



**Spokane Park Board
Development & Volunteer / Citizen Advisory
Committee**
4:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 17, 2024
In-person and WebEx virtual meeting
Fianna Dickson – Marketing & Communications

Committee members:

DVCAC:

- X Kelly Brown – Chair/The Friends of Manito Park
- X Jeff Lambert / Trevor Finchamp – Friends of the Bluff
- X Cole Taylor – Friends of Riverfront Park
- X Lee Williams – Friends of Coeur d 'Alene Park
- X Paul Lindholdt – Friends of Palisades
- Stephen Williams – Spokane Disc Golf Club (*absent*)

DVC:

- X Jennifer Ogden – Chair/Park Board
- X Bob Anderson – Park Board
- X Gerry Sperling – Park Board
- Doug Kelley – Park Board (*absent*)
- X Kelly Brown – DVCAC representative
- X Lindsey Shaw – Community Assembly representative
- Matt Antush – Member-at-large (*absent*)

Park staff

Fianna Dickson
Sarah Deatrich

Guests

Deborah Ritter
Carol Ritter
Paul Kropp

Minutes

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by DVC Committee chair Jennifer Ogden. See list above for attendance.

Jennifer noted that Lindsey Shaw had moved up from the Citizen Advisory Committee to the full Development and Volunteer Committee of the Park Board. She also noted that Paul Kropp was in attendance as a guest, representing the Community Assemblies.

2. **Public comment:**

- A. Deborah Ritter and Carol Ritter attended to share their role as representatives of the Grant Park Community Garden, a robust community garden space. They are interested in

connecting with other volunteer groups supporting Spokane's City parks and may submit a letter of interest (to Garrett Jones) in having a role on the DVCAC.

3. **Correspondence:**

A. Michael Pearson ([attached](#))

4. **DVCAC discussion items:**

A. None

5. **DVCAC standing reports:**

A. DVCAC member news – Kelly Brown

1) Friends of the Bluff – Jeff Lambert

a. The DNR and City Parks began a fire risk reduction thinning project in the South Bluff area on January 2.

b. A member appreciation event will be held at the Woman's Club on January 30.

2) Friends of Coeur d'Alene Park – Lee Williams

a. The Friends created a 2023 year in review document (posted in the Basecamp discussion board) that highlights accomplishments of the past year.

b. They are also working on a coordinated legislative ask with Parks.

c. The Farmer's Market has been a great success bringing a great number of people (and positive activity) to the park. The Farmer's Market is applying to do it again next summer.

d. It was suggested that Friends of CdA use the good work they put into their annual report as source material for fundraising and publicity materials.

3) Friends of Riverfront Park – Cole Taylor

a. Cole Taylor met with Caroline and Jacob Calder about restarting that group; Jennifer noted there may be an opportunity around turning the Stepwell site into a beer garden/bar for non-profit fundraising. Those details to be explored further.

b. The Friends are looking forward to plugging into the Expo+50 celebration.

4) Friends of Palisades – Paul Lindholt

a. Goats will be back in summer 2024 for fire fuel reduction efforts.

b. Paul Lindholt inquired if Park Friends groups can advocate around the levy initiative without impacting their 501c3 status. Fianna talked with City Legal, who said if the Friends group isn't receiving money from Parks, they can advocate for the levy (a yes/no vote). However, Fianna will check with City Legal again to inquire about any cautions around lobbying and a 501c3 status. Fianna said that all groups can feel comfortable sharing information-only materials (no persuasive "vote this way" content) to help educate the public – just like the City can do legally. The City's levy website is www.SpokaneParks.org/levy. Additional content is being added in the months to come.

5) Community Assembly – Lindsey Shaw

a. Lindsey shared that she invited Nick Hamad, Park Planning Manager, to attend the February CA meeting to share a levy presentation.

b. Lindsey noted that Gonzaga University had adopted the nearby portion of the Centennial Trail up to Mission Park for the next 3 years; she is hoping some of that might spill over into Mission Park.

B. Expo+50 update – Kelly brown

1) Kelly Brown shared that the calendar of events for Expo+50 is being fleshed out now that the proposals for events have been reviewed; further information should be coming out to the public about what those 9 weeks would look like shortly.

2) Organizers are looking for volunteers to help with the different pillar themes. Refer interested parties to Kelly.

3) KHQ is a media partner for the Expo+50 event and has begun airing Expo Minutes once

per week.

6. **DVC/DVCAC membership updates:**

- A. DVCAC currently has five vacancies. Interested parties should submit a letter of interest to Garrett Jones, via email or postal mail.
- B. Paul Kropp relayed that there is a potentially interested party from the Community Assembly; however, they are awaiting the results from the levy ballot measure before proceeding.

7. **DVC action items**

- A. None

8. **DVC discussion items**

- A. None

9. **DVC standing reports:**

- A. Levy subcommittee update – Jennifer Ogden
 - 1) Initially, there was talk about forming a political action committee (PAC) called the Citizen Advocates for Parks; however, this may not happen as the Park Foundation has expressed willingness to take in funds for the educational aspect of the levy outreach. This should be decided within the next month.
 - 2) Jennifer noted that levy advocacy cannot be a part of a Park Board meeting or city subcommittee - that any advocacy be done by members as private citizens in their "off" hours. Interested members were encouraged to contact Jennifer after the meeting.

Bob Anderson reported that the Park Board unanimously approved a resolution supporting the Friends of CdA Park's legislative ask for funding for improvements to the park.

Bob Anderson and Gerry Sperling, Park Board President and Vice President, have their first meeting with Mayor Brown on January 29.

Park Board Nominations Committee is in process of gathering votes for 2024 Park Board officers, which will be finalized at the February 8 Park Board meeting.

Lindsey Shaw recollected a previous MOU between Parks and community centers to provide free lunch and activities for children, allowing for a safe environment for kids to play with volunteer adults supervising. She questioned whether there is a possibility of revisiting this practice. Fianna recommended she contact Jennifer Papich, Recreation Director, for information. Jennifer Ogden recommended Council member Bingle as an additional resource. Deb Ritter provided Lindsey with some suggestions about places to contact to explore the idea further.

10. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 21, 2024, in-person in the Liberty Park Library events room, 402 S. Pittsburg St., and virtually via WebEx.

DT: January 15, 2024

TO: Spokane Park Board Development & Volunteer Committee / Citizen Advisory Committee
FR: Michael Pearson, Browne's Addition
RE: PARK BOARD LEVY PRESENTATION, JANUARY 17, 2024

After reviewing your upcoming agenda, I noted that your committee will be receiving a presentation on the proposed Park Board Levy, 2024. I was first introduced to the levy proposal on October 19, 2024 when I attended the Browne's Addition Neighborhood Council meeting. On the agenda was a presentation by the Spokane Parks Department. I, along with others at the meeting, have been advocating for the implementation of a Park Board/City Council approved 2015 Master Plan for our city's first and oldest park, Coeur d'Alene Park. Though approved, this plan has not been implemented nor are its components reflected on the Parks Department's recently released 20-year plan for Spokane parks. I was anxious to hear the presentation. I was sadly disappointed!

Shared with us was a PowerPoint from the October 12, 2023 Park Board meeting during which they approved a resolution for an \$11.25 million a year, 20-year levy; a total investment of \$225 million dollars to revive neighborhood parks and build new ones. When the question was asked, why are we just hearing about this now, why wouldn't you reach out to your community regarding this proposal, the answer was, that's why we are here. When asked why in October did you elect to put a levy request on the ballot in February of 2024 without further involving the community, the answer was twofold: one, "we" need to get this resolution in front of the current City Council before the November election and two, our consultants recommended we go on the ballot with the SPS levy as it will have a better chance of passing.

With this 'lack' of information in hand, I and others in our Browne's community contacted the members of the City Council and asked them to consider delaying any proposed vote for a Spokane Park Board levy until such time the neighborhood councils and the citizens of Spokane have a chance to review and provide input regarding the focus of the levy on each of our current 'neighborhood park'. As the proposed levy name implies, Healthy Parks, Healthy Neighborhoods.

Coeur d'Alene Park in Browne's Addition is a ten-acre parcel given to the City of Spokane in 1891 that is currently surrounded by a diverse group of 2900 residents contained in a few block radius. In addition, as of the summer of 2023, it is the home to 2 of Spokane's City Line bus stops, located adjacent to the park. It would be desirable for the levy to support implementation of the aforementioned Coeur d'Alene Park Master Plan (again, approved in 2015 yet not included in any Park Board planning). Friends of Coeur d'Alene Park and volunteer advocates are reduced to selling cookies and lemonade along with a myriad of other fundraising efforts to attempt to garner funds to one day meet the goals of the park's Master Plan, e.g., ADA compliant walkways that would allow disabled individuals to enter and move about the park or readily access city buses (as just one example).

My request, along with others in our Browne's Community, is that prior to submitting a ballot proposal to the general population, the Parks Department should meet with every neighborhood council representing an 'established' park and specifically address how the levy will be of benefit to their park's needs. While it can be argued that the focus on new parks in the Spokane area is of merit, the reversal of urban decay is a concept that needs to be addressed prior to seeking citizen support of a levy.

Recognizing that you'll witness at your meeting a very colorful PowerPoint presentation, I am requesting that you ask the tough questions that go beyond the slide presentation and seek answers to your specific community needs. This concept can be addressed by encouraging the staff of Spokane Parks to visit every neighborhood council whose region includes an established park, set the colorful PowerPoint presentation aside, and discuss the implications of a proposed levy for their specific neighborhood park. After collecting data related to a future community levy, perhaps greater guidance and support for a future levy may surface.

In general, I support the concept of a levy investing in our parks. I support informing our community, I can't support the lack of respect for Spokane voters and specifically neighborhood councils regarding lack of input and particularly detailed information concerning how the proposed levy will affect each established neighborhood park, as the levy title promotes.

Respectfully,



Michael Pearson
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