

MINUTES OF LAND USE COMMITTEE III MEETING

Held: May 18, 1976

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gisvold, Chairperson; Brickley, Blunt, Bullier, Herrell, Jaeger, Kirkpatrick, Sprecher, Stevenson and Thorgerson

EXCUSED: M. Johnson, Lang and Moshofsky.

STAFF: Rich, Lamb, and Martin.

Invited Guests: Howard Terpenning, Supt., Taulatin Hills Park and Recreation District.

Estella Ehelebe, Supt. of Parks, Multnomah County.

Dale Christenson, Supt., Bureau of Parks, City of Portland.

Mel Stout, Regional Planner, State Parks Division; Bob Taylor, State Parks Division.

Linda MacPherson, Planner, CRAG

Don Carlson, Executive Officer, Portland Metropolitan Area Local Government Boundary Commission.

Parks and Recreation

Mr. Gisvold opened the meeting by explaining that the committee is trying to determine to what level of government the various aspects of the several functions should be assigned. He asked the resource persons if the categories listed under the park and recreation function in the commission's matrix were meaningful.

Mr. Christenson said that the list was oversimplified. Where do golf courses and the recreational use of school facilities fit in? Ms. Ehelebe and Mr. Terpenning said that provision should be made for neighborhood parks separately.

Mr. Christenson said that facilities are multi-purpose, i.e. a given facility may serve everything from regional to neighborhood needs with the clientele coming from all over.

Ms. Stevenson asked if there were certain activities which were too small to be handled by the state and too large to be local responsibility. Mr. Christenson cited the zoo. In general, he said, leisure service should be provided regionally; political boundaries are artificial. It is difficult for jurisdiction to justify developing sites near its boundaries.

(cont.)

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Mr. Carlson pointed out that the boundary commission has had recent inquiries about the formation of park and recreation districts in East Multnomah County, North Clackamas County and in the Tigard area.

Mr. Terpenning said that the City of Beaverton has become a part of his district. The district grows as urban sprawl grows. The district absorbed the old Aloha-Huber district.

Mr. Gisvold asked if problems are best solved by the merger of units.

Mr. Christenson said there would be no problem if all areas provided the same level of services. He pointed out that Portland has started to charge non-residents who participate in city sports program (a news clipping on this subject was distributed to the committee). Mr. Terpenning said his district has done this for some time.

Mr. Rich asked if it wouldn't become an impossible administrative chore to check the residence of users. Mr. Terpenning said it was a growing problem, that there was no practical method of monitoring and that it tended to make liars out of children.

Mr. Sprecher said the problem was that a local unit cannot provide a regional service from a local budget. Mr. Herrell asked if many non-residents were receiving free services. Mr. Terpenning replied that, in the case of his district, it is pretty much local residents who are served, since the district includes one-half of the county's population. Tigard, Metager and the western part of the county are the exceptions.

Ms. Jaeger asked how the district would handle a facility which would serve the region. Mr. Terpenning replied that they just wouldn't get hung-up on it. Mr. Sprecher said that problems arise only when non-resident use of a high investment facility or program (capital investment of staff) is involved.

Mr. Christenson said that Portland's problem was that it couldn't keep up with the demand for sports programs and was having to turn away teams.

Mr. Terpenning said they have had to reverse their policy of not building athletic fields and relying on school facilities, because of the increased use of the latter by the schools as the result of the increase in girls' athletics. They are building six baseball fields and three soccer-football fields.

Mr. Gisvold asked about spreading the jurisdiction and the tax base. Are there more facilities like the zoo which should be handled by a larger unit? Mr. Christenson replied that there are some elements which are necessary to a city simply by the nature of being a city. The Pittock Mansion is really a regional facility, but it attracts tourists to the city and helps its economy, so it is properly a city function. Likewise, the stadium. The zoo is different, because it is in reality a major educational facility of the state.

Mr. Sprecher asked if the county had any parks inside the city? Ms. Ebelebe said no but that there were four outside the city near its boundaries. Mr. Sprecher then asked what justification there was for taxing city residents for county parks. Mr. Christenson pointed out that the county parks were regional parks that served the entire area.

Mr. Christenson said that there were community centers, with pools, gyms, etc., on the east edge of the city which derive one-half of their use from nonresidents. He pointed out that Portland is unique in that all swimming pools are free.

Mr. Terpenning offered the opinion that facilities like the stadium, the art museum and the coliseum could well be regionally supported.

He pointed out that Washington County has no state parks and suggested that the state had a proper role to play in that area. Mr. Stout replied that some state parks were in the planning stage for Washington County. The state is coming closer to the city with its parks, e.g. Tryon Creek and the Columbia Gorge parks. Ms. Thorgerson asked if there was a state policy with regard to Hague Lake. Mr. Stout said there was not at the present time. Mr. Terpenning said that there was little local tax subsidy of that facility.

Mr. Herrell asked if Portland was operating certain types of facilities that other jurisdictions are not. Mr. Christenson and Mr. Terpenning replied that this was true. Mr. Herrell then asked if some things should not be operated on a regional basis. Mr. Christenson replied that there was a potential for savings but that, in practice, they are rarely realized. Mr. Terpenning pointed out that a regionalization had occurred in the case of bringing the City of Beaverton into his district. The problem is how to get local support for programs in a large area. It is difficult to sell neighborhood facilities on a regional basis.

Mr. Herrell asked if it would not be possible to retain some decision making at the local level. Mr. Christenson suggested that the solution was for smaller units to contract with larger ones for services.

Mr. Herrell asked if it was logical for the same agency to manage the stadium and the parks. Mr. Christenson replied that the Bureau of Parks was not a single purpose agency and that it covered all leisure services.

Mr. Sprecher raised the question of whether the committee was looking for a disease to fit the cure. He suggested that in this function things might well be let alone that services are now being adequately provided except possibly for some pockets.

Mr. Herrell asked how the financial load could be equalized. Mr. Christenson replied the zoo.

Mr. Rich pointed out that a healthy regional approach would require that a regional unit not merely take on the turkeys that no one else wants. He asked if there should be a regional body to allocate funds to local programs on a equalization basis. Mr. Herrell asked if the Portland taxpayer was subsidizing the nonresident. Mr. Christenson replied yes except for the self-supporting programs.

Ms. Stevenson asked about the areas which were not being served. Ms. Ehlebe replied that an effort was being made to form a county service district for neighborhood parks.

Mr. Herrell asked if there should be separate administrative agencies. Ms. Ehlebe replied that merger will probably come some time in the future.

It will depend upon the planning that is done in the next few years. Mr. Christenson said that a single administration could effect savings in maintenance by more efficient use of crews. Ms. Ehlebe said the problem was to bring east Multnomah County facilities up to city standards.

Ms. Thorgerson asked if regional acquisition of sites would be desirable. Mr. Christenson replied that the real need is for adequate land use planning at the regional level. Mr. Herrell asked what role there was for the upper tier. Mr. Terpenning identified planning. (Sites need to be set aside early.) Also, the setting of standards and at least some tax equalization. The lower tier should be responsible for operations and have some role in standard setting.

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