, Ali Berman, Suenn Ho, Allison Snopek, Andre Buenacosa, Tommy Schopp, Myrah Rafi'ah Beverly, Patti Miles, Sally Bernstein, Jessica Green

Board members absent:

Kitty Firth, Adrienne Feldstein, Bill Van Bang, Matthew Shipkey

City staff present:

Art Pearce (Interim Bureau Director), Maximo Behrens (Recreation Division Manager), Lauren McGuire (Assets & Development Division Manager), Amanda Manjarrez (Policy Strategies & System Improvement Manager), Sarah Huggins (Sustainable Future Program Manager)

Others present

None

Meeting called to order at 9:00am with roll call following.

Agenda Items

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

General Announcements

Jacob Karson (Board Chair) gave some clarification on a new portion of the agenda that will include public comment discussion. It will not necessarily be a Q&A, but a chance for

Ali Berman (Board Member) discussed restarting the ad hoc PGE Harborton Project. She moved to reconvene the ad hoc committee with the intent of investigating and writing a letter on behalf of the Board. Jacob seconded the motion. Sally Bernstein (Board Member) asked a question about logistics of what an ad hoc committee entails for its interaction with community and partners. Jacob, Sally, and Tommy Schopp (Board Member) expressed interest in joining. All members voted in approval and the motion carried.

Approve June Meeting Minutes

Suenn Ho (Board Member) moved to approve, Andre Buenacosa (Board Member) seconded. All voted in approval and the motion carried..



Director's Report

Interim Director Art Pearce introduced himself to the board giving some background on his work with the City and the history and shared his perspective on his first month at the PP&R bureau. He approached his work with PP&R so far as a hidden work of hospitality.

Darcelle Plaza opened this summer, which was a great addition to downtown revitalization. Forest Park Shuttle launched their pilot this summer which was a great accessibility program for community in outer parts of Portland to visit the Park. Final negotiations with the US Tennis Association NW are underway, more will be announced on that topic.

There is anticipated presentation at Council's Public Works Committee about partnerships later this fall.

Suenn asked if the Parks Board would be involved with reviewing candidates for Interim Director. Director Pearce replied that he'd ask.

Sally asked what the Director's overall vision for Parks was. He replied that sustainable funding was the biggest priority and taking care of maintenance. In addition, being able to embrace partnerships.

Suenn commented that the Board would like clarity on who exactly the Board is an advisory body to with the changes in the city.

Jessica asked more about the partnership updates with USTA NW. Sarah Huggins replied that USTA NW will be taking on the facility with an ask for annual reports.

Andre asked if there's expectation for PTC to close in the Fall? Yes, anticipated September 1. He then asked what the programming would look like. Staff replied that there hasn't been a preview of programming yet.

Jacob asked if there will be tracking of scholarships and free/reduced cost usage and its comparison to the Access Discount in the past. Sarah said yes, this will be part of the annual report that the bureau has asked for from the organization. He commented that making an apples-to-apples comparison between both financial setups would help build trust with community in its transparency on the equity and accessibility impacts.

Sally asked about Director Pearce's perspective on his one-on-one meetings with Council. In summary, he replied there is often a desire for more services and programming at low costs.

Regarding the budget cycle, Michelle gave a brief share on some of the talking points on some of the cuts that were brought to Council during the advocacy from the Board. Unfortunately none of the items were changed and were cut.

Patti made a request to hear back where the pools are at status-wise for their maintenance and private partnership opportunities.



Working Groups

Land Use and Infrastructure

The next meeting is August 25 at 8am. At the previous June meeting, there was a presentation from Brett and Carine on neighborhood park studies and fact-finding. The discussion will be continued. Today's retreat will help guide what the agenda will be in the next meeting.

Community Engagement

There was no meeting, but there is going to be a future discussion on what's intended for CEWG.

Culture, Nature, and Recreation

CNR received the same presentation from LU&I, and the group dove into the discussion on gentrification and neighborhood park studies.

Board Affairs

Discussion of combining CEWG and CNR was also brought up in BA, especially for this year since there are only 13 members.

Jacob moved for Portland Parks Alliance to have Myrah Rafi'ah Beverly (Board Member) as a liaison to synergize efforts and the relationship between both bodies. Suenn seconded. All voted in approval and the motion carried.

Jacob moved to have a member of Parks Levy Oversight Committee to serve in an ex officio capacity for one year. Andre seconded. All voted in approval and the motion carried.

Other Business/Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting Adjourned

Jacob adjourned the meeting at 10:29am.

