

Metro Parks and Greenspaces Advisory Committee
January 9, 2001
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Metro Regional Center

Chair Rick Charriere called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. He welcomed the committee to the first meeting of the new year and to the challenges it will bring. Other committee members present, in addition to Charriere were Bob Akers, Jim Battan, Julie Garver, Jay Hamlin, Dave Manhart, Sylvia Milne, Brian Scott and Seth Tane. Also in attendance were Chris Noble, member-elect for District #1, Heather Kent, Ron Klein and Patricia Sullivan.

Introductory Comments and Announcements

The member-elect for District #1 (Gresham and east Multnomah County), Chris Noble, was introduced to the Committee. Bob Akers, who has ably represented that district for many years, made the introduction. With Executive Officer Mike Burton's approval, her official term will begin March 1, 2001. She spoke of her background as a citizen activist, having worked on land-use and wetland issues as well as having grant writing experience.

An update on the Howell Territorial Park Master Plan implementation was given by Heather Kent. A master plan, which includes development, was brought before the Management Committee and adopted by Metro Council in 1997. A planning process was followed that involved public outreach and a project advisory team, including several residents of Sauvie Island. There was no opposition to the plan at that time. Metro is now in the land-use process, seeking conditional use approval in order to allow the park developments being proposed. Some of the improvements include an all-season 27 space gravel parking lot and the adapting of some areas of the Howell house to become more ADA accessible. The main structures being proposed are three picnic shelters, a small septic system rest room and a gravel trail that would connect to those facilities. A future phase would include a self-service interpretative nature trail and viewing blind out to Howell Lake.

At the land-use hearing, the hearings officer denied the application for three main reasons: 1) concerns about impact on traffic, 2) impact to surrounding farms and 3) concerns about emergency services. The decision has since been appealed. Additional negotiations were held with County staff after which Metro agreed to limit special events on the island to a total of three per year. One will be the Wintering-In Festival, which already takes place at the park. The other two special events would be limited to 1,000 people. Another county hearing has been scheduled for January 30, 2001.

Seth Tane, committee representative for unincorporated Multnomah County, who recently visited Howell Park with copies of the plans, spoke of a vocal group of residents who are pro-wildlife. This group favors the trails, the viewing blind, the interpretative sign and the parking area but opposes the picnic shelters. Their rationale is, according to Tane, the shelters would attract visitors that don't have the best interests of the area's cultural and wildlife values in mind. Tane also spoke with Ciecko, who made the point that Metro has to serve a broader community. The Open Spaces Parks and Streams bond measure was passed by a wide range of people having a variety of needs and to "reserve" Howell Park (benefactor of bond measure funds) for only a small number is to deny access to the broader group.

Committee members asked how they could best provide their input to the Commission. Suggestions included writing or e-mailing any of the Multnomah County Commissioners or Diane Linn, in particular, the commissioner for the Sauvie Island area.

Ron Klein gave an update on two easement applications that had come before the committee last summer. At that time, Laurie Wulf presented an easement application from the Mt. Scott Water District to install a 12" potable water line under Metro property from Cedar Park Drive to and across Mt. Scott Creek. Due to conflict over the related access point to the Mt. Talbert park

area, the project will be severely delayed or possibly cancelled altogether. The other application from J. B. Goodman LTD, which constructed an assisted living facility immediately west of park property, requested an access easement across the park property onto Sunnyside Road. However, the applicant is now of the understanding that Clackamas County may require Metro to allow access to the facility at no cost to the applicant. Goodman is not pursuing the easement further at this time.

Final Review and Signing of Committee FY01-02 Budget Letter

The draft of the budget letter from the committee to Burton was reviewed. Julie Garver proposed an alteration to the letter to refer to the Open Space Acquisition Program as one of the most positively recognized programs at Metro. A motion was made and passed unanimously to approve the letter with the proposed revision and for it to be signed by each committee member rather than only by the Chair. The changes were incorporated during the meeting and signed by all with the exception of Rod Peters who was not in attendance. With his approval, his signature will be added by proxy.

Open Spaces Acquisition Program Quarterly Report

Ron Klein presented the quarterly report in Jim Desmond's stead for the period from October 1 through December 31, 2000. Highlights include 62 acres of the Madsen property in the Dairy/McKay Creeks area. It contains approximately 2,548 feet of the north bank of the Tualatin River combining wetlands, mixed deciduous and conifer stands and agricultural fields. This property will be managed by the Jackson Bottom Wetland Preserve.

Another significant acquisition was the Raetz property of over 43 acres in Clear Creek. This includes 1,823 feet of Clear Creek frontage supporting a variety of fish including cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, steelhead and coho salmon. Some of the predominant mature western red cedar trees on the site are over five feet in diameter.

Greenspaces Protection Plan Development and Next Steps

Heather Kent provided an update of the plan. One of the products of the process is a computer-generated map that depicts a draft regional system of parks, natural areas, trails and greenways. The Regional System (an update of the 1992 Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan) will continue to be refined by natural resource professionals and local government staff. The next step will be to continue work to define regional management standards with local park providers and to present the draft map to the public. A public involvement timeframe has not yet been determined. Charriere commented how beneficial the maps were to the committee.

Preparing for a Diack Nature Center Fundraising Campaign

A presentation of the early stages of this campaign was made by Klein. When the Oxbow Regional Park Master Plan was approved in 1997, it included a nature center that would be funded through grants and private donations.

In 1999, Metro entered into a cooperative agreement with the Oregon Parks Foundation to work together on raising funds for the nature center. The next step was to determine whether this is a viable project. The Collins Group was contracted to do a feasibility study for the potential of raising the necessary funds for construction and operation of the facility. Participants in the study, however, rated it as a medium priority with school funding receiving a higher community priority. Work is now being done to assure that the nature center programming directly supports the Oregon educational goals and objectives for service learning.

Metro legislation has also been drafted to establish a permanent endowment fund at the Oregon Community Foundation to support programming and operation of the nature center.

Advisory Committee Letter of Support for Federal Funding

A sample of last year's letter from the committee to the Oregon and Washington congressional delegation seeking federal funding for the Department's programs was distributed for review with the necessary updated information. It will be considered at the February meeting for committee members' approval and signatures.

Additional Update

Klein reminded the committee of term expiration dates of March 31, 2001 for two members, Brian Scott and Sylvia Milne.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.