



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
JULY 11, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Tim Reid  
Michael Liang  
**REMOTE:** Andrea Smith, President  
Rosie Ayala

**EXCUSED:** Aaron Pointer

**IN THE CHAIR:** Tim Reid

**PLACE:** MPT Headquarters, 4702 S. 19th St. Tacoma, WA

**STUDY SESSION**

Sheryl Blessing and Julian McGilvery who supervise the District's Beyond the Bell and Club Beyond Programs were introduced by Hollie Rogge.

Ms. Blessing informed the Board that the Beyond the Bell program helps to build a comprehensive system that can be easily navigated by families that brings a network of service providers together who offer equitable and affordable arts, enrichment, science, nature, fitness, and sports programming as well as childcare for Tacoma students. Staff stated that the Youth Services unit at Metro Parks Tacoma has key goals in mind with every youth service program that is offered including: safety, strength-based principles, diversity and inclusion, accountability, and quality. Mr. McGilvery then commented on the areas that make up the Whole Child initiative including the Beyond the Bell program, childcare, field trips and summer programming. Staff then reviewed an organizational chart that highlighted locations of all the youth services program offerings occurring at schools, community centers and park locations. Staff then discussed the collective impact model being used to run these programs and articulated the roles and responsibilities of the agencies that are currently involved including Tacoma Public Schools, Metro Parks Tacoma and Greentrike.

Ms. Blessing and Mr. McGilvery then highlighted the session schedules as well as the daily schedules for Club Beyond. Ms. Blessing continued the conversation by noting the importance of social emotional learning that is addressed through the programs that are being offered via the Whole Child initiatives. Several graphs noting attendance data and registrations of these programs were then reviewed.

The presentation concluded with staff noting the successes and opportunities moving forward as the Beyond the Bell program continues, including improving training and hiring more staff, standing up childcare as it relates to organizational licensing, offering successful field trip experiences, and creating consistency with delivery practices.

**REGULAR MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Park District Board of Park Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner Reid at 6:05 p.m.

A motion was made to excuse Commissioner Pointer; seconded and passed unanimously.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS** PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH PROCLAMATION

Mark Knowlden began the presentation by noting the significant value parks and recreation play in the community. Commissioner Ayala then read a proclamation recognizing July as Parks and Recreation Month in Tacoma.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT** None**STANDING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS**

Commissioner Liang stated he recently toured Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium with staff. He also commented positively on the Pride event he attended last weekend with other local elected officials.

**Nature & Environment Advisory Council**

Commissioner Ayala reported that the council is scheduled to meet on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Joint Municipal Action Committee**

Commissioner Ayala and President Smith reported they attended JMAC last Friday. They reported that Tacoma Police Chief Avery Moore was present and shared details of the department’s strategic plan to reduce crime in the city. President Smith also stated that each agency had an opportunity to report out on safety challenges their respective agencies are facing.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Debbie Russell acting on behalf of Executive Director Shon Sylvia commented on the following:

- New District employees Tania Wink and Amy Wilson were introduced.
- Congratulations were extended to the staff at Fort Nisqually Living History Museum as they are one of two Washington organizations to win the prestigious 2022 AASLH Award of Excellence, awarded for the online Puget Sound Treaty War Panel series.
- Metro Parks Tacoma and City of Tacoma partnered together to bring a great, family friendly July 4th event to the Waterfront for the 2022 Summer Blast. Attendance numbers will be available soon. There was a great presence by the Tacoma Police Department and Fire Department in helping assist in pulling off a safe, family friendly event.
- This weekend marks the first paid concert at Dune Peninsula with Island Empire Festival on Saturday followed by a free, community Pride event on Sunday.

- Mosaic, Tacoma’s Arts and Culture Festival, returns to Wright Park on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> after a two-year hiatus. The event is from 12-7p.m. and is free to attend.
- There is a Capital Improvement Committee meeting this Wednesday, July 13<sup>th</sup> at 5p.m.
- Staff is planning for a Board Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>.

**COMMUNITY COMMENTS** None

**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 27, 2022 REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Commissioner Liang moved to adopt the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Ayala and passed on a vote of 4-0 (Commissioner Pointer being excused).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**RESOLUTION NO. C48-22:** APPROVAL OF WARRANTS CLAIM FUND FOR JUNE 2022

**RESOLUTION NO. C49-22:** W.W. SEYMOUR CONSERVATORY REHABILITATION PROJECT NO. J2021-01 FINAL ACCEPTANCE TO PEASE CONSTRUCTION

Commissioner Liang moved to adopt the consent agenda as presented; seconded by Commissioner Ayala and passed on a vote of 4-0 (Commissioner Pointer being excused).

**PURCHASING RESOLUTIONS** None

**PUBLIC WORKS PURCHASING RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. PW50-22:** PDZA POLAR BEAR MINOR EXHIBIT IMPROVEMENTS A/E CONTRACT AWARD TO BCRA DESIGN

Commissioner Liang moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Ayala.

Debbie Russell stated that this item was discussed at the June 29<sup>th</sup> CIC meeting.

Ms. Russell commented that PDZA is planning for minor improvements to the nearly 40-year-old Polar Bear Exhibit that can be accomplished in the next 11 months with a goal of having it ready to receive a new Polar Bear ahead of the 2023 peak visitor season. She further stated that

the design work will be completed by BCRA and that some of the improvement work will be completed by PDZA staff.

Being no additional comments, the question was called, and the resolution passed on a vote of 4-0 (Commissioner Pointer being excused).

**SINGLE READING RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. R51-22:** AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT WITH EVENT NETWORK FOR OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RETAIL OPERATIONS AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM AND NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK

Commissioner Liang moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Ayala.

Alan Varsik commented that in January 2021, after challenges and business impacts associated with COVID closures, Wildlife Trading Company announced an upcoming change in their retail operations and informed Metro Parks that Event Network, LLC would assume the retail operations and purchasing. He noted that staff is familiar with Event Network and commented positively on their product line and business practices as they support many of the objectives that are in line with the Zoo’s strategic plan.

Being no additional comments, the question was called, and the resolution passed on a vote of 4-0 (Commissioner Pointer being excused).

**RESOLUTION NO. R52-22:** ACCEPTING AND APPROPRIATING \$490,000 FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE FOR THE MELANIE LAPLANT DRESSEL PARK PROJECT

Commissioner Liang moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Ayala.

Debbie Russell commented that this funding has resulted from a request from Representative Jake Fey. She further noted that this resolution accepts and appropriates a \$490,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce for the Melanie LaPlant Dressel Park Project and authorizes the Executive Director to enter into a contract agreement for the awarded grant.

Being no additional comments, the question was called, and the resolution passed on a vote of 4-0 (Commissioner Pointer being excused).

**SECOND READINGS RESOLUTIONS** None

**FIRST READING RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. RR53-22:** A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON, PROVIDING FOR THE SUBMISSION TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE DISTRICT AT AN ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 8, 2022, OF A PROPOSITION AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO LIFT THE PROPERTY TAX LEVY LIMIT ESTABLISHED IN RCW 84.55.010 TO FUND THE RESTORATION, PRESERVATION, MAINTENANCE, OPERATION AND SECURITY OF PARK, RECREATION AND ZOOLOGICAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Commissioner Liang moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Ayala.

Hunter George stated that under state law, a taxing jurisdiction can only increase its regular property tax levy by 1% above the amount of revenue collected the previous year (not including new construction). He further stated that 1% limit does not keep up with inflationary and operational costs. Additionally, Mr. George commented that pro-rationing occurs when one or more taxing districts have the same statutory right to levy for taxes. The Board members were reminded that levy rates are limited by either the \$5.90 / \$1,000 maximum (combined levies for senior and junior taxing districts) or the 1% constitutional limit.

Mr. George continued by stating that the combination of rising assessed values and the state-mandated cap on revenue collection substantially reduces the District's levy rate. He also indicated that while state law authorizes park districts to collect \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value, the state's property tax cap has eroded Metro Parks' rate to \$0.46 due to consistently increasing property values.

Mr. George commented that the only way to restore the rate to the legal limit of \$0.75 per \$1,000 is to ask voters to consider what is known as a "levy lid lift." Board members were reminded that MPT last had a levy lid lift on the ballot in April 2010, which voters approved 68 percent to 32 percent. MPT received the full amount of funding for the next six years.

Mr. George stated that the Board asked staff to monitor the erosion of property tax revenues under the state-mandated cap and to consider a potential lid-lift between 2017-2020. Once the pandemic struck, however, staff recommended to wait and re-evaluate the situation after 2021 and focus on the financial needs of the district moving into the next biennium.

Staff noted that MPT has spent the past two years seeking community input on the types of programs and services needed and operational improvements that would better serve residents. It was noted that this engagement has come through customer service surveys; meeting with ethnic and cultural partners, program focus groups, and advisory councils; and hosting "Co-create to Recreate" events. Mr. George noted that additionally, the nonprofit Trust for Public Lands (TPL), which works with communities across the nation to increase public access to parks, programs and open space, says its own community survey shows Tacoma residents want

the District to address key needs, including basic maintenance and operations to support out-of-school recreation programming and access to clean and secure facilities, parks, and open spaces. Mr. George stated that MPT’s levy rate has eroded from \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value in 2016 to \$0.46 today. He commented that the average Tacoma home value for tax year 2022 is \$415,000, according to the Assessor-Treasurer’s Office. The Board was informed that restoring the rate to \$0.75 via a levy lid lift would increase the rate 29 cents per \$1,000, which amounts to a little over \$10 per month for the average home.

Mr. George commented that if voters agree to restore to the full authorization of \$0.75, the District would receive an estimated \$10 million annually for the restoration, preservation, maintenance, and operation of park, recreation and zoological facilities and programs.

Mr. George stated that staff has been working with Pacifica Law and Key Banc on this issue.

Commissioner Ayala requested additional information on the modal value of homes in Tacoma. Commissioners stated that it is important for the community to be aware of the loss of revenue during COVID and that much of the funding over the past 2 years has been one-time funding from COVID relief dollars and will not continue.

Doug Andreassen representing the District’s Business & Responsive Agency Advisory Council stated that he has looked over the District’s financials and is supportive of the Board placing this issue on the ballot in November.

Being no additional comments, the resolution moves to second reading at the July 25<sup>th</sup> Regular Park Board meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** None

**NEW BUSINESS** None

**BOARD COMMENTS**

**ADJOURN**

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

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President

Submitted by: Jennifer Bowman, Board Secretary

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Clerk