

**MINUTES OF THE METRO COUNCIL REGIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**

Wednesday, June 3, 1998

Metro Council Chamber

Members Present: Ruth McFarland (Chair), Patricia McCaig (Vice Chair), Lisa Naito

Members Absent: None.

Chair McFarland called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

**1. INTRODUCTIONS**

None.

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF MAY 6, 1998**

**Motion:**

Councilor McCaig moved to adopt the Regional Facilities Committee minutes of May 6, 1998.

**Vote:**

Chair McFarland and Councilors Naito and McCaig voted aye. The vote was 3/0, and the motion passed unanimously.

**4. ORDINANCE NO. 98-752, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FY 1997-98 BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS SCHEDULE BY TRANSFERRING \$120,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO PERSONAL SERVICES IN THE ZOO OPERATING FUND TO PROVIDE FOR INCREASED TEMPORARY STAFFING AT THE METRO WASHINGTON PARK ZOO (OREGON ZOO), AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

Kathy Kiaunus, Deputy Zoo Director, explained that the zoo needs to hire temporary workers to work in two areas, visitor services and facilities management. Visitor services normally hires seasonal employees, but this year for various reasons turnover has been higher than in previous years. Temporary workers need to be hired in facilities management, most of the need has arisen to fill positions temporarily vacant due to injuries in the custodial services; a little relates to completing the Oregon Project.

Chair McFarland asked what effect this will have on the contingency fund.

Ms. Kiaunus said a significant amount remains in the contingency fund.

Councilor Naito asked about the revenues of the zoo in light of the rainy spring.

Ms. Kiaunus said that despite the crummy weather, revenues have been good because people have come to see the koalas. Also, this is the school season, and kids come regardless of the weather.

Chair McFarland opened a public hearing at 1:40 PM. No one came forward to speak, so the hearing was closed.

**Motion:**

Councilor Naito moved to recommend Council adoption of Ordinance No. 98-752.

**Vote:**

Chair McFarland and Councilors McCaig and Naito voted aye. The vote was 3/0 in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilor McCaig will carry the motion to a meeting of the full Council.

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**5. RESOLUTION NO. 2658, FOR THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO EXECUTE AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FOR MANAGEMENT OF PROPERTY IN THE SANDY RIVER GORGE TARGET AREA**

Charles Ciecko, Regional Parks and Greenspaces, said this represents an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that has become routine. It is based on a boilerplate, and contains nothing new. Like many others of these, it involves no money exchanges nor additional costs for Metro.

Jim Desmond pointed out the area on a large map.

**Motion:**

Councilor McCaig moved to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 98-2658.

**Vote:**

Chair McFarland and Councilors McCaig and Naito voted aye. The vote was 3/0 in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Naito will carry the motion to a meeting of the full Council.

**6. RESOLUTION NO. 98-2660, FOR THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO EXECUTE AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF PORTLAND FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PROPERTY IN THE EAST BUTTES BORING LAVA DOMES TARGET AREA**

Chair McFarland asked that the area be pointed out on a map so she could better understand why this property falls under the City of Portland's jurisdiction. Mr. Desmond showed the area, which lies near the border between Gresham and Portland, but it is in Portland.

**Motion:**

Councilor McCaig moved to recommend Council adoption of Resolution No. 98-2660.

**Vote:**

Chair McFarland and Councilors McCaig and Naito voted aye. The vote was 3/0 in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Chair McFarland will carry the motion to a meeting of the full Council.

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVISING REGIONAL PARKS AND GREENSPACES ON THE BLUE LAKE PARK MASTER PLANS**

Mr. Ciecko said that as Metro has done more master plans, the staff has gotten better at doing them. He recalled that when the Oxbow Master Plan was brought before the Regional Facilities Committee, which created controversy, the Committee requested staff to bring master plans before it early so recommendations could be made before plans are so far along. He said that is what they are doing in this case.

Blue Lake Park, unlike other parks Metro has acquired, had a master plan when Metro acquired it. However, it was made in 1985 and parts are out of date. Furthermore, since Metro acquired it, new issues have arisen that need to be taken into consideration.

Julie Weatherby, Parks and Greenspaces, showed slides of the park and explained what has happened since 1985. She referred the committee to page 3 of the master plan (attached to the meeting record), which shows a map of the park. She showed slides of the west portion of the park, the part that most people associate with the park. She pointed out the parts that were developed as part of the 1985 master plan, including a play area and some reservable covered shelters. She pointed out the old style of development, with cement walkways running along the water. Today, the water's edge would be restored for wildlife habitat. She showed the old swimming beach. She said this receives heavy use during the summer months. She showed a children's water play area, developed in the early 1990s, and a wetland

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area. She pointed out undeveloped areas that could potentially be improved as part of the master plan. Some of those would be improved as wildlife habitat. She showed where the concerts are held in the summer.

Mr. Cieccko introduced Jim Walsh from Walsh and Associates, a land-planning consultant. Mr. Walsh recapped changes made since 1985. He noted facilities that had been originally planned, but were never built. He said in preparation for doing a master plan now, various groups and individuals were surveyed to find out what direction they thought the park development should take. He called attention to page 2 of the staff report (contained in the agenda packet). He said most people favor this to be a natural-resource based recreation area. He said most people wanted to have the park remain regional in focus and not become a neighborhood park. He said most people wanted to see habitat improved, especially wetlands. People would like the natural setting improved, perhaps by adding more trees, to create a "sense of place."

He said that on the east side of the park, 100 acres of land could be developed. Revenue-generating development that is compatible with wetland conservation would be ideal.

Overall, the vision is to make it possible for more people to use the park without compromising its character or its function as a wetland habitat. There are education opportunities for schools to use the area in outdoor programs and to develop wildlife corridors. As part of the effort to increase revenues, ways would be sought to increase visitors in the off-seasons and off-peak hours. For example, some cross-country events have used the trail system. The Lake House is currently used for weddings and produces revenue. Reserved picnic sites for group picnics does, also. The park could use more of these, as this year 40,000 people had to be turned away. All current sites have already been booked for this season.

Other revenue generating ideas, such as developing a golf course on the east portion, have been discussed. However, revenue generation is not the primary goal, and no one wants to put something in there that will destroy the character of the park.

Councilor Naito shared her own experience using Blue Lake Park. She said she went there when her children were young, because the park is ideal for small children. She said having a large area with mowed grass and a swimming area close by is a real asset. Not very many parks in the area offer a large groomed area. When children get older, other kinds of parks are more interesting to them. But she'd hate to see this type of park gone. It is needed.

Heather Nelson, Regional Parks and Greenspaces, summarized the goals of the park as recreate, educate, generate. The feeling is to maintain the existing character of the park by keeping the aspects of it that work. The picnic shelters work. All picnic shelters have been booked for this season and 40,000 people have been turned away. They would like to look for new opportunities to educate and new opportunities to generate revenue that wouldn't jeopardize the character of the park.

Councilor McCaig thanked Mr. Cieccko for bringing this before the committee early. She recalled that in considering the master plan for Oxbow Park, the capacity could not be increased without losing the character of the park. In this case, the capacity can be increased without destroying the character. She would like to see increasing the capacity of the park be a priority.

Chair McFarland said she agreed that the capacity could be increased. Referring to one recommendation for removing an existing road, she asked which road they were suggesting closing. Mr. Walsh pointed out the road on an aerial map. Chair McFarland said she would close the road first, as a way to increase the capacity.

Councilor Naito said she supports the educational component, but she sees this park as primary human-made. She does not see developing it further in that direction as a problem. She asked about alcohol use. Mr. Cieccko said it was by permit. Councilor Naito said limiting alcohol use seems to keep the park more pleasant for families.

Chair McFarland said she would like to keep the summer concerts. She suspected not many places in the east county are suitable for that. Mr. Cieccko said they would like to move from a subsidized event to a revenue-neutral or revenue-generating event.

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Councilor McCaig asked about overall revenues. Mr. Ciecko said as of 1996-97, attendance was 304,000. This was slightly low because flooding the previous winter had caused damage that had not been repaired by the end of the 1997 season. That year revenues were \$332,000 and operating costs were \$550,000.

Councilor McCaig asked what happens next. Ms. Nelson said they would go back and research business strategies before coming back before the committee with more recommendations.

Councilor McCaig asked about the financial piece. Obviously the parks would like to generate more revenues--perhaps to break even. She asked how much Metro wants to subsidize the park. Ms. Nelson said the feeling now is to maintain the current level of subsidy.

Councilor McCaig asked if any parks are self-sustaining. Mr. Walsh said that most parks pay about 25% of their own expenses, with the remaining 75% being supplied by subsidies. He said this park provides 60% of its own money. That is a very good level of self-support for this industry.

Chair McFarland said the lake must be kept accessible to those who cannot walk or walk far. She said that might be a consideration in planning small parking areas for those with handicap stickers. She said not all the areas need to be accessible, but some should be. She also suggested developing winter uses.

### **8. COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM.

Prepared by,

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Council Assistant