

The Parks & Community Services Board approved these meeting minutes on November 6, 2019.

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday
September 10, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-113
Bellevue, Washington

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Trescases, Vice-Chair Hamilton, Boardmembers Clark, Heath, Synn¹, Unger

BOARDMEMBER ABSENT: Boardmember Kumar

PARKS STAFF PRESENT: Nancy Harvey, Glenn Kost, Shelley McVein, Camron Parker, Scott Vander Hyden

OTHERS PRESENT: Heidi Dean, David Fredericks, John Suthern

MINUTES TAKER: Michelle Cash

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Trescases at 6:00 p.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion by Boardmember Unger and second by Boardmember Clark to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by Vice-Chair Hamilton and second by Boardmember Unger to approve the July 9, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously (5-0).

¹ Arrived at 6:02 p.m.

4. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Dave Fredericks

535 100th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA

Mr. Fredericks expressed his concern about the removal of 53 trees in Downtown Park for the NE Gateway Project. He wants to ensure that the Board has evaluated all options before the trees are cut down. Mr. Fredericks suggested that the Board consider modifying the NE Gateway Project to keep the existing main entry the focal point and gateway, rather than the proposed plan.

Heidi Dean

11661 SE 56th St., Bellevue, WA

Ms. Dean expressed her concern about the proposed project at Newport Hills Neighborhood Park. She explained that the neighborhood was promised that they would know the source of the community input yet the survey listed personal information as “optional.” Ms. Dean is aware that survey input not only came from people outside of Bellevue but also from people around Washington and throughout the country.

Ms. Dean explained that there was a survey conducted in 2014 of the Newport Hills Community Club. The results of this survey created a community level amenity (dog park) in what is intended as a neighborhood park. If the City has mandated that there must be a dog park at the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park then Ms. Dean thinks that other parks should be considered.

5. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:**

Councilmember Robertson provided the following report:

- Council received an update regarding the NE 12th Street Multipurpose Path Project and its impacts to McCormick Park. This project will most likely remain a Council project, not a Parks Board project.
- Council received a briefing regarding the tent encampment (Tent City 4). The consent decree is inconsistent with the current code so Council is working to true up these issues.
- Council will receive a presentation regarding the East Main Land Use Code. They are also working on a new Development Plan and a large quasi-judicial matter.

Boardmember Heath asked if the Parks Board previously voted to cut down the trees for the NE Gateway Project at Downtown Park. Councilmember Robertson clarified that procedurally the Parks Board conducts planning and staff/designers work on the actual design elements. To Councilmember Robertson’s knowledge, the Parks Board does not evaluate the project to the level of what trees will be cut down. Boardmember Clark added that the Parks Board was made aware of the tree cutting at a previous Board meeting. Chair Trescases added that the NE Gateway Project was a concept as part of the Downtown Park’s Master Plan that was adopted in

the 1990s and is coming to fruition. The Board has reviewed and endorsed the current designs. This was done with consideration of the Park's history and will ultimately have a net gain of trees after the project is complete.

Boardmember Heath asked if the Parks Board has been charged with reviewing the alternatives for the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park Project or if the Parks Board is to determine where an off leash park should be located in Bellevue. Councilmember Robertson clarified that there is a Master Plan for Airfield Park that includes an off leash area (OLA) at Robinswood Park. This project is not funded and was the last discussion of off leash parks. The Parks Board is to determine the best alternative for the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park. Councilmember Robertson recommended that the Parks Board either approve one of the options that will be presented later in the meeting agenda or recommend an alternative. When the Parks & Open Space Master Plan is updated, then the Parks Board can evaluate and update citywide needs for off leash areas.

Boardmember Synn explained that although a project may not be in the Parks Board's charter, the Board is a visible conduit for feedback and can make sure any feedback provided is then forwarded to the appropriate party.

Boardmember Synn asked why the Parks Board is not involved in the planning process for McCormick Park. Councilmember Robertson clarified that although there are some park amenities, the current McCormick Park project is a Transportation project. The project includes a two-block gap for the bicycle lane. She added that the Parks Department has been involved in the project and the Transportation Department has been conducting the outreach for the project.

6. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Ms. McVein provided the following report:

- The Bellevue Network on Aging is currently recruiting new members.
- The Kelsey Creek Farm Fair will be held on October 5, 2019. All Boardmembers are encouraged to attend.

7. **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:**

Boardmember Unger visited the following parks during the summer months:

- Surrey Downs Park
- Downtown Park, including Movies in the Park
- Meydenbauer Bay Park
- Hidden Valley Park
- Killarney Glen Park

Boardmember Clark visited the following parks during the summer months:

- Downtown Park
- Gateway Corner Park Project
- McCormick Park

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- Ashwood Park
- Crossroads Park

Boardmember Synn expressed his amazement with the rapid growth in the Spring District. He suggested that the Board be diligent about planning for this area. Boardmember Synn also noted that the new growth is dense with little space for parks.

Chair Trescases visited Meydenbauer Bay Park via water access. She noted that the transient moorage is a bit difficult to find.

Vice-Chair Hamilton visited Downtown Park and the future site of Newport Hills Neighborhood Park. He noted that there are great social media connections for the parks, particularly the E-newsletter. Vice-Chair Hamilton also called attention to a *Seattle Times* article that featured Meydenbauer Bay Park and its many amenities.

8. **CHAIR COMMUNICATION & DISCUSSION:**

Reported above.

9. **BOARDMEMBER/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS:**

No reports.

10. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

A. **Newport Hills Neighborhood Park – Planning Process and Site Alternatives**

Mr. Kost reviewed the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park project and explained that the project is made up of three separate parcels (Tyler, Brick, and Patterson). The Tyler property was acquired in 2010, the Patterson property was acquired in 2015 and the Brick property was acquired earlier this year.

Mr. Vander Hyden summarized the outreach and feedback that was conducted by the neighborhood in 2012 and by the City this year. Overall, most of the comments were in support of some sort of shared areas (i.e., OLA and common area).

Boardmember Synn asked staff to define an OLA. Mr. Vander Hyden explained that an OLA is a safe, fenced area where a dog does not have to be confined to a leash—it is a place to gather and let dogs run free. Boardmember Synn asked if there has been community input to the definition and features of an OLA. Mr. Vander Hyden clarified that the community has requested a traditional OLA for Newport Hills Neighborhood Park.

The following are additional details about the alternatives that Mr. Vander Hyden summarized:

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- Alternative A: The least developed of the three alternatives, it closely resembles the 2015 Vision Plan. The OLA is 1.75-acres and the general use area is 1.35-acres with a small picnic shelter (15' x 25') and an open lawn area. The small off-street parking area would be expanded slightly and the picnic shelter would include an access drive with one ADA and one service/convenience parking stall;
- Alternative B: Moderately developed, this option adds several amenities to Alternative A, such as a larger general use picnic shelter (20' x 30'), a perimeter path. A small shelter, agility equipment and a dog wash station are added to the OLA. Off-street parking is relocated to near the picnic shelter and lighting is added to all of the OLA to be used after dark.
- Alternative C: The most highly developed, this option provides the largest picnic shelter/gathering space (20' x 35'), includes a grass viewing/seating mound and adds adult exercise equipment to the play area. It includes a separate shy/timid dog area and provides two small shelters in lieu of one larger one in the OLA. A small retaining wall is proposed to separate the OLA from general park area, creating a more level and useable general park area and an overlook/viewpoint into the OLA. This would also create a more defined sense of space between the OLA and the general park uses.

Outreach was conducted in May and July, 2019 for the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park. Mr. Vander Hyden reported that there were 55 written comments received after the May meeting. Most of the comments wanted a full or partial OLA, which is consistent with earlier outreach conducted by the Newport Hills Neighborhood Association in 2012. Mr. Vander Hyden noted that multiple common area amenities were also requested.

Mr. Vander Hyden explained that the following elements are common for all three plan alternatives:

- A fenced OLA. The size varies slightly with each option, ranging from 1.6-1.75 acres. Each option includes a double fenced entry, drainage improvements, informational kiosk and water station;
- A general use park area. The size varies with each option, ranging from 1.35-1.5 acres. Each option would contain an optional lawn area, a picnic shelter and gathering area (varying size) and pathway connections;
- Soft surface trail connection to 116th SE, future trail connection to the Brick Property and ravine overlook;
- Park frontage improvements along SE 60th St. and pedestrian crosswalk at 116th Ave. SE;
- Sani-can with an enclosure;
- Parking improvements.

Mr. Vander Hyden showed pictures of the Robinswood Park OLA as a size comparison for the proposed OLA and several existing neighborhood park areas similar in size to the proposed common area. The next steps and project timeline include:

- Third public meeting (Sept. 24) – present preferred plan
- Parks Board meeting (Nov.) – preferred plan/recommendation

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- City Council meeting (Nov./Dec.) – present preferred park plans
- Design and permitting (Fall thru Spring, 2020)
- Public bid (Late Spring 2020)
- Construction (complete in 2020)

Boardmember Clark attended the community outreach sessions for the alternatives and expressed concern about the size and expected capacity of the park. He asked if previous Boardmembers had any metrics in regards to capacity. Mr. Kost clarified that there were no studies, other than the recommended alternatives. A minimum of one acre for the OLA is also recommended. Mr. Kost further noted that Robinswood Park typically has 12-15 dogs on a busy day and 3-4 dogs on a lighter day; however, no formal studies have been conducted to confirm actual uses.

Boardmember Clark suggested that one acre be allocated to the OLA at Newport Hills Neighborhood Park so that other parts of the park can be expanded and more accessible. Mr. Kost clarified that the proportions of the various OLA alternatives came from community feedback received since 2011. Mr. Vander Hyden added that the small dog and shelter areas decrease the usable space at the park.

Boardmember Unger asked how far dog owners travel to use dog parks. Mr. Kost explained that it is difficult to tell who uses the OLAs at the parks. The community outreach that was conducted targeted a specific area, which Mr. Kost highlighted on a map. However, he cautioned that people outside of this area could have responded to the survey—but that approximately 90% of online survey responses were from the highlighted map area.

Boardmember Unger expressed concern about the parking, since the alternatives include an OLA and the park is a neighborhood park. Mr. Vander Hyden noted that parking is important for the park and that the neighbors have requested that a dog park be included in a portion of the park.

Since Newport Hills Neighborhood Park is currently being used as an unofficial OLA, Boardmember Unger asked if the entire park is being utilized or only portions of the park. Mr. Kost clarified that the entire open area of the park is being used as an unofficial OLA.

Vice-Chair Hamilton noted that the Newport Hills community will ultimately benefit from the robust planning process for the park. He added that the history that has already been captured for the park needs to ultimately be reflected in the park, as well as the recent history. Vice-Chair Hamilton explained that the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park is part of a parks system and there is an obligation to the rest of the system to align with the priorities of all of the parks. Vice-Chair Hamilton commended staff on their efforts of gaining community feedback. The community vision, parks staff expertise, and the Parks Board recommendation will ultimately help inform Council of a recommendation. Vice-Chair Hamilton favors Alternative C with the reduction of the OLA to one acre. He thinks the OLA should be smaller than the recommended size because the park is a neighborhood park. He is concerned that people will approach the park thinking it is solely an off leash dog park. Vice-Chair Hamilton discussed some of the community comments he received about including a path within the OLA. He also suggested that signs be included to direct people one way and OLA users the other—Surrey Downs Park is a great example of what can hopefully be done at Newport Hills Neighborhood Park.

Boardmember Synn asked if Bellevue has any breed or size restrictions for dogs in Bellevue parks. Mr. Vander Hyden confirmed that there are no restrictions. Boardmember Synn also asked staff to clarify the area of the park that is unusable for humans. Mr. Vander Hyden showed this area on a map. Boardmember Synn thinks that the presented alternatives include an OLA that is too large. He likes Alternative C but suggested flipping the OLA with the open park area so the OLA adjoins the wetland. Boardmember Synn added that the unusable space for humans should be considered as an OLA for dogs. Mr. Vander Hyden clarified that the unusable space cannot be used for dogs or humans because of the terrain. Boardmember Heath asked if the west side of the Tyler Property can be used for dogs. Mr. Kost explained that this area is also too steep and erosion would then become an issue.

Boardmember Heath requested that the proposed parking capacity at Newport Hills Neighborhood Park be compared with other neighborhood parks. Mr. Kost clarified that it is premature to determine the number of parking spaces. He added that many of the neighborhood parks have limited or no parking spaces. Boardmember Heath expressed his concern that building a neighborhood park with an OLA and lots of parking may make the park more of a destination park. Mr. Kost clarified that the park will not have programmed events so the use will be spread out—weekends are typically more popular along with nicer weather days.

Boardmember Heath asked if consideration has been given to OLA barriers that are mobile so the size of the park can be altered as needed. Mr. Vander Hyden explained that this might create community confusion and increase liability at the park. Boardmember Heath also asked if the OLA was included in the 2008 levy. Mr. Kost confirmed that it was not included.

Boardmember Heath explained that there is an assumption in conversation that the Newport Hills community prefers an OLA and an open space. However, there have been concerns expressed that this assumption comes from the 2011 community feedback, which some community members feel is flawed. Boardmember Heath suggested that this questioning be included and clarified on future surveys. Mr. Kost and Mr. Vander Hyden discussed the online survey collection methods noting that it is difficult to track where the data is coming from if the information is not provided. Boardmember Heath stated that there is a perception that there wasn't an adequate screening process for respondents completing the online survey. He asked if this could be eliminated if the survey was conducted again. Mr. Kost responded no.

Boardmember Heath asked if trees will be cut down to develop any of the recommended alternatives. Mr. Vander Hyden clarified that a few trees will most likely need to be removed.

Chair Trescases prefers using the term “common area” rather than “community area” since all of the areas are available to the community. She added that a one acre dog area does not translate to an actual acre because of the facilities that will be included in the park. Chair Trescases feels that the OLA is important for dogs to run free and get exercise. Although Newport Hills is a neighborhood park, Chair Trescases feels that any of the parks in Bellevue are potentially destination parks. However, she does not foresee the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park becoming a destination park. Chair Trescases expressed her support for Alternative C.

Councilmember Robertson requested clarification regarding the size of the proposed common area. Mr. Vander Hyden stated that the proposed size is between 1.35-1.5 acres.

Boardmember Unger expressed her support for Alternative C with the modification of a gate to change the park size to include small and large dog areas. Mr. Kost discussed the small dog area at Robinswood Park that includes an adjustable fence.

Mr. Kost explained that staff will revise Alternative C and move the wall to the south to make the OLA slightly smaller and the common area slightly larger. Various size options will be presented at the next Board meeting. Vice-Chair Hamilton clarified that the best practices, department knowledge, and 2010 OLA study/feedback should all be considered when determining the size of the OLA.

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Unger to extend the meeting until 8:40 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).

11. **NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

12. **PROPOSED AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:**

Chair Trescases reported that the next Board meeting will be a retreat held on October 8, 2019 at Lewis Creek Park.

Mr. Parker reviewed the following agenda items for October:

- Safety in the parks
- General OLA policy
- Progress on the Recreation Program Plan and Department Strategic Plan

13. **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:**

- A. CIP Project Status Report
- B. Memo from staff re Downtown Park NE Gateway Project Update
- C. Email from Heidi Dean re Newport Hills Park planning
- D. Email from Pamela Johnston re children's safety/staff salaries
- E. Email and attachments from Heidi Dean re neighborhood parks vs community parks

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- F. Email from Sierra P re summer camps
- G. Email from Amber A re summer camps
- H. List of upcoming Parks special events

14. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

John Southern

5761 110th Ave. SE, Bellevue, WA

Mr. Southern is a dog owner and uses the Newport Hills Neighborhood Park daily. He said that a one acre OLA would be too small for the park. He also requested that sand not be used in the OLA. Mr. Southern expressed his appreciation to staff and the Board for considering an OLA at Newport Hills Neighborhood Park.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Boardmember Clark and second by Boardmember Synn to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Motion carried unanimously (6-0).