

Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee

Mike Ragsdale, Chair

MEETING NOTES

Thursday, March 23, 2006

5:30 – 7:30 PM

Metro Regional Center, Rm. 501

600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, OR

Committee members present: Chair Mike Ragsdale, Scott Burgess, Ernie Drapela, Kim Gilmer, Faun Hosey, Mike Livingston, Linda Robinson, Zari Santner, and Dan Zinzer

Committee members absent: John Griffiths, Mike Houck, Sue Marshall, Tim Raphael, Dick Schouten and Mike Sykes

Elected officials, staff and guests present: David Bragdon, Jennifer Budhabhatti, Chris Carlson, Jim Labbe, Jill Fuglister, Joel Shoening, Pat Sullivan, Jeff Tucker and Christy Owen

General Update

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm. New member, Mike Livingston, was introduced to the group. Mike comes to the Committee with 30 years experience at Portland General Electric.

Kim Gilmer reported on the Parks Directors' meeting held on March 21. She introduced that group to the GPAC Vision. They discussed the long term vision and how to put it together with the regional 40 to 50 year vision. It was emphasized that to accomplish this the help of the directors and their staffs is essential. The directors decided to meet quarterly and that a component of their work would involve GPAC with which they want to develop a good relationship. The discussion continued about the need to define "the system". Such a process would identify what Metro has already mapped of natural areas and trails, active and passive parks, obtain the park providers' master plans or comprehensive plans and identify gaps in the system. Kim informed the group that this discussion would later involve standards for parks. However, this discussion would be collaborative rather than a top-down process. The GPAC group agreed on the need to contact park directors to obtain the information for this project. A sharing of information will be vital in the process.

Council President David Bragdon spoke of the work of the park directors as paralleling the efforts of Metro's "New Look" program.

Task Force Work include

Metro Staff reported on the status of the different components of the Committee's Task Force work.

System component

Chris Carlson and Jennifer Budhabhatti reviewed previous efforts over time to define/identify the system and its regional components and the need for aggregating resource information. Chris discussed the systems work and the New Look work. A common base map which is being built for both GPAC and the New Look will include natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources inside and outside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Data sources will include Title 3 areas, Goal 5 areas, private parks, national wetlands inventory, wildlife corridors, 2006 bond measure target areas, federal and state public lands and vacant public lands. Scott Burgess asked how the boundary will be defined. Chris responded that one boundary might be the 2006 Bond Measure map. Jennifer noted that another boundary of the New Look could be that. By the end of April a working base map will be available for GPAC to review.

Scott asked if recreational programs offered by schools should also be counted, Chair Ragsdale suggested that programming should be discussed separately. Programming offered by private entities such as the YMCA/YWCA should also be added to the mix.

Funding component

Jeff Tucker and Christy Owen discussed their research on baseline funding for parks and greenspaces especially SDCs. They shared a "working" matrix of SDCs by jurisdiction. Finance component of the Task Force work. The two issues that will be now be looked into are: 1) What is the baseline for funding of parks and greenspaces generally and in this region and 2) After determining what the baseline is, determine if there any deficiencies, if the baseline is adequate and what revenue sources can be found to address any deficiencies. Jeff noted that there is an assumption that if SDCs are being collected, they are also being spent, but that assumption has not been tested.

Staff noted there are extreme differences among the jurisdictions in their need and use of SDCs but emphasized that GPAC will not determine the exact needs of each jurisdiction. Staff will also look at grants, local levies, enterprise revenues and other sources of funding.

Kim Gilmer said that it may be possible in the future to encourage a certain level of standards around the region and SDCs could be increased to meet these standards. Scott added that state statutes determine the minimum level of SDCs that can be charged, after that the level is a political decision.

Zari added that some communities pay for the full cost of providing park services and others only pick up a portion of the cost. An additional column should be added to the matrix to record that difference. Jeff agreed and asked for assistance in collecting this information.

Institutional component

Joel Schoening, Metro intern, is working on institutional cooperation and will interview a number of park directors and research collaborative models around the country.

Regional Equity Atlas Project

Jim Labbe and Jill Fuglister from the Coalition for Livable Futures made a presentation on the Equity Atlas they have been working on with Portland State University for the last couple of years. The Coalition is a partnership of 60 community organizations working to strengthen and broaden regional planning efforts to ensure a healthy, equitable, and sustainable future for the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. It identifies equity issues related to park and natural area access for residents of the region.

The coalition's definition for "equity" includes access to parks and greenspaces, economic and social barriers, per capita park acres and walking distance to public parks. Diversity of parks type and functions was not included in the atlas.

Jim suggested GPAC refer to the website – www.urbanfauna.org and follow the link to "Science" for information on recent scientific publications that document and support individual and collective actions to protect and restore our urban ecosystem for fish, wildlife and people.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m. The next GPAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 27 at Metro, Room 501.