



**MINUTES OF  
THE REGULAR MEETING  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MARCH 24, 2025**

PRESENT: Andrea Smith, President  
Matthew Mauer, Vice President  
Alisa Lee  
Carla Santorno  
Pete Reyes

IN THE CHAIR: Andrea Smith

PLACE: Center at Norpoint, 4818 Nassau Ave NE Tacoma, WA 98422

**REGULAR MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Park District Board of Park Commissioners was called to order at 6:00 p.m. President Smith read a land acknowledgement.

**COMMISSIONER SWEARING-IN**

Newly appointed Commissioner Pete Reyes was administered the oath of office.

**INTRODUCTION OF ELECTEDS IN ATTENDANCE**

City Council Member Sarah Rumbaugh and County Council Member Bryan Yambe were introduced and addressed the Board and community in attendance.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

**NORTHEAST TACOMA PUBLIC ART UPDATE**

Claire Keller-Scholz updated the Board on the new public art project being installed at Brown's Point Playfield. The Board was informed Paige Pettibon was selected following a competitive process as the artist for the project.

**SOUNDSIDE CHURCH PARTNERSHIP RECOGNITION**

Meagan Kula thanked and recognized members of the church for their continued partnership and event support to the Center at Norpoint.

**PAKS CHAMPION AWARD**

Members of the Active Living and Community Wellness Advisory Council presented Stan Opdyke with the Parks Champion Award for his outstanding service to keeping parks clean.

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH PROCLAMATION**

Caitlin O'Connell commented that Parks Tacoma has a 118-year history where women have played vital roles, from park laborers to administrators, continuing a legacy that predates the city itself. It was

noted that Indigenous Coast Salish women were the original stewards of the land, and later, Métis women at Fort Nisqually contributed to both family life and the Hudson’s Bay Company. Ms. O’Connell stated that to honor Women’s History Month, the “In Her Shoes: The Women of Fort Nisqually” exhibit is traveling to Parks Tacoma community centers, offering new audiences a chance to engage with these often-overlooked stories. This initiative helps correct historical narratives, dispel stereotypes, and foster a deeper understanding of the shared human experience across time.

### **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

President Smith commented that she attended the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tacoma Flower & Garden Club.

### **2025 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

President Smith made the following committee appointments for 2025:

- Capital Improvement Committee –Commissioner Mauer, Commissioner Santorno (Commissioner Smith- Alternate)
- Joint Municipal Action Committee – Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Reyes (Commissioner Lee Alternate)
- Zoo Liaison—Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Reyes (Commissioner Lee Alternate)
- MPT/TPS Coordinating Committee—Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Mauer
- MPT/COT Interlocal Policy Committee—Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Mauer
- Tacoma Parks Foundation – Commissioner Smith
- Active Lifestyles and Community Wellness Advisory Council—Commissioner Lee (Commissioner Reyes Alternate)
- Nature and Environment Advisory Council—Commissioner Mauer (Commissioner Santorno Alternate)
- Arts and Heritage Advisory Council—Commissioner Santorno (Commissioner Lee Alternate)
- Business and Responsive Agency Advisory Council—Commissioner Reyes (Commissioner Mauer Alternate)

### **STANDING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS** None

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Debbie Russell sitting in for Executive Director Shon Sylvia commented on the following:

- Hunter George provided a legislative update, noting that the current session in Olympia is at day 71 of 105. He explained that the House and Senate have passed their respective bills and are now reviewing each other’s proposals, with key deadlines approaching on April 2 and 8. Mr. George highlighted that both chambers released their operating and transportation budget proposals, with significant investments in K-12 education and differing approaches to balancing the budget, such as the use of the Rainy Day Fund and state employee furloughs. He also noted ongoing discussions regarding changes to the 1% cap on property tax increases, with the Senate proposing no cap but restrictions on spending and the House suggesting a

3% cap with more flexibility for local governments. The transportation budget, facing a billion-dollar deficit, includes gas tax and fee increases to address funding gaps. Mr. George emphasized the importance of the yet-to-be-released capital budget, where several local projects, including the Portland Avenue Sprayground, Titlow Park pedestrian bridge, and a new beaver habitat at Northwest Trek, are awaiting potential funding. He also provided updates on policy bills, including legislation allowing the state to lease underutilized land for community use, a bill designating bull kelp as the state marine forest, and efforts to modify childcare provider qualification requirements to include relevant experience. He concluded by stating that he will provide further updates as the session progresses, particularly once the capital budget is released.

- Paul Simmons was introduced as the new director of the Business Administration and Planning Department.
- People’s Community Center opened on schedule following planned maintenance closure. Maintenance closures are also scheduled for Norpoint, Eastside and STAR Community Centers before the end of the year.
- South Park experienced vandalism in December 2024 and again earlier this month that has resulted in damages of approximately \$400,000. Staff has been working to correct the damage which included the theft of copper wire resulting in a loss of bathroom and sprayground function. Staff is anticipating having operable bathrooms in May. It is unlikely that the sprayground will operate this season. Parks and Recreation will be communicating with the neighbors about the park impacts and encouraging them to help report criminal activity.
- Charlotte’s Blueberry Park also experienced criminal activity in March with the theft of 13 fruit trees that were planted earlier this month. Parks and Recreation Department is communicating with SENCO who had received the grant funding for the stolen trees and is cooperating with the Tacoma Police Department’s investigation. The trees have been replaced, and staff will deploy temporary measures to make the trees less vulnerable to theft.
- Indigenous Voices Podcast has won an award from Washington State Historical Society - Fort Nisqually’s Indigenous Voices podcast has won the David Douglas Award from the Washington State Historical Society for “significant contribution.
- The gift shop at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park is reopening this Friday after renovations
- Ferry Park Playground Celebration Our contractor reached substantial completion at Ferry Park. Construction fencing was removed on Friday to provide access to the two new playgrounds this past weekend. Staff have coordinated a celebration event with our Hilltop community members who helped engage the neighborhood in both the playground design and selection processes with festivities planned for March 29<sup>th</sup> from 10 am – noon.
- a special ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the deployment of 14 electric school buses in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools, including three electric school buses funded through Washington Ecology funding and 11 buses through the second round of the US EPA Clean School Bus Program. Date: Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. at Owen Beach.
- There is Board Committee of Whole scheduled for March 31, 2024 at 5:30pm at District HQ. The agenda will be posted to the District web site, agenda items include Loop Trail Phase II & Meadow Park Golf Course.

- There is a Capital Improvement Meeting (CIC) scheduled for April 2, 2024 at 5pm at District HQ.

**COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

Tom Gibbs submitted written comments regarding off leash dog parks in NE Tacoma.

A voice mail was also revived from a member of the public related to the rates at the Boathouse Marina rate increase.

Yvonne Tracy, Lenny Leach, Art Tatchell, Matt Claybaugh, Mark Carr, Boots Salatino, Marty Sandhop, addressed the Board requesting that the Board take action to address the upcoming planned rate increase at the Point Defiance Boathouse Marina. Each of them noted the need for affordable rates for community members including seniors. Commentors made note that amenities and cost comparison to other facilities in the area are not comparable.

Joyce Conner requested the Board consider an off leash dog area in NE Tacoma.

Jackson Young noted he is an Eagle Scout working and would like to take on supporting an off leash dog park for his Eagle Scout Project.

Iuliia Didkivska thanked the District and the Board for all the support they have shown Ukrainian committee in making them feel welcomed in District spaces.

Following community comment President Smith stated that the fee increase at the Boathouse will remain in place as of April 1. She continued by stating that the Business and Advisory Council has been asked to review past actions and conduct a study for the next rate adjustment in October. President Smith also commented that, if necessary, prices may be lowered at that time. The increase was prompted by a State Auditor finding, ensuring compliance and avoiding financial reporting exceptions.

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2025 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 10, 2025 REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Commissioner Mauer moved to adopt the minutes as presented; seconded by Commissioner Lee and passed on a vote of 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**RESOLUTION NO. C14-25: APPROVAL OF WARRANTS CLAIM FUND FOR FEBRUARY 2025**

PROCLAMATION IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

Commissioner Mauer moved to adopt the consent agenda as presented; seconded by Commissioner Lee and passed on a vote of 5-0.

### **PURCHASING RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. P15-25: AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF GOODS AND SERVICES FOR PARKS TACOMA**

1. MERLINO MEDIA GROUP FOR MEDIA BUYING SERVICES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$930,000

Commissioner Mauer moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Rick Dietz emphasized the importance of maintaining visibility with the regional audience, as an enterprise department depends heavily on admissions and events for revenue. He highlighted the role of strategic media planning in achieving this goal, noting that Merlino advises district staff on paid media strategies, negotiates advertising rates and placements, and secures value-added promotions to support revenue growth. Dietz further explained that Merlino also manages advertising purchases for Zoo Trek, Zoo Lights, and Parks Tacoma, utilizing a mix of digital, search, TV, and Spanish media to reach diverse audiences. He pointed out that Merlino's commission rate remains significantly lower than industry standards, ensuring cost-effective media investments. As a result of these efficiencies, Mr. Dietz noted that the 2025 media budget request is slightly lower than in 2024, reflecting continued strong value and a reduced allocation for Zoo Lights.

Being no additional comments, the question was called and the resolution passed on a vote of 5-0.

### **PUBLIC WORKS PURCHASING RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. PW16-25: INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT FOR THE ROOSEVELT PARK SIDEWALK PROJECT WITH THE CITY OF TACOMA STREETS INITIATIVE PACKAGE #27**

Commissioner Mauer moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Paul Simmons commented that this resolution authorizes the appropriation of up to \$100,000.00 from the 2014 UTGO Bond Funds Neighborhood Parks Small Caps for construction of sidewalk and ADA access improvements along the E. Roosevelt Street that frontages to Roosevelt Park. He noted that this resolution would also authorize the Executive Director to enter into the necessary agreements with the City of Tacoma.

Being no additional comments, the question was called and the resolution passed on a vote of 5-0.

### **SINGLE READING RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. R17-25: AUTHORIZING THE PLACEMENT OF A RESTRICTIVE COVENANT ON PARKS TACOMA OWNED PROPERTY AT SOUTH PARK**

Commissioner Mauer moved adoption of the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Paul Simmons commented that approval is requested to authorize the placement of a Restrictive Covenant on District owned property at South Park. The Board was informed that in accordance with Asia Pacific Cultural Center’s acceptance of financial assistance for activities related to the construction of the new Cultural Center building at South Park provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce, the Restrictive Covenant states that APCC and Parks Tacoma must provide a Community Center on the property for a term of ten years

Being no additional comments the question was called and the resolution passed on a vote of 5-0.

**FIRST READING RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. RR18-25: AUTHORIZING THE SURPLUS & CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY AND GRANTING A TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT TO THE CITY OF TACOMA, ACCEPTING & APPROPRIATING COMPENSATION FROM CITY OF TACOMA AND AMENDING UTILITY EASEMENT NO. 12921 AT WAPATO PARK FOR SHERIDAN ARTERIAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Commissioner Mauer moved adoption of the resolution; seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Paul Simmons commented that this resolution authorizes the surplus and conveyance of 128 square feet of park property and granting a temporary construction easement of 44,071 square feet to the City of Tacoma for arterial improvements along Sheridan Avenue in exchange for \$32,776. Mr. Simmons further commented that this resolution also amends an existing utility easement with Tacoma Public Utilities to accommodate the relocation of a pole and guy anchor. Additionally, it grants the Executive Director authority to execute the necessary documents for the property transfer, temporary construction easement, and utility easement amendment

Being no additional comments resolution was moved to second reading at the April 14<sup>th</sup> Regular Board Meeting.

**SECOND READINGS RESOLUTIONS** None

**NEW BUSINESS** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** None

**BOARD COMMENTS**

Commissioner Reyes invited community to join him at the Ferry Park celebration on Saturday.

**ADJOURN**

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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President

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Clerk

Submitted by: Jennifer Bowman, Board Secretary