

Metro Parks and Greenspaces Advisory Committee
September 8, 1998 Summary Meeting Minutes
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Metro Regional Center

Mike Reid called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were: Bob Akers, Jim Battan, Rick Charriere, Julie Garver, John Griffiths, Jay Hamlin, Faun Hosey, Syliva Milne, Mike Reid, Brian Scott, Seth Tane, Charles Ciecko, Jennifer Sims, Heather Nelson Kent, Tom Imdieke, Ron Klein and Pat Sullivan.

Election Results

Ron Klein announced that Jim Battan has been elected Vice Chair of the Committee according to the phone-in and mail-in votes received. As per committee protocol, Battan will take over the chairmanship on October 1, 1999 at the conclusion of John Griffiths' term.

New Revenue Sources for Parks & Greenspaces Dept.

Background

Charlie Ciecko provided background for the discussion. In May of 1998 Mike Burton received a letter co-signed by three public opinion leaders who had been active in the 1995 Campaign for Open Spaces, Parks & Streams (Measure 26-26). The letter noted:

- the exceptional progress made in implementing the bond measure
- the need to start considering next steps for making available for public use and enjoyment the lands acquired as a result of the bond measure
- the necessity of developing a financing strategy that supports those needs
- a specific suggestion to consider an auto rental tax as a potential source of revenue

Burton referred the request to Administrative Services Dept (ASD) to analyze the recommendation and identify other potential revenue options for supporting Regional Parks & Greenspaces programs. He asked that the analysis be presented to this committee for its consideration and a recommendation be made to him which would ultimately be sent to the full Council.

Need

❖ *Revenue Shortfall - To provide evidence of the need for additional funding, Tom Imdieke of ASD provided a 5-year financial projection; along with the data, the following points were made:*

- Regional Parks Fund – Assuming all fund projects are spent, draw-down on the fund reserve could conceivably begin as early as next fiscal year: \$43,000 in FY 1999-2000 and as much as \$4,992,000 in FY 2003-04 (estimated fund balance less required reserves).
- Smith & Bybee Lakes Trust Fund – Beginning in fiscal year 2001-02, it will be necessary to draw from the fund balance by amounts ranging from \$1,200 in FY 2001-02 to \$18,000 in FY 2003-04 rather than operating solely from interest earnings.

❖ *Unfunded Projects – Charles Ciecko presented information illustrating the following:*

In addition to projected revenue shortfall, the issue of unfunded needs at existing facilities must be addressed. Completed Master Plans recommend improvements estimated to total \$15 million. The Master Plan for Blue Lake Park, in process to be completed this fiscal year, may result in still more recommended improvements which are unfunded.

❖ *Unfunded Needs Related to Newly Acquired Properties:*

Master Plans – These properties are required to proceed through a master plan process prior to being opened to formal public use. Possible cost based on a projection of 12 to 15 new regional parks and natural area management units - \$700,000 to \$1 million.

Predicted Development Costs – Again based on 12 to 15 new “park” areas, with equal numbers requiring light, moderate and heavy development - \$34 million

Projected Operations & Maintenance Costs –Based on a very conservative \$540 per acre for the 6,000 acre Bond Measure goal - \$3.24 million per annum, although it was pointed out that until the facilities are developed, there will be no extensive increase in O&M costs.

Ciecko emphasized these projections were based on current data where available, although in some instances best guess scenarios were employed in the calculations.

Options

Indieke provided the Committee with a clarification of the source and scope of Metro Council's authority in adopting new revenue sources. In considering potential alternatives to address the shortfalls and unfunded needs, Metro staff prepared a list of long-range funding possibilities. These included taxes of a more limited nature, called "niche" taxes. They do not require prior voter approval, but do require a review by a Tax Study Committee, which is established by the Council and charged with the study of funding needs and options. After holding at least 3 public hearings, the Tax Study Committee reports its findings and makes a recommendation to staff and Council. Among the list of possible resources explored were an auto rental tax, auto tire tax, construction excise tax, lottery tax and off street parking tax.

- ❖ **Auto Rental Tax** – ADS provided information on a projected 5% auto rental tax based on the same type as currently imposed by Multnomah County on every rental of a motor vehicle for a period of 30 days or less. Such a tax could potentially generate revenue of \$6.3 million per year (although that estimate was considered high by some).

Discussion included the following comments and suggestions: 1) an exclusion from the tax for non-profits, 2) consideration of administrative costs, start-up costs and type of legislative action required, 3) Indieke will look into whether the tax would apply to pickups and other types of heavier transport vehicles, 4) if the tax were to proceed, it would be within Metro jurisdictional boundaries, and 5) 70% of rental car business takes place at the airport.

Nexus

The committee considered a nexus or correlation between funding source and consequent expenditure an important factor in the choice of options. Ciecko pointed out an auto rental tax could raise a portion of the needed finances for parks facilities and programs from visitors to our region who come, in large part, because of our attractive natural resources and accessibility to them.

Recommendation

- ❖ **Seth Tane moved that the Committee forward to Metro Council, for its consideration, the issue of identifying and securing new revenue sources in support of Regional Parks & Greenspaces Department facilities and programs. Inherent in this consideration is the establishment of a Tax Study Committee. Sylvia Milne seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Metro staff offered to prepare a letter in draft form to be sent from the Advisory Committee to Metro Council and the Executive Officer expressing its ideas on the just passed resolution. The letter would first be forwarded to the Committee for edit and signature.

Review of draft Resolution No. 98-2698 for purpose of updating the Greenspaces Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC)

Background

Heather Nelson Kent provided background on this resolution. Metro's role in managing and operating parks and natural areas has experienced dramatic changes since 1990. The original GTAC was formed that year to act as technical advisor to the Metropolitan Greenspaces Program. The Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan followed in 1992, the creation of the Regional Parks & Greenspaces Dept in 1994 and the adoption of the Regional

Framework Plan in 1997. While the Policy Advisory Committee was updated in 1994 to become this Regional Parks & Greenspaces Advisory Committee, GTAC has had no comparable "modernizing".

Committee discussion centered on Exhibit A of the Resolution and the groups represented on GTAC. The importance of adequate representation by the business community was pointed out. Suggestions were also considered for representation to extend to a citizen-at-large and a "friends group" designee. Ceicko pointed that as GTAC moves through the advisory process, there will be ample opportunity for the public to offer input and influence what the final product looks like.

Recommendation

❖ **Seth Tane moved that the Committee support Resolution 98-2698. Bob Akers seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Updates

Ceicko thanked Mike Reid on behalf of the Department for the fine work accomplished during his term.

Ron Klein reminded the four Committee members representing areas outside Metro boundaries of the expiration of their terms on March 31, 1999. Emphasizing the value of their service and prospective, he encouraged them to consider extending their involvement with the Committee another term. Should they choose not to do so, however, it was hoped they would offer thoughts on possible replacements.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The next meeting of the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Advisory Committee will be held Tuesday, October 6, 1998, at Metro Regional Center, from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.