



Spokane County

PARKS, RECREATION AND GOLF
Doug Chase, Director

MINUTES

SPOKANE COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, June 14 at 8:00 AM
404 N Havana

Present: Mel Fowler, Tom Mackenzie, Doug Kelley, Kaitlin Erickson

Staff Present: Doug Chase, Aysha Al-Hafian, Curt Chambers

Guest: Chris Duff

I. Call Meeting to Order (Vice-Chair “Acting Chair”, Mel Fowler) – 8:07 am

A. Additions to the Agenda

Ms. Fowler motioned to change the Minutes reviewed from the November 9, 2022, meeting to the March 8, 2023, meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Kelley.

B. Review and consider PAC minutes from the March 8, 2021 meeting – **8:09 am**

Motion to Approve: Mr. Kelley.

Motion seconded: Mr. Mackenzie.

Unanimously Approved.

II. Member’s Report (Vice-Chair “Acting Chair”, Mel Fowler) – 8:10 am

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

Ms. Fowler extended a warm welcome to Ms. Erickson and congratulated her on her appointment to the PAC. She also welcomed Mr. Duff back and thanked him for taking time to provide the PAC Members with a tour of Avista Stadium.

III. Introduce New PAC Member, Kaitlin Erickson – 8:11 am

Mr. Chase introduced Ms. Erickson and welcomed her to the PAC.

Ms. Erickson stated that she is looking forward to being a part of the PAC. She works for an organization that allows employees to participate in community groups such as this. She enjoys her time spent in the county and at county parks and wants to give back to the community.

IV. Avista Stadium Improvements Update (Doug Chase): 8:15 - 8:20am

A. PRC update

Mr. Chase stated that this meeting provided a great opportunity to present an update on Avista Stadium. At the last meeting, Parks Admin was working on onboarding an application for an alternative delivery form of construction. There are some differences between this approach vs the traditional design/build. The first is the general contractor would be selected based on qualifications and not on the lowest bid. The contractor would be selected based on their experience and proven ability on projects. Several major construction groups will only bid on this kind of project type. Another different component is there would be early and ongoing interaction between the contractor and architect. The two would be working together earlier in the project to identify any issues to prevent any bumps down the road. Parks Admin presented the new construction model before the Project Review Committee on May 25 and was successful, receiving unanimous approval. It will be the second alternative delivery ever done within the county. The first was with public works about a month prior.

[See presentation.](#)

Mr. Chase stated that the selected contractor will be starting in the fall. This is why PAC Members will be walking through the improvements, guided by Mr. Duff, before the updates. There is nothing like putting feet on the ground and seeing it in person and then returning in a year or two.

Mr. Duff stated that it is hard to believe that the last time Avista Stadium was presented to PAC Members was March 8, and the project has moved along quickly in a short amount of time. The project budget is still the same. About \$16.886 million is available, which should cover the first two phases. In theory, MLB requirements should be met in the next two calendar years.

At the last meeting, the Spokane Indians were looking to the State for funding. At this time, \$5.8 million was allocated to the project. Out of the \$24 million that was allocated to 11 different teams in the state of Washington, the Spokane Indians received their ask of \$5.8 million. With these funds, it is anticipated that everything on the list will be accomplished. The remaining \$5 million that we are still needing to raise will be picked off spectator amenities.

Mr. Duff stated that one of the challenges is figuring out what projects can be worked on during baseball season. Some projects might be shifted so that the contractor can work throughout the season without interruption. Having an owner's rep, while an additional expense, is good and comes with fresh eyes on the project.

Mr. Mackenzie asked who the primary holder of funds is when there are multiple funding sources.

Mr. Chase stated that the County is the primary holder, and all the monies go into a county account.

Mr. Chase stated that the goal is to have the funds collected in ample time, and it is timed to be available, and all set up before adding on the owner's rep. The account is set up, and there are funds in there. The general contractor will get started right away. The architecture will begin working on the next phase of plans. The project will be running full speed ahead while following all the timelines and deadlines.

Mr. Duff stated that the Spokane Indians are 25 home games into the season, and they are tied for 1st place. The winner of the first half of the season makes the finals automatically. The halfway point of the season is the middle of next week. The team is very competitive this year, and a player was recently moved up to AA division.

Mr. Duff shared that this year, the Spokane Indians are just under 12,000 fans ahead of projections. The Spokane Indians should draw 265,000 fans this year, which is up from last year. The Spokane Indians have been playing the short season for so long, part of getting numbers up is reeducating people that we are now playing in the spring. It is a combination of business growth, education, and the weather this spring, which has led to good numbers.

Mr. Duff also points out that at the last meeting, he had mentioned that the Spokane Indians were trying to hire some 300 employees. The way they market for jobs was altered, and this year, more retired people have been hired. The spring hire was very successful, and there is an all-time high of hiring employees.

Mr. Mackenzie stated that in the past the Spokane Indians were always number one in attendance. He asked if that is the case this year. Mr. Duff responded that yes, they used to be number one. Recently, Vancouver added some improvements and took the number one spot. That trend looks like it will continue where Vancouver is number one and The Spokane Indians are number 2.

Mr. Kelley asked if a name change was in the works. Mr. Duff responded that no, the stadium name will not change. It will probably be Avista Stadium for the next few decades.

Ms. Erickson asked if the plan contains concepts for additional seating. Mr. Duff replied that the only real addition of seating will be the dugout areas for players and a 360 concourse, which is more a walking pathway. There currently are no plans for more capacity. The stadium quantity is about right for the attendance numbers.

B. Avista Stadium Tour (Chris Duff, President Spokane Indians BB) – 8:20am - 9:20am
Walk next door for a tour to view existing conditions, overview of future improvements.

V. Written Department Update (Vice-Chair “Acting Chair”, Mel Fowler) Misc. questions 0-10 minutes - 9:20 am – 9:30am
Time allotted for Questions/Clarification Advisory Committee Members may have associated with the “written departmental update”.

Mr. Kelley wanted to know the status of the Linwood pickleball court renovations and mentioned the letter to the editor on Holmberg. Mr. Chase stated that he recently communicated with the advocates of the pickleball community, and the plans are being finalized. The project will be going out to bid this calendar year.

Mr. Kelley stated that it was scheduled to start in August of last year.

Mr. Chase responded that was the goal, however there was a window of opportunity to apply and utilize ARPA funds for the West Plains, Plante’s Ferry, and Irrigation Projects- and Parks pursued it. The challenge is that the monies received have tight strings attached. It was originally believed Parks had until 2026 to use the monies awarded for these projects. In the last 3-5 months it was learned that these projects need to be under contract to spend all those dollars before 2024. It can take us into 2026, but if they are not under contract, then the monies can be lost. There is a huge push to get those projects completed within the timeline to avoid losing \$11 million dollars. Unfortunately, this does mean that some projects had to be pushed.

Recently, Parks Admin lost an individual who was with the department for 16 years. Parks Admin is working to fill the vacancy and is realizing that it is a difficult position to fill. The vacancy of Park

Planning, Development, and Real Estate manager is slowing down some projects. It is providing new challenges to everyone in the department, but hopefully, Parks will be successful in filling the position.

Mr. Chase reminded everyone that pools open Monday.

Mr. Mackenzie asked if Parks was offering signing bonuses for pools. Mr. Chase responded no, Ms. Hansen and Mr. Harlan do a good job with staffing, and they start recruitment as early as January. Another helpful element in staffing is the lower capacity levels. Before covid, the capacity was 500. The number has since changed, and pools now cap at 350. Both pools now offer two, 3-hour blocks of time which accommodate more people. And it is a nicer environment for lifeguards.

Mr. Chase also stated that he and Ms. Hansen updated the board Monday of this week and gave them a preview that pools are opening Monday, and a reminder that pools close August 20th due to the difficulties in retaining enough staff to stay open.

Mr. Chase also mentioned that the ParkSide Books out at Liberty Lake is now operating. ParkSide Books operates similarly to a lending library. Mr. Chase is looking forward to seeing more about how it works and operates.

VI. Adjourn – 9:47am

Next Regular Meeting: September 13, 2023; **Location:** 404 N Havana, 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 Ashley Cameron at (509) 477-2122 (TDD), 824 North Adams Street, Spokane, WA, 99260; or acameron@spokanecounty.org. Please contact us forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting date.