

Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee
Mike Ragsdale, Chair

MEETING NOTES

Thursday, June 22, 2006
5:30 – 7:30 PM
Metro Regional Center, Rm. 501
600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, OR

Committee members present: Chair Mike Ragsdale, Ernie Drapela, John Griffiths, Faun Hosey, Mike Houck, Linda Robinson, Zari Santner, Dick Schouten, Mike Sykes and Dan Zinzer

Committee members absent: Scott Burgess, Kim Gilmer, Mike Livingston, Sue Marshall and Tim Raphael

Elected officials, staff and guests present: David Bragdon, Chris Carlson, Jim Desmond, Christy Owen, Pat Sullivan and Jeff Tucker

Chair Mike Ragsdale called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Committee Business

Chair Ragsdale affirmed that GPAC will continue meeting during the summer months. A concern about a lack of attendance by some committee members was raised and the Chair said he would review the attendance records for the last six months to assess the situation.

Chair Ragsdale referred to the committee's policy to distribute GPAC meeting notes, but not to submit them for approval. He asked, however, that if anyone has any concern about an item that needs to be corrected to contact Chris Carlson or Pat Sullivan.

Committee Work Plan Updates

Finance

Jeff Tucker and Christy Owen of Metro staff are delving into *Part 2 of the GPAC Finance Report: Potential New Funding Sources*. They are generating a list of possible sources for Christy to research. A preliminary list was distributed. The committee was asked to review it, let them know if there are other items that should be added and to identify those items on which Christy should focus.

The discussion that followed cited the significant amount of funds that could be generated from a tax on video sales and rentals. That suggestion will be added to the list of potential sources. Although it is historically unpopular with voters, Chair Ragsdale thought it prudent to keep a state sales tax on the list because, at some point, the strategy presented to voters on its behalf may appeal to them. It was further thought best to leave all current items on the list for maximum potential of finding creative funding strategies. Next time the committee sees the list

it will include a description of each item, where the ideas came from and a rough idea of how much funding might be generated.

Institutions

Christy is researching models of collaborative governance that may provide options for the region. She said collaborative models tend to identify need and focus on programs responding to it. She briefly described Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) which differentiates between regional and municipal facilities according to use. Local municipalities tend to focus on recreation programs, while regional programs generally focus on wildlife and habitat.

Chair Ragsdale asked the committee if Christy's research is going in the right direction. Is there something else her research should be looking for? Mike Houck suggested that East Bay Regional Park and Chicago Wilderness and the city of Chicago, in general, be included in the research. He added that the need is to create this system (which has been defined) and to find a solution for funding both for acquisition and management. The question is what institutional structure would best do that. Jim Desmond said to focus on case examples of multi-jurisdictional models whose focus is natural areas.

Other suggestions related to Christy's research included the recent Trust for Public Land (TPL) study by Peter Harnik, *"The Excellent City Park System"*, which identifies guidelines to follow in seeking park excellence and which provides examples of 55 cities that have succeeded

Chair Ragsdale suggested Christy examine the TPL document referred to above to identify which jurisdictions have components of the GPAC Vision and "how they got where they got". Jim Desmond reminded the group that the TPL report is focused on cities and not regional systems or regional financing. David Bragdon said it would be beneficial to know institutional histories in order to understand the different roles a regional body can play and what direction such information could give. Mike Houck proposed Vancouver/GRVD, East Bay, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Seattle/King County as models worth researching, having a good mix of experience, history and political systems. Chair Ragsdale said it could be beneficial to identify examples in the TPL document that are financially healthy and identify the source of their revenues.

System

Metro staff has compiled different components of the "System" on map layers. The process has developed an inventory of existing elements of the system which have been divided into the following layers: 1) natural areas (regardless of ownership), 2) regional and local trails, 3) community and neighborhood parks (consisting of, for example, grass/trees and picnic tables) and 4) local parks focused on active recreation. These layers have been identified, to some degree, by type and function. This inventory brings the Data Resource Center's (DRC) database up to date through 2003. The only missing information is from the local jurisdictions on local parks, trails and natural areas that have been built since then or are proposed for construction and development within a limited period of time.

Chris Carlson proposed that GPAC look at the distinction between "region-wide" and "regional". The maps/layers just discussed represent a region-wide inventory of existing park, greenspace, trail and recreational facilities regardless of geographical distribution (these would include everything from pocket parks and local squares to Oxbow Park). Further discussion described a sub-set within the region-wide system that is "regional" such as Oxbow Park, Forest Park, and

the Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade. Staff proposed an additional GPAC discussion that looks at that established inventory/system and decides which facilities are actually regional, based on an agreed upon set of criteria. Chris added that there are some distinctions of semantics, which need to be noted in the record so that the word "regional", in this context, is commonly understood by everyone. It was requested of staff to develop a set of criteria based on the Minneapolis model or another similar model. Chris said that could be pulled together in a short period of time. Once GPAC is supplied with that criteria, it can begin to consider which elements in the region-wide inventory fit the criteria.

Landscape Workshop, June 20, 2006

Mike Houck reported on the landscape workshop held on June 20 at the University of Oregon downtown center. The workshop/charette was held as an extension of the GPAC work being done on the system. A base map was created for it from the multiple layers of maps produced of various components of the system. Chris noted this is a very important map because it depicts the landscape infrastructure for the region. It is also being used by the New Look staff in its work on natural resources.

A group of 15 to 20 people were invited to this workshop, among them Zari, Ernie Drapela, Tim Raphael and representatives from the U. S. Forest Service, USF&W, ODF&W, Columbia Land Trust, Vancouver/Clark Parks, and a number of landscape architects. This effort specifically focused on the natural resources element of the system – not the parks, trails, or active recreation facilities. As a reference point, the group was provided with the Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee Vision Statement, which was adopted by Metro Council in May 2005. They were also given information from the New Look staff that related to this work.

The fundamental objective of the workshop was to: "Identify and interconnect an ecologically significant system of natural resource landscapes in Oregon and Washington in response to Metro's Vision and the New Look." After breaking into smaller groups, the participants identified these landscape patterns by illustrating them directly onto copies of the base map.

A number of GPAC members suggested others with expertise whose input would be valuable to this process. Mike Houck pointed out that for maximum output from the type of workshop that was held, the number of participants had to be limited. It was agreed to collect from committee members the names and contact information of professionals whose experience and point of view would enhance and make more comprehensive the product that comes out of the workshop process. It was requested that suggestions of such experts be e-mailed to Pat Sullivan at (sullivanp@metro.dst.or.us).

Committee members were also reminded that the same process has to be done on the parks and trails as it was on natural resources. It was noted by Mike Houck that not much time was spent on the issue of aesthetics and "sense of place", e.g. the value of views – such as the view of Mt. Hood or the view from Cooper Mt. There may be a need to bring together some people whose expertise is in that area to examine that piece of natural resource significance.

Mike Houck would like to hold another workshop (perhaps scaled down) with participants coming from the list of suggestions from GPAC members. This group could review the work from the June 20 workshop, report on gaps, "ground truth" the maps and provide their own input. A next step would be to produce a subsequent composite map working with Matthew Hampton of DRC.

According to Mike Houck, David Hulse, a professor in the Dept. of Landscape Architecture at U of O, who also attended the (June 20) workshop, has offered to take the data from that exercise and the follow-up workshop to compare to data he has collected on recreational opportunities/facilities in the Willamette Basin and with data from The Nature Conservancy. He would then report on any gaps or inconsistencies he finds. Chris Carlson and Mike Houck will report to the committee at the July meeting on the process to date and provide an interim product. Input will be sought from the rest of the committee.

Park Directors' Work

Zari Santner reported that she, Kim Gilmer and Dan Zinzer will be meeting on Friday, June 23, with the parks directors group to bring them up to date on the system work, to collect information from them on their existing facilities and to obtain a copy of their comprehensive plan (or master plan or mission plan) to review and find out what the commonalities are. This will be the beginning of a standard for active parks with the idea of equity of services for people of the region. It was emphasized that such a standard would be for jurisdictions to aspire to, not to be required of. Zari said they will provide a status report at the July GPAC meeting and are working toward having a product for the August meeting.

Council Work Session Agenda

Chair Ragsdale will provide a thorough update of GPAC's work to date to the Council at their Work Session on June 27. Ernie suggested it would be helpful to include along with the progress made, how that progress relates to the Vision Statement and how it fits into the New Look. It was also suggested to provide a copy of *Part I of the GPAC Finance Report*. – Chair Ragsdale will ask for a reality check from Council; do they agree with the direction in which GPAC is heading. The Work Session will be held at the Hillsboro Civic Center at 2:00 p.m. if any committee members would like to participate in the update.

The next GPAC meeting will be held on July 27.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.