



Spokane County

PARKS, RECREATION AND GOLF
Doug Chase, Director

Meeting Minutes

SPOKANE COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 8:00 AM
404 N. Havana St

Present: Eric Sawyer, Tom Mackenzie, Mel Fowler, Doug Kelley, Dave Schaub

Not Present: Eric Johnson

Staff: Doug Chase, Paul Knowles, Jamie Kelly, Aysha Al-Hafian

I. Call Meeting to Order (Chair, Eric Sawyer) 8:02

A. Additions to the Agenda

None.

B. Review and consider PAC minutes from February 9, 2022 meeting

Motion to approve: Mr. Mackenzie

Seconded: Mr. Kelley

II. Member's Report: (Chair, Eric Sawyer):

Park Advisory Committee Members are encouraged to provide a brief report.

Mr. Sawyer went up to Stevens Creek and noticed there was not too much mud. It was a pretty nice hike and there was a full parking lot at about 5 pm that night. He played golf at MeadowWood and stated that it looks very nice for this time of year. He noted that with the bridge over Latah Creek (Hatch Road Bridge) under construction, more patrons might come to play golf at Latah Creek as opposed to the City of Spokane course off 195.

Mr. Schaub stated that the trails at Glenrose are great. Mr. Knowles asked if he had explored the newly made reroute of the Glenrose Trail and explained that a new trail was created for those who may want a more gradual ascent up Glenrose as multiple trails were being created to avoid the old grade.

III. Elections:

Open Positions:

Chair

Vice Chair

Land Evaluation Committee (Rotating One-Year Position)

Mr. Chase explained that every couple of years we need to alternate those in Chair and Vice-Chair positions, and this was a year for doing so.

Mr. Sawyer asked who held the one-year rotating position for the LEC.

Mr. Mackenzie responded that he currently held that position.

Mr. Sawyer asked Mr. Schaub if he had served as chair before to which Mr. Schaub responded that he had not.

Mr. Schaub offered to serve as the chair as long as it is not conflictive, which it is not.

Mr. Sawyer asked if the Vice-Chair follows the Chair to which Mr. Chase responded that in the past, typically the Vice-Chair becomes the Chair.

Mr. Sawyer then nominated Ms. Fowler as Vice-Chair.

Mr. Mackenzie stated he is willing to continue in the rotating LEC position.

Mr. Sawyer moved to have Mr. Schaub become the Chair, with Ms. Fowler as Vice-Chair.

Motion seconded by Mr. Kelley. Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Knowles pointed out that last year, Mr. Schaub had to step off the LEC due to a potential conflict of interest. After speaking to Parks' legal counsel, the conflict has been resolved and Mr. Schaub can once again serve on the LEC. Thus, removing Mr. Kelley from the position and reinstating Mr. Schaub. Mr. Kelley was thanked for his "pinch hitting" role on the LEC in 2021.

IV. Director's Report: (Doug Chase):

- 1) Ballot Measure Update. Mr. Chase will share a presentation, presented 3/28/2022 to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Chase introduced Jamie Kelly, the Parks Department's new Parks Project Manager. Mr. Chase stated that the Department also has a new Recreation Program Manager that he hopes to introduce in the future. He mentioned that he is pleased to have a full team now

Mr. Chase stated that at the previous meeting, Mr. Duff with Spokane Indians Baseball ("SIB") came by to explain the situation with MLB and the Avista Stadium. He then began his presentation that he presented to the Board last month. ([See presentation here](#))

Mr. Mackenzie asked if there are any projects that fell out of the ones identified in the presentation.

Mr. Chase responded that in the five to six-year improvement plan, there are many projects. However, at this time, the County has attempted to stay within a certain total value / cost amount. The levy lid lift option would be a 9-year time frame, needing 51% of the vote to pass. The excess levy option would be a 20-year and would need 60% of the vote to pass. He mentioned that SIB has expressed more interest in the 9-year levy lid lift option.

Mr. Mackenzie stated that when discussing this with the community, the feedback he receives has been what will SIB do to help?

Mr. Chase responded SIB is looking at dramatically having their rent increased. The capital funding contribution that SIB may provide will largely factor into their lease payment as discussed up to this point. As of now, no decisions have been made and the County is looking at other funding options.

Mr. Sawyer asked if the lease payments would remain dedicated to the facility. Mr. Chase responded that historically, all lease payments have helped to offset County contributions to the facility, but costs incurred by the County have always exceeded lease payment revenue, so there has never been a surplus. The decision to dedicate lease revenue to the facility would be a decision that the Board would make.

Mr. Schaub asked if less contribution from SIB means more contributions from the taxpayers? Mr. Chase responded that potentially could happen.

Mr. Mackenzie asked what other communities, such as the Tri-Cities, are doing, as Boise lost their minor league baseball team. Mr. Chase answered that other communities are essentially doing what SIB / County are to comply with MLB standards. Currently, Avista Stadium is the furthest from compliance. Not much has been done over time to modernize the facility. However, last year, SIB won the “Team of the Year” award, and the attendance numbers are great. The stadium has not prevented SIB from having one of the most successful teams, attendance, and economic impact.

Mr. Sawyer mentioned that there is a big public policy debate on this. It ultimately comes down to what value the community puts on SIB. The big question is the public policy question, and how much is it worth to the community?

Mr. Chase ended his presentation by stating that there are plans to continue discussions with the Commissioners to determine next steps. One commissioner is leaning towards having two separate ballot measures that would provide voters with an option of either parks or the stadium, while two are leaning towards a combined ballot measure. SIB has made it clear that they support a combined stadium / parks ballot measure only.

Mr. Mackenzie mentioned that with inflation the way it is now, timing of a ballot measure isn't great.

Mr. Chase responded that there is a real possibility that the County will not succeed, and the stadium will go down. With the County targeting an August 2nd ballot measure, they must meet the filing date of May 13th. There is still much to do on the Department-side to have informational materials ready for the community. SIB has agreed to cover half of the cost of the design and construction documents for Phase 2. Mr. Kelly is putting together a RFQ that might allow the County to use the same A/E firm to design future phases.

Mr. Schaub asked if there was a specific role for the PAC to play in this project. Mr. Chase responded not at this point. With the timing of the August ballot measure concept and other funding possibilities being pursued, the Board needs more time. The Department is working hard to map out a timeline to show what it might look like in terms of ability to complete the projects.

V. Written Department Update: (Misc. 0-15 minutes) Time allotted for Questions/Clarification Advisory Committee Members may have associated with the “written departmental update”.

Mr. Sawyer mentioned that it is great to see everything getting ready to open up.

Mr. Kelley asked how aquatics were going after the staffing difficulties faced last year. Mr. Chase responded that last year, staffing ended up working out, and this year Parks staff has started strong in terms of employing aquatics staff.

Mr. Kelley mentioned that at hole number 5 at Latah, the bullseye has fallen and needs to get placed back up as it is laying on the bank. He also asked if there was a sponsor available for the County golf championship and was curious as to where that was going.

Mr. Chase responded that this decision is being made by the pros and suggested that Mr. Kelley reach out to Mr. Scott to further discuss if the sponsorship committee can help supply a sponsor.

Mr. Mackenzie asked what the status of Avista's Upriver Park is. Mr. Kelley responded that it is still in progress, but almost complete.

Mr. Sawyer mentioned that the Podium has exceeded goals after a strong opening. It will be closed for May to complete sound quality improvements so that it can be used for indoor concerts during the summer months.

Meeting adjourned: 9:27 am.

Next Regular Meeting: May 11, 2022; **Location:** 404 N Havana Street, contingent upon COVID-19 sanctions.

***Purpose:** The purpose of the Parks Advisory Committee, (PAC) referred to, as the “Park Board” is to make recommendations to and advise the Parks and Recreation Director on matters concerning the operation and maintenance of the Spokane County park system.*

Spokane County Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

“The mission of the Parks, Recreation and Golf Department is to enhance the general quality of life for the residents of Spokane County by providing the highest quality and quantity of parks, recreation, open space, and related cultural opportunities given the available resources.”

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) INFORMATION: Spokane County is committed to providing equal access to its facilities, programs, and services for persons with disabilities. The Spokane County Parks, Recreation & Golf Conference Room is wheelchair accessible. Individuals requesting reasonable accommodations or further information may call, write, or email Tim Hansen at (509) 477-5750 (TDD), 824 North Adams Street, Spokane, WA, 99260; or thansen@spokanecounty.org. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.