



**Spokane Park Board
Development and Volunteer
Citizen Advisory Committee
5 p.m. Thursday, May 26, 2022**

Virtual meeting via WebEx

Call-in: 408-418-9388; Access code: 2495 013 3839

Fianna Dickson – Marketing & Communications

Committee members

Kelly Brown – Chair/The Friends of Manito Park

Greg Connolly – Friends of Spokane Skate Parks

Trevor Finchamp – Friends of the Bluff

Lindsey Shaw – Community Assembly representative/Logan Neighborhood Council

Cole Taylor – Friends of Riverfront Park

Craig Volosing – Friends of Palisades

Maribeth Watt – Friends of Sky Prairie

Lee Williams – Friends of Coeur d 'Alene Park

The special meeting of the Development and Volunteer Citizen Advisory Committee meeting will be held virtually via WebEx teleconferencing at 5 p.m. Thursday, May 26, 2022. The public will be able to listen to the meeting by calling 408-418-9388 and entering access code **2495 013 3839**, when prompted.

Written public comment may be submitted via email or mail. Comments must be received no later than 1 p.m. May 26 by email to: spokaneparks@spokanecity.org or mail to: Spokane Park Board, 5th floor City Hall, 808 West Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Washington 99201. Submitted public comments will be presented to meeting attendees prior to the meeting.

Agenda

A. Discussion items

1. Call to order/roll call – Kelly Brown
2. [Friends Toolkit update – Fianna Dickson](#)

B. Standing reports

1. EXPO+50 overview – Kelly Brown
2. DVCAC membership update – Kelly Brown
3. DVCAC project presentations – Kelly Brown

C. Next meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting is 5 p.m. June 23, 2022.

D. Adjournment

Agenda is subject to change

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION: The City of Spokane is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs and services for persons with disabilities. Headsets may be checked out (upon presentation of picture I.D.) through the meeting organizer. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may call, write, or email Human Resources at 509.625.6363, 808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA, 99201; or erahrclerks@spokanecity.org. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact Human Resources through the Washington Relay Service at 7-1-1. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.



Park Friends Toolkit Text

Updated: May 2022

Note: Exploring a matrix of: volunteer (register) → club (one-page agreement) → Park Friends group (MOU).

Items in red are open questions, but we would love CAC feedback on all elements of the draft toolkit!

Message from the Director

Thank you for your interest in joining or creating a Park Friends group. Park Friends groups make Spokane Park even better! The City of Spokane has nearly 100 park properties that provide healthy recreation opportunities, quiet green space, community-building, equitable access, and improve our quality of life. Park Friends group volunteers add resources where budgets are limited, and enhance the vitality and quality of a park they steward. We are grateful for our community that embraces their parks, and hope we can work together in the future!

This toolkit is meant to serve as a guide for starting and fostering a Park Friends group. We hope the information here is helpful, and if you have questions not addressed here, please reach out to us by calling 311 (outside of the city, dial (509) 755-2489) or email Parks@SpokaneCity.org. Thank you! – Garrett Jones, Director, City of Spokane Parks & Recreation

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What is a Park Friends group?

Park Friends groups are a coordinated group of volunteers who support and advocate for a specific park or group of parks. Membership is open to all community members. They serve as ambassadors, community advocates, and stewards of their chosen park. The group's affiliation with City of Spokane Park & Recreation is formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding, and members work in close coordination with a Park & Recreation staff liaison.

What do Park Friends groups do?

Activities may include park clean-up days, fundraising activities, assisting with programming the park with recreational activities, advocating for park improvements, and similar. Groups can be highly active or smaller scale; they may be a large formalized 501(c)3 or more grassroots. Park Friends groups are supported by the

Development and Volunteer Committee (DVC) of the all-volunteer Park Board, and the affiliated Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) of the DVC. Park Friends groups network with one another to share resources and ideas.

How do I start a Friends group?

First, check the list (online link) to see if a Park Friends group already exists for your park, and if it does, we encourage you to jump in and join! If your park does not, this toolkit can help you start one.

What if I want to volunteer for Parks, but don't want the commitment of starting/joining a Park Friends group?

Parks & Recreation has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, from one-time activities to seasonal events and everything in between. Please visit www.SpokaneParks.org/volunteer to see a list of current options, and if nothing feels like the right fit, contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 311 to discuss other ideas!

Forming a Park Friends Group

- 1. Meet and Greet:** Give us a call and let's talk! We'd love to connect with you to hear why a park matters to you, why you'd like to explore starting a Park Friends group, and talk through ways we can work together to support the park's health and activity. We'd love to hear what your goals might be, and ways you'd like to engage the neighborhood or community. We are focused on solutions-based partnerships.
- 2. Talk with your fellow park-goers and Neighborhood Council:** Do you have some people who might be interested in joining your effort? It will be important to connect and find a few additional core members who can help launch your Park Friends group and support initial planning. Approaching your [Neighborhood Council](#) with your idea will also be a valuable place to gather their feedback and possible members.
- 3. Create a mission statement:** This will be an important and concise way to express the meaning of your Park Friends group. Consider your group's purpose, business, values, goals, and actions. If you're looking for examples, here are a couple from existing Park Friends groups:

The Friends of Manito: The Friends of Manito is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports Spokane's Manito Park. We were founded in 1990 to conduct fundraising, volunteer, and educational activities – to support the responsible preservation and improvement of the park in cooperation with the City of Spokane and its surrounding community.

Friends of Palisades: In 2002, Friends of Palisades was formed as a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation, and maintenance of the park. We work to (1) educate the public about the park through various programs and events, (2) present park issues to the City, and (3) increase the size of the park whenever possible. We bring together park volunteers and supporters for work party events, social activities, and to address any safety concerns.

Friends of the Bluff: As Friends of the Bluff, we are stewards of Spokane's High Drive Bluff Park. Through volunteer efforts, community partnerships, and education, we conserve the area in a natural,

sustainable state for multiple users who respect the resource, each other, and wildlife.

And here's our **Spokane Parks & Recreation** mission statement: The City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Division acquires, operates, enhances, and protects a diverse system of parks, boulevards, parkways, Urban Forest, golf courses, recreational, cultural, historical and open space areas for the enjoyment and enrichment of all.

4. **Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Spokane Parks & Recreation:** A template MOU is attached as Appendix A (in process with Legal). This will serve as a guide for creating and updating MOUs with Park Friends groups. We will work with you to make any edits and finalize the MOU.

One of the first decisions you'll have to make is if you'd like to form your own 501(c)(3) (information at the [WA Secretary of State website on Non-Profits](#) website), or work with one of our local 501(c)(3) as your fiscal agent/sponsor. If it's the latter, we can help connect you with some options, and you'll need a separate MOU between your Park Friends group and the 501(c)(3) serving as your fiscal agent/sponsor. (Note: Confirming details with legal about order of activities, fiscal agent vs. fiscal sponsor).

5. **Staff Liaison:** Once an MOU is complete, your Park Friends group will be assigned an official staff liaison who will serve as your primary point of contact for all coordination.
6. **Group structure:** There are a few things to consider about your group structure. Whatever you decide, it is important to memorialize it in writing.
 - a. **Leadership roles:** (Note: Check with legal) If you're applying for your own 501(c)(3), it will be necessary to formalize leadership roles for your application and to write articles of association or bylaws. If you're utilizing an existing 501(c)(3) as your fiscal agent/sponsor, you may choose to work together for a little while before holding elections or formalizing a leadership structure. Many groups will at some point formalize a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, determine how elections take place, and outline term limits.
 - b. **Committees:** You may also want to form committees that align with your goals, like park clean up, programming, or fundraising.
7. **DVC/CAC involvement and networking with other Park Friends groups:** Park Friends groups are supported by the Development and Volunteer Committee (DVC) of the all-volunteer Park Board, and the affiliated Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) of the DVC. Park Friends groups network with one another to share resources and ideas. There are six seats on the CAC for Park Friends representatives, and terms are 2 years; positions are recommended by the DVC, and appointments are confirmed by the Director of Parks & Recreation. Even if your Park Friends group doesn't have an official seat on the CAC at the moment, it's a wonderful group to connect with to share ideas and find support amongst other Park Friends groups. You can read more about the DVC and CAC at www.SpokaneParks.org/board.

Growing a Park Friends Group

In the first year, it will be important to keep your newly-forming group focused on creating and building a shared vision, setting attainable goals, and working together to accomplish small projects! This will build momentum and community support.

Here are a few strategies and ideas we've found helpful for growing your Park Friends group.

Holding your first event:

Start small! We recommend a park clean-up day because they are fairly easy to organize and easy for the community to participate in, but yield big rewards. If you'd like to do a park clean-up day, here are the steps.

Before the event:

- First, do a walk-thru of the park to determine needs and high-priority areas
- Reach out to your Parks staff liaison to let them know what you'd like to do. They can help coordinate some supplies and a trash pick-up.
- Determine the date and timeframe in coordination with your Park liaison, to ensure there aren't conflicts with other events in the park that day and to ensure needed resources are available. You'll need a no-cost park reservation, and your Park liaison can connect you to the right place for it.
- Notify potential volunteers, your neighborhood council, send social media messages out, utilize free community calendar event listings, and ask to hang posters in local community centers/businesses and the park (your liaison can guide you on how/what to avoid when posting signs in the park, i.e. no stakes in the ground or nails in trees). Also ask your Parks liaison to help spread the word via Parks channels.
- Send a reminder email the day before the event to potential volunteers

The day of the event

- Have a welcome station where people can be greeted and sign in. Please use the Volunteer Sign In Sheet and the Volunteer Waiver forms in Appendix B (add).
- Once everyone has arrived, overview the project and assign work groups. Let them know the safety protocols, and what to do when they're done with their tasks.
- Take some great pictures to post on your social media channels or website.
- Once the work is completed or the time has ended, ensure equipment borrowed is returned.
- Thank volunteers for their hard work, and invite them to join you for future projects.

After the event

- Send a thank you email to your volunteers, and let them know how much was accomplished – the number of trash bags filled, for example. Link to your social media channels and invite them to follow you or learn more on your website. The more people feel appreciated and that their time had value, the more likely they are to participate again.
- Work with your liaison on any follow-up needed by Parks staff after your event, such as pile pickup.
- Send your Volunteer Sign-In Sheet and Volunteer Waivers to your Parks staff liaison or volunteer coordinator.

Additional events to consider:

A no-cost permit will be required for your event, please work with your Park staff liaison and the Park Reservations team. The permit will also review rules around alcohol, large-scale food service, etc.

- Block party

- Movie night
- Concert
- Educational series about nature, gardening tips, the history of the area, etc.
- What else?

Building your membership & engaging your neighborhood

- Create an email address. Creating a Friendsof___Park@gmail.com or similar will create consistency and allow multiple people to monitor/respond to the inquiries.
- Create a website – tips?
- Create social media pages – tips?
- Like, share, and comment on related neighborhood social media pages
- Connect with your [neighborhood council](#) by getting on the agenda and presenting your ideas at a meeting.
- Place banners or signs around the park inviting people to learn more about and join your group (just make sure to check in with your staff liaison about how to post signs – we have rules around stakes in the ground and no nails in trees).
- Ask to hang posters in your local business shop windows.
- Work with your staff liaison to ask how Parks can promote your new group or event. We can often post on our social media channels, issue a press release, etc.
- Keep a list of volunteers and their contact information, so you can reach out to them with new opportunities.

How to build partnerships:

- Start with local businesses, schools, religious institutions, community centers, etc.
- Maybe the grocery store donates candy for your Halloween event in the park, or kids from the high school do a park clean-up to as part of a class project.
- Learn about your partners' interests and priorities, and find ways that your Park Friends group might align for mutual benefit.
- Build relationships with your Neighborhood Council, and participate in the Park Board's Citizen Advisory Committee.

How to track volunteers:

- Free or low-cost software options – **what do people recommend?**

How to explore a physical improvement project:

If you have a physical improvement project you'd like to see done in your park, let's talk! Connect with your Park liaison. We'll explore how the project might align with our overall Parks & Recreation Master Plan. If the project meets mutual goals, we might be able to leverage some matching funds or grant dollars to accomplish more together. We have some great examples of projects done in partnership with Park Friends groups.

How to fundraise:

Fundraising can be important to helping you achieve your mission, whether it's supporting maintenance, hosting community events, or physical improvement projects.

When you approach a potential funder, you'll want to have a specific project in mind, an idea of what you'd like them to consider donating, and what you can offer in return. It's wise to have the plan in writing, so you can leave it with them to consider. You might have a single page that outlines the event, and different sponsorship levels and what benefits each level comes with (signage at the event, a free booth space, etc.).
(Example to share?)

Consider asking individuals you know who might be willing to donate any amount, and don't be afraid to start small. Community institutions and local businesses benefit from a park that is clean, healthy, and vibrant, and they may be interested in providing in-kind supplies or some funding to support your work. You can also host a fundraising event.

We all know how important it is to say "thank you" to our donors, supporters, and volunteers, and showing your appreciation will go a long way in building a strong relationship.

Grants are another avenue to explore. What's a good resource to find them (www.grants.gov, others?)? If you've found one of interest, work with your Park liaison to ensure the project is do-able and to see if there might be a way to leverage the grant with other matching funds or letters of support.

Good things can take time

We so appreciate your interest and time dedicated to working with us; together, we can do so much more. Thank you. There are often many steps we have to go through as a Government agency, and we appreciate your patience as we navigate things. It might seem like extra steps or time, but we do our best to be efficient while also ensuring we follow required processes, serve as trustworthy stewards of Parks & Recreation resources, and balance competing priorities for deserving projects. It might take time, but when these great partnerships happen, the outcomes are incredible.

Thank you

Thank you for your interest in starting, joining, or growing a Park Friends group. We hope that you have found this information helpful, and we are always available for questions. As our programs grow and evolve, we will update and revise this toolkit, and we welcome your feedback.

City of Spokane Parks & Recreation

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808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

Spokane, WA 99201

311 or (509) 755-2489

SpokaneParks@SpokaneCity.org

In progress:

Appendix A

MOU Template

Appendix B

Volunteer Sign In Sheet and the Volunteer Waiver forms

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