

METRO REGIONAL PARKS AND GREENSPACES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 4, 2003

Meeting Notes Summary

Chair Chris Noble called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Other committee members in attendance included Jay Hamlin, Jeff Kee, David Manhart, Sylvia Milne and Aleta Woodruff. Also in attendance were Metro Councilor Susan McLain, and the following Metro Parks staff: Jim Desmond, Lupine Hudson, Ron Klein, Jeff Tucker, and Pat Sullivan.

Introductory comments and announcements

Aleta Woodruff recommended that Committee members take time to read Jim Desmond's "**Letter from the new parks and greenspaces director**" in the Special Edition Spring 2003 GreenScene.

Ron Klein also referred to the **GreenScene**, noting the full color issue was designed, in large part, to showcase trails, coinciding with the recent update of the concept plan for trails. In addition, the Regional Trails & Greenways center portion of the publication may be produced as a "stand-alone" version towards the end of this fiscal year. According to Jeff Tucker, the extra cost for the color feature was paid for primarily by Metro's partners in the trails projects.

Councilor McLain noted the **value of the Advisory Committee** to Council, and the number of significant issues that lay ahead on which it can offer guidance, particularly in light of its background dealing with important components of Parks' policies and programs.

Jim Desmond made **presentations of appreciation to Jay Hamlin and Sylvia Milne**, whose second terms officially expire on March 31, 2003. Each of them, with distinct areas of interest, has contributed to the Committee in immeasurable ways. Klein reminded them that Metro Code on advisory committees allows them to continue to serve until a replacement has been appointed, should they choose to do so. Encouragement along those lines was forthcoming from those present.

David Manhart, whose first term expires March 31, 2003, will attend the April 1 meeting at which the agenda will consist of "a conversation with Council President Bragdon", but is as yet undecided on applying for a second term.

OLD BUSINESS

A discussion was continued on the topic of **fire insurance** for structures on open spaces properties which Metro rents out. Tucker reported that, in the form the policies were originally written, the fire insurance has been cancelled. These policies, at a cost of \$14,000 per year, allowed Metro not to rebuild the structures but to still recoup their full value. As replacements, standard homeowners' policies have been purchased costing \$2,500 per year. In addition, no-deductible liability insurance is carried on all of the rental properties at a cost of \$6,000 per year.

Review of Metro revenue sources

In answer to a request from the Advisory Committee for an informal and on-going briefing, Tucker provided information on Metro revenue, in general, and **Parks Dept. revenue**, specifically. He spoke of revenues by type and which department(s) or fund(s) receives them. Grant awards were referred to in summary: 1) from what organizations does Parks receive money, 2) in what amounts, and 3) brief descriptions of how the funds are spent. At the next meeting Tucker will present the next level of detail on grants - by project.

Desmond presented a summary of the **Metro Financial Trends Report** given recently by Council President David Bragdon and interim Chief Operating Officer Mark Williams to Metro staff and to

Council. As it provided an overall financial picture of the agency, it was suggested Committee members read the report prior to the April 1 meeting with President Bragdon. There is great concern that, throughout the agency but most acutely in the Parks Dept. and the Zoo, there has been a spenddown of the fund balance, relying on it to balance the budget. The problem is even more exacerbated for Parks by the sunseting of the \$1 per ton excise tax on June 30, 2003. Bragdon will submit a budget that does not use any fund balance; he believes departments need to live within their existing resources.

Desmond reported he has identified some areas of prudent management that will result in significant savings. He has been directed by COO Williams to implement one of those - the elimination of a parks supervisor position in the field. Currently there is one supervisor for Blue Lake Park and one for Oxbow Park and separate field staffs for each. **The two Park staffs will be combined into one working unit managed by one supervisor.** This should result in a savings of approximately \$100,000. Applications for the position will be open to the two current supervisors as well as other interested parties.

Preparation for April committee meeting with Metro President David Bragdon

The Committee made the following suggestions for discussion points:

Questions for Bragdon-

- What is the role of the Regional Parks & Greenspaces Advisory Committee?
- What is Bragdon's vision for the future of Metro Parks?
- How does the Committee fit into that vision?

The Committee -

- Would like Council to continue with the \$1 per ton excise tax
- Wants to emphasize points made in Committee's budget letter to Bragdon (Feb 21, 2003)

NEW BUSINESS

Volunteer services annual report - 2002

Lupine Hudson presented the 2002 Volunteer Services Report which highlighted where people are volunteering and the kinds of activities they are involved in. Details of the first-ever Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held on November 17, 2002 at the Oregon Zoo were reported. Information was also included such as the number of volunteers in 2002, the number of volunteer hours performed, the number of volunteer sites worked and the value of the volunteer hours. The consensus was the volunteer program is an extremely valuable resource for the Parks Dept.

Request from Metro's Committee for Citizen Involvement (MCCI) to work together on items of common concern

- RPGAC questioned what issues were being considered
- how different are the committee roles?
- want to avoid redundancy
- have concern if local partners are not involved

The Advisory Committee would like to meet with MCCI, but because of the full agenda in April, suggests a later month be considered.