
**BUSINESS & RESPONSIVE AGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

MISSION STATEMENT

This Council advises and makes recommendations to the programs and operations of
Metro Parks Tacoma concerning financial management and business practices.

Metro Parks Tacoma
4702 S 19th Street, Tacoma, WA 98405
December 12, 2017

Present: Jeff Albers, Su Dowie, Jen Drake, Don Golden, Elizabeth Pebley, Noreen Plum, Dan Powell
Absent: Peter Kram, Johnny Mojica
Staff: Erwin Vidallon, Julie Wilfong
Board Liaison: Commissioner Baines
Guest:

SUMMARY

Erwin Vidallon discussed the District's year-end activities and budget adjustments.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 a.m.

MINUTES

The September 12, 2017 minutes were approved as written.

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Erwin Vidallon introduced two new members, Jen Drake and Elizabeth Pebley to the council as the Board of Park Commissioners passed a Resolution appointing them as members on December 11, 2017.

Jen Drake has been a resident of Tacoma for over 10 years and served on the BRAAC Council previously. She is very familiar with Metro Parks and uses various facilities daily from Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium to the People's Community Center and Pool. She works in sales and marketing in the health care field.

Elizabeth Pebley grew up in the Tacoma area and played a variety of sports through Metro Parks. She is a graduate of Western WA University and works in the State Senate as a Legislative Assistant to Senator Anne Rivers. She was appointed in the spring to the Tacoma Human Services Commission and volunteered herself to start working on the Mental Health Sales Tax Working Group.

Jeff Albers motioned to accept the new council members and Commissioner Baines seconded the motion. Council unanimously approved new members.

DESTINATION POINT DEFIANCE UPDATE

No update was given.

YEAR END ACTIVITIES & YEAR END BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

Erwin Vidallon discussed with the Council that Metro Parks is getting ready to close out its fiscal year and Finance staff are meeting with the departments to discuss what the year-end process and how we will close out the year. We have been meeting periodically with the departments in preparation for this. There are no big issues, just technical adjustments that need to be made. The process will be completed by the end of January, then we will start to prepare the Comprehensive Accounting & Financial Report (CAFR) sometime in March. The Finance department has some new staff that will be working on the CAFR this year and there are a lot of learning opportunities. Tara Dunford our previous Controller has moved on to do consulting work related to CAFRs and Metro Parks has hired her to come

back and assist our new staff with this process and to make sure we are in line to complete the process and ensure we meet all the requirements.

In January, our Budget Officer, Don Higgins, will be attending the meeting and will discuss in detail what the budget adjustments will be.

2018 WORK PLAN DRAFT

Erwin Vidallon stated as we move into the 2018 year, he would like to do more field trips with the Council to the capital project sites as work is completed. He mentioned touring the New Aquarium and the new Eastside Community Center. 2018 will be a busy year as the three (3) largest projects will be completed and the grand openings will be happening.

Su Dowie mentioned Metro Parks has done a fabulous job at matching money for the project, but when she is out in the community and talking about the capital projects, she is unable to tell people how much external funds the Park District was able to bring in for a particular project or for the community center. She requested for this information to be made available as it would make it easier to talk about these projects. Erwin Vidallon concurred and stated if there is a particular project she would like information on to please send him an email or call him and he will get the needed information.

Su Dowie and Commissioner Baines stated it would be great to have this information for the three (3) major projects. The information doesn't need to be based on the dollar amount if percentages work better. This was a great suggestion and Erwin Vidallon would get this for them.

Erwin Vidallon stated aside from the field trips, one of the things he would like to include is a discussion on different revenue opportunities.

Jen Drake asked if there was anything in particular that the council should focus on such as low attendance or if revenue was down at a specific site. Erwin Vidallon responded Meadow Park Golf Course is one of the sites where they are looking at other ways to bring in revenue. Dan Powell mentioned the Council met and had discussions with the manager about ways to improve revenue and future plans for the golf course in the last two years.

Erwin Vidallon mentioned we are losing out on revenue opportunity with our SERA Field Complex because of the fields. Most baseball, fast-pitch and high school tournaments have moved out of the Tacoma. Metro Parks did a field study in 2015/2016 and there is a large to do list to get the fields back in shape.

Dan Powell would like to see a presentation on Youth Activities working with other partnership and the use of scholarships. How do we get kids active and out of the house? Erwin Vidallon mentioned this year the Park District and the Tacoma Public Schools have introduced the Whole Child Access Pass. This gives all kids in Tacoma Public Schools access to special pricing and promotions to Metro Parks activities. This isn't just for the child, but for the parents to and encourages families to be active.

Don Golden asked for the tour of Eastside Community Center to happen April.

Su Dowie mentioned in 2017 the Council was to have a meeting at Northwest Trek but did not happen and Erwin Vidallon mentioned Northwest Trek will be doing an enhanced Keeper Tour and that it would be a good opportunity for the Council to visit.

Dan Powell asked if there was any opportunity to generate attendance during the off season at Northwest Trek. Jen Drake mentioned the steam train in Alby was not too far. Su Dowie mentioned a hay ride through the park in the fall would be fun. Erwin Vidallon mentioned the Council can invite Rick Dietz the new Deputy Director of Northwest Trek to come in and talk about the enhanced Keeper Tour.

Erwin Vidallon mentioned both Northwest Trek and Point Defiance Zoo have a Marketing Department that could be invited to talk about the various campaigns they will have for the upcoming year to attract visitors. Su mentioned

there is a challenge with marketing doing outreach to attract families with small children, but what about adults. How do they reach the adults with no children? It would be interesting to hear from the Marketing Department.

Su Dowie had asked what are the recreation programs on the horizon? Metro Parks can inform the council on what is coming up and provide the information. Su Dowie stated the organization should look ahead to sustainability and not on a year by year basis but look at 5 year goals or 20 year goals.

Metro Parks' conservation efforts will be increasing District-wide and will not just be focused on the Zoo or Northwest Trek but at District-wide strategies and this would a good opportunity to introduce these efforts for the future to the Council.

Su Dowie would like to have a conservation about the "triangle" property at Point Defiance. As Metro Parks looks to build a hotel or other use that would be a revenue generator, she asked if there could be a link to "eco-tourism" or a recreational thing that is a different business perspective. Commissioner Baines mentioned they talked about the idea of a water-taxi, but the problem is there are not enough stops along the way to dock. Foss Waterway has spots to dock on the waterway at the Maritime Museum and the Museum of Glass.

Erwin Vidallon would like to introduce the Council to the District ideas for the waterfront as there is a new venue in the new park that would be a revenue generator and Metro Parks has one shot to do this right. Su Dowie stated Metro Parks should considered bring the waterfront entities together (Foss Development Authority and the Cohens) to plan more coordination for the development to be more integrated. Erwin stated there are discussions and it continues to happen.

Jen Drake would like to learn more about the FAB Program (Fifty and Better). There are senior centers in Tacoma, but the facilities caters to the low income population and homeless seniors. The program is amazing, especially for folks on a tight budget. Erwin Vidallon stated this would be included as part of the recreation projects on the horizon presentation.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The August, September and October financials were reviewed. Erwin Vidallon reported Metro Parks is looking good through the end of October and this also be the case for November. Metro Parks is projected to have a variance of \$2.4 Million at the end of December and we will still have a healthy cash reserve.

Enterprise funds are very dependent on their admissions. Both Northwest Trek and Point Defiance Zoo had a cyber Monday sale in November and they had over \$200,000 in sales made on this day for memberships. \$182,000 was for the Zoo and \$21,000 was for Northwest Trek. Jen Drake asked if there was a way to make a donation at the Zoo to pay for a membership for another family. Donations can be made through the Zoo Society.

Erwin Vidallon gave a few fun facts related weather at Northwest Trek were on November 3rd, they broke the record from 1973 for the earliest snow fall and coldest day time temperature from 1933. Also on November 5th, the park was closed due to heavy snow. Then on November 22nd, a new record for the high and low. The high was 70 degrees and the low was 22 degrees and there was an increase in admissions on this day. The park was forced to close on November 26th due to high winds. This storm damaged three park vehicles from downed branches.

MEETING SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 9, 2018, held at Metro Parks Tacoma Headquarters

ADJOURNED

The meeting ended at 8:50 a.m.

Approved:

Peter Kram, Chair

Submitted by: Julie Wilfong