

Metro Parks and Greenspaces Advisory Committee  
August 4, 1998 Summary Meeting Minutes  
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Metro Regional Center

Present: Bob Akers, John Griffiths, Mike Reid, Jay Hamlin, Jim Battan, Sylvia Milne, Seth Tane, Rick Charriere, Dan Kromer, Ron Klein, Patricia Sullivan, Jim Desmond. Interested citizens in attendance: Charlotte Benz, William Doering, Judith Goldmann, Janice Healy, Stanley Clarke, Jeanne Gentry and Bonnie Kiser.

Mike Reid called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Ron Klein announced that the September 1<sup>st</sup> Advisory Committee meeting will take the form of a tour of **Peninsula Crossing Trail**. This will provide the committee with a "before and after" impression as it also had the opportunity to view the trail early in the planning/construction process. The "Grand Opening" of the trail will be October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Dan Kromer, Manager of Operations & Maintenance, presented a brief history and overview of Metro's **Pioneer Cemeteries**. Inquiries were made of the private sector recently as to any interest in their purchase or management. Such a transaction would only be considered for the 14 cemeteries as a unit. At present they include 10,000 saleable gravesites among them. As additional background, a cemetery committee was formed in 1994 to consider ownership or maintenance options although no clear recommendations came out of that committee at the time. It was pointed out currently the cemeteries run at a 25% deficit. Investigating the possibility of privatization was a follow-up to the earlier cemetery committee's efforts. There are no plans for sale or transfer at this time.

A discussion followed which included the following suggestions from citizens in attendance: 1) urge the state legislature to upgrade vandalism of cemeteries to a Class C Felony, 2) employ the tourist appeal of historic cemeteries as a marketing tool, 3) create an endowment fund from the proceeds of the 10,000 gravesites as they are sold, 4) replat cemeteries to include room for additional gravesites, 5) add niche walls, and 6) put ad in newspaper announcing the availability of gravesites, rather than relying solely on the yellow pages. An observation was also made that some cemeteries are erroneously zoned by the City of Portland as residential (R-5) rather than open space.

As there is a great deal of knowledge, experience and willingness to aid the Pioneer Cemeteries within the group of seven citizens present, a "friends group" was formed to offer its assistance when the soon-to-be-hired Manager of Volunteer Services comes onboard with the Parks staff.

Beginning October 1998 John Griffiths, current Vice Chair, will take over the chairmanship of the Advisory Committee. A new vice chair will be needed to act as back up and ultimately move into the Chair beginning October of 1999. **Nominations for RPAGAC vice-chair** were requested. Jim Battan offered his services. Ron Klein will also contact absent members for possible interest, mail out a ballot form and notify the committee of the results at the September 1<sup>st</sup> gathering.

Ron reported on the **MCCI**, (Metro Committee for Citizen Involvement), the charter committee created to facilitate public involvement and outreach for Metro. The MCCI has been restructured and subcommittees created to focus on the various departments within the agency. The goal is for the subcommittees to understand better what each department does and to support and encourage broad-based public participation in the development and review of programs and projects carried out by Metro Departments. Ron will act as the liaison to the Parks, Zoo and Creative Services subcommittee.

The project the Parks subcommittee is taking on is the Regional Natural Area System, a two to three year process to: (1) inventory the natural areas in the region and (2) re-define what our regional system of parks, natural areas, greenways and trails is all about. Also part of the process is to devise a natural areas protection plan that will ultimately support the Regional Framework Plan.

Metro Council recently adopted a **"Public Involvement Planning Guide"**. In the appendix of the guide Ron pointed out a Project Public Involvement Plan (PPIP) Form which he depicted as a very helpful device to articulate the goals and strategies of a citizen involvement group.

The minutes of the June RPAGAC meeting were considered and accepted.

Jim Desmond provided an **update on recent open space acquisitions**. He reported a total of 3,671 acres have been purchased to date. Recent major acquisitions included: 73 acres in the East Buttes area, over 30 acres in the Rock Creek target area, 230 acres of some of the most pristine property along the Sandy River Gorge on both sides of Gordon Creek, and the closing on the final segment of the OMSI to Springwater Corridor Trail. Bob Akers offered a thank you to Jim Desmond and his staff for the extensive time, effort and perseverance put forth to finalize the deal; it was a complex process and very difficult transaction.

Information on **two November ballot measures** was also provided by Jim. The state measure is a constitutional amendment to designate 15% of lottery funds to be divided equally between state parks and salmon habitat (both acquisition and restoration). The Campaign for Parks and Salmon estimates between \$35 - \$45 million will be generated per year. Currently there are no dedicated funds for State Parks. The half of the funding earmarked for salmon habitat will be administered by GWEB (Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board) which will award grants to groups involved in fish and wildlife habitat protection. Metro, it was noted, would be eligible to apply for these grants.

As to concerns the measure would deplete school funding, Jim Desmond offered the following: schools currently receive 60% of state funds while parks receive 1/10 of 1%. This measure would increase funding to parks by 9/10 of 1%, providing them with a total of 1% of state funds. It was noted it would be left to the State Legislature to make the final determination of how to dedicate the funds.

The City of Portland ballot measure, referred to as "GOBI II", the second General Obligation Bond Improvement package, is for \$64.85 million. It is a real estate tax earmarked primarily for the renovation of existing parks although approximately twenty percent of the funds are geared for land acquisitions in "park-deficient" areas. Commissioner Francesconi is chairing that effort. Jim added that passage of this measure would complement rather than conflict with Metro programs.

**Utilitree** is a consortium of utility companies, led by Pacificorp, having tree planting programs to offset carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired plants around the country. Metro has entered into an experimental partnership with them. To date, areas in Clear Creek and Multnomah Channel across from Sauvie Island have been planted with approximately 64,000 seedlings covering a total of 120 acres. Utilitree donated the trees, did the clearing, preparation, and planting. (This can be a creative way to obtain funding beyond the bond measure.) It is now Metro's responsibility to maintain the trees for a period of five years, considered the most critical period for survival. Maintenance for that period of time is required by State forestry law. At that point trees are termed "free to grow". Metro's Jim Morgan directed the choice of tree species, in what mix and what location.

Mike Reid emphasized that every such planting should be carefully documented and records of these properties, as assets, should accurately reflect their increased value.

Seth Tane, who represents RPAGAC on WRPAC, expressed concern for "interim" habitat protection. Because WRPAC will be addressing Goals 6 and 7 (flood protection and water quality, respectively) prior to Goal 5 (habitat protection), he feared loss of habitat during that time. He asked that the committee consider offering its support for the latter goal.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.