



Joint City Council/Park Board Study Session

11 a.m. Thursday, April 28, 2022
WebEx virtual meeting

City Council members

X Breean Beggs– President
X Jonathan Bingle
X Michael Cathcart
X Lori Kinnear
Karen Stratton
Betsy Wilkerson
X Zack Zappone

Park staff

Garrett Jones
Jason Conley
Mark Buening
Al Vorderbrueggen Jennifer
Papich
Fianna Dickson
Mark Poirier
Jonathan Moog
Pamela Clarke

Park Board members

X Jennifer Ogden – President
Bob Anderson – Vice president (Absent/excused)
X Garrett Jones – Secretary
X Nick Sumner
X Greta Gilman
Sally Lodato (Absent/excused)
X Gerry Sperling
X Barb Richey
X Hannah Kitz
X Kevin Brownlee
X Christina VerHeul
X Jonathan Bingle – City Council liaison

Guests

Kelly Brown

Minutes

Click [HERE](#) to view a video recording of the meeting.

- A. **President's report** – Jennifer Ogden
1. Introduction of Park Board members – Following the introduction of new Park Board member Christina VerHeul, Jennifer introduced each of the other board members noting the chairs on each of the Park Board committees.
 2. Thank you for Council funding partnerships – On behalf of the Park Board members, Jennifer thanked the council for the funding support on the following projects: 1) parks playgrounds and restrooms; 2) north suspension bridge restoration; 3) Downriver stormwater project; and 4) Don Kardong Bridge rehabilitation project.

- B. Park and Open Space Master Plan update** – Jennifer Ogden reported there were more than 5,300 responses to the master plan public survey which is four times more than any similar public outreach conducted by Parks.
1. The following survey results were reported:
 - a. Approximately 90% of the respondents indicated parks are essential to their connection with nature, their mental and physical wellbeing, and their connection with their community.
 - b. Top-tier community desires – Based on survey responses, the following have been identified as top-tier projects: 1) restrooms; 2) playgrounds; 3) soft trails; and 4) trailheads.
 - c. Second-tier community desires – These include: 1) off-leash dog parks; 2) fishing areas; 3) disc golf courses; and 4) indoor pool.
 - d. New parks and renovation – 71% believe we should improve neighborhood access to a park by building new parks on land the city already owns, and 66% believe we should focus on renovating and enhancing existing parks and natural lands.
 - e. Enhance the community’s economic vitality – 80% believe an important purpose of Parks facilities is to enhance the community’s economic vitality.
 - f. Parks and programs welcoming and accessible – 66% believe the city needs to do more to make parks and programs welcoming and accessible.
 - g. New property – About half considered it essential or very important to acquire new property for parks and natural areas.
 - h. Seek additional funding – About 60% felt the city should seek additional funding to create new offering and maintain existing ones.
 2. Master Plan details – Nick Hamad provided a presentation which covered how the parks system was evaluated, goals and objectives, and an action/vision plan which prioritizes areas in need of investment. Details relating to the Master Plan may be found at: <https://my.spokanecity.org/parksrec/master-plan/>.
 3. Next steps: A 90% draft has been reviewed by a stakeholder team made of City Council members, Park Board members and staff. The draft master plan will go back to the public so they may comment on the 90% plan. The Park Board will review the plan in May or June, and is expected to take action to adopt in June or July. The master plan will then come before City Council for final endorsement.
- C. Looking ahead – Jennifer Ogden**
1. Seek funding – Jennifer explained Parks plans to seek additional partnerships and contributions from the general fund and other sources which will be dedicated to capital replacement and repair.
 2. Land evaluation and surplus policy – The Park Board has discussed the option of a land evaluation and surplus policy which would set guidelines on how Parks accepts land donations. Some of these parcels are so small it isn’t feasible to use them as beneficial public green space. There is a possibility these parcels could have alternative and positive uses.
 3. Request green space – Parks is looking at asking developers to set aside green space as they develop residential areas in Spokane.
 4. Future projects – These proposed projects include: 1) seek partnerships in creating an indoor swimming facility; 2) develop a trail maintenance plan; 3) develop Meadowglen Park; 4) prioritize renovations and improvements at parks, specifically those in underserved neighborhoods; and 5) a potential future bond to fund park improvements and renovations. There is a possibility this bond could come before voters in 2024.
- D. New Park Board Committees and membership composition** – Jennifer Ogden
1. Development and Volunteer Committee, and Development and Volunteer Citizen Advisory Committee – These committees were formed last year and are

designed to increase the opportunity for citizen involvement in their parks. The committees offer a communication path between neighborhood, community and friends groups, and the Park Board. This communication path can be utilized for sharing ideas, and for seeking help with projects, events and fundraising.

2. King Cole Commemoration Project Update – This steering committee, endorsed by the Park Board, is comprised of community leaders and Park Board members. Its purpose is to develop and fundraise for a prominent recognition of King Cole within Riverfront Park. The unveiling of this recognition is scheduled to align with the 50th anniversary of Expo in 2024.

E. **Park Board committee reports** – The following reports were presented to City Council:

1. [Golf Committee – Chair Gerry Sperling](#)
2. [Land Committee – Greta Gilman](#)
3. [Recreation Committee – Sally Lodato](#)
4. [Finance Committee – Bob Anderson](#)
5. [Urban Forestry Tree Committee – Kevin Brownlee](#)
6. [Riverfront Park Committee – Nick Sumner](#)
7. [Development & Volunteer Committee – Bob Anderson](#)

F. **Discussion**

1. Policy for non-park use of Park property – Greta reviewed the basis for establishing a policy to respond to requests relating to use of Park lands for non-Park purposes. Some of the recent requests to lease or utilize park property for non-park uses include: 1) Hamblen water tower; 2) the Sportsplex; 3) libraries; and 4) Avista EV charging stations. While many of these shared-use agreements can be beneficial partnerships, it would be helpful to have a specific policy and procedure to follow when these opportunities/situations arise. CP Beggs asked if the board had a vision as to how the policy would be developed, such as gather representatives from council, the board and staff. Greta agreed a task group with that representation would be optimal.

G. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Minutes approved by: *Garrett Jones*
Garrett Jones, Director of Parks and Recreation

Park Board Golf Committee
Chair Gerry Sperling

The game of Golf is signified by four (4) well-known courses in the Spokane Parks and Recreation Division. Golf is currently concluding a 4-year \$8,000,000 strategic investment in three (3) irrigation systems. Systems have been replaced at Indian Canyon (opened in 1935) and Esmeralda (opened in 1954). Downriver (opened in 1916) irrigation is 80% complete and expected to be finished and operational in May 2022.

The investment in these three (3) courses has upgraded antiquated, manual irrigation systems in the 3 oldest golf courses and improved the customer golfing experience, while saving water. A Council approved SIP loan is being repaid by Golf ratepayers. The Creek at Qualchan (opened in 1993) and is the youngest course.

Growing the Game of Golf is always at the forefront of Marketing Strategies for each of the courses. PGA Jr golf, Operation 36, First Tee of America, and High School golf have started at all 4 of the courses. Group lessons start in June and Men's and Ladies' Leagues are underway. ProAm events will be held at Esmeralda, and Indian Canyon later in the season. May 2, The Creek at Qualchan will host the IEPGA Pro Am event.

Golf has made its mark in the Spokane Area and communities beyond. April 23 is the date to officially induct Mark Gardner, PGA Director of Golf at The Creek at Qualchan, into the PNWPGA Hall of Fame. Congratulations Mark!!

Park Board Land Committee

Chair Greta Gilman

The Land Committee of the Spokane Park Board advises the Park Board on matters pertaining to the policies and administration of operating and maintaining City-owned park properties. The committee reviews land acquisitions (and land dispossession), park planning and development, park operations agreements, capital and operational budgets, sponsorships, and general operational updates and information. The committee meets at 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays the week prior to the regular Park Board meeting.

Recent items that have gone through Land Committee on their way to the full Park Board for approval:

- Parks and Natural Lands Master Plan –contract, interim and final deliverables
- Accept donations for Hoopfest courts, murals, baseball fields, art, etc.
- Accept ownership of properties acquired through Conservation Futures
- Land lease agreements, such as the Sportsplex and libraries
- Easements on Park property
- Contracts/change orders and design concepts for Park Improvements such as Dutch Jakes Park rebuild, Liberty Park Collaborative Improvements, and Kardong Bridge
- Park Rules and Regulations Title 12 Amendments
- Equipment purchases and leases as recommended by Park Operations
- Libraries, Public Schools, and Sportsplex Interlocal and Joint Use agreements
- Proposals for non-Park uses of Park Land, such as Hamblen Park water tank

Items to discuss with City Council:

- Policy for non-Park use of Park Land; need a policy for responding to requests for using Park lands for non-Park purposes
- Parks Surplus Property Process

Park Board Recreation Committee
Chair Sally Lodato

Sports Fields improvement fee (SFIF) and Dwight Merkel synthetic turf replacement

1. The synthetic turf fields at Dwight Merkel are at their life span of 12 years. Dwight Merkel is a heavily used field since there are only two synthetic fields in the area.
2. A sports field improvement fee is currently being discussed (similar to the golf fund). This fee will aid in establishing a funding mechanism to all user groups for maintenance and improvements. Three sports fields (Dwight Merkel, Franklin and Southeast Sports Complex) will incur a \$5 booking fee while tier 1 and tier 2 fields will incur per hour increases and fees for winter use. It is anticipated that this change will provide an additional \$45,000 to the SFIF fund starting in 2023.
3. If approved by Park Board, the fields will close for about 4 months in either summer or fall. Past participants and schools have been notified and were given a chance to provide feedback. There will be a temporary soccer field available at a northside park for displaced teams.

Recreation Report Highlights Quarter 1, 2022

1. Preliminary numbers are in for the first quarter of 2022 (compared to same period 2021). Outdoor Recreation was up 8 programs and 151 participants; Wellness was up 6 programs and 62 registrations; Corbin Art Center was up 44 programs and 261 registrations; Winter Volleyball which was not offered in 2021 had 100 teams and 604 participants and winter adult flag football was up 1 team and 38 participants.
2. Outdoor Recreation partnered with Spokane Nordic Ski Association, Fitness Fanatics, 49 Degrees North and Friends of Mt Spokane to provide 31 cross country ski lessons and 70 snowshoe tours. Additionally, 30 CHAS employees learned to snowshoe with plans of taking their own clients to the mountains for recreation therapy.
3. Therapeutic Recreation held a St Paddy's day Friday night jam; Powerhounds Cup with \$2,000 donated for participant gear; Blue Waxers participated in the Langlauf Nordic race; powerlifting at North Central High School returned and cornhole was at capacity in March.
4. The highest spring registration for volleyball in history was recorded with over 100 teams playing at the Podium!
5. Spring Activity Guide went live online on March 11 and has been viewed over 10,000 times with nearly 1000 registrations and over \$100,00 in gross revenue. Inserts were placed in utility bills as well as post cards to past participants. Emails were sent to Spokane School families that included a 10% off promo code used to track marketing efforts.

Recreation Department was awarded SEEK (Summer Experiences and Enrichment for kids) funding for the 2 applications submitted

1. Spokane's Community Outdoor Recreation Experience (SCORE): \$37,694

- Summer outdoor recreation opportunities for their youth and teen ages 8-18yrs. summer programs.
The goal is to increase the number of at-risk and underserved youth who are active outdoors.
- 2. **SCORE** will provide 3 days a week 6-8 hours each day for a community center (NEYC, WCCC, MLK, SWSCC) to reserve outdoor tours and instruction for up to 10 weeks over summer 2022.
- 3. **Youth Summer Recreation Access for All: \$68,701**
 - a. ***Youth Summer Recreation Access for All will provide:***
 - Ample scholarship opportunities for all summer youth camp programs Financially support the hiring of a certified medical employee to expand summer services to those with disabilities for TRS FunShine Camp
 - To Date: \$16,520 scholarship dollars have been awarded to 46 underserved youth in our community.

Other noteworthy items:

1. A total of 136 children attended Spring Break Camps at the Corbin Art Center.
2. Our summer camp guide is available online with our full summer activity guide being printed and distributed by the end of May
3. Recreation was awarded a National Recreation and Parks Association Grant allowing the Wellness and Enrichment area to partner with Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community and Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington, to develop the framework for a sustainable Healthy Aging Through Parks and Rec program in Spokane. Target demographic is underserved people living with memory loss illnesses like dementia and Alzheimer's, and their caregivers. We are aiming at launching the Enhance Fitness program in Fall 2022.

Park Board Finance Committee

Chair Bob Anderson

The fiscal environment created by the COVID pandemic caused Parks to rethink the way budget dollars are allocated. Parks went to a core service model that is closely related to what most of us do with our personal finances. What are the necessities we require and how do those compare with our revenue intake? What can we afford and what must we reduce or eliminate? Parks determined the costs to deliver core services that the community requires and compares those to the forecast revenue. Priorities based on community expectations were developed for adding additional services as revenue allows.

Implementing a core services budget requires an exceptional team and leadership. What is needed for the community instead of how do I obtain more resources for my department must become the cornerstone philosophy. The shift in budget process and staff buy-in to the greater good for community has been essential to Park's successful financial performance.

The 2021 fiscal year can be depicted as the first steps to normalcy. Recreational program revenue increased from \$300,623 in 2020 to \$1,133,680 in 2021. Salaries and the supply expenses to offer these programs had similar increases. Riverfront Park was able to implement the long-anticipated concert offerings at the Pavilion, which resulted in revenue and expense increases similar to the Recreation departments. Adherence to the 2021 budget enabled Park's to overcome unplanned increases to the Service and Charges expense line, which were due primarily to Utility rates and usage increases. Sound fiscal planning and monitoring offset the increases and resulted in a very successful 2021 for Spokane Parks.

Looking ahead where is Parks going and how will it get there.

- The efficient core services budget process will continue to serve Park's well in the future.
- Developing and enhancing partnerships as exemplified by the Don Kardong bridge rehabilitation. The total expense of this project would have drained Park's capital budget. City Council and other partners like Gonzaga University will make it possible for the completion of other needed community projects.
- Listening to our Community to determine short- and long-term priorities. Park's Master Plan research and analysis will serve as the planning guideline for Park's future
- Working with Council and City Administration to further exceed the expectations of our growing community.

In closing I want to thank the Park's staff for their passion and efforts to provide increased recreational opportunities for the Spokane Community as we started the seminal steps to recovery. As a Park Board we realize this would not been possible without the beneficial partnership with our Spokane City Council. Your support with capital projects like the Don Kardong bridge, Storm Relief, and the shared belief in Keeping our Parks and Playgrounds safe and accessible for all were primary to Park's 2021 and essential to future successful years.

Urban Forestry Tree Committee Chair Kevin Brownlee

I chaired my first UFTC meeting earlier this month, so I'm still getting oriented. My initial topic of interest is Park Department authority, through Urban Forestry, on private property inspections for development services for landscape trees, which are required through the development code.

The Parks Department is responsible for inspection and permitting of trees and landscaping in private commercial and residential developments. While this work does involve trees, it's well outside the role of the Parks Department, and does not involve street trees in the public right-of-way.

These inspections are currently performed by a Park Department Urban Forester in a position funded jointly by Parks and the Planning Department. While this is ostensibly a shared position, the Planning work is nearly a full-time demand. This joint arrangement was an agreement between previous department directors. It's not supported by Urban Forestry policies or ordinances.

We're exploring how Planning can hire its own Urban Forester for inspections to free up Parks Urban Forestry staff to perform their intended roles.

Also, due to the hard work of our Urban Forestry staff, Spokane will be receiving its 19th Tree City USA award this spring. An Arbor Day Celebration will be held this Saturday, April 30, at Finch Arboretum.

Urban Forestry 2021 Accomplishments:

- 1,100 new seedlings were planted at Camp Sekani with Evergreen East Mountain Bike Alliance and their volunteers
- 1,000 seedlings were given out for Earth Day in Partnership with The Lands Council, The Pacific Education Institute and On-Track Academy. On-Track also planted 24 new street trees around their school, integrated tree related projects into their classrooms and received many awards including becoming one of the first Tree Campus USA K-12 in the nation, being recognized as a Tree City Founding Campus.
- 602 new community trees were planted, including 118 in partnership with The Lands Council and community volunteers through the SpoCanopy Program. SpoCanopy aims to ensure every neighborhood has access to trees and green space.
- 488 Street Tree Permits were processed, representing 3,261 trees
- 484 trees were pruned by UF Staff
- 312 Site inspections were performed for certificate of occupancy
- 306 Development and demo plan sets were reviewed
- Urban Tree Canopy Analysis was completed in partnership with Gonzaga
- A windstorm in January resulted in a loss of 200 trees. A restoration plan resulted in quick and safe clean-up, revenue from logs which were sent to a mill, quick repairs and a 2-for-1 replacement commitment with a diversity of species.

Park Board Riverfront Park Committee

Chair Nick Sumner

It is no secret that Riverfront Park is an amazing destination. The park has received numerous awards following a massive multi-year transformation project. That transformation has created a gathering place that is specifically designed for people all ages and abilities to enjoy. The new and updated attractions in the park have allowed the city of Spokane to enter into several beneficial partnerships with organizations that are like-minded in how they view the importance of public recreation and access to parks and natural areas. Social media is flooded with posts of park patrons making great new memories and experiencing the best of what Spokane has to offer. With the completion of construction, we have transitioned into the next phase of the story of Riverfront Park – a story that started predominately with Expo 74 and continues to be written today.

In 2021 we saw a return to some normalcy with construction winding down and activities ramping up.

2021 Riverfront Spokane Highlights

- **Spokane Cultural Days** - Riverfront collaborated with Numerica Credit Union, Councilwoman Wilkerson, Carl Maxey Center, and the Downtown Spokane Partnership to recognize Black History and cultural awareness. On 2/27, visitors enjoyed complimentary SkyRide admission, a video presentation on cultural diversity and a Downtown Spokane Scavenger Hunt. Attendance: 537
- **Rangers in the Community** - Rangers celebrated a birthday with a boy who wants to be a Park Ranger when he grows up. The team put together a gift bag with a book about Rangers, custom Ranger T-Shirt, coin, and a gift card.
- **Local HS Graduation** - The Pavilion hosted seven graduation ceremonies (Spokane Public Schools and Lakeside HS) June 11-14, providing an outdoor venue that could accommodate social distancing due to the COVID protocols at the time. Attendance: 6,700
- **Spring / Winter Markets** - Riverfront markets provide an opportunity for the public to shop from local artisans and vendors at the Pavilion. The Spring Market runs for four weeks in April and the Winter Market runs weekly between Thanksgiving and Christmas. There were 11 Market days in 2021 with Spring Market series attendance of 7,437 and Winter Market series attendance of 5,070.
- **AEG Concert Series** - There were 12 concerts promoted by AEG between August and October. The inaugural concert by Primus won the Inlander Best Of Concert award for 2021. Total attendance: 23,720+
- **Shakespeare in the Park** - The Shakespeare in the Park series in partnership with the Spokane Shakespeare Society provided eight free performances of A Midsummer Night's Dream throughout August and five free performances of the Complete Works of William Shakespeare in September. Total attendance: 2,211
- **Labor Day Symphony Concert** - Riverfront partnered with the Spokane Symphony and provided a venue for the Labor Day Concert. Attendance: 1,343
- **Fall Fest** - In its third year, Fall Fest is quickly becoming a new Spokane tradition with a wide range of activations that appeal to the whole family encompassing downtown Spokane. Fall Fest was a showcase of local talent including sing-alongs, magic shows, roaming dancers and interactive fun activities in October. Attendance: 4,500
- **Holiday Lighting at Riverfront** - There were two lighting initiatives over the holidays in Riverfront in 2021. Light Up the Night returned with an 80-tree display highlighting Spokane community centered organizations. The 2nd annual Holiday Trail of Lights invited the community

to get into the holiday spirit by taking a stroll through Riverfront Park and enjoying all of the sparkling holiday lights on Riverfront's blue bridge, Clock Tower, Oak Alley, and more.

- **New Year's Eve Fireworks** - Riverfront was excited to return to the tradition of a vibrant fireworks show in the heart of downtown! The family-friendly fireworks show began at 9 p.m. and the Numerica Skate Ribbon offered extended hours. Cola-Cola provided sampling and giveaways and brought their polar bear mascot which was a big hit with the kids! Attendance: over 2,500

2022 will see a continuation of returning events and a host of exciting new events.

2022 Riverfront Spokane Events Season

- Between May 1 and Nov 1 - highlights include:
 - Public events – Est. 30 events return to Riverfront including Bloomsday, Hoopfest, Pig Out, Pride, and walks and runs
 - Hoopfest center court will be in the Pavilion. First time in the park since 2017.
 - Community Engagement Activities – Est. 90 free activities planned to include Riverfront Moves Fitness series, Riverfront Eats, Carrousel Story Time, Shakespeare in the Park, Movies in the Pavilion, and Historic walking tour.
 - 4TH of July Celebration will include a free Spokane Symphony concert at the Pavilion
 - Pacific Northwest Beer and Cider Festival is a new event coming to the US Pavilion in August.
 - Concert Season at the US Pavilion is anticipated to present 8 concerts.
- **Local Vendors** - Riverfront will continue to offer the north bank food truck program featuring local vendors.
- **Infrastructure Repair** - Riverfront will complete a mini-renovation of the Red wagon Meadow including replacement of the electronic message sign, painting of the red wagon, restoration of the plants along the river, and repair of the Asphalt pathway.
- **Humane Society Dog Park** - Advance the planning, design and fundraising of the Dog Park at the Forestry Shelter. Activities will kick-off with the Parade of Paws and design unveiling on June 18.
- **Downtown Zipline**- With concurrence of City Council, Staff will lead a community working group to develop a request for proposal document and solicit potential interested parties.

Park Board Development and Volunteer Committee Chair Bob Anderson

Last year we introduced the Development Volunteer Committee (DVC) to the Council at this joint session. A year has gone by and what have we accomplished?

For those of us who want desired results yesterday, not enough. For those who have given so much of their passion and time more than we hoped. More on accomplishments below but first a recap of DVC's purpose and structure

The early vision was the DVC would provide a direct pathway to the Park Board for community members like Friends of Groups, Neighborhood Councils, Business Associations and individual citizens with the passion to get involved. The Park Board approved the DVC with its stated purpose: to help guide fundraising priorities (capital and programmatic) and to enhance and to help coordinate "the efforts of Friends of Groups with their fundraising activities" The DVC would consist of 4 Park Board members and 4 non-Park Board members. Initial composition of the non-Board members was to include one member from Friends Group and 3 community leaders.

We still wanted more community involvement through leadership positions and developed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) which would be open to all Friends Groups, Neighborhood Councils, business and civic groups. The goal is to have this group representative of the Spokane community not one segment. The CAC would report directly to the DVC and would have a peer selected member position included in DVC composition.

What have we accomplished and or discovered:

- We have all but one position on DVC filled
- The CAC has gone from full to needing a few more member
- Spokane is blessed with so many passionate people who want to help and we will continue to meet with and listen to their needs
- Parks Master Plan will provide an excellent starting point for future action
- Our neighborhood Parks have excellent community stewards and without their help our Parks would not be the treasurers they have grown to be
- When you discover a neighborhood park steward as passionate about all our Spokane Parks don't let them get away as they are a treasure and invaluable to your vision

As Chair of the DVC, I envisioned a list of accomplishments to present this year. Instead, we have developed a team that will build a better community. I wish that I could list all the hours and energy that our team has devoted to this Committee and its potential. Spokane will benefit from what they will accomplish.